From Partnerships to Bureaucracies:

The Constitutional Evolution of Russian Universities

M. Sokolov, S. Lopatina, G. Yakovlev

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Mikhail Sokolov
Candidate of Sciences in Sociology, Professor, European University at Saint Petersburg. Address: 3a Gagarinskaya St., 191187, Saint Petersburg, Russian Federation. E-mail: msokolov@eu.spb.ru
Sofia Lopatina
PhD candidate, International Max Planck Research School for the Anthropology, Archaeology, and History of Eurasia (IMPRS ANARCHIE). Address: Advokatenweg 36, 06114 Halle (Saale). E-mail: lopatina@eth.mpg.de
Gennady Yakovlev
PhD candidate, Department of Political and Social Sciences, European University Institute. Address: Via dei Roccettini 9, I-50014 San Domenico di Fiesole (FI). E-mail: gennadii.iakovlev@eui.eu

Abstract. Russian university is treated as a miniature political system in this article. Four hundred charters, statutes and ordinances are analyzed in order to identify three pivotal axes allowing us to classify constitutional frameworks of universities: the axis of independence from the principal the axis of collegiality, or the balance of power between the rector and the Academic Council and the axis of federalization, which shows how decentralized the organizational structure is. Next, it is shown how these variables are interrelated and how their stable sets form types of intra-university political systems—federative, unitary, dual and controlled—which exist or used to exist in Russia. Contrary to the widely held belief that all of the differences between universities can be traced to their position on the scale of "collegiality" (partnership model) vs. "managerialism" (bureaucratic model) and although public universities do resemble bureaucracies more than partnerships today, different elements of their constitutional design seem to have evolved independently and under the influence of different factors.
Keywords: higher education in Russia, university management, organizational politics, academic power.

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This study was designed to create a typology of university governance models in Russian higher education and trace their evolution using university statutes as the major source of information. There are diverse and numerous typologies of academic governance models [Ryan 1972; Cohen, March 1974; Birnbaum 1988; Voegtle, Knill, Dobbins 2011]. Researchers usually follow one of two approaches. One of them implies identifying ideal types of governments which are often compared to historic types of political systems (*academic oligarchy*

or *feudalism* [Ryan 1972; Clarke, Youn 1976; Birnbaum 1988]), while the other consists in identifying the central axes, or dimensions, that set the range of possible variations in the constitutional structure of universities. The latter approach has a higher analytical potential, as dimensions allow building typologies —but it does not work the other way. However, analysis often boils down to only one dimension that opposes *managerialism/bureaucracy* to *democracy/collegiality* in university organization [Kaplan 2004; Masten 2006; Jones 2011; Apkarian et al. 2014; Woessner, Kehler 2018].

The most crucial difference lies in faculty involvement in decision making. The category opposing intra-organizational democracy to bureaucratic rule is a powerful ideological formula, yet empirical studies have often been doubtful as to whether this dimension alone is enough to describe all the variations in the political structures of universities [Apkarian et al. 2014; Tight 2014]. In one of the studies that pioneered this approach, Janice M. Beyer and Thomas M. Lodahl argue that power is distributed between the central administration and departments, on the one hand, and between administrators and faculty within subdivisions on each level. Taking their cue from this, they determine two axes, that of centralization/decentralization on the institutional level and that of bureaucracy-/collegiality-oriented governance within university subdivisions, which yield four combinations of characteristics [Beyer, Lodahl 1976]. For example, they describe the British university of those days as decentralized and bureaucratic at the same time, as it represented a conglomerate of chairs governed exclusively by professors holding those chairs (junior lecturers had no voice). Such universities are “collegiate” only in the rather limited sense that they are run by senior professors, but they are not managerial either. Institutional structures like that have been quite common in the history of science.

A more recent comparative study uses a survey of European university administrators to show the dramatic differences between the countries in terms of how power is distributed among different levels of the university structure. For instance, school-level councils played an important role in Denmark and Germany but had little power in the UK, while university-level councils were vested with significant power in Germany and the Netherlands but played a small part in Sweden, the overall faculty influence being perceived as strong in all cases [Goedegebuure, Boer 1996]. Likewise, a recent study has demonstrated the impossibility of ranking all the United States universities on a single scale of faculty involvement in decision making; in fact, the distribution of power among subdivisions can vary greatly within the same level of faculty participation [Apkarian et al. 2014]. In Russian literature, there have been attempts to compare universities by the level of democracy and centralization, where democracy is understood as involvement of regular employees, such as lecturers, in decision making (zero democracy is by default equaled to bureaucratic

governance) and centralization shows whether power is concentrated at the center or distributed among a number of divisions (schools, faculties, etc) [Sokolov 2016]. It is doubtful, however, that these two dimensions suffice, as they do not allow, for example, distinguishing between democratic universities governed predominantly by rectors and those dominated by Academic Councils.

This article offers a way to identify the fundamental aspects of university political structure and puts forward a more complex system of five axes: (i) degree of independence from the principals; (ii) degree of federalism; (iii) balance of power between collegiate and sole executive bodies; (iv) inclusivity; (v) level of legal protection for faculty. Of these five axes, only the first three demonstrate significant variations in contemporary Russia. Empirical evidence is provided below to prove "realness" of the three dimensions, which will be followed by describing the evolution of the Russian education system in the coordinate system shaped by these dimensions.

1. Dimensions of University Political Systems: Theoretical Model

The first of the theoretical axes is *dependence/independence*, which determines the locus of decision making in university life in terms of whether decisions are made within the university or come from outside. Internal or external locus of control corresponds to the most basic understanding of what university actually is: it can be conceptualized either as a faculty and (or) student community or as an institution founded by someone who does not belong to either of the two groups and seeks to accomplish their own goals. In the former case, communities will naturally operate as a self-governed guild, being independent in electing their leaders and new members with the help of certain democratic procedures. In the latter case, it would be logical to assume that the external principal will try to retain control over their institution, which is barely possible without appointing a senior executive and delegating her the right to appoint subordinate administrators and professors while reserving the possibility to intervene into the process if necessary [Masten 2006].

Historic examples of utterly dependent universities include Russian universities of the era where the conservative University Statutes of 1835 and 1884 were in place, enabling the Minister of Popular Enlightenment (*Ministerstvo Narodnogo Prosveschenja*) and the university governor (*popechitel'*) not only to appoint professors but also to dismiss or transfer them to another university. Utterly independent universities include medieval scholastic guilds which had courts and guards of their own (Oxford and Cambridge are the closest analogues these days). The election of a rector is based on democratic procedures that involve a more or less wide range of employees[1].

[1] Technically, rectors do not have to be elected by voting; an alternative proce-

The appointment of a rector can be performed by three types of actors, acting as principals: (a) the national bureaucracy (as in the Russian Empire), (b) the board of trustees, which may represent the wider community's interests (as in American private universities), and (c) the rector who acts as an entrepreneur establishing the university as a private company. Accordingly, we can speak of *state-run*, *corporate* and *proprietary* universities. Mixed options are also possible, e. g. state universities in the United States are governed by boards of trustees appointed by state governors.

The second axis, *federalism/unitarism*, describes the degree of self-governance on school and department levels, i. e. to what extent "local" actors are vested with real authority and can make decisions in areas that they find important. Actually, in a three-level governance system comprising the levels of university, schools and departments, this dimension can split into three, with a specific characteristic for each level. One could picture, for instance, a university system where the central governing bodies and departments are very powerful, in contrast to schools that embrace those departments (a situation which was probably typical of European universities during the period of integrating another level between university and departments in the two-level model [Beyer, Lodahl 1976; Goedegebuure, Boer 1996]). In politics, similar division of powers is observed between the national, regional and local levels of governance[2].

The third axis describes the *degree of collegiality*, or the balance between collegiate executive bodies (Academic Councils on different levels) and individual executives (rectors, deans or department chairs). Continuing the political analogy and drawing a parallel with parliaments, it can be assumed that collegiate bodies of university governance may be divided into three types depending on the role they play: dominant, autonomous and subordinate (similar to parliamentary governments, according to Matthew Soberg Shugart and John M. Carey [Shugart, Carey 1992]). Dominant governing bodies elect and remove senior administrators and basically reduce administrators' role to executing decisions made by such bodies. Autonomous governing bodies participate in electing the top administrators but have limited control over day-to-day management. However, they make strategic decisions and cannot be dismissed or reorganized by administrators. Finally, subordinate collegiate bodies function as advisory boards that are appointed by administrators and have very little influence on policies.

dure such as draw may be used. However, this is not found in modern political systems on either national or institutional level. Absence of an external founder implies democracy by default.

[2] A system of four or more levels would require a new dimension for every level added, but such systems are extremely rare, as far as we know.

The fourth dimension that would be important for a broader historical analysis is the degree of inclusivity, i. e. the range of faculty members entitled to their vote, which draws a line between democracies and oligarchies. Before the early 20th century, such rights were reserved ubiquitously to senior professors, but more and more groups were admitted to governance over time, often as a result of social revolutions, as in Russia and Germany in 1918, or massive-scale student protests against any sort of establishment, as in France and Germany in the 1960s and 70s.

The fifth dimension that would play a role in the comparative context describes labor rights and, specifically, availability of tenure appointments. Where professors cannot be fired, the influence of any governing bodies is limited and the overall system is rather poorly controllable. However, no great difference is observed among Russian universities in this aspect, as employee rights are protected everywhere by the same provisions of the Labor Code (relatively poorly, given that extremely short contracts are allowed and no life tenure option is available).

Narrowing these dimensions down to the sole opposition between managerialism and collegiality suggests that university characteristics must be intercorrelated in at least three dimensions—independence, collegiality and inclusion. It is generally believed that university dependence or independence depends on the level of collegiality and inclusion: the guild logic implies broad democratic participation in decision making, whereas managerialism involves a predominance of vertical chains of command. Meanwhile, some of the examples above demonstrate that reality is more complex than opposing democracy/collegiality to authoritarianism/managerialism Whether such oppositions will be observed in every specific case is an empirical question, which this article attempts to answer. At the same time, five dimensions may be not only excessive (if boiled down to fewer in practice) but sometimes insufficient for describing the distribution of powers. A greater or smaller influence of Academic Councils may not necessarily be seen as a monolithic set of characteristics. There are probably universities where Academic Councils play a decisive role in electing professors but have no voice regarding budget allocation, just as there are institutions where Academic Councils are in charge of finance but do not interfere in recruitment issues.

Below, we try to find out, first of all, whether Russian universities differ in the three aforementioned dimensions, whether these dimensions exhaust the variations observed and, finally, whether all the logically possible cells are actually filled.

2. Data

This study analyzed 400 statutes of 310 public and private universities (for some universities, a few consecutive versions of statutes were analyzed), which is about one third of the entire population of univer-

sities in Russia[3]. Statutes were selected randomly using quota sampling to build a representative sample. Proportions were specified for two criteria: region (Moscow, St. Petersburg, other regions) and specialization, considering the size of each category, in the 2015 Monitoring of Performance of Higher Education Institutions (45 statutes of classical universities, 70 of (poly)technical, 22 of medical, 20 of pedagogical, 35 of universities of culture and arts, 28 of socioeconomic, 9 of law enforcement universities, 27 of agricultural, and 144 in private)[4].

The sample is comprised of statutes dating back to various years between 1993 and 2015. Russian higher education went through waves of statute revisions (the most significant ones falling on 2011 and 2015), which affected most public universities subordinate to the Ministry of Education and Science, so the retrieval of previous versions became a problem. However, search engines often save earlier versions of university websites, which may contain old versions of statutes—this is exactly how many of them were found. While working on the final text of this article in November–December 2017, we consulted the statutes of the selected 310 universities to trace any amendments made to them, but the most recent data used for quantitative analysis was available for no later than 2015.

2.1. Data Coding

To enable quantitative analysis of the statutes, their texts were quantified. As a rule, statutes assign a list of powers to every governing body. Following the overall political-scientific framework of research, attention was paid to powers related to appointment and removal from office. The list also includes some key powers that have been a subject of previous research [Goedegebuure, Boer 1996; Masten 2006; Kaplan 2004; Apkarian et al. 2014] and play the greatest role in academic governance: financial issues, human resource policies, establishment and reorganization of subdivisions, and research policies. For governing bodies that were not featured in all the statutes (e. g. school councils), it was documented whether or not they were mentioned at all. The powers analyzed were coded into binary (Yes/No) variables. Almost the whole database thus consists of dichotomous variables; besides, there are several numerical variables describing the number of powers listed in the statutes for governing bodies that were usual-

[3] According to Russian Federal State Statistics Service, a total of 900 universities existed in Russia in 2016, of which 530 were public and 370 private: http://www.gks.ru/wps/wcm/connect/rosstat_main/rosstat/ru/statistics/population/education/#. Branch campuses were excluded from analysis, as additional dimensions would have had to be added to the coordinate map.

[4] Strictly speaking, consecutive statutes of the same university can not be treated not as independent cases. The ambition to obtain a few versions of constitutional documents of the same university is explained by the desire to analyze amendment patterns in every single university (which has not been fulfilled so far).

ly assigned a list of powers (e. g. Academic Council). The database was comprised of a total of 46 variables: 4 numerical and 42 dichotomous. However, a lot of the dichotomous variables did not have sufficient variations to be include in statistical analysis, being mentioned either too rarely (the rector's right to dismiss the Academic Council) or, vice versa, almost ubiquitously (the existence of an Academic Council). The resulting list included 31 variables with variances that allowed for statistical analysis.

2.2. Limitations

When drawing inferences about university policies from statutes, it is vital to bear in mind that one cannot be absolutely positive about the extent to which statutes regulate university life. As with national constitutions, statutes may only be a façade concealing a different reality. Nevertheless, studies that compared formal documents with university governance practices revealed a high level of consistency between what was stipulated and how the faculty perceived the distribution of powers in their university [Ryan 1972; Woessner, Kehler 2018]. We cannot hope that analysis of statutes alone can be enough to find out the exact degree to which they reflect the real balance of powers in Russian universities, yet the configuration of formal frameworks sometimes allows for making some cautious assumptions, which will be presented at the end of this article.

Another limitation of data extracted from the statutes is that it does not reflect the roles of a number of actors that may have a lot of power in decision making (e. g. student council) or the institutional innovations of the recent years, primarily those in the leading universities (e. g. the creation so-called of Strategic Academic Units). The statute authors probably preferred to mention as few governing bodies and boards as possible, restricting their range to the most conventional ones, represented in standard statutes, as new governance structures were regarded as experimental and not necessarily stable. It can be assumed that universities were trying to avoid readopting their statutes to document the evolution of those new structures. Statutes allow for tracing changes in the relationships among the actors that constitute the traditional backbone of university governance[5].

3. Political Regime Dimensions: Principal Component Analysis

Statutes of Russian universities differ essentially in the distribution of powers, but the key governing bodies vested with such powers are always more or less the same. The most important decisions are made by the principal (*uchreditel'*) and the assembly (*conferentcija*). According to the Russian law, every university has a principal; the principal' role may be limited, however, to founding a university without retaining much further control over its development. In the case of

[5] We are grateful to the anonymous reviewer of *Educational Studies* for this observation.

public universities, the principal may be represented by federal ministries, including the Ministry of Education and Science of Russia, Russia's Government, local governments, etc. Private universities may be founded by businesses, nonprofit organizations, individuals, or groups of individuals. An individual principal is usually also the first rector and, in fact, the sole proprietor of the university. In addition, a university may have a governing body which is designed to represent the principal(s) and can have a variety of names: board of governors, principals' council, board of trustees, board of regents, university board, supervisory board, etc.

The nomenclature of intra-university governing bodies is more unified. On the institutional level, powers are distributed between the Academic Council (*uchenyj sovet*) and rector; on the level of schools (*fakultety*) and departments (*kafedry*), there are school deans (*dekany*), school councils (*sovet fakulteta*) and General Assemblies (*konferentcii*), department meetings, and department chairs (*zavkafedroj*). Their powers are described in much less details in the statutes than those of university-wide governing bodies. However, there are some pivotal issues where the relationships between the "federal" and local levels become a zero-sum game, such as in the election of deans, department chairs, professors and associate professors.

To verify the constructed typology empirically, principal component analysis was run based on binary variables describing the intra-organizational political regime[6]. Principal component analysis is a method of statistical analysis which is most fully in line with the assumption that variances in statute characteristics are not random but follow certain patterns, reflecting the university's position in a space defined by a small number of dimensions. For instance, the presence of all the powers characterizing the Academic Council reflects the university's position in a single dimension of *Academic Council's influence*. If the Academic Council is powerful, the statutes will most likely contain lots of powers, and if it is not, the number of powers will be small. Principal components analysis provides an insight into whether there is evidence to suggest that variance in the characteristics analyzed reflects the presence of a small number of latent dimensions. It

[6] Analysis captured in Table 1 involves 23 variables, excluding those that correlated weakly with the rest of the variables. The resulting correlations could probably be explained by the simple fact that statutes assigning more powers to governing bodies were greater in length and more detailed. These variables did not change the fundamental structure of the components, simply decreasing the proportion of variance explained (e. g. research approval by the Academic Council). The number of components was restricted to three, as models with more dimensions produced specific components loaded with powers specific to some of the most widespread statutes versions. However, the selected three components, which explain more than half of the variance, do not appear to be associated with any wave of revisions.

also allows for identifying which university characteristics are related to this or that reconstructed dimension, i. e. which variables are "loaded" by each of the dimensions. Variables loaded positively on the same dimension correlate positively with one another and negatively with the negatively loaded variables.

The theoretical axis *dependence/independence* is captured in the first dimension (24.88 percent of variance explained), which shows the highest loadings for the powers of the General Assembly (positive) and principal (negative). The axis also embraces some key powers of the Academic Council, which normally belong to rectors in dependent universities (establishment of subdivisions, election of deans and department chairs), as well as compulsory rector's reports and re-electability of Academic Councils as a form of collegiate governing body's accountability to intra-university constituents. Finally, academic qualification requirements for department chairs and deans also gravitate toward the same component.

Some clarifications are needed here. The statutes did not contain any regulations directly restricting participation of junior professors in decision making (the fourth theoretical axis of *inclusion*), yet some of them limited the range of people to be elected to office, such limitations being manifested most visibly in independent universities and fading away to zero in dependent ones. This observation may be interpreted in two ways, as an attempt to preserve indirect control of the academic profession over key office positions (if a dean must be a professor with a doctoral degree, the rector may not appoint just anyone) and as statement of the fact that private universities, which are usually more dependent, often experience a lack of academic degrees among their faculties.

The second component (17.07 percent of the variance) covers the rest of Academic Council's powers and, quite unexpectedly at the first glance, the requirement that the rector's election should be approved by the principal. Such a requirement is simple to explain, though: the need to obtain the principal's approval is only found in the statutes of universities that practice rector elections and where Academic Councils play a crucial role, selecting candidates to be presented to the principal.

Finally, the third factor (9.77 percent) is loaded with the powers of peripheral actors (schools, departments) and, quite unexpectedly as well, rector's reports to the General Assembly. Such reporting, however, may be interpreted as a characteristic practice of decentralized institutions where rectors are obliged to present the results of their work to the community at large.

The three-component solution is a result of rotation. Prior to rotation, analysis reveals one principal component explaining 34 percent of total variance. It is loaded with independence, collegiality and decentralization and demonstrates that—as a gross generalization—opposition between bureaucracy and democracy in the Russian ac-

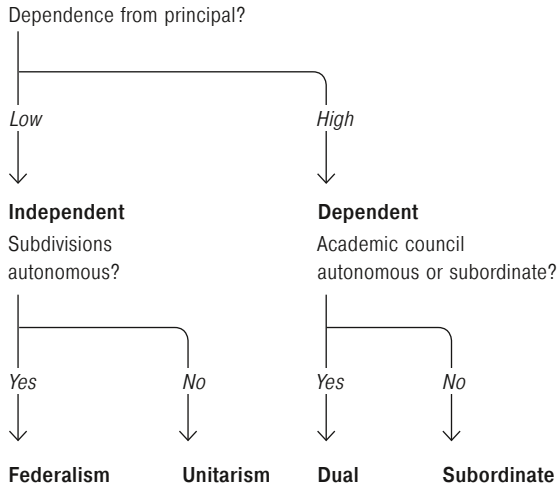
Table 1. **Principal Component Analysis Results. Standardized Component Loadings.** Varimax Rotation

	Component		
	1	2	3
Availability of a numbered list of powers of the principal or supervisory board	**–0.598**	–0.312	–0.089
Approval of candidates for rector's position by the principal	0.355	**0.593**	0.204
Rector is elected	**–0.725**	–0.349	–0.227
The statutes mention the General Assembly (*konferentsija*)	**0.620**	0.244	–0.009
Rector is elected by the General Assembly	**0.760**	0.322	0.219
Academic Council is elected by the General Assembly	**0.612**	0.084	–0.072
Statutes are adopted by the General Assembly	**0.674**	0.340	0.168
Rector reports to the General Assembly	0.181	0.123	**0.529**
Rector reports to the Academic Council	**0.575**	0.201	–0.117
Deans are elected by the Academic Council	**0.406**	0.347	–0.278
Department chairs are elected by the Academic Council	**0.453**	**0.509**	0.029
Professors are appointed by the Academic Council	–0.033	**0.875**	0.103
Associate professors are appointed by the Academic Council	–0.063	**0.868**	0.074
Academic Council participates in discussing financial issues	0.331	**0.595**	0.118
Academic Council decides on establishment and reorganization of subdivisions	**0.478**	**0.505**	0.148
Academic Council administers student allowances	**0.585**	**0.422**	0.170
Academic Council approves members of the board of regents	0.312	**0.506**	–0.061
Statutes allow for preterm Academic Council elections	**0.444**	0.399	0.052
Powers of department chairs are mentioned	0.007	0.011	**0.738**
Powers of the dean are mentioned	–0.005	0.078	**0.789**
Powers of school councils (*sovet fakulteta*) are mentioned	0.105	0.097	**0.585**
Formal academic requirements for school deans are stipulated	**0.615**	–0.094	0.341
Formal academic requirements for department chairs are stipulated	**0.685**	–0.215	0.205
	24.88%	17.07%	9.77%

Note: Loadings over 0.4 are shown in bold.

ademia has some descriptive value. However, rotation shows that a more comprehensive and informative model implies three dimensions instead of one. It is only in the very first approximation that diversity of intra-organizational regimes can be boiled down to one variable (degree of managerialism).

Figure 1. **Classification of Russian Universities' Political Systems**



Basically, analysis confirms that the three-dimensional model is sufficient for describing Russian university as a political system. We do not come across a subtype of university where, for example, collegiate governing bodies are more powerful than the rector in one area and less so in another coexisting with a subtype where the situation is opposite[7]. In other worlds, quite distinct variations are observed which allow for stating that the three theoretical dimensions correspond to pretty realistic descriptions of reality. Independence, relative power of collegiate governing bodies, and degree of federalism are real dimensions, and universities may be lower or higher on each of the three scales.

Three dimensions are supposed to yield eight combinations of high and low values of the characteristics analyzed. However, fewer variations are observed empirically. Figure 1 provides a register of such combinations.

First, there are no independent universities with weak collegiate governing bodies, just as in strong presidential democracies. Second,

[7] Cronbach's α is 0.844 for the five-point scale describing General Assembly's powers and 0.836 for the 12-point scale describing Academic Council's powers (increasing only if two points—research approval and president election—are removed, up to 0.840 in both cases). The measure is only 0.688 for schools and departments' powers (which include academic requirements for deans and department chairs), but it still demonstrates a significant consistency in the relevant characteristic.

there is no combination of federalism and dependence. All dependent universities feature the so-called "power vertical". The basic division of universities is into dependent and independent. Independent ones always have powerful collegiate governing bodies and fall into federated and unitary. Dependent ones are always unitary and fall into subordinate (low collegiality) and dual (high collegiality).

The latter subcategory has to be explained, since its role has expanded greatly. In theory, both the sole executive and the collegiate governing body may be appointed externally (Peter the Great's *collegia* are a good example). However, nothing like that happens in reality: collegiate governing bodies are usually elected (apart from *ex officio* members), and if their powers are significant enough, those of the principal are inevitably limited. Dual unitary universities are characterized by a curious combination of powers: while a rector is appointed, an Academic Council is elected democratically and remains relatively powerful. On the surface, this organizational form approaches the dual authority model of shared governance as it exists in U.S. universities, which involves parallel governance structures, professoriate and administrators appointed by the board of regents [Baldridge 1971; Apkarian et al. 2014; Woessner, Kehler 2018]. There is an essential difference, however: in the American model, decisions are made in a number of stages consecutively by representative and appointed governing bodies, while Russian universities have adopted segmental distribution of powers where collegiate governing bodies and administrators have isolated areas of responsibility. For instance, according to the current statutes of Saint Petersburg State University—where the rector has more powers than in any other public university—central administrators may establish new subdivisions without the Academic Council's approval but may not appoint professors and associate professors to work in them. In fact, control over human resource policies remains in the same hands as always.

The next section will use historical materials to explore how university constitutions evolved during the period covered by this study.

4. Public Federations, Private Autocracies: 1993–2005

At the beginning, Russian universities fell distinctly into two extremely opposite categories depending on how much power was concentrated within the institution, in the hands of local constituents, and how much belonged to the external principal. In some of them, administrators were elected and obliged to report to the staff on a regular basis. In others, local constituents did not play any role while governance was carried out directly by the principal or by the rector appointed.

The first category included all public universities, except for law enforcement ones. Their statutes entitled the principal to control the budget, changes in legal forms and major organizational transformations (establishment of branch campuses), but the General Assembly was in charge of approving the statutes and electing the rector, while

budget approval and establishment of new subdivisions were controlled by elected intra-university governing bodies and rector. The principal approved the rector elected and had veto power, but some universities managed to add a provision to their statutes allowing them to override the veto[8]. In addition, some of the universities adopted constitutions that eliminated the risk of having an 'outsider' rector: "*The vacancy of MSU Rector shall be filled by a professor who has been employed with the Moscow University full-time for at least five consecutive years"* (Statutes of Moscow State University, 1998). Back then, General Assemblies in public universities also discussed annual rector's reports, which is an important power allowing the General Assembly and Academic Council to remove rectors from the office before their contracts expired and emphasizing symbolically the rector's responsibility before the personnel.

In each of these cases, university independence and the significant role of the General Assembly coexist with a high level of Academic Council's powers. The rector's powers are stipulated in the statutes in a rather uniform manner, and they are always extensive, so there can be no talk about dominant Academic Councils. An Academic Council's powers, meanwhile, are what actually changes and may serve as an indicator of collegiality.

The axis of *unitarism/federalism* is where the greatest differences among public universities are observed during that period. A model example of a federative governance system is found in the 2001 Statutes of Adyghe State University. The document vests important political powers in deans, school councils and department chairs. Deans are elected by the school council and deal with human resource issues within their schools. School councils select candidates for professor and faculty positions, elect department chairs, approve curricula and establish new subdivisions. In other universities, the right to elect deans, department chairs and professors is vested in the Academic Council, with a reservation that candidates should be "discussed" prior to election, which sometimes involves a vote by secret ballot. Therefore, federated and unitary public universities continued to coexist for some time.

More diversity can be found in the statutes of private universities, as they were not subject to any standards and the Ministry of Justice was likely to register even some very extravagant constitutions. Some of them simply copied the statutes of a public university as the most

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[8] *"University Rector is elected by secret ballot by the General Assembly, which includes academic staff, employees of other categories and students enrolled in five-year programs, and then approved by the Ministry of Education of Russia. <...>. In the case of a motivated refusal of the Ministry to approve the candidate elected, a new election is held, where a candidate securing two thirds of the vote cast shall be approved without fail."* (Statutes of Chernyshevsky Saratov State University, 2001)

legitimate model. A good deal of the statutes of private universities were proprietary in nature, similar to articles of incorporation. Such universities had a sole founding owner (sometimes formally referred to as the "proprietor" (*sobstvennik*), who appointed herself the rector, appointed all of the university's governing bodies single-handedly and performed literally every governance function[9].

Such universities are usually governed by an individual, and the General Assembly and Academic Council do not have any significant powers and may not exist at all, as in the 2010 Statutes of the East European Psychoanalytic Institute in St. Petersburg, or be appointed by the rector. For example, according to the 2010 Statutes of Baltic University of Ecology, Politics and Law, "*The Academic Council of the Institute is elected by the Rector for a five-year term and shall be comprised of at least three members*." In other cases, the rector establishes the Academic Council at her sole discretion and has the power to veto any of its decisions. Top administrators can adopt all of the functions normally performed by the Academic Council. For example, the 2006 Statutes of the Institute of Social Sciences stipulate that "*the Rector recruits, employs and deploys the faculty and non-teaching staff as well as bears the responsibility for their qualifications.*" However, only a comparatively small fraction of private universities abolished the governing bodies referred to in standard bylaws of a public university; more often than not, such bodies were preserved, but the powers vested in them were pretty much decorative, such as discussion of the institutional Code of ethics.

The private universities that borrowed public university statutes unchanged were probably guided by the high legitimacy of the public university governance structure, and the founding rectors who vested every possible authority in themselves were preoccupied with retaining control over the structures they had created. Apparently, the third category of statutes that became widespread among private universities reflected the ambition to combine these advantages, while at the same time rewarding rectors for all the challenges they had to go through in order to solve every problem manually. This category of dependent university statutes kept an autonomous Academic Council endowed with considerable powers, which fitted into the dual model. Some of those universities explicitly tried to reproduce the Ameri-

[9] For example, statutes may state that "*The Institute's Founder is Viktor Stepanov, born 1956, natural person and citizen of the Russian Federation <...> The Founder's scope of competence includes: adopting the Institute's Statutes, amendments and additions thereto; appointing the Institute's Rector"* (Statutes of Altai Economics and Law Institute, 2010). This model logically implies the right to transfer the university by hereditary succession, which is stipulated, for instance, in the 2015 Statutes of Taganrog Institute of Management and Economics: "*In the event of the Sole Proprietor's death, the heir will inherit the proprietorship*."

can type of dual organization (e. g. Moscow School for the Social and Economic Sciences or New Economic School), whereas others created similar authority distribution systems of their own. For instance, the 2007 Statutes of Armavir Linguistic University reserved the same powers to the General Assembly as in most public university statutes, with the exception of a rector election. However, the General Assembly also approved the university statutes and elected the Academic Council, which was entitled to recruit faculty members. The 2009 Statutes of Saint Petersburg University of the Humanities and Social Sciences states: "*The Rector is elected by secret ballot by the Academic Council upon the recommendation of the Board of Regents for a term of up to five years. <…> In case the decision is not made, the Board of Regents shall propose a candidate or candidates within two weeks upon prior consultation with the Academic Council.*" Meanwhile, the same statutes entitled the rector to exercise full control over the composition and work of the Academic Council (in which the representatives of the regents had only a consultative vote) and select candidates for deans and department chairs' positions. The exact reasons for adopting statutes like that are unclear, but the effects are such that the university's self-perpetuating rector Alexander Zapesotsky, who has held this position since 1991, was virtually free from the control of the nominal principal, the Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Russia (which inherited the university, called Higher Trade Union School at the Soviet times, from the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions). What is never found in dependent universities of either that period or later ones is federalism.

5. Recentralization, 2006–2011

The year 2006 marked the beginning of a new era in the constitutional history of public universities as well as in many other aspects of the history of Russian higher education as such. Universities were facing the consequences of the baby bust and at the same time the first zealous interventions of the government which was trying to boost their research productivity and economic growth by increasing the control over their activities in exchange for targeted investments. The innovations involved introducing certifying committees (*attestatsionnaya komissija*) that approved candidates in rector elections and apparently played a great role in the "renewal" of the rectors' community[10]. At the same time, regulations restricting rector candidates to current

[10] Letter of the Federal Agency for Education No. 18–02–10/08 On University Rector Election Procedure of September 21, 2006 states: "*The University's Academic Council approves the list of rector candidates and submits it to the Certifying Committee of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation*"; in addition, "*The rector candidate elected by the General Assembly is further considered by a panel of the Federal Agency for Education*."

employees could be found less and less often in university statutes (the latest one in the sample is found in the 2011 Statutes of the second-tier Moscow State Pedagogical University). Rectors of public universities were unfailingly elected by General Assemblies up to the end of 2010, when amendments to the statutes of Moscow State University and Saint Petersburg State University were adopted.

In 2006, one of the statutes in the sample introduced for the first time the post of institute director, functionally equivalent to school dean but appointed by the rector (Statutes of Tyumen State Architectural University). The same regulation is found in the 2007 Statutes of Southern Federal University and St. Petersburg University of Film and Television and spreads quickly in the years that followed[11]. At the same time, the statutes entitle councils of structural subdivisions to elect deans and department chairs less and less often (the latest mention in the sample is in the 2011 Statutes of the Far Eastern State Medical University). However, the process of replacing schools with institutes and deans with appointed directors has become dragged out and is still active, just as that of introducing departments with appointed heads. This transformation was not dictated by changes in standard statutes, which touched little upon university governance; rather, it is probably mostly the reflection of initiatives developed locally, not handed down by the Ministry. Unlike with the principal's powers, which were first expanded in federal and national research universities and only later in second-tier universities supervised by the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Agriculture, the momentum of recentralization was not spreading in one specific direction, whether from center to periphery or vice versa.

In 2011, public universities supervised by the Ministry of Education experienced a wave of statute revisions that consolidated the centralization of power around campus-level governing bodies, rector and Academic Council. In most cases, schools and departments lost their freedoms and authority, and the overall university organization transformed from federalism to rigid unitarism. Many revisions adopted after 2010 did not even mention discussion sessions preceding the election of department chairs and deans, which had never happened before.

Overall, statutes of public universities adopted since mid-2005 indicate a decrease in the influence of collegiate governing bodies

[11] "Institute directors" in universities' statutes used to denote directors of universities' research institutes who were also mostly elected by Academic Councils upon discussion in a respective institute; later on, however, institutes were more and more often understood as schools with appointive heads. The 2011 Statutes of Baikal State University of Economics and Law provide a straightforward definition: "*Functions equivalent to those of schools may be performed by institutes and colleges headed by directors appointed by the Rector*."

(General Assembly, Academic Council), yet they still fit into the definition of systems with autonomous Academic Councils given in this article. The sweeping powers of General Assemblies have been preserved, too: they can still approve statutes and elect rectors and Academic Councils. Besides, statutes of some universities keep the reservation about possible early termination of rector's contract[12].

6. Independence Lost: 2011– On December 31, 2010, amendments to the statutes of Saint Petersburg State University and Moscow State University held that rectors were no longer elected but appointed by the President of Russia. Other Russian universities joined in soon, adopting statutes that cancelled rector elections and statute approval and clipped some other powers of the General Assembly. The innovations of 2006–2011 include one of the earliest mentions of which is found (somewhat unexpectedly) in the 2010 Statutes of the second-tier Almetyevsk State Institute of Municipal Services: "*ASIMS will establish a supervisory board [popechitel'skij sovet] of seven (7) members: two from among employers, one representative of the Ministry of Land and Property of the Republic of Tatarstan, one faculty member, one parent committee member, one representative of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tatarstan, and one representative of Almetyevsk Municipal District*." Later on, this clause gains ground, sometimes including rather specific paragraphs (like the one stating that "*Those having an outstanding conviction or unexpunged criminal record may not become members of the ASIMS Supervisory Board*"), and can be found, for example, in the 2012 Statutes of Southern Federal University, the first one in the sample to abolish rector elections. A supervisory board acts as a buffer zone between university and principal, providing recommendations to both and, in particular, selecting rector candidates to be approved by the agency. Similar statutes were soon adopted by all the universities that were part of the Project 5–100.

Statutes abolishing elected rectors were adopted by most universities supervised by the Ministry of Education (in 2015 for the most part). Second-tier universities, meanwhile, did not even have supervisory boards, they were just assigned a rector appointed by the principal upon discussion by the certifying committee (statutes did not specify who selected the candidates to be considered by the committee). In 2014–2015, statutes stipulating that rectors be elected by the General

[12] Despite the existing standards and possible external institutional pressures, statutes remained customized in many aspects, and some of them introduced specific points to reflect the unique events in the history of the institution. Nevertheless, different "families" of universities still shared some common typical traits, e. g. agricultural universities remained more decentralized than others.

Assembly were still adopted, but only by universities supervised by the Ministry of Culture (e. g. the 2014 Statutes of the Maxim Gorky Literature Institute, one of the best examples of embodied collegiality) and the Ministry of Agriculture. Later on, some of them adopted amendments to strengthen the principal's role, but, according to the 'Documents' sections on the official websites, a number of old versions were still in force as this article was being finished (late 2017).

Contrary to what is implied by the generalized concept of changing from partnership to bureaucracy, reduced university independence did not involve a considerable decrease in collegiality (understood as the balance of power between rector and Academic Council) for a number of universities, even though General Assemblies had lost their authority permanently and the last traces of direct democracy had faded away in most of them. Supervisory boards limited some powers of Academic Councils (e. g. those concerning establishment of subdivisions), but the balance of powers between Academic Councils and rectors was preserved virtually at the level of 2011. On the whole, the Ministry of Education's initiatives were probably designed solely to strengthen the state's role, so they affected little intra-university organization. As a result, universities supervised by the same ministry and falling within the same category have preserved different internal political regimes. For example, Moscow State University remains much less collegiate than Saint Petersburg State University. Because the statutes of municipal universities largely reproduce those of universities founded by federal ministries, they gradually introduce structural innovations, but the process is very slow.

The segment of private higher education was barely affected by all those changes, continuing to reproduce numerous proprietary universities whose principals controlled every appointment and major decision directly or via appointed rector. Yet, along with this trend, constitutions borrowed from earlier versions of public universities also remain in force. As a result, the most prominent examples of university autonomy are found today in private education. They include, among others, the Statutes of the Stolypin Institute for the Humanities (2010), Institute of Theology and International Relations (2014) and Armavir State Social University (2013), which have preserved election of the rector by the General Assembly, though sometimes in reduced forms (e. g. the Statutes of ASSU state that General Assembly elects the rector "in agreement with the Principal"). A special category is formed by private universities that were among the first to institutionalize rector appointments by the principal (or the principal's representatives in the board of regents) but reserved the possibility of limiting the number of candidates to choose from, thus turning supervisory boards' powers effectively into veto power. A telling example in the sample is the 2015 Statutes of the Moscow School for the Social and Economic Sciences, which entitles regents to appoint the rector "upon the

Table 2. **Comparing Average Scores of the Statutes in Three Dimensions, by Periods (F-test in the last row).**

Period	Independence	Collegiality	Federalism
1993–2005 (N=56)	0.622	–0.082	0.693
2006–2009 (N=49)	–0.203	–0.094	0.275
2010–2011 (N=153)	0.262	0.245	–0.228
2012– (N=142)	–0.457	–0.199	–0.123
F	25.14***	5.35**	15.00***

** $p < 0.001$; *** $p < 0.0001$

recommendation of the Academic Council". In this case, the university creators were probably guided by the Anglo-American institutional model but suggested that dual structure would make the university too dependent from the supervisory board, so they decided to introduce small innovations, which, however, changed the very nature of the whole political procedure.

Table 2 illustrates the transformations that have taken place. For every statute, scores calculated based on loadings for three components show the position occupied by the document on the respective axis, and average indicators for the selected periods are compared. The highest average indicators of independence are observed for the earliest period and the lowest for the most recent one. The third period features a bounce upward, probably induced by the 2010–2011 series of statutes adopted by public universities, which in fact had even more autonomy than private ones at the time. Federalism gradually decreases from the first period to the third one, which is followed by a small (insignificant) climb. No explicit trends can be identified in collegiality variance. The 2010–2012 wave of public university statutes must have provided a certain boost in collegiality, but everything went back to original state very soon.

7. Conclusion

The study demonstrates that differences between intra-organizational political regimes in Russian higher education can basically be reduced to three dimensions, namely the degrees of independence, collegiality and federalism. Empirical evidence being available for only four of all the conceivable combinations of high and low values of the three characteristics. University independence implies strong collegiate governing bodies. Universities that make key decisions—such as those related to rector election—independently differ primarily in the degree of federalism in their governance structures. External control over university suggests a high level of centralization but allows variation in au-

tonomy of the Academic Council, which cannot be a dominant force (otherwise the principal's control would make no sense) but can be either autonomous or subordinate. The former is more typical of publicly owned universities, while the latter for private proprietary ones.

A great number of public universities first evolved from federalism to unitarism (by 2011) and then to dualism (mostly by 2015), which allows for talking about a transformation from partnerships to corporations. The very course of this evolution, however, reveals a few independent processes rather than a single one. Contrary to the idea of changing from partnership to corporation as a single process of decreasing collegiality, it becomes obvious that universities' political structures first lost federalism and then independence, but the levels of collegiality remained virtually intact. The wave of losing independence started with the central—in terms of location and significance for the education system—universities and reached the peripheral ones last of all, but nothing like this can be said about recentralization.

What was behind those changes? This question brings us back to the previously stated doubts about "realness" of university constitution. On the whole, the findings of this study challenge the assumption that university constitutions were purely fictitious for the academic community—documents signed blind. If universities had made little of the statutes' content, their statutes would have all been nearly identical (since everyone would have been adopting the same version, trying to save on the cognitive effort), or, alternatively, there would have been an infinite number of variations (if every university had drafted statutes from scratch). However, neither is true. The language of statutes was widely borrowed, as could be seen from the example of private universities, but their overall content bears a clear imprint of the academic community being concerned about the consequences. Even if some statutes have nothing to do with real-life university governance practices, their developers did not have a clue.

So, what were the ideas that guided them? This is where we enter a domain where our findings only allow for conservative assumptions. It is easier to imagine the reasons for changes in university independence than those for recentralization. Dependence of private universities is probably mainly explained by their principals' desire to remain in control of them. In this regard, the situation was less ambiguous for principals of public universities, for whom control also meant responsible decision making (the Ministry is currently responsible for selecting rectors to regional universities—the power that it would probably prefer to divest itself of) and fulfillment of more or less explicit social obligations to the faculty. That is to say, the independence gained by Russian universities at the cusp of the 1990s was probably not so much an achievement of their own but rather a consequence of the government's readiness to shift the responsibility for universities' well-being onto their own shoulders. Following their European colleagues, Russian researchers found out that "autonomy", despite its positive

connotations, often entailed funding cuts. As soon as the state gained possession of the resources that it was willing to invest in academic development, it stipulated regain of control as a condition. Government agencies obviously took formal governance structure seriously and used all available leverage to make universities abandon self-governance. It remains unknown, however, whether its efforts encountered any resistance, and if not, whether it was because the academic staff found the managerial structure more legitimate, or did not take it seriously, or had no resources to protest.

In any case, explanations referring to the role of external agents do not shed too much light on the course of intra-university recentralization. All versions of standard statutes leave internal structure to a university's discretion, and no interference to reduce faculty autonomy was observed on the part of the Ministry until 2012. The findings of this study are thus not enough to provide any definitive answer.

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