

СОВРЕМЕННЫЕ СОЦИАЛЬНЫЕ И СОЦИАЛЬНО-ПСИХОЛОГИЧЕСКИЕ ИССЛЕДОВАНИЯ

WOMEN AND RUSSIAN MODERNIZATION

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This article analyzes Russian women and their ability to embrace Western educational and business practices following the fall of the Soviet Union. As recently as the 1980s, women managers in Russia were rare. Today, a total of 42 percent of senior management posts in Russia are held by women. Unlike women in Western nations who tend to frame their emerging role in ideological terms, Russian women enrolled in academic programs that gave them valuable skills for the market economy. The paper also shows that Russian women are adapting to these changes more rapidly than men.

This study explores the considerable changes that have taken place in business education as Russia has adapted to the needs of a world economy. The Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree is now popular across Russia and is the source of the new business management concepts that explain the data. Russians are now far more likely to speak English, to work in a service-related job, to hold personal investment portfolios and to be able to work outside of Russia. These are massive changes compared to the years before 1991. New business curricula have played a role in making these changes happen.

Key words: education, market economy, business curricula, master of business administration (MBA), Peace Corps, women, Russian women

Since the fall of the Soviet system, enormous change has swept across Russia. These changes include the decline of Soviet military and political power, the breakup of the Soviet states and the topsy-turvy dismantling of the Soviet economic system. Historians enjoy the benefit of hindsight. Much of the earlier scholarship dealing with the 1990's concerned the question of whether Russia had shifted toward Western practices at all. For example, *How Russia Became A Market Economy* by Anders Aslund draws the conclusion that Russia had moved to a market economy. Aslund looked at the aftermath of the coup in the autumn of 1991 and reviewed events to the beginning of 1995. He took into account Gorbachev's legacy, the formation of the reform program, the dissolution of the USSR and the consequences of this for the ruble, the privatization policy adopted,

and the macroeconomic stabilization measures implemented. These events are the starting point for Russia moving into a new era. Among these is the development of a new economic system for Russia. More accurately with the fall of the Soviet system, Russia found itself thrust into a world market economy for which it was poorly prepared.

A market economy, which is the clear, dominant force in the world's economy, requires products and services to be made in a cost effective manner and to be of high quality. This means companies compete to lead the market. For Russia over the last two decades, this means that government control of the economy no longer determines a company's success. Russian companies have had to demonstrate their competence by matching their products and services against companies in an open market environment. This paper derives from research for a recent doctoral dissertation [5]. The research shows three major factors that have shaped Russia's emergence as a free market contender.

The first major factor is the rapid ***growth of English across the country***.

English is the preferred international language of business. The efforts of the Peace Corps and aid from the US government clearly moved acceptance of English forward in Russia during the late Soviet period. Russia's embrace of English appears from a historical point of view far slower than China's, which is on target to have the world's largest number of English speakers. With wide knowledge of English, any nation will find it easier to participate in the transfer of goods and services, financial exchange and general business interaction that is required in the market economy.

Education Leads the Reforms. The second major change is the expansion of new business skills that support a free market economy. Before the fall of the Soviet Union, Russia and the other Soviet states did not follow Western educational standards. Bachelor's and Master's degrees, for example, were not awarded. While the Soviet Union encompassed many great minds and supported much learning, it eschewed Western degrees and academic practices. In particular, business students were discouraged from adopting Western techniques. Professors advocated the principles of Marxism that marked previous decades of Russian history

During the 1990s and beyond, Russian higher education began to adopt Western degrees and to expand its relationships with Western universities. These new approaches derived from colleges and universities in the west that had been training business managers for a free market environment. Such skills as strategic planning and solving business problems for competitive success have long served as the staple in western universities.

From a small entrance onto the scene, the Master's of Business Administration degree (MBA) began to pick up steam and then grew rapidly. With the wide knowledge of English — the first factor in the transformation — the rapid growth of new business concepts was spurred by the plethora of texts written in English. In fact, students and a group of younger Instructors move freely in the English-language milieu surrounding the new curricular content.

As significant as these changes in the content and teaching techniques of business education were, educational reform was underway for several decades. As pointed out by Shcherbakova, the number of institutions providing primary professional education rose from 3,257 in 1970 to 4,045 in 1980, while the number of people enrolled in them rose, respectively, from 1.406 million to 1.947 million [10].

Within the influx of students from a new generation, studying business that reflects western practices represents a critical change. The Master of Business Administration (MBA) programs are experiencing a boom; they caught fire after 1990-2000. As shown in this study, the seeds were in place earlier. New programs feature numerous business subjects such as accounting, finance, marketing and human resources, together with English language instruction and English language texts.

Russian Women to Adopt These New Business Concepts. The acceptance of western business concepts is a fascinating development. The third critical factor in this metamorphosis is the tendency of Russian women to adopt these new business concepts rapidly and to move into positions in the market economy more forcefully than men.

While the content of business education in Russia was shifting, there is no indication that women might find this especially attractive. Nor was the central government at the ready to steer younger Russians into new academic pursuits. At international conferences, the authors have been asked about the advance of education in Russia back to the nineteenth century and its possible role in recent developments. While widely discussed, advances in women's education were a struggle in prior centuries. Part of the reason for this is that through the end of the nineteenth century, not many Russians were attaining secondary or university educations. According to the 1897 Russian census, only 104,000 people in Russia had attended or were attending universities. This represented 0.1% of the population. The vast majority were the children of nobles and officials. From the beginning of the twentieth century, the number of Russians and the social status of those advancing their education expanded. In 1904, 5,000,000 Russian children attended primary school. Of that total, 3,000,000 were in government-run schools and 2,000,000 were in schools run by the Orthodox Church. This represented only 27 percent of all children in Russia. About 1,000,000 students were in secondary schools [4]. These statistics diverge sharply from the rapid growth of higher education in recent decades.

Among the studies that look at the education of women in earlier times is Sophia Satina, *Education of Women in Pre-revolutionary Russia* [6]. Suffice it to say that the distant past is indeed far from Post-Soviet developments. By the late Twentieth Century many educational opportunities were available for all Russians, men and women. Other scholars have looked at more recent gender restructuring and the role of women in the Post-Soviet economy. These include Gail Kligman's *Women and the Negotiation of Identity in Post-Communist Eastern Europe*, which offers a broad view of women in Eastern Europe after the fall of Communism [6]. Also of note is Monica S. Fong, *The Role of Women in Rebuilding the Russian Economy*, published by the World Bank [2]. These studies also show that various international organizations were gaining access to Russia and looking at opportunities. Sarah Ashwin's *Gender, State, and Society in Soviet and Post-Soviet Russia* looks at several interesting topics including the increase in female breadwinners and the apparent loss of status for Russian men [9]. As one would expect, generational differences prove sharp in Post-Communist Russia. Ulrike Ziemer's *Ethnic Belonging, Gender, and Youth Cultural Practices in Contemporary Russia* looked at the subject of youth identity, a strong indicator of how younger generations of Russians are adapting to the new economic reality [12].

A number of scholars have also looked at *perestroika* as a possible window into the advance of Russian women. These include G.W. Lapidus' *Gender and restructuring: the*

impact of perestroika and its aftermath on Soviet women [7]. In fact, the well-known *perestroika* opened doors for women.

Of greater significance are the sharp differences in attitudes about labor and the role of women across recent generations. Studies in this vein include Jeffrey W. Hahn and Igor Logvinenko *Generational Differences in Russian Attitudes towards Democracy and the Economy* [3]. Combined with the statistical information available, such reviews provide an interesting panorama of how the position of women in the Russian economy underwent a metamorphosis. Younger Russians are far more open to the advance of women in business.

Women Take Advantage of Education In Current Business Practices. Of all the factors reviewed in this research paper, higher education stands out as the most significant. The link between the advances of women in Russian business and changes in Russian higher education are clear. Russians have always loved education; the Soviet Union placed a premium on education. Most education was “free” and the general level of education compared to other nations was respectable across the decades of the twentieth century. The emphasis, of course, was on engineering and science, which contributed to Russia’s superpower status. All of this offers a good foundation for a population willing to educate itself, to latch onto new skills and concepts so as to compete in a new economy.

Statistics show that the general level of education has continued to rise in Russia (as well as in all developed nations). In addition, the number of educational institutions is increasing. Since the fall of the Soviet Union, the number of colleges has risen and enrollments are up. Specifically, the number of American-style business management programs has risen rapidly and many younger Russians are enrolling in these programs.

Old Ways Prove a Barrier to Wealth. Observers must grapple with the idea that advances in business education at a time when the once all-powerful central government was in repose relate to a rise in self interest and a desire for greater personal wealth. Indeed, the strong evidence shows that Russians are far more concerned about saving money, saving for retirement and building up a store of personal wealth. Such attitudes stand sharply apart from earlier decades in Russia.

A good deal of resistance characterizes recent decades. Resistance to change can be seen in two ways. Resistance subsided because the majority embraced the pursuit of wealth. Holding back took on the image of being a barrier to the new wealth offered by changing economic times. Change also involved the use of English and the acceptance of Western educational practices. Curiously, resistance to democracy in Russia is standing up better than resistance to personal wealth. This means that events in Russia in the time period of this study (1990 to the present) offer interesting historical insights into how change actually occurs.

Historians will note that somewhat similar patterns took place in the former East Germany after its inclusion under the Germany umbrella and are taking place through the Newly Independent States as well as China, which are improving their infrastructure and welcoming foreign investment. Personal wealth proves to be a powerful motivator. Historians may expect similar patterns when the situations shift in Cuba and North Korea.

How Far Did Women Advance? The intention of the research project was to look at higher education in Russia and to trace the international relationships of faculty members

through conferences and sabbaticals where new ideas may be freely exchanged. These factors proved significant. The sharp differences between Russian men and women in the post Communist period proved an unexpected discovery. The backdrop of these dramatic events in Russia over more than two decades is quite significant and full of historical change — the new market economy, the expansion of English, the growth of private education and the widespread acceptance of western business concepts. These factors help to show exactly how the results came about.

Did Russian women really embrace these Western concepts and propel themselves into business management? Through the 1980s, women managers in Russia were rare. By 2014, a total of 42% of senior management posts in Russia were held by women, which represents a massive change. By comparison to the US, Western Europe and other developed countries, the change has also been rapid. Consider this report by the Grant Thornton international consultancy, which said 89% of the Russian enterprises it has interviewed in a survey of 6,900 businesses in 26 countries employed women in senior management. In this survey Russia ranked first, the Philippines second with 85% and the United States third with 75%. From a rarity just before the time frame of this dissertation to first place in the world is indeed remarkable.

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ЖЕНЩИНЫ В МОДЕРНИЗИРУЮЩЕЙСЯ РОССИИ

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В статье анализируются возможности российских женщин освоить западные образовательные и бизнес-технологии после распада Советского Союза. Совсем недавно, в 1980-х гг., женщины-руководители в России были редкостью. В настоящее время в общей сложности 42% высоких руководящих должностей в России занимают женщины. В отличие от женщин в западных странах, которые стремятся к возрастанию их роли в идеологическом плане, российские женщины вовлекаются в академические образовательные программы, которые дают им ценные навыки для рыночной экономики. В статье отмечается, что российские женщины быстрее адаптируются к экономическим изменениям, чем мужчины.

В исследовании рассмотрены значительные изменения, которые произошли в российском бизнес-образовании в процессе адаптации России к потребностям мировой экономики. Степень магистра делового администрирования (МВА) сейчас является очень популярной в России и является ресурсом освоения новых концепций управления в бизнесе. Граждане России в настоящее время гораздо больше склонны говорить по-английски, работать в сфере обслуживания, делать собственные инвестиции и работать за пределами России. Автор считает, что новые образовательные программы в сфере бизнеса сыграли свою немалую роль в этих изменениях.

Ключевые слова: образование, рыночная экономика, бизнес образование, магистр делового администрирования (МВА), Корпус мира, женщины, российские женщины