

Working Time and Role Strains of Research and Teaching Staff in a Modern Russian University

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Abstract. The article touches upon the changes in roles within the academic profession in Russia arising from the education and science reform. The analysis is made through the example of the National Research University Higher School of Economics (HSE). Both

quantitative and qualitative data is used to suggest a typology of faculties based on their work time allocation. The typology includes five types of faculties: teacher researchers, teachers, researchers, “universal soldiers”, and experts. Each type displays different levels of satisfaction with their work time budget: those who do a lot of teaching and administrative work tend to be less satisfied. This can be explained by the changes in the system of faculty certification in Russia and by how academic staff respond to those changes. Interview results are used to highlight the typical work time allocation problems faced by faculties. These include a low degree of freedom to manage one’s own work time, the lack of boundary in work-life balance, excessive teaching load, an increase in unscheduled tasks, and the problem of delegating workloads which require high research and management skills.

Keywords: work time allocation, academic profession, education and science reform, job satisfaction, types of academic professionalism.

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The academic systems of many countries are undergoing huge changes induced by a combination of factors: the spread of e-learning, the digitalization of library databases, welfare commercialization, and the growing competitive power of the nonacademic sector as a produc-

er of new knowledge and provider of educational services¹. Additional pressure on the Russian academic system is exerted by the rapid transition from the Soviet model to international standards and by the mission of engaging actively in the global education market competition imposed by the state [Kuzminov, Semenov, Froumin 2013]. In general, structural tension is growing and affecting various sectors of higher education in Russia, including the top universities.

Despite a number of initiatives undertaken to reform the existing structure of academic positions, the Russian scientific system inherits many technical features from the Soviet model, adjusting them empirically to the newly-emerging challenges. For instance, the academic degree system is oriented at teaching and industry-specific applied research objectives rather than satisfying the requirement to provide a flexible role distribution in the context of academic state capitalism [Deem 2001], in which Russian universities find themselves today. Behind the established nominations and organizational hierarchies, new roles of academic professionals are evolving to adjust to the challenges of the modern world, while the old ones are losing their former significance [Balatsky 2014].

New roles and even types of academic professionalism are not always considered by the existing organizational and scientific hierarchies and can only be identified indirectly by using unique techniques and approaches, which we attempt to do in this article. We assume that allocation of work time budgets among academic professionals builds a typology of such professionals based on the activities they engage in, thus providing a new perspective on the division of academic labor. Of course, the approach has several important limitations and requires some reservations to be made in terms of methodology and content. First, the methods of survey and interview that we use limit data validity to some extent as they are based on retrospective and subjective evaluations. The diary method would work best here but it involves some organizational and financial complications [Gruzdev, Terentev 2015]. Second, time budgets do not always fully reflect the types of activities that professionals engage in or their individual rhythm and predictability at work. Working in research and teaching has always implied a vague schedule and a high level of task uncertainty in specific periods of time, except for fixed teaching and office hours. Even academic staff themselves cannot always visualize the structure of their work time budgets or describe it clearly. However, in general and along with other methods, academic staff labor budgeting reveals essential transformations of professional roles in this area.

This study uses research and teaching staff work time budgeting to analyze the academic profession transformation in the context of

¹ The factors affecting today's higher education systems are described in [Colini 2016:35].

the education and science reform in modern Russia through the example of the National Research University Higher School of Economics (HSE). Using the results of a quantitative online survey and a series of interviews with teachers and researchers, we try to answer the following questions: how research and teaching staff allocate their time among different types of professional activities; how satisfied they are with the structure of their work time budgets; which problems in this area they encounter; and how they would prefer to spend their work time².

1. Teachers' Time Budgets as a Subject of Sociological Research

The growing workload of academic professionals, together with the lack of time, began to arouse the interest of researchers in the 1990s when the first signs of the managerial turn in higher education appeared. In 1992, Stephen M. Jordan and Daniel T. Layzell found out that the workload of academic faculties in Arizona universities and colleges amounted to 60 hours/week, with half of this time accounting for teaching [Jordan, Layzell 1992]. A consistent increase in workload was also observed in Germany [Teichler 1994], Great Britain [Johnes, Taylor 1990] and other countries [Altbach 1995] around the same time.

In reporting an increase in the workload of academic professionals, researchers demonstrate how work time budgets differ across teacher categories and how the structure of specific activities is changing. Thus, Jane Jacobs concludes, based on her study, that provided that the chances of staying “on the professional periphery” are inversely proportional to time resources that academic staff dedicate to work, the amount of time spent on work becomes the most important factor of intraprofessional differentiation [Jacobs, 2004]. Jeffrey F. Milem, Joseph B. Berger and Eric L. Dey use the results of a national teacher survey to report a considerable change in the structure of time budgets of US university teachers (except for two-year colleges) between 1972 and 1992: the proportion of time allocated for research increased, contrary to the proportion of time spent on teaching and out-of-class communication with students [Milem, Berger, Dey 2000].

Similar changes have been reported by some Russian studies. In particular, some shifts in the allocation of Russian teachers' work time were observed in 1992–2012, when the proportion of time devoted to research increased considerably [Sivak, Yudkevich 2013].

It is critical how changes in the workload of university researchers and teachers affect the quality of their work. University administrators regard increasing the workload of academic professionals as a source of productivity growth, but these expectations can hardly be considered justified, as workload represents a complex system of interrelat-

² Research on time budgets was actively used in Soviet sociology and even applied to analyzing the labor of researchers and highly-qualified professionals [Patrushev 1984; Fomin 1967].

ed aspects of teaching, organizational work, research and expert activities [Soliman, Soliman 1997]. Measuring the quality of academic professionals' work is another problem, as the very notion of "quality" has no univocal operationalization and can be interpreted depending on the demands of specific education system players: university management is interested in increasing the number of publications in top-rated journals, students in good teaching, and department administrators in fulfilling the administrative workload [Harvey, Green 1993; Green 1994]. When a specific indicator of quality prevails in assessing the performance of academic professionals, there is a risk of imbalance in work time and effort distribution, as professionals themselves tend to prioritize this prevailing criterion.

A more recent study [Bozeman, Gaughan 2011] investigates the importance of teachers' work time budget structure for their job satisfaction. Although the balance of hours devoted to research, teaching and other types of activities does not prove to be a significant factor of job satisfaction for the selected sample in this case, the authors point out the huge potential of considering the structure of time budget in further research on job satisfaction.

When assessing work time budgets, it is necessary to make allowance for the differences between academic disciplines [Clark 2011]. The major blocks of academic load—teaching and research—can be either in conflict or in relative agreement with each other [Fairweather, Rhoads 1995; Middaugh 1996]. Mary F. Fox [Fox 1992] shows that in economics, psychology, political science and sociology, teaching and research do not complement each other but rather form conflicting components in the workload of academic professionals. For quite some time already, publications and research have been recognized as having more weight than teaching in academic labor assessment [Diamond 1993], which results in a deterioration of teaching quality.

In a study conducted at the University of Michigan, Kathryn M. Moore and Philip D. Gardner demonstrated that most academic professionals spend 35% of their time on teaching, 26% on research, and the rest on other types of activities [Moore, Gardner 1992]. Meanwhile, the majority of respondents would like to devote more time to research and less to teaching and administrative work. James S. Fairweather and Robert A. Rhoads reveal differences between professors and assistants in terms of how their time is distributed between teaching and other types of workload: teaching takes up more than half of assistants' work time [Fairweather, Rhoads 1995].

Professional academic activities are growing more and more stressful: the image of a relaxed workday of a university teacher or researcher recedes into the past under the pressure of market-oriented management in higher education and science. Jagdish K. Dua demonstrates that 82% of faculties deal with stress in the workplace, with overtime work being one of the main sources of stress in this professional category [Dua 1994].

We have already touched upon work time budgeting for academic professionals in modern Russia [Abramov, Gruzdev, Terentev 2015]. Based on a survey of teachers and researchers conducted in a Russian university, we suggested classifying academic staff depending on the structure of their work time budgets. Eight categories of faculty were identified: teachers; teachers engaging in research; teachers engaging in administrative work; researchers; administrators; teachers-researchers-administrators; teachers-researchers; and teachers-administrators. We demonstrated that these categories differed in terms of professional priorities, assessment of working conditions, understanding of strategic goals of university development, and attitude toward publication activity promotion policies. The proposed classification was abstract and analytical in nature. To identify the categories, we used mathematical logic and enumerated acceptable workload combinations; next, we searched for relevant observation clusters and compared them by a number of parameters.

In this article, we proceed from a different logic and analyze empirical data instead, which explains differences in the resulting typologies. Besides, we focus more on issues like satisfaction of faculty with their work time budgets and the challenges they face in distributing their time resources among different types of professional activities. To provide a more comprehensive picture, we resort to mixed methods research, using survey results in combination with academic staff interviews.

2. Method and Data

The empirical basis of research included the results of a survey of Moscow HSE campus academic staff and semi-structured (in-depth) interviews with the faculty.

The survey of academic staff was conducted online by the HSE Center for Institutional Research in November–December 2016: the link to the online questionnaire was sent out to corporate and personal mailboxes of all university employees having their base rates in teaching or research positions (regardless of whether they combine the two activities or not). Participation in the survey was voluntary. This article presents the results of analysis which did not cover data on employees holding administrative positions in the HSE (in addition to teaching and/or research ones), as the structure of their work time budgets is conditioned largely by formal employment characteristics (a high proportion of administrative workload). Seven hundred and fifty-six employees agreed to participate in the survey, which accounts for 32% of the Moscow HSE campus faculty not employed in administrative positions. The composition of the resulting sample does not differ essentially from the total population (the differences do not exceed 5%) in such parameters as category, sex, age, academic degree, department (for teachers), or years worked at the HSE. The structure of the

Table 1. **The structure of the sample selected from the HSE faculty (%)**, N=756

Sex	Female	56
	Male	44
Age	25 and younger	14
	26–30	20
	31–40	24
	41–50	16
	51–60	15
	60 and older	12
Academic degree	None	40
	Candidate of Sciences/PhD	44
	Doctor of Sciences	16
Employee category	Researcher	21
	Teacher	59
	Teacher researcher	20

selected sample broken down by sex, age, academic degree, and category is presented in Table 1.

We carried out fifteen semi-structured (in-depth) interviews with HSE academic staff engaged in teaching and research activities in humanities, social and economic sciences in September–November 2016. Five respondents were employed as teachers only, four as researchers only, and six combined teaching with research. The respondents belonged to different age cohorts. The sample included men (6) and well as women (9). The interviews focused on the following: responsibilities and time budget for various operating tasks, subjective work time budgeting preferences, work time budget management, employer’s control of work time, attitude toward reforms in science and education and their influence on work time budgets. Some interviews were conducted face to face (11), and some with the help of dedicated online communication facilities (4). All the interviews were recorded using a voice recorder. On average, each interview took about 40 minutes.

3. Academic Staff Work Time Budgeting

The questionnaire for HSE academic staff focused on work time budgeting and satisfaction with the existing distribution of work time among different types of professional activities. The questionnaire asked respondents to specify the proportion of time (%) they had

Table 2. **Work time budgets of the HSE academic staff in 2016**

Questionnaire item: If all the time you spent on professional activities in 2016 is taken as 100%, what will be the rough proportion of time that you devoted to each of the activities listed below? Please only take your activities at the HSE into account. N=756

	Mean	25th percentile	Median	75th percentile
Teaching and academic advising	46	25	50	70
Research	37	15	30	50
Administrative work	9	0	5	10
Expert work and other types of professional activities	8	0	5	10

spent on the following types of professional activities in 2016: teaching and academic advising; research; administrative work; expert work and other types of activities. Only work activities at the HSE counted. The sum of all values was supposed to make 100%. Answers that did not satisfy this requirement were excluded from the analysis.

The survey results demonstrate that academic staff spend on average half (46%) of their work time on teaching, over one third (37%) on research, and 9% and 8% on administrative and expert work, respectively (Table 2). Half of the respondents spend less than 30% of their work time on research activities while a quarter of them spend less than 15% on this. Half of the academic staff spend more than half of their work time (over 50%) on teaching, and while a quarter of them spend over 70% on this. Only a quarter of the employees report that administrative and expert work accounts for more than 10% in the overall structure of their work time budget; half of the respondents spend less than 5% of their time on these types of activities.

The selected sample of academic staff is not homogeneous in terms of the structure of their work time budgets. *K*-means clustering allows us to identify five relevant categories of HSE employees (Table 3), which we conventionally code as teacher researchers, teachers, researchers, “universal soldiers”, and experts. We will dwell on each of the categories below.

Teacher researchers represent the most widespread category in the selected sample of academic staff (41%). Professionals in this category distribute their time almost evenly between teaching and research, showing little or no engagement in administrative or expert work.

Teachers devote most of their work time to teaching and academic advising, while research, administrative and expert activities remain outside their routine. This category is pretty widespread as well, accounting for nearly one third of the sample.

Table 3. **Classification of academic staff depending on the structure of their work time budgets*** (%), N=756

	Teacher researchers	Teachers	Researchers	"Universal soldiers"	Experts
Proportion of time devoted to teaching and academic advising	45	80	84	24	13
Proportion of time devoted to research	40	10	7	24	37
Proportion of time devoted to administrative work	7	5	4	43	5
Proportion of time devoted to expert work and other types of professional activities	8	5	5	8	46
Sampling fraction	41	33	18	8	5

* Based on the results of k-mean clustering with five clusters

Researchers spend nearly all of their work time on research (field studies, publications, conferences), paying little attention to other types of professional activities. They account for 18% of the sample.

The last two categories—*"universal soldiers"* and *experts*—are represented much more poorly in the sample (8% and 5%, respectively). They have specific work time budget distribution patterns. *"Universal soldiers"*, unlike other categories of academic staff, devote a considerable amount of their time to administrative work, while at the same time engaging in teaching and research quite actively. Therefore, they *"fight on three fronts"*, which is where the name of the category comes from. *Experts* differ from the rest of the categories in that they spend an essential proportion of their time on expert and enlightening activities, thus acting as academic conductors in the public sphere. They mostly engage in research, not teaching.

4. Academic Staff Satisfaction with the Structure of Work Time Budget and the Perceptions of What It Should Be Like

During the survey, academic staff were asked to assess how satisfied they were at the time of the survey with the distribution of their work time among different types of professional activities at the HSE. Assessment was based on a four-point scale with values ranging from *"Absolutely dissatisfied"* to *"Absolutely satisfied"* and the *"I don't know"* option available.

Over one third of the respondents reported being absolutely dissatisfied (8%) or rather dissatisfied (27%) with how their work time was distributed, while over half (61%) were found to be satisfied with the existing structure of their work time budgets, and 4% had no answer. We revealed a statistically significant correlation between satisfaction with the current work time budget structure and employee

Table 4. Correlation between the satisfaction with the existing work time distribution and employee category determined based on the work time budget structure (%)*

Questionnaire item: Please state how satisfied you are with how your work time is now distributed among different types of professional activities at the HSE

	Absolutely dissatisfied	Rather dissatisfied	Rather satisfied	Absolutely satisfied	I don't know
Teacher researchers (N=273)	6	28	49	12	5
Teachers (N=250)	11	30	38	16	5
Researchers (N=135)	3	10	38	47	2
"Universal soldiers" (N=58)	14	54	24	3	5
Experts (N=36)	6	19	58	17	0

* χ^2 test statistic significant at $p < 0.000$ ($\chi^2 = 131.260$, $df = 16$).

category determined based on such structure (Table 4). Researchers (85%) and experts (75%) showed the highest level of satisfaction with the structure of their work time budgets, while the lowest (27%) was observed among "universal soldiers". The satisfaction rates among teacher researchers and teachers were 61% and 54%, respectively. As we can see, an increase in the proportion of work time spent on teaching and administrative work has negative effects on the satisfaction of faculty with their work time distribution.

Faculty members who reported being dissatisfied with the distribution of their work time among different types of professional activities at the HSE at the moment of the survey were additionally asked to describe how they would prefer their work time to be distributed. Most of them would like to increase the proportion of time spent on research (89%), and only 8% would like to reduce the amount of time devoted to this activity (Table 5). Three quarters of the dissatisfied would like to reduce the proportion of time spent on teaching and academic advising (75%), and only 17% would like to engage more in teaching. Half of the respondents would like to spend less time on administrative work, and 29% would prefer to devote more time to expert work. The desire of academic staff to devote more time to research and reduce the amount of time spent on teaching and administrative work proceeds naturally from the recent transformations in the faculty performance assessment system. As with other countries, Russia has got used to the formalized faculty performance assessment system based on the quality and quantity of scientific publications and participation in research projects. Teaching is perceived as an indispensable yet not career-boosting activity. The increased attention of university management to faculty research results in growing indica-

Table 5. Academic staff perceptions of how the structure of their work time budgets should be changed,

Questionnaire item: If you could choose how much time you spend on specific professional activities at the HSE, what proportion of time would you devote to each? N=257

Would like to...	Time spent on...			
	teaching and academic advising	research	administrative work	expert work and other types of professional activities
Increase	17	89	9	29
Leave as it is	8	3	41	47
Reduce	75	8	50	24

tors of publication activity; however, it also turns teaching into an involuntary activity that legitimates the position held but does not bring any credits in the performance assessment system.

Statistically significant differences in the desire to change the distribution of time among different professional activities were revealed between the identified academic staff categories (Table 6). Only three categories (teacher researchers, teachers, and “universal soldiers”) provided the amount of answers sufficient for a comparison. Those who would like to reduce the proportion of work time spent on teaching and academic advising were found mostly among teachers: almost all of them (93%) would like to engage less in teaching. Meanwhile, 96% of them would prefer to devote more time to research activities. The same patterns are observed among teacher researchers, of whom 83% would like to spend less time on teaching and 87% would increase the amount of time devoted to research. These categories of academic staff differ in their attitude toward expert work: the proportion of those who would like to engage in expert activities is slightly higher among teachers (35%) than among teacher researchers. Most “universal soldiers” would like to increase the proportion of time devoted to research (97%), yet only 44% of them would like to spend less time on teaching. Their attitudes toward expert work are inconsistent: nearly one quarter of them would like to increase the amount of work spent on this type of professional activity, while the same proportion would like to reduce it.

5. Why Academic Staff are Not Satisfied with the Distribution of their Work Time

The survey results show that the HSE faculty is not satisfied with the existing structure of their work time budgets because of teaching overloads and excessive administrative work as well as the need to engage in three or more activities at the same time. The dissatisfaction of academic staff with the distribution of their work time are ex-

Table 6. **The desire to change the structure of one's work time budget, depending on faculty category**

Questionnaire item: If you could choose how much time to spend on specific types of professional activities at the HSE, which proportion of your work time would you devote to each?

	Proportion of time spent on...											
	teaching and academic advising*			research**			administrative work***			expert work and other types of professional activities****		
	Increase	Leave as it is	Reduce	Increase	Leave as it is	Reduce	Increase	Leave as it is	Reduce	Increase	Leave as it is	Reduce
Teacher researchers (N=93)	11	6	83	87	4	9	2	46	52	25	46	29
Teachers (N=101)	5	2	93	96	2	2	17	51	32	35	52	13
Researchers (N=16)	56	31	13	38	0	62	12	44	44	44	31	25
"Universal soldiers" (N=39)	44	15	41	95	5	0	3	3	94	23	49	28
Experts (N=8)	50	13	37	100	0	0	0	32	68	13	0	87

χ^2 test statistic significance at:

* $p < 0,000$ ($\chi^2 = 85.304$, $df = 8$);

** $p < 0,000$ ($\chi^2 = 77.380$, $df = 8$);

*** $p < 0,000$ ($\chi^2 = 55.292$, $df = 8$);

**** $p < 0,000$ ($\chi^2 = 29.230$, $df = 8$).

plained in the interviews, where the faculty members assessed retrospectively their labor effort in different types of professional activities and talked about how they used their work time.

The major finding derived from the analysis results is that faculty members experiencing different combinations of workload in their professional activities may define the same labor organization parameters as problems. Therefore, we can suggest that dissatisfaction with the structure of work time budget has not so much to do with the compulsory nature of specific activities as it has with the specific conditions of the working environment on the one hand, and the established standards of the professional academic staff culture in respect of a number of activities on the other.

5.1. Low degree of freedom in using work time

Among other problems, the respondents mentioned a low degree of freedom in designing the set of tasks and setting deadlines. Regardless of workload combinations, the teaching routine corresponds less and less to the ideas of vocation and liberal profession and tends to resemble an "ordinary" job such as a typing clerk, as teachers report. This transformation in the very nature of professional activity mani-

fest itself in the increasing amount of tasks, the value of which is not shared by employees, and the disregard of academic staff's capabilities when setting deadlines. This results in a role conflict mentioned by some respondents: duties of a regular performer, requiring timely task accomplishment, come into conflict with the professional's position, requiring a highly conscientious analysis and sometimes a deadline extension for the sake of quality:

"We don't truly have what they call academic freedoms today. This can be clearly seen in time distribution. We are bothered by one-time service tasks, and the more global aspects are involved as well, which include research, when deadlines are set from above and you can only respond to that. This is a fact that is not always easy to live with. Not because of laziness but because this work actually requires more time. My current workday is an ordinary routine, maybe even a factory-type one." (teacher researcher, male, 55 years old)

Judging from the interview materials, we can suggest that academic staff categories classified as researchers and experts based on their workload combinations mainly associate limitations of freedom in using their work time with analytical work and grant reporting deadlines. In this case, dissatisfaction with workload distribution stems from the imbalance between free scientific inquiry and formal accomplishment of research projects in favor of the latter. Faculty categories that spend a lot of time on teaching and treat teaching as their top priority find freedom limitations in the need to reorient themselves to research. This is not about any reluctance to do research; rather, this is about the need to intensify research activities while reserving a considerable amount of time for teaching, as well as about the specific attitude to research "as to the sacred cow"³. Research requires a great deal of effort, which undermines the balance of time budget.

"For me, it (sources of dissatisfaction.—Authors) is deadlines only. There is no chance of extending them. It is simply a fact, a task that you accomplish. I would like to devote a lot of time to preparing a publication, studying other publications to delve into a subject. Ideally, I would probably divide the time 50/50 between reporting and field activities. Now, unfortunately, it works on a residual basis, and this is terrible, in my opinion. I am not satisfied with that." (researcher, female, 35 years old)

"I cannot say that I am not into research at all, but teaching is my top priority. However, everyone has to do research now, otherwise

³ The metaphor used by a respondent.

you'll just be given the sack. For example, I don't really like writing articles, but I have to do this. This is reporting." (teacher researcher, male, 28 years old)

5.2. No boundary between work and life

A large proportion of faculty duties are difficult to quantify. Research activities, which include preparing publications, keeping oneself up-to-date in the relevant professional field, and out-of-class teaching-related activities, such as development of study materials and presentations, form a "continuous time", which has a poorly demarcated boundary with personal life. Many respondents specify this poorly demarcated boundary as one of the reasons for their dissatisfaction with how much time they spend on their professional activities.

"There's no boundary at all (between work and life.—Authors). This summer, there wasn't a moment I was totally "switched off" from work. I believe this is wrong, and my next summer is going to be arranged differently." (teacher researcher, male, 28 years)

5.3. Overload teaching

Burton R. Clark called teaching overloads one of the systemic problems of the American academic profession in the 1990s [Clark 1997]. This observation can be rightfully applied to Russia as well, now that Russian universities have entered the race for rankings and adopted the research performance system based on publication activity indexes. Dissatisfaction with the structure of one's work time budget because of teaching overloads is typical of both faculty members who do spend most of their time on teaching and those who don't. The boundary where teaching load becomes excessive, as perceived by academic staff, is moving, being determined by a number of factors including professional goals, attitude towards teaching, and the quality of courses delivered.

"Teaching is like a fire that needs mending all the time to keep it burning. It took a great deal of time, because it was the most urgent and pressing need at the moment. I was thinking: "I'm having a seminar tomorrow, so I need to prepare this now, elaborate these texts, solve these problems, double-check, discuss—and the research task will wait for two days. So, research was constantly moved aside because teaching occupied all the time available." (teacher researcher, female, 28 years old)

"This (teaching.—Authors) is my profession, so these standards alone don't scare me. It is OK to have 700–800 teaching hours, I used to have over 1,000. But teaching for the same 700–800 hours when you are also supposed to prepare several publications during the year? These are not just publications, after all—you're supposed to elaborate and to conduct a study. So, this is becoming a problem." (teacher, female, 60 years old).

5.4. Unscheduled tasks Last-minute tasks represent an important factor in the dissatisfaction of academic staff engaged in various extents of administrative or expert work, bringing stress and uncertainty into the labor process and producing rush jobs and workathons. This interview data explains the fact established by the survey: faculty categories with considerable amounts of administrative and expert workloads demonstrate relatively high proportions of employees dissatisfied with their work time budgets. As judged by the interviews, the problem lies not so much in a reluctance to engage in these activities as it does in relevant planning challenges.

“I probably get most enervated when something comes up out of the blue. They tell me in the morning that I should do something by the evening... emergency and aggressive deadlines, given that I had totally different plans for the day. And so I have to reschedule everything in the most unpredictable way. Because it happens quite often, it is really uncomfortable.” (researcher, female, 35 years old).

5.5. The problem of delegation Uneven distribution of tasks is another reason for the dissatisfaction of academic staff with their work time budgets which was revealed in the interviews. The problem is not only in the number of tasks but also in their content: young employees are charged comparatively more with routine jobs, while experienced faculty members reputed among their colleagues find themselves overloaded with tasks requiring a high level of responsibility. The latter feel the consequences of what can be called the other side of ‘the Matthew effect’ [Batygin 2001]: uneven distribution of advantages in the form of research projects results in overloads associated with the need to accomplish those projects on time. The respondents report that excessive load is explained in this case by difficulties with delegating tasks that require a high level of research and management competencies.

“It seems to me that revising the work done by subordinate employees is a very unpleasant kind of work. I don’t know if it can be eliminated, but this revision, this redoing of what others are supposed to do—this is awful.” (researcher, female, 30 years old).

“A huge number of projects are charged on a very small proportion of people. This is kind of weird, because the institute is large, but projects are always led and managed by the same people. How come? This is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, these people have proved themselves to have the competencies necessary to take responsibility. On the other hand, their overload is tremendous.” (researcher, male, 25 years old).

6. Conclusion Analysis of the empirical data obtained from a leading Russian university reveals role strains and uneven distribution of labor in the Russian academic system. Formal hierarchies of academic ranks and degrees reflect only partially the complex organization of the modern academic community, which adjusts to organizational and content changes in various ways, including by rethinking time management techniques and seeking to harmonize different types of workload. Categories of academic professionals identified during the analysis (teacher researchers, teachers, researchers, “universal soldiers”, and experts) represent traditional professional roles in the science and higher education sector, which reflect the existing division of labor: some engage more in teaching, some in research, some in administrative work, and others are often invited as public intellectuals by the mass media. However, such division of labor is brought into question today: for instance, the bureaucratic attention is focused on research and publication activities, thus decreasing the prestige of teaching, which means that academic professionals are willing to reduce the workload of this type in their work time budget.

Administrative work at the university can be regarded as an opportunity to strengthen one’s position and improve career prospects, while at the same time it often inhibits full participation in research projects. In addition, faculty members who spend a lot of time on administrative work try to avoid the status of “administrators”, which harms their reputation as academic professionals. Meanwhile, one can’t ignore the fact that science and education reforms in Russia have increased administrative pressure in this sphere as well as the role and influence of bureaucracy in universities, necessitating empirical research on the professionalization of this academic staff category.

Important results of the research conducted include not only explication of proportions of different professional activities in the time budgets of faculty members but also the identification of qualitative characteristics of work time and these professional activities that have a great impact on their perception by the performer. Our study demonstrates that the university labor process is characterized by a growing ambiguity caused by tasks assigned unexpectedly, which are often bureaucratic in nature and divert faculty effort and attention from the main activity. According to the respondents, such work patterns cause stress and alienation from the professional activity, which is not perceived as a vocation anymore but rather as an ordinary desk job. In our view, such a transformation in the perception of one’s professional role may have far-reaching effects. Going deep into solving truly complex scientific problems as well as informal communication with colleagues and students recede into the background of academic staff’s working priorities. Instead, the effort is focused on solving the tactical problems of complying with the existing bureaucratic requirements and achieving the performance indicators imposed from above [Safronov 2016].

The university case analyzed in this article is probably not indicative of the changes in the work time budgets of academic professionals all over Russia. However, similar trends may be observed in other educational and research institutions that respond actively to institutional change, e. g. in universities participating in national university support programs (Project 5–100, the National Research University Competition, etc.). Besides, if other Russian universities and research centers develop isomorphically and look to the practices applied by leading institutions in one way or another, the identified patterns of using work time budgets by academic professionals can become typical of the whole higher education and science system.

Similar trends of alienation from academic labor can be observed in other countries as well. Independent researchers regard them as a disturbing phenomenon, which undermines the ethos of research and will ultimately deprive universities of their competitive edge in the production of new authentic knowledge. Indeed, the corporate culture of universities resembles that of business structures more and more, whereas the most proactive business structures use elements of the classical academic community to promote the production of innovative knowledge.

On the whole, we believe that classification of academic professionals based on work time budgeting may become a promising perspective in research on changes in Russian science and higher education.

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