

MIXED GOVERNMENT AND THE STRUCTURAL ORIGINS OF ACADEMIC VIRTUE

This presentation will explore some points of convergence between the republican theory of self-government and modern organizational analysis. It starts by drawing parallels between the republican theory's central dictum—that successful polities should combine three good forms of government (monarchy, aristocracy, democracy) because mixed government proves to be the most resistant against corruption—and approaches to organizations, explaining organizational decline by unchecked control of one group of stakeholders. Granting voice—the formal right to participate in decision-making—to a variety of stakeholders is usually seen as a safeguard against decline. The optimal configuration of such rights to be implemented in the academic world is subject to debate, with the shared governance model exemplified by leading US universities and the “participatory democracy” (Rosovsky) model exemplified, until recently, by Russia, being two options. This paper's argument is that the comparative advantages of various models of voice rights distribution depend on the exit opportunities available to agents, with exit potential being determined by the general economic situation, organization of academic labor markets, and prevailing student culture. To contribute to the development of mixed government, distribution of voice rights should compensate for disparities created by unequal distribution of exit power. Shared governance political structures prove more efficient than others in fostering republican virtues in contexts where central administrators face an influential professoriate; attempts to institutionalize it in Russia where exit potential is insignificant resulted in the evolution of academic monarchies, not always benign or educated.

In *The Discourses on Livy* Machiavelli famously argues that mixed government, rather than any “pure” form of government (monarchy, aristocracy, democracy), proves the most resistant to corruption. The division of powers between the major political agents—the prince, nobles, and people—checks the natural inclinations of each of them to become self-serving or lenient and guarantees that all of them together will remain virtuous and serve the common good. This thought finds immediate parallel in the “organizations as polities perspective” (Zald, 1966; Zald and Berger, 1978), which exploits parallels between upper-level political entities, such as nation-states or republics, and other formal organizations, including universities, and which also associates decline with unchecked control of one group of stakeholders.

In their classical book, Scott and Blau (1962) argue that formal organizations could be classified according to which group they primarily serve—their owners (business organizations), personnel (mutual-benefit association), clients (service organizations), or society at large (commonwealth organizations). Most categories of organizations can belong to more than one of these types. Thus, a university can primarily benefit its administrators (and even act as a for-profit corporation with upper managers as major shareholders), it might function as a mutual-assistance association benefiting its faculty, it can serve its clients (students) or fulfill some societal goals advocated by outside publics. Organizations that, as modern multiversities (Kerr, 1963), have multiple, highly institutionalized and legitimate goals (Scott and Meyer, 1994) and multiple stakeholders (Mitchell et al, 1996) are probably doomed to disputes about how much they should gravitate to one of these types. But while there may be little agreement about what a perfect multiversity looks like, there is probably a nearly universal agreement that some developments exemplify an indisputable decline. Thus, for example, abusing public trust in scholars for individual financial gain by faculty or administrators (taking bribes from students or selling diplomas, overstepping the area of one's expertise to use whatever resources one is entrusted with for self-aggrandizement, enrichment, or for employing one's kin) would strike us as traits irreconcilable with any definition of a good university.

Those who studied decline in academic organizations often came to a Machiavellian conclusion that such loss of academic virtue is often attributable to their being completely taken over by one of several groups of stakeholders. Thus, universities ruled solely by professors eventually turn into oligarchies, such as the ones Burton Clark discovered in Italy (1977). Indeed, when there are conflicting normative

expectations concerning whose interests a category of organizations should serve, any case when such an organization belonging to this category is taken over by any single group will be regarded as a clear case of decline by members of other groups of their would-be owners. The argument runs deeper, however. Not only are universities dominated by star professors likely to disregard legitimate concerns of students, treat junior faculty as servants, and reproduce whatever social prejudices scientific establishments share, they also tend to corrupt the dominant group itself—the star professors are inevitably, gradually replaced by their loyal but mediocre lieutenants who, nevertheless, enjoy the same privileges. While the professorial mores—involvement in research, appreciation of originality and dedication, and commitment to fair judgment, which Michele Lamont’s book (2009) describes—may at least postpone such a development significantly, there is little doubt that sovereign professorial corporations are in grave danger of gradually evolving into self-serving cliques indifferent or even hostile to true originality and using every opportunity to extract profits from their students (this is a typical portrayal of European universities in the seventeenth century). Even more obviously, universities fully controlled by students or higher administrators are in great danger of falling into types of decline specific to them: when rectors or presidents turn students into a source of profits, students will have a legitimate excuse for not entering adult life.

Those who, as Clark, reflected on the sources of such decline usually pointed to the distribution of organizational power. Thus, in Clark’s view, Italian oligarchy emerged because (1) the ground-level units, chairs, occupied by full professors, were endowed with most responsibilities and (2) crucial system-wise decisions were made by voting of incumbents of these ground-level posts. Much in university institutional design worldwide reflects a Machiavellian intuition that giving all groups some control over organization (mixed government) is the most powerful antidote to such a decline. The specific governance structures that could guarantee such control are a widely debated issue. The central argument of this paper is that institutional governance structures should be regarded in the context of other means of influencing organizational development that its internal stakeholders possess. Accounting the distribution of different forms of organizational power is necessary if we are to understand what any single one of them—say, participation in institutionalized decision-making—is able to achieve. For the aims of this paper, these forms are conceptualized according to their position in the spectrum between “voice” and “exit” described in Hirschman’s classic book (Hirschman, 1970). Equations specifying the ideal formula of university governance should take into account the “exit” potential, which functions as a “dark matter” of influence—invisible but, nevertheless, in many senses outweighing the visible power of voice. I argue that, dependent on distribution of exit potential, structures providing voice may function differently, and their introduction may have different consequences for evolution of the whole organization. As for exit, its potential is dependent on the wider political-economic context in which a given organization exists.

The outcome of this discussion will be listing conditions under which a particular set of such structures and practices, known as “shared governance”, is likely to contribute to the realization of the “mixed government” ideal. The crucial trait of this set, from the point of view of this paper, is delegating preparation of decisions related to university governance to various specialized collegiate bodies, including members of the groups which are immediately affected by these decisions and/or are likely to possess greatest expertise in the area under concern (the latter usually meaning the most distinguished faculty).

For the purposes of developing the argument of this paper we may exploit parallels between personages of this drama and Machiavelli’s prince (rector or president), nobles (distinguished faculty), and people (wider faculty). Monarchies will stand for organizations in which crucial decisions are made by rectors, power coming to them from outside and not from their subjects. Regimes defined as monarchies could be divided into proprietary (if the owner is a private person or corporation), bureaucratized (if it is part of the state bureaucracy supervising education) or communitarian (if trustees representing community are involved), although empirically the distinction is sometimes blurred. Their opposites could be subdivided into democracies (if voting rights are widely institutionalized) and

aristocracies (if there is a close circle, usually of senior professors and distinguished researchers, who make the crucial decisions). The procedure of appointment of the senior administrator, president, or rector is usually a sort of a litmus test showing what kind of structure we observe.

The crucial characteristic of the shared governance system is that ultimate decision-making within the organization rests with the president or rector, whose primary responsibility is before external rather than internal stakeholders—the board of trustees. Returning to parallels between universities and wider polities, shared governance resembles an idealized feudal monarchy more than a city-republic. The political theory of the medieval monarchy (Reynolds, 1994) required that subjects provided and principals accepted counsel, with a good ruling monarch relying on local assemblies of nobility and, occasionally, other estates. While he or she was ultimately responsible before upper powers for the flourishing of the realm (with the Holy Trinity playing the role of the trustees), there was no doubt that only by being responsive to the expressed concerns of the subjects could a monarch prove worthy and a monarchy an example of good governance.

This governance system, dominated by rectors or presidents not elected by their constituencies and not accountable before them, is strikingly undemocratic. Indeed, one of its greatest advocates, Henry Rosovsky, finds it necessary to include a lengthy explanation of why this governance structure is still legitimate (Rosovsky, 1990: 253-258). From a Machiavellian standpoint, it is also under suspicion as prone to evolving into tyranny. Why would presidents accept the advice of committees or be responsive to the needs of their constituencies? When a shared governance system retains characteristics of mixed government in spite of having so much opportunity to evolve into de facto pure monarchy? And what prevents this monarchy from slipping into tyranny, except personal virtues of some higher administrators?

To discover this, we will analyze the Russian case in which deconstruction of democratic governance structures and giving chief administrators more powers indeed resulted in the emergence of monarchies, and what were intended to become shared governance institutions transformed into clienteles of favorites, a governance structure characteristic of pure monarchy. That will shed light on the conditions which prevented such evolution in the US but not in Russia.

The paper starts with discussing applications of Hirschman's theorizing to organizational power, and to academic power in particular. It then analyzes one particular case—the political evolution of Russian academia—in these terms, and gives reasons why in the Russian context introduction of constitutions similar to those existing in the US is likely to result in the emergence of monarchical regimes. It finishes with some very tentative speculations about what truly republican governance structures would look like in this context.¹

“Voice” and “exit” in organizational life

Hirschman's classic defines voice and exit as “reactions to decline” in communities or organizations, including states. “Voice” stands for active protest while “exit” for emigration or stopping consumption. In some settings there is a clear opposition between these extremes. For example, as far as the market is concerned, “exit” stands for shifting to a substitute good while “voice” is the (unlikely) reaction of writing complaints to producers. In other settings, however, there is a whole spectrum of reactions

¹ This paper relies on several empirical studies. One of them is a comparative study of sociological careers and academic labor markets in five countries of which the present author was a part (Sokolov et al, 2015). Another one is a study of governance in Russian universities conducted by a team of the European university's researchers (Kharkhordin and Bychkova, 2016). I also relied on a few lesser research projects (Sokolov and Volokhonsky, 2013; Sokolov 2017).

falling somewhere between active protest and flight. Thus, between voice and exit one finds more or less explicit threats of leaving if one's demands are not met, or boycott, or strike.²

For the aims of this paper, we will exclude pure or irreversible exit, and speak of "voice" and "exit power" as instruments of influencing an organizations' course available to individuals who are staying within it. Ultimately, all forms of voice power arise from the legitimate right to be heard, emerging either from moral obligation or from legal arrangements. In contrast, exit power emerges from the threat of consequences which may follow if one's preferences are not taken into account. To be valid, voice power is to be expressed in conventional forms and it is the influencer's responsibility to see that the voice is cast according to the established rules. Oppositely, exit power may be executed through implicit threats that are never articulated. Overall, voice tends to use formal institutionalized channels, while exit uses informal or unconventional ones. At the far side of the "exit" part of the spectrum we find vague suspicions by the management that, without better treatment, individuals may lose motivation or choose another employer. Such suspicions may not be based on voiced threats; indeed, they may never reach the consciousness of the individuals from which they presumably originate. This is something an employer suspects employees or customers may consider, without firmly knowing they would.

This spectrum of possibilities could be illustrated with academic examples. On the one pole, we find a formal right to participate in decision-making procedures, such as casting a vote for election of the rector. On the other extreme, we have the sort of power students have over their institutions. Without their own knowing, the threat of their losing interest and dropping out or transferring to another university may be the most powerful incentive for academic organizations. Somewhere in between, one may cite recommendations of various committees having only a deliberative voice, on, say, personnel matters, or petitions by campaigners. While the president is not obliged to follow any particular recommendation, there is a general understanding that faculty's or students' opinions should be taken into account, that failing to do so may result in their leaving for other institutions or protests leading to loss of support of some crucial outside groups. Wide spread of such mixed forms of influence, with weakness of pure voice, seem to be a distinctive feature of shared governance.

As follows from what was said above, voice and exit powers have different sources and may be distributed differently among members of an organization; access to them may evolve in totally different directions, as when a radical democratization of university governance and inclusion of students into governing bodies comes hand in hand with increased importance of corporate funding which is disproportionately brought in by a few senior professors. There is an inevitable tendency for voice to convert into exit—as when a group that controls vital resources insists on political representation as a guarantee that these resources are used as it feels necessary—but it is checked by several other tendencies. Voice power at least partly emerges from institutionalized structure, adopted by universities to gain societal legitimacy (Kamens, 1977; Suchman, 1995). As such, it is strongly dependent on societal legitimizing myths and changes with them. Thus, the 1917 socialist revolution in Russia with its radically egalitarian ideology could not but result in the democratization of university governance, including such measures as temporal abolition of scholarly degrees and ranks, which lasted until the mid 1930s.

There is one more reason why such discrepancy seems immanent. As voice power emerges from access to institutionalized models of participation, the repertoire of governance models available in a given society is limited to a few options. In many countries, legitimate models come into academic politics from more conventional politics and cannot be amended. Thus, a principle of "one voter, one vote" is considered sacred, and the idea of tying the number of votes one can cast to one's Hirsch-index would

² Hirschman recognized that such threats have an ambiguous status in his schema. While in some places he limited exit to actual leaving, and treated threats of exit as a variety of voice (e.g. Hirschman, 1970: 43), in others he recognized their hybrid position.

seem bizarre at best.³ This rigidity creates another source of tension between voice and exit: voice is never distributed to fit exit perfectly.

In contrast to voice, exit power in its purest form is determined by the amount of economic or symbolic resources which an individual or division brings in.⁴ The exit power a particular organization faces depends on the economic niche a university occupies. Masses of teachers participate in providing education, but a few academic superstars generate the lion's share of research income and recognition (and, at least in Russia, only one person—the rector—negotiates with the political elites to get some kind of federal program funding). Greater or lesser dependence on one of these sources defines who has the greatest potential to threaten exit, and the variety of sources define how concentrated it will be.

The connection between dependence on resources an individual or group brings in and their exit power is mediated, however, by several intervening variables. Exit power is determined not so much by what an individual can bring in but by what they can take out. What is important for converting resources into exit power is the seriousness of the provider's threat to find another academic or non-academic employer. The seriousness of this threat depends on two variables: the first is the real exit prospects a professor has, and the second is the organization's chances to find a replacement. Paradoxically, the exit power declines alongside general increase in the attractiveness of particular academic employment or of the academic profession in general. During the 1990s economic crisis following the disintegration of the USSR, Russian professors could threaten their deans saying that they would leave their positions and go work in street kiosks, as the wages there were much higher. This threat would not seem credible anymore, especially at top institutions, which have witnessed significant salary increases in the last decade.⁵

In addition to the general attractiveness of academic employment, another set of variables describes chances of finding alternative employment. Faculty exit power goes up with rapid expansion of the academic sector, development of teaching technologies, and labor market mobility. Thus, Russia, with its traditional absence of nationwide labor markets, in many senses experiences a deficit of faculty exit power compared with more mobile countries, such as the US. The general level of societal self-organization, including of professional groups, allows faculty to negotiate collectively, greatly increasing the power potential of their members. Finally, it seems that faculty exit power increases with the size of organization (Sokolov and Volokhonsky, 2013). Size (and diversification) makes the costs of monitoring by central management significantly higher and increases opportunities for shirking or slowing down activities that one finds disagreeable or not rewarding—something which could be called “partial exit”.⁶

As for research elite, in addition to what they have in common with the less distinguished faculty, part of their influence obviously emerges from the degree of income the academic sector derives from them, with the research universities most dependent on scientific superstars. It also depends on the prevailing motivations and culture of students (are students following celebrity professors?). In the monumental *The Academic Revolution* by Jencks and Riesman (2002[1968]), the rise of the powerful academic profession in the US is explained by the emergence of a highly mobile labor market with universities competing for star professors who attracted students and could bring in research funding. Further,

³ Such a vote would have another institutional model—that of business ventures, in which shares, rather than individuals, have votes. For universities in most countries, however, borrowing a model directly from the world of commerce would be highly illegitimate.

⁴ Obviously, in the academic world the distinction between economic and symbolic is blurred. A professor whose presence enhances an institution's reputation as a scientific center and, thus, increases revenues from research-oriented graduated students provides both legitimacy and economic resources.

⁵ An important note here is that “exit power” is always a double-sided relationship. An individual exits if she quits an organization, an organization exits if it fires a worker. As in the case of individuals, the threat to fire would be less credible if it is known that a substitute is not available. The “exit power” is a proxy for relative possibility of finding an alternative partner (Emerson, 1962).

⁶ Note that, counter to what Hirschman said, such exit is obviously not binary. It is gradual and probably multi-dimensional. This makes the power based on it particularly effective: the threat can be carried out without fully destroying potential for further threatening as is the case with terminal exit.

professorial cosmopolitanism, participation in the life of one's discipline, is both an insurance and a leverage against administrators as it increases the probability and negative consequences of an individual's leaving an organization. And the more organized are disciplinary bodies, the more exit potential the research elites have.

If only exit power mattered, dependence on certain combinations of income sources—tuition and teaching subsidies, research funding and sponsorship, or federal patronage, plus the potential each group has to threaten stoppage of their influx—would fully define their intra-organizational political regime. Thus, full dependence on one of these sources would result in the emergence of a variation of the Aristotelian triad of political models—democracy, oligarchy, or tyranny, and their mixture—in a form of mixed governance. But as democratic voting rights are institutionalized independently of distribution of exit power, the correlation is less than perfect.

Evidence of such absence of correlation suggests two kinds of considerations, one of which condemns it, while the other praises it as necessary in certain circumstances. One common theme widely discussed in the political economic literature is inefficiency, which results from discrepancies between contributions to production and ability to participate in redistribution of collective gains. This topic is most often discussed in connection with national taxation, but studies of academic organizations show examples of debates strikingly similar to those usually preceding national elections.

The tension between voice and exit important for research universities—and for national science policy—emerges from the fact that research achievements are distributed extremely unequally among individuals and divisions compared with any feasible schema of distribution of voting rights. When there is no easy formula available to convert an individual's research achievements into a due share of research funding and privileges (and usually there is none), federal research funding might meet the fate it mostly faced in Russian universities until recent reforms started there. As one informant described it:

This research funding . . . was distributed by the faculty expert board. First, each department submitted its collective research project [because the official aim was supporting research collectives], which was, basically, a mixture of plans of its faculty. In this way 95% of funding were distributed—a pure social welfare, each department's project was funded accordingly to the number of people who was at that department. Other 5% was an open competition . . . or maybe even 1%. For that time A., deputy dean for science, invited two external experts—and that was real. So, in fact, there were two expert boards, internal and external, but the first really controlled 99% of the funding.

What was meant to facilitate research was becoming just another salary bonus. Dependence of the university on block grants and its overall research profile in the context of wide institutionalization of voting rights thus inevitably increased tensions between those few who were responsible for their generation and those many who reaped the benefits because they had votes, with these tensions possibly becoming an incentive to decrease investments into research efforts on the part of those who received no material reward for them. Republican writers could easily use this example as an instance of the tendency of a pure democracy, embodied in wide distribution of voice, to result in loss of research vigor on the part of nobles (their achievements are not rewarded) and loss of resources which are distributed equally between individuals of different abilities and research initiatives of different merit (other examples could be found in Rosovsky's treatment of conflict of interests [Rosovsky, 1990: 264-267]).

The shared governance schema, say its advocates, allows remedying the "voice failures". Leaving the final decision with the president, and allowing the latter to negotiate with individuals and divisions on an individual basis, it creates a governance structure able to accommodate disparities in exit power. This points to one of the conditions under which shared governance is functional: much difference must exist in the roles individuals and divisions are playing in securing resources for a given organization, particularly when the nature of these resources is varied and not easily converted in universal currency.

Nevertheless, in addition to arguments for greater correlation between voice and exit, reasons for intentionally engineering discrepancies between them may be given as well. These reasons become particularly important for organizations in which exit power is concentrated in the hands of a particular group and which thus has a tendency to gravitate to one of the pure regime types. In those cases, distribution of voice power might be engineered to strengthen the position of having less exit potential vis-à-vis having more and, thus, balance the overall amount of power in the hand of each agent. Indeed, if the pure-type universities have the most propensity for corruption, creating a counterbalance in the form of giving more voice options to less resourceful groups seems a good strategy. Returning to the shared governance example, allocating a greater role to the president in the Anglo-American universities and stripping the faculty of many formal voting rights may be a reflection of their perceived propensity to evolve into professorial oligarchy and the necessity to tip the balance in favor of central administrators. Their ability to contribute to realization of the mixed government idea, however, depends on faculty's, and particularly distinguished researchers', ability to successfully threaten various sanctions against the abuse of power: voicing protest in media, petitioning the trustees, and, ultimately, resignation. Stripping them of the most compelling forms of voice without increasing their exit potential would have an outcome different to what its engineers might hope for.

The Russian example below illustrates how governance structures spontaneously evolve to the directions determined by distribution of exit power, how they could be amended to empower particular groups, and the consequences of empowering a wrong group.

The Russian story

Necessarily simplifying, one may say that Russian higher education oscillated between aristocratic and monarchical (or, more precisely, bureaucratic) patterns of access to voice before 1917, and between democratic and monarchical after 1917. For nearly all of this period, Russian universities demonstrated a remarkable degree of coercive isomorphism (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). Universities' statutes and charters were highly uniform across territories and different types of institutions.⁷ At any point in time between 1804 and 1917, and later between 1930 and 1991, a model statute has existed and only minimal deviations from it were tolerated. The model statutes changed from time to time (e.g. in 1835, 1863, 1884, and 1905 during the Imperial period). It is customary in the Russian historiography to classify them into "liberal" (1804, 1863, 1905), usually following the general liberalization of political climate, and "conservative" (1835, 1884), with the major difference between them being in the procedures of selecting new rectors and professors. In the conservative statutes, they were appointed by the Ministry. In the liberal ones, they were selected by assemblies of senior professors. Following the 1917 revolution and the fall of the Tsarist regime, professors used the window of opportunities to proclaim their full independence from the ministerial bureaucrats and establish, for a short period of time, purely aristocratic constitutions in which only research merits granted access to governance participation.

The new Soviet power, however, was eager to curtail the power of the mostly bourgeois professoriate. Soviet Russia was probably the first country to institutionalize an inclusive definition of academic collectives, embracing not only senior and junior professors, but also technical personnel and students. All these gained the right to elect and to be elected to the university councils. The older system of professorial chairs (*kafedry*) was abolished. The word *kafedry* for the elementary units of the university structure itself survived, but now it meant something more akin to the US departments—an egalitarian

⁷ In the Russian context, the division between universities and institutions of vocational or professional higher education does not have much sense. The Soviet highly utilitarian understanding of education, presuming that all kinds of higher training should prepare a trainee for a particular professional niche, is still reproduced by the state educational standards which one has to follow to receive a state accreditation. Even the so-called "classical universities" teaching the widest spectrum of basic sciences are different from more specialized institutions not in the nature of training they provide, but in diversity of educational programs they offer, each program being strongly oriented towards a certain vocational niche. The word "university" is used in this paper in a generic sense, as synonymous with "a higher education institution". For recent reviews of the Russian higher education field see (Froumin, Kuzminov and Semyonov, 2013; Yudkevich, 2014).

group of teachers covering a broad discipline (that is why “departments” is used throughout this text).⁸ Finally, most of the senior positions were included into the Party *nomenclatura* lists, which meant that their candidacies were to be agreed on by the Party authorities. That usually meant that assemblies of all workers had to vote for a single candidate handpicked by the regional Party committee; thus, the formal democratic framework was checked by arrangements building universities into state and Party apparatus and making it, in our terms, a monarchy with a democratic ceremonial. In contrast to Party control, the democratic institutional framework survived the fall of the Soviet *nomenclatura* system, and from 1991 Russian universities emerged enormously democratic in their governance (compared, for example, with the US ones), with rectors and members of representative bodies elected by and fully responsible to their internal constituencies.

Due to the overall decrease of state regulation, public universities received more freedom in designing their political structures, and the huge numbers of private schools were initially scarcely regulated at all. Analyzing the statutes of public institutions which were in force between 1993 and 2008 we find high levels of democratization (the exception being military academies) with the senate and the rector everywhere elected by inclusive assemblies consisting of representatives of all categories of university personnel. During the 1990s in most universities, faculties also had the right to elect their deans and department chairs and to hire new professors. While formally the direct election of deans by faculties was nearly universally abolished by 2005 in favor of appointment by academic senates, the general understanding until the end of the 2000s was that senates were just rubber stamps legitimizing the decisions made by the faculties in the course of preliminary “discussion” (*obsuzhdenie*). The same story was repeated at an even lower level: the department chairs were universally elected by respective faculty councils, but in most institutions these elections occurred more or less automatically after the departments voted for their favorites. It was only in exceptional circumstances that their decision could be disregarded.⁹

In agreement with what our previous theorizing suggests, this purely democratic type of government structure easily evolved in universities deriving their revenues from a single economic niche, and the one allowing faculty members to contribute in comparable amounts to organizational well-being. During the early post-Soviet period until approximately 2007, economically, universities were wholly dependent on income from teaching undergraduate students, either coming as state subsidies or as tuitions (in a representative survey of Russian universities in 2006, the median amount of income from these two source was 85% (Sokolov, 2017) As teaching hours were distributed relatively uniformly among individuals, the “one voter, one vote” schema did not entail conflict between the voice allocated to individuals and the exit opportunities they possessed.

In addition to its general legitimacy in the time of overall democratization, increase of inter-organizational democracy might be explained by the increase in the exit power of the faculty. In the context of severe economic crisis, the university management had to invent policies that would retain the personnel. In the absence of financial incentives, it meant other concessions. First, it endorsed wide representation, which was to guarantee that the collective had full control over decision-making. Second, it decentralized the budget to support the private initiative of various divisions. Being unable to pay sufficient salary, university administrators gave full opportunity to divisions to enrich themselves,

⁸ Currently, Russian universities consist of departments (*kafedry*) headed by chairs (*zavedujuschij*) grouped into faculties (*fakul'tety*) headed by deans (*dekany*) or, more recently, institutes (*instituty*) headed by directors (*direktora*). Thus, a sociology faculty could include departments of sociological theory, mathematical methods, comparative sociology, etc.

⁹ An excerpt from an interview is characteristic for decentralized universities: “Well, the [faculty] council always supports the candidates favored by the department. The idea is—you elect them, you live with them. On my memory, there was one case when a guy running for a department chair was turned down . . . but they were consuming alcohol in the daytime with freshmen at his office, so all other departments felt this is a disgrace”. Unless something perceived as a gross moral transgression occurs, the higher bodies abstain from intrusion in what is regarded as the sovereign decision of constituencies.

and they gave them guarantees that the voice of members of other divisions would not be used to appropriate their revenues. A conversion of exit into voice occurred.

Post-Soviet academia allows us an attractive opportunity to study effects of inter-organizational democracy on the evolution of an organization. As might be predicted from both Machiavelli and Blau, democratic universities usually rapidly evolved into mutual-benefit associations mostly aiming at enriching its members. An expectation existed that any income getting into the central university budget, either from tuition or federal funding, should be used in a manner which benefited all faculty equally. In the harder periods of the 1990s that meant using whatever money university earned for paying salaries to its personnel. An administrator who failed to meet this expectation risked losing the next elections. In an important article, Gordon Winston (1999) derives the logic of behavior of universities from their character as non-profit organizations unable to distribute their financial gains through paying dividends. Ironically, this is precisely what post-Soviet universities successfully did, allowing each division (faculty, and in some cases even departments) to pay its extra income as bonuses to professorial stakeholders.¹⁰ The severe economic crisis probably contributed to the speed of this evolution, but one might argue that its roots were largely present in the governance schema itself.

In contrast to what one can imagine, the wholly democratic universities did not exhibit mass political participation. Rather, the regimes existing within them might be described as “electoral patrimonialism”—representation of each subdivision’s interests as well as other tasks were delegated to senior faculty members, who were elected to the formal positions of department heads or deans. Governance was exercised by traditionalistic matriarchs and patriarchs, usually holding full professorships, who were able to win and retain the sympathies of local electorates. All others felt themselves free of necessity to participate in making decisions (in interviews that were often formulated with remarkable straightforwardness: *“I am not being paid for [participation in search of a candidate for a vacancy]. X. is my department head, his salary is two times that of mine, this must be something he does to earn it. I do research in my free time”*). Thus, while theoretically an open competition for all academic positions exists, the usual practice is for a boss to make direct invitations and for department members to approve the handpicked candidate during their discussion.¹¹ An academic from a country with an open labor market structure could evaluate how much time, otherwise spent on sitting in various committees, this system saves; indeed, this professionalized system of university governance allowed the vast majority of faculty to concentrate on tasks receiving immediate rewards.

Democratic procedures could be and sometimes were mobilized, mostly when something regarded as an abuse of traditional power occurred. Department heads or deans were losing elections when they conflicted with their local electorate. Unless such conflicts happened, their positions were understood as more or less perpetual and not requiring rotation. Democratic procedures acquired the status of reality also when a boss would leave his or her position because of age, promotion, or scandal. If the departing candidate left no heir, or if the heir was unpopular among the local electorate, then room for competition opened. This happened most often at the level of the rector’s election. At some universities, the rector’s electoral campaign looked like a textbook example of competitive democracy, with candidates struggling to please their constituencies and acting incumbents losing elections to contenders (Novosibirsk University can be cited as an example).

Obviously, the fairness of contract between the boss and his or her constituencies sometimes could be put in doubt. Bosses could disregard the interests of their subordinates or the organization as a whole and use their position for personal enrichment, self-aggrandizement, or supporting family members. Up to a certain degree, this was tolerated as a fair reward for carrying administrative burdens.¹² Thus, a

¹⁰ The central administration also used to close its eyes on all sorts of informal payments widespread in the university, or to the fact that positions were often filled by someone’s relatives, or even to cases of professors seeking sexual favors from students in exchange for grades—all understood as extra bonuses necessary to compensate for unattractive salaries.

¹¹ It is extremely unusual for a candidate to propose him- or herself without being invited in this fashion.

¹² An additional reason why such inequality was usually tolerated is that, in addition to time costs, casting a vote incurs moral costs. In Russian academia, appearance of total harmony, mutual trust, and universal consensus

rector is usually allowed to pay salaries to those working at the rectorate far exceeding those of other faculty, appoint his spouse or children as vice-rectors, and, in the most infamous cases, embellish on construction or rental contracts. Three years ago, when the Ministry requested published reports of rectors' incomes, some of them turned out to be richer than CEOs at large corporations. Not unexpectedly, academic folklore also reports multiple cases of petty tyranny. Nevertheless, it seems that, generally, such abuses of power in most universities stayed within predictable and tolerable limits.

It is important to note that, in terms of their inter-organizational regimes, many private universities offered a marked contrast to the version of democracy prevailing in public universities. While some of them adopted bylaws imitating those of public universities, a few invented their own constitutions, usually reserving unlimited powers for the rector, who appointed members of senate and trustees and sometimes even was able to stipulate in the bylaws their right to transfer rectorship to the founder's offspring. Private universities were thus the clearest cases of unlimited monarchy or even despotism. Several factors contributed to the persistence of a situation wherein monarchies co-existed with democracies. First, with few notable exceptions, new private universities mostly occupy the very bottom of the prestige scale in Russia. They get the least academically successful students from unprivileged families unable to occupy one of the "budget places" or to pay higher tuition at a more expensive school. The demands on educational quality from this audience are typically quite low, and, until recently, there was only limited regulation of teaching at private schools by the Ministry, so there are no incentives for the university to try to keep more qualified teachers from quitting. The former thus possess little exit power. On the other hand, the private universities employing them had little power over them as well, and it is common for Russian professors to lecture at several institutions at once, doing their major work at a more prestigious public institution and moonlighting at a few private ones (Altbach et al. 2015). Most faculty were thus part-timers who would readily agree with the rector's dictatorship at an institution they anyway regard as a temporary side-job, but not at the university with which they have a stronger affiliation. The relations between private institutions and their faculties are likely to be less stable, with faculties having neither leverage nor motivation to struggle for voice rights.¹³ Finally, most private universities are still run by their creators and first rectors, and are widely regarded as their private enterprise, making their unlimited control over them more legitimate.

What was markedly absent in both patrimonial democracies and autocracies was an aristocratic component. Indeed, research elites have brought too little funding to all but a few private universities to be able to threaten stopping their supply, and the reputation of the universities in the eyes of students depended too little on the reputations of particular professors or even faculties to bother about losing their symbolic capital.¹⁴ Besides, all the factors mentioned above, which allow converting resource dependence into exit power, worked against them. There was little labor market mobility, national disciplinary communities were weak in most disciplines (suffice it to say that in most fields, there were no nationwide disciplinary associations or regular nationwide conferences), and no traditions of self-organization assisted them in negotiating with other intra-university groups. Possibly the only element strengthening their position were requirements towards degrees necessary to promotion to the ranks of associate (docent) and full professors. The degrees are conferred by the All-Russian Attestation

(which is sometimes poetically defined by the untranslatable word "*sobornost*") is widely appreciated. In contrast, the necessity to advance one's private interests or preferences in public is regarded as a disgrace. In fact, most Russian academics value feeling that they are objects of paternalistic or maternalistic care, and that their superiors spare them of potentially embarrassing situations of political negotiations.

¹³ "Exit" is something both an individual and an organization might play. An individual exits if she quits an organization, an organization exits if it fires a worker. An important note here, however, is that the amount of exit power both of them possess over each other is not a zero-sum property; both can have much or little. In the case of private schools, both have little, which produces very unstable relations.

¹⁴ Statistics of prices of higher education and of examination scores necessary to enrol at various programs show that students are choosing, first of all, a given university which occupies a certain position in the hierarchy of prestige, and, second, a specialty. Very little variation remains unexplained when we include these two variables into regression equations. In other words, it is questionable if such a thing as the reputation of a specific faculty or department exists in the eyes of Russian students.

Committee located in Moscow and, since the 2000s, require a number of publications in periodicals from a list compiled by the Committee. As many faculty members needed promotion, they supported allocating money to causes which might facilitate their defenses, for example, launching a journal at a particular university mostly in order to provide the local faculty with publication spaces. Individuals were valued who had a nationwide research profile, served as Committee experts, and could edit such a journal or guarantee its promotion onto the Committee's list. With this exception, research stars had little leverage in negotiation with their organizations and no special voice powers; as a result, even money coming from federal block grants and earmarked for research was unlikely to reach them.

With the exception of some very untypical institutions, this was the situation at Russian universities from the late 1990s to approximately 2006. Since 2006-2007 the Ministry for education and science has initiated a series of reforms aimed at increasing the quality of teaching and boosting university scholars' research productivity. The major performance indicator that government officials have chosen for themselves since 2012 is the position of Russian universities in international rankings. To improve standing in rankings, universities have had to demonstrate drastic increases in their number of international research publications, international students, patents and R&D funding. This could be achieved only through concentration of limited resources on centers of excellence, both within the university system as a whole and within a specific university. Such concentration was precisely what the existence of intra-university democracy prevented. Rectors serving their faculties were extremely unlikely to use research funding in a way that would most efficiently increase research output, as that would mean losing many votes at the next elections. From the point of view of ministerial bureaucrats, that was an obvious "voice failure".

Changing the existing democratic political regimes was regarded as one of the major tasks for recent reforms of the higher education sector. In 2011 the Ministry initiated a series of reforms aimed at replacing democratic elections by bureaucratic orders of command. Thus, universities wishing to enter the "5/100" federal program¹⁵ were required to present a roadmap of "management optimization" that would list the abolition of direct elections of rectors. Similarly, in the same wave of "optimization", traditional faculties with elected deans are currently being replaced with institutes headed by appointed directors, and a system of traditional departments in some universities is being replaced by a new system of educational programs with appointed heads. In 2015, after first-tier universities sold their liberties and accepted the external control, the second- and third-tier public universities were commanded to follow their example and to abolish democratic elections of rectors.

There were some protests but only insignificant ones (the most important happened at the provincial Birobidzhan University). This lack of resistance could be explained by the general change of political climate in the country (Forrat, 2015). Another, probably not less important, reason why the transition from democratic to bureaucratic regime occurred smoothly was that the increase of rectors' immunity to local voice coincided with the importance of having a rector approved of by state stakeholders. The influx of government money largely depended on personal trust towards top university administrators within the political elites. Allocation of student places funded from the federal budget or participation in various federal target programs (*tselevyje programmy*) depends on rectors' ability to negotiate with respective federal ministries, while getting subsidies for campus renovations or acquiring new buildings often depends on their ability to convince regional administrations. In such a context, the personal profile of a rector in the eyes of their bureaucratic counterparts is one of a university's major assets; it was just good strategy for faculties to let upper bureaucrats appoint somebody they really wanted to see as the head of the university.

The university political regimes thus attained a strongly monarchical component. The newly appointed rectors could make unpopular decisions without the risk of losing the next elections. Consolidating their power, however, remained problematic. After the loss of voice, faculties still could use partial exit. The rectors found themselves vis-à-vis huge structures they could not run without the assistance of the

¹⁵ A program aimed at concentrating federal funding at 15 universities, at least five of which are to enter the top 100 of international university rankings.

traditional bosses who alone could organize the teaching process or recruit new personnel. Moreover, in most universities, important responsibilities remained with the academic senates.

The governance arrangement most universities have arrived at by now could be described as “shared”, albeit not in the sense characteristic of American universities. Positions of traditional democratic structures remained strong in all matters educational: members of elected academic senates were still responsible for educational programs and promotions of teaching personnel, and department chairs for curriculum and recruitment. Distribution of research money, however, was withdrawn from their responsibility and delegated to parallel bodies. These bodies are comprised of individuals invited or appointed personally by the rector. They often meet behind closed doors and have only an advisory vote on distribution of research funds. The movement occurring simultaneously in a few schools competing for the status of “leading research university” is to relocate research activities into separate structures such as institutes for advanced studies isolated from the rest of the university and governed in a different regime. Such solutions were strongly encouraged by the Ministry.

The first results of the experiment, however, did not quite match the expectations. An important study conducted at three of the top Russian research universities demonstrated that the various groups of advisors rectors surrounded themselves with have not evolved spontaneously into analogues of workable committees (Kharkhordin and Bychkova, 2016). Higher administrators complained of not knowing whom to invite to them and not knowing where to get necessary advice on whom to invite; distinguished researchers, particularly younger ones, avoided invitations, and those volunteering to participate were mostly traditional academic bosses whom the administrators suspected of inclination to lobby the interests of their clientele. In all three universities studied, all important decisions on research and strategic development matters were described as made exclusively by the rector; getting personal access, winning the rector’s trust, and securing his enthusiasm were the major conditions of receiving resources for developing one’s projects within the university. While in all the three cases studied the rector was described as accessible and supportive, the overall system reminds one of a pure-type absolute monarchy rather than any form of mixed government, and shared governance evolved into something like a suite of court favorites. No stable communication channels emerged, apart from the ability to contact the rector at specified hours. And while the rectors of the three universities analyzed, as well as of some other Russian research institutes, were able to contribute to their development, others achieved less spectacular results. Some rectors provoked constant internal strife resulting in the flight of personnel and were repeatedly accused of tyranny (Saint Petersburg University rector Kropachev is an infamous example), some enriched themselves beyond any measure and entered Forbes’ lists of billionaires (Saint Petersburg Mining University rector Litvinenko), and still others ended their terms in jail on accusations of corruption (former rector Ivanets of Far Eastern Federal University). As the mixed government theory leads us to expect, the goodness of a monarchy wholly depends on the personal qualities of the autocrat.

Conclusion: When governance structures work?

Why, after the democratic frameworks were abolished, did Russian universities evolve into monarchies rather than some form of mixed government? And why, in spite of the earnest attempts of at least some rectors to establish collegiate bodies to which to delegate some of their authority have such attempts not prevented this evolution? One answer is that there was simply not enough time for the new governance framework to be fully understood and embraced, and the question of institutionalizing it is essentially a question of organizational learning. Another explanation—and the one which is possibly the first to come to mind—is that the lack of tradition of self-organization and the much-lamented deficit of civic-mindedness plays a role here. According to this explanation, cultural factors are fully responsible for the fact that would-be nobles preferred to seek personal favors from rectors, rather than attempting to exercise influence over organizational decision-making through collegiate bodies.

Without denying the validity of both of these explanations, it seems that the considerations we have started with allow another account. The shared governance framework in its original form might be out of place in the case in question, as it essentially protects central administrators from too much influence

by the faculty, and, in the case of research universities—the standing of which depends of prominence of their professors—prevents them from evolving into oligarchies. For such a governance structure to become functional, however, one needs a system in which senior professors command much exit power, and this, in turn, means an environment with many universities competing for star professors, students aiming to receive high-quality education, and disciplinary communities vibrant.

With all these conditions absent, unconditionally strengthening the president empowered a wrong agent. While various formal performance indicators, based on bibliometrics in which the Ministry measured the success of research universities, probably increased the exit power of leading researchers and research groups, they obviously have not done so to a degree necessary to create much potential of turning universities into oligarchies.¹⁶ In fact, they were not strong enough to guarantee “nobles” any responsiveness by higher administrators. Some rectors, particularly those who believe that their political connections make them immune to the Ministry’s disapproval, felt free to disregard complaints by research elites completely.

Ironically, such powerlessness turns into a self-fulfilling prophecy. As Hirschman saw, casting voice is costly. Those who believe that their voice is not supported by sanctions that will penalize ignoring it may not bother to cast it at all. Alternatively, they may choose other ways of voicing their demands, the ones they believe are more efficient in the present situation. Various unofficial working groups created by the rector had no influence except one based on the rector’s good will. They had no realistic chance to appeal either to ministerial bureaucrats (while some attempts were made, hardly any case of a rector’s dismissal after a conflict with faculty is recorded), or to wider publics, which demonstrated remarkable indifference to university affairs. In this situation, their members could not expect to gain much through participation in the work of collegiate bodies. Whatever demands they had toward university administrators, it was much more efficient to voice them through personal contacts to which the more progressive rectors made themselves available. Relations between administrators and leading scholars gravitated to a highly personal model, with rectors’ advisors competing with each other for their princes’ favors.

Borrowing inspiration from republican thinkers, one might conclude that, if anything, to contribute to creating mixed government, governance frameworks in Russia should have empowered the research elites, creating bodies comprised of leading researchers, selecting them independent of any intra-university group, and making their collective voice decisive in certain crucial respects, rather than advisory. Otherwise, the general feeling that the rector ultimately decides makes addressing the rector directly a much better way of getting things done than spending time persuading other committee members, and the shared governance fails because those to whom participation is proposed see no sense in having their share.¹⁷

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¹⁶ The Ministry discussed the necessity of creating an open academic labor market, however, they usually stopped short of implementing measures which could really facilitate exit. Thus, most funding schemas used for allocating research grants exclude transfer of research moneys to an institution different from the one at which the recipient of the grant worked at the moment when the application was submitted.

¹⁷ Shared governance in Russia possibly had much more potential in governing educational affairs, in which exit power of lower-level units is significant and administrators really need some leverage against traditional bosses and their clienteles. Interestingly, it seems that the committee system evolved spontaneously in this sphere, with a committee coordinating educational efforts of different divisions (*uchebno-metodicheskoe objedinenie*) often referred to in interviews as the most important collegiate body of a university.

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