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Editorial

Teachers' issues in the countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia—this is the theme of the main section of this Moscow issue of Voprosy obrazovaniya/ Educational Studies. On this occasion we have invited Gita Steiner-Khamsi from Columbia University (USA) and Elena Lenskaya from the Moscow school of Social and Economic Sciences as Guest Editors. We thought it would be interesting for our readers to gain two different perspectives on the same issue—from a Russian and an international expert's point of view. We gave our Guest Editors the freedom to choose the authors and research topics for the thematic section. As a result we have a selection of works by Russian and international authors as well as by young Russian researchers who are currently working in different American universities. The subject of their studies –the theme they all have in common—is the current developments in the education systems in the CIS countries. We are aware of the debatable nature of many of the materials published in this thematic section, and see it as part of the mission of the journal that was originally intended to provide room for expressing different opinions on a very wide range of issues in the area of education. We are looking forward to getting feedback from our readers.

Letter from Guest Editors to Readers

Dear Readers,

This special issue comprises a collection of articles devoted to teaching challenges in several countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. The studies published in this issue are written by authors based in the region as well as by researchers from other European countries and the United States.

We were happy to accept the invitation to serve as editors of this issue, as we believe the future of reforms in this region hinges on the active participation of teachers. It matters a great deal whether they themselves believe in the importance of improving the quality of education, enhancing their own competencies, and ameliorating their status as teachers. There is much to be gained from analyses of the current situation of teachers in schools of the region, produced by scholars based both inside and outside the region.

Two articles, written by Russian authors, focus on the results of TALIS-2013, in which Russia took formal part in for the first time. Marina Pinskaya, Alena Ponomareva and Sergey Kosaretsky discuss the problems of training young teachers for school work and the challenges they face. The authors present compelling findings of how young teachers suffer from the lack of active learning methods and

group-based training programs. This shortcoming negatively affects young teachers' attitudes to the profession and to the school they work in. Naturally, these problems have always been recognized, but the study supports the general sentiment with empirical data. The study shows that mentoring of young teachers is purely formal and support for them is insufficient in Russian schools. In the other article, Elena Lenskaya and Irina Brun analyze whether Russian school principals are adequately prepared for exerting "transformational leadership." The study reveals that there is no pre-employment training for principals, their workload leaves them with almost no opportunity for creative activities, and nearly half of the respondents report being unable to delegate powers and that they prefer managing their educational institution on their own. Apparently, the fundamental educational reforms that took place over the past few years had little or no impact on the attitudes of newly appointed principals and others who had to pass strict certification criteria. Both articles purposefully refer to experiences of "league leaders" or educational systems with the highest student achievements, given the tremendous interest of education authorities and possibly the readers of this journal, to understand teacher and staffing policy in countries of this region.

The article by Azerbaijani authors Ulviya Mikayilova and Elmina Kazymzade investigate similar problems in that they analyze the readiness of teachers to implement the new education standards. The study used a comprehensive sample and provides evidence that teachers continue to face challenges at work, despite the assertion of the government to provide support. The authors conclude that teacher education will not become effective unless the teacher becomes the one makingthe decisions on their professional development and unless a professional community is created to help them. Studies associated with transformational change, the need for instructional leadership, or the huge value in creating a "community of learners" among teachers have greatly resonated in the region. The important study by Mikayilova and Kazymzade is therefore likely to draw attention from researchers and practitioners from other countries of the region.

The article by Elena Aydarova from the University of Arizona (U.S.) is dedicated to the case of Russia. It defines the problem of teacher retention in a situation where mass media shape an extremely negative image of school. Unsurprisingly, teachers in many schools indeed feel humiliated, disempowered and without any rights. The author discovers a compelling paradox: the amount of clinical practice has been increased, of which the Russian reformers insisted for a long time. However, extensive clinical practice in present-day school with its off-the-scale bureaucracy and meaningless standards forced on teachers has made students flee from the profession in the middle of their studies, ultimately increasing teacher turnover. It is important to bear in mind that the study focuses on a group of prospective teachers of English, who, compared to teachers of other subjects,

have excellent employment opportunities in the labor market. However, even if the other teachers cannot afford to lose their prospects for employment, the negative image of school will definitely affect their attitudes and mitigate their desire and enthusiasm to work in school. The authors proposes that greater attention should be given to the school environment, assessed differently by different stakeholders including the media.

In an interesting study, William Smith and Anna Persson investigate teacher attrition, in particular the flight of teachers from disadvantaged schools in Latvia, Estonia and Georgia. They see the root of the problem in the exclusion of teachers from the decision making, their insufficient autonomy and dependent position due to the absence of a permanent contract, if not in their lack of rights. In this respect, the article resonates with both the work of the Azerbaijani authors and that of Olena Aydarova. The research was largely based on OECD's Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) in which the number of children from disadvantaged families is exclusively obtained through reports from school teachers and principals; some of whom, in their reports, are possiblyraising the socio-economic status of the parents of their school community just to give socially desirable responses. It becomes obvious when we compare the proportion of disadvantaged schools in Estonia and Latvia to that of Georgia with its lower standard of living. It turns out that the proportion is lower in Georgia, according to the teachers' answers, and it cannot but cause concerns.

In many countries of the region, teacher remuneration systems have undergone significant transformations, taking into account the excessive teaching loads that teachers take on to boost their low income. The assignment of additional teaching hours has a negative impact both on the quality of life of the individual teacher and on the quality of education, especially if the additional hours are taught in subjects for which the teacher has not obtained any formal qualification. Steiner-Khamsi explores the key features of the stavka system which remunerates teachers based on the hours that they teach and includes additional supplements for specific tasks (classroom teacher, grading notebooks, after school classes, etc.). The stavka system, also known as the "teaching load" system, is—according to Steiner-Khamsi—structurally different from a weekly workload system, in which teachers are paid based on 36–40 hours of work. In other words, the stavka system tends to encourage not only part-time teaching positions (half a stavka or weekly workload, or less) but also excessive teaching loads (more than 1.5 stavkas) with detrimental effects on the quality of instruction. Her article focuses on two countries of the region—Kyrgyzstan and Mongolia—that attempted to move away from the teaching load system (stavka system) and instead established a new remuneration system that takes into account the statutory weekly workload. The reforms in the two countries were meant to remedy

some of the negative side-effects of the stavka system, notably, the low base salary, fragmentation, unpredictability and last but not least the practice of assigning excessive teaching loads.

Raisa Belyavina's article also deals with teacher remuneration. She investigates the implementation of the incentive supplements which the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic introduced as part of the fundamental salary reform in 2011. The so-called "stimulus fund" represents 10 percent of a school's salary fund and is supposed to incentivize effective teaching by rewarding high-performing teachers with a bonus payment. The schools are in charge of determining the award criteria and selecting the awardees for the bonus payments. The study draws on a comprehensive study, funded by UNICEF Kyrgyzstan, which included among other data collection instruments a survey of 217 teachers. First, the study finds that schools use a broad array of award criteria, of which only a few directly measure effective teaching. Second, the intention of the stimulus fund policy to pay big bonuses to only high-performing teachers does not apply in practice. The school committees, in charge of disbursing the stimulus fund, tend to pay a small supplement to all teachers at the school with a few additional bonus payments for select teachers. Third, Belyavina finds that schools use the stimulus fund to offset some of the salary cuts that older teachers had to endure due to the elimination of teacher ranks (known as teacher "categories") and the upgrading of teacher qualifications, implemented in the 2011 salary reform. The monetization of teacher qualifications benefitted mostly younger teachers because they completed a Master's or Bachelor's degree and therefore were entitled to a higher base salary. Belyavina's study is fascinating because it examines how schools modify a reform over the course of its implementation, or, to use the title of one of Larry Cuban's well-known articles, How Schools Change Reforms. In a different vein, Steiner-Khamsi reminds us that, "Every fundamental reform, perhaps most visibly in the area of salary reform, implies a re-stratification process." This is a useful and important implication that applies especially to the last two articles, written by Steiner-Khamsi and by Belyavina, and will definitely resonate with most readers.

This is our first experience of creating a themed collection of articles by Russian and foreign researchers. We believe that the dialogue it has produced is something we have worked for for a long time, and we will be happy to keep working in this direction, provided that our readers share our enthusiasm.

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Teach or Perish:

The Stavka System and its Impact on the Quality of Instruction

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Abstract. The post-Soviet teacher salary system is referred to as a "teaching load" (*stavka*) system, because the number of teaching hours accounts for the wide range of teachers' income. This article discusses the challenges of the *stavka* system, presents a few changes and modifications over time, and provides examples of salary reforms of two countries: the 2007 teacher salary reform in Mongolia and the 2011 reform in Kyrgyzstan. The UNICEF Kyrgyzstan study identifies six negative consequences of the high correlation between the salary and the number of hours taught: vulnerability of teachers, micromanagement of teachers, overcrowding of schools, vacancies as placeholders or "strategic vacancies", excessive teaching loads, the redistribution of teaching hours to non-specialists. The Government of Mongolia successfully replaced the teaching load system with a workload system in 2007. In Kyrgyzstan, the re-stratification process led to a revolt of those who lost in the wake of the reform. Within a period of two years only, they ensured that the *stavka*-system was, with a few exceptions, put back in place.

Keywords: teachers, teacher salary systems, the teaching load (stavka), the weekly workload system, educational reforms.

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To this day, several governments of, or with close ties to, the former Soviet Union continue to struggle with how to reform the teacher salary system that they inherited from their communist past. It is a system that rewards those teachers who manage to secure the greatest number of additional teaching hours, even if these hours are in school subjects for which the teacher does not hold an adequate qualification. The post-Soviet teacher salary system is referred to as a "teaching load" (*stavka*) system, because the number of teaching hours accounts for the wide range in teachers' incomes. This system is diametrically opposed to the weekly workload system of OECD countries, where the income of all employees, including that of teachers is based on 36–40 hours of work per week,; of which 22–29 hours are set aside for teaching.

This article discusses the challenges of the *stavka* system, presents some of the changes and modifications over time, and provides

examples of the salary reforms of two countries: the 2007 teacher salary reform in Mongolia and the 2011 reform in Kyrgyzstan. The Government of Mongolia successfully replaced the teaching load system with a workload system in 2007. Like any other state employee, teachers in Mongolia work for 40 hours per week of which they are expected to teach for 19 hours and use the remaining hours for lesson planning, grading, meeting with students, parents, and fellow teachers, and for performing administrative tasks [UNICEF Mongolia, 2012]. The Government of the Kyrgyz Republic attempted to do the same in 2011 but ultimately failed to abandon the *stavka* system: within a period of only two years, it reverted back to a remuneration system that heavily relied on teaching hours. In the end, the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic succumbed to pressure from the municipal government of Bishkek and the Teachers Union by lifting the ceiling for permissible working hours from 32 hours (decree number 19, January 2011) to 49 hours (decree number 373, June 2013), a ceiling that was not only higher than before the 2011 reform but curiously also exceeded the limit prescribed in the Kyrgyz Labor Law [UNICEF Kyrgyzstan, 2014].

1. Empirical Studies on the Situation of Teachers

A brief review of the literature, followed by a few paragraphs on the database used for this article, may be in order here. There are numerous studies on the situation of teachers, published in Russian as well as in the national languages of the Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CEECIS) region. In addition, there are a few empirical studies, written in English, which are readily accessible to researchers based outside the region. The following does not represent a comprehensive overview of important research carried out on the teacher remuneration system in the CEECIS region but rather illustrates in an exemplary manner the type of empirical studies that have been conducted on the topic.

Two studies are important for understanding the history and the political context of the Soviet salary system: the landmark study on the origins of the remuneration system, entitled *Financing Soviet Schools* and written by the eminent scholar of comparative education Harold J. Noah [1966] and the book *An Economic History of the USSR: 1917–1991* [Nove, 1993]. Alec Nove's book covers the entire period of Soviet rule and ends with a chapter on Gorbachev's failed attempt in 1987 to introduce a more differentiated salary system that would take into account the broad range of skill levels, notably between manual workers and highly trained specialists.

In addition to these economic analyses, there is a remarkable body of research that uses qualitative and ethnographic methods to capture the situation of teachers in the first twenty years after the political changes of 1991. The studies carried out by Alan de Young, Sarfaroz Niyazov, Duishon Shamatov, and Iveta Silova very effectively capture the early and late transition period in the CEECIS region. Synopses of

their work are assembled in the volume *Globalization at the Margins: Education and Postsocialist Transformations in Central Asia,* edited by Iveta Silova [2010].

The third group of scholars has, over the past few years, conducted dissertation research on the situation of teachers in the region. It is expected that their dissertations will be published as books, journal articles, or book chapters over the next few years. Examples of outstanding dissertation research include the work of Olena Aydovera (Michigan State University, 2015), Nurbek Teleshaliyev (Cambridge University, 2016), Magda Nutsa Kobakhidze [2016] and three dissertations completed at Teachers College, Columbia University: Erin Weeks-Earp [2015], Simon Janashia [2016], Raisa Belyavina (expected 2017).

Finally, there is a plethora of commissioned research on the topic produced by national and international experts, funded by governments, international organizations, or non-governmental organizations. Precisely because it is commonly acknowledged that the teacher salary is too low, the national education budget limited, and the challenges with fixing the system nearly insurmountable, this fourth group of analytical work on the *krizis pedagogicheskogo kadra* (English: crisis of the pedagogical cadre) has been in great demand over the past few years.

It is noticeable that the two genres of literature—academic research (the first three groups) and commissioned policy analysis (the fourth group)—do not relate to each other even though, more often than not, the same authors produce both types of research. In my own writing on the topic, I attempt to bridge the divide between foundational research in academe and commissioned research in policy studies. When writing for an academic audience, I draw on the *stavka* studies to demonstrate the existence of structurally different remuneration systems across regions. I have made it my intellectual project to understand exactly why traveling reforms resonate at a particular time and under certain circumstances (focus on reception), and how these imported global education policies, "best practices" or broadly defined international standards are subsequently locally adapted, implemented, or re-contextualized (focus on translation). I noticed that uncritical policy borrowing from one type of system to another incompatible system makes imported reforms such as the global teacher accountability reform, reflected in performance-based promotion, teacher incentive schemes or teacher score cards, unsustainable and short-lived. Typically, such imported reforms constitute mere add-ons to the existing remuneration system in the form of pilot projects and they only last for the duration of external funding. The governments neither scale up the donor-driven reform at national level nor do they institutionalize them (see [Steiner-Khamsi, Stolpe 2006, Steiner-Khamsi, 2012, Steiner-Khamsi, 2015]). In the technical reports on teacher remuneration that I have produced—

with funding from the World Bank, UNICEF, and USAID— for over a dozen governments, I attempt to understand the "logic" of the fragmented (post-) communist salary structure, examine its anomaly and malfunctions in these capitalist times, and document the various attempts that governments of the region tried in order to save, remedy or replace the *stavka* system. In this article, I draw mainly on the World Bank-funded studies in Mongolia [World Bank, 2006] and Tajikistan [Steiner-Khamsi, 2007] as well as on the UNICEF-funded studies in Mongolia [UNICEF Mongolia, 2012], Kyrgyzstan [UNICEF Kyrgyzstan, 2009, 2014] and the comparative study in six countries of the CEECIS region [UNICEF CEECIS, 2011].

2. The Fundamental Divide between Teacher Salary Systems

In 2005 the World Bank commissioned a compelling study on teacher salaries in Mongolia as part of the Public Expenditure Tracking Survey Mongolia [World Bank, 2006]. We were surprised to find the extent to which the salary structure was fragmented, that is, composed of a low base-salary and supplemented with all kinds of additional items such as additional teaching hours, a stipend for serving as class teacher, a stipend for grading student notebooks, a stipend for managing a lab at school, etc. Since these stipends or supplements were not always paid in full but rather depended on the arbitrary assessment of the deputy school director on whether the teacher really properly graded student notebooks (the use of red ink was at the time mandatory to make supervision easier), effectively managed the class (supplementary deductions were made for students that came late to class or cut class), and took care of the lab (salary supplement deductions were made for broken equipment), the teachers were not able to predict their monthly take-home salary.

The study on the post-Soviet salary structure was later on replicated in Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, and in a six-country study of the Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States region (see [Steiner-Khamsi, 2007; UNICEF CEECIS, 2011; UNICEF Kyrgyzstan, 2009, 2014; UNICEF Mongolia 2012]). These studies confirmed the post-Soviet legacy in the region: all educational systems used to have a teaching load system *(*Russian: *stavka)* in place in which additional teaching hours helped boost the low base salary of teachers. In the school year 2007/2008, the salaries of teachers in the post-Soviet region (EU accession countries excluded) ranged from US$47 to US$215 per month. The relative salary was not only low but also below the national wage average, ranging from 53% to 92% of what others with a similar level of education earned in the respective country. As a result, teachers at school level fought over who gets assigned additional teaching hours, regardless of whether these additional hours were in their own subjects for which they were trained or whether they merely substitute for teachers of other subjects that were on study leave, maternity leave, or otherwise absent.

Figure 1. **Total Pay of Teachers in Tajikistan**

Base Salary	Supplements	Allowances
• Fixed Base Salary • Salary Depending on Teaching Load	• Class Teacher • Grading Student Notebooks • Supplement/Coefficient by Rank • In total: 3-12 Supplements	• Transportation • Housing • Plot of Land/Garden • Discount on Utilities etc.

Bonuses	Social Benefits	Other Income
• Annual (performance based) • Event-specific (e.g., olympiads) • Special occasions (Teachers Day, New Year, etc.)	• Pension • Sick leave, maternity leave • Scholarships • etc.	• Private tutoring • Fees for special classes • inofficial contributions by parents

Source: [UNICEF CEECIS, 2011].

Figure 1 illustrates the complex salary structure in the post-socialist region, using Tajikistan as a case. Since the publication of the study, the salary structure in Tajikistan has undergone a reform[1] which has integrated the various supplements (over ten supplements) into two supplements (class teacherand notebook checking).

The fragmented teacher salary in Tajikistan is indicative of the teacher salary structure in the CEECIS region where the base salary is low, the benefits for civil servants attractive, and the dependence on additional income great, notably in the form of teaching additional hours but also in the form of private tutoring, fees for special classes, or unofficial contributions by parents. The fragmented salary structure is a legacy of the communist past where all workers were supposed to be paid equally and, depending on the actual work, would receive professional supplements. At that time all workers were considered public servants and received, from today's perspective, generous "social benefits" including free housing and a plot of land. Today, the markers of public sector jobs, notably generous allowances and attractive social benefits, are barely visible and are associated with a bygone era.

There is a broad consensus among experts in and on the region that the *stavka* system has a disastrous impact on teaching and learning. Primarily, it is incomprehensible why there is such a resistance to change. It is important to bear in mind that some administrators in the region favor the teaching load to the workload

[1] See [Steiner-Khamsi, 2007].

Figure 2. **The Fundamental Divide between Salary Systems**

TEACHING LOAD SYSTEM	WORK LOAD SYSTEM
• Flexibility/abuse for both the education sector and the teacher: Teachers teach from 4 to 40+ hours	• The profile of the teacher and the teacher standards are clearly defined. Teachers work either part time or full time.
• The role of the teacher is reducted to teaching and all other activities (including pedagogical ones) are paid extra	• The role of the teacher implies teaching and all activites related to education. The teacher is typically expected to stay at school beyond the actual teaching hours.
• Unpredictable income, Small base salary for 1 teaching load,. Teachers take on additional teaching hours and/or take on additional job(s) in or outside the school.	• Predictable income, teachers are not permitted to take on additional jobs (except if they work part time).

Source: [UNICEF CEECIS, 2011. P. 77].

system due to the flexibility it offers in hiring part-time teachers. Put positively, the teaching load system allows schools in rural areas to recruit qualified teachers part-time who otherwise, due to better compensation, would work outside the profession. The teaching load system also makes it possible to recruit teachers that only wish to work part-time either because of family or household committments (typically female teachers) or because they have a second job as farmers, professionals or merchants. Put negatively, the teaching load system enables governments in developing countries to pay low salaries, enlist teachers for part-time positions, rely on teachers making money off additional teaching hours and seeking additional income from jobs outside school, collecting (official and unofficial) fees paid by parents, and engaging in private tutoring. Needless to say, such harsh work conditions are likely to generate seasonal teacher absenteeism (especially during harvesting) but also other income-related absences, and overall puts a great pressure on teachers to secure income from multiple sources. The next figure summarizes the key features of the two fundamentally different salary structures.

In the teacher salary studies that were mentioned in this section, we found a clear divide in teachers' professional identity between the two vastly different salary systems: the teaching load system (base salary for 18–24 hours of teaching per week or a fraction thereof, compensation for additional teaching hours, and compensation for all additional pedagogical activities), carried over from the Soviet past, and the weekly workload system (36–40 hours of work per week including all activities at school), in place in OECD countries including those EU member states from the CEECIS region. In instances where teachers only teach for half a teaching load (9–12 hours) or less, teachers identify with their primary job as farmers, merchants, or professionals and only "help" the school because there is a shortage of qualified teachers.

Figure 3. **Scatter Plot of Actual Teaching Load and Teacher Salary**

Source: [UNICEF Kyrgyzstan, 2014. P. 33].

3. Challenges of the *Stavka* or Teaching Load System

In the UNICEF Kyrgyzstan study, we collected salary information (tarifikazie or tariff tables) from 527 teachers that were employed in ten schools [UNICEF Kyrgyzstan, 2014]. Maximum variation sampling criteria were used to ensure that the ten selected schools represent the widest possible range of schools in terms of location (rural/urban), language of instruction (Kyrgyz, Russian, Uzbek), and type of schools (primary schools, complete secondary schools, lyceums/gymnasiums). Similar to previous teacher salary studies carried out in Armenia, Mongolia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, the ability to take on additional teaching hours greatly determines the size of a teacher's income. Figure 1 illustrates the high correlation between monthly salary (depicted in the Kyrgyz currency *som*) and the weekly teaching hours, based on data analyzed from 527 teachers that were listed in the ten tariff tables of the sample of schools.

More than half of the variance (54%) in the monthly salary is explained by the number of teaching hours: the Pearson correlation is 0.738 and is significant at the 0.01 level. This explains why teachers have remained so keen to take on additional teaching hours.

The high correlation between the salary and the number of hours taught is problematic for a variety of reasons. The UNICEF Kyrgyzstan study [2014. P. 34ff] identifies six negative consequences that are reproduced in full in the following.

3.1. Vulnerability of Teachers

It is up to the school administration, in particular the school director and the deputy school director, to assign teaching hours. Primarily,

the assignment is done based on subject match, that is, teachers are assigned to primarily teach their subject of specialization. However, in larger schools the school administration is in a position to choose among qualified teachers and so the question becomes which teachers are given preference for teaching additional hours. Not only the focus group interviews with teachers but also the individual interviews with school administrators, carried out in the UNICEF Kyrgyzstan study, explored the negotiation process and allocation criteria in greater detail. There is indeed competition among teachers to secure additional hours. More often than not, younger teachers lose out and their inability to gain additional income and the sense of inequality leaves them frustrated. The qualitative interviews in fact conveyed a sense of "intergenerational war" over securing additional teaching hours.

The school administrators defended their preference for experienced teachers as follows: "Experienced teachers are better teachers and of course they should be given preference when hours from unfilled positions are distributed." Often school directors justified their choice by interjecting additional justifications such as "this is what parents ask for" or "this is what the collective of teachers decided."

The teachers were very vocal about the need to take on additional teaching hours. A group of older teachers commented in a group interview:

> "Young teachers leave the profession anyways as soon as they find a better paid job. It is us, the experienced teachers, that keep the school going."

In fact, there is a large turnover of young teachers during the first few months of their employment. The question is, however, whether young teachers abandon the school, and possibly the profession, because they feel ill-prepared to teach in front of a large class, are frustrated once they realize that other more experienced teachers earn much more due to having secured additional teaching hours, or embrace a better paid job opportunity outside the teaching profession. There is no doubt, however, that the anticipation of school administrators and older teachers that "young teachers will leave *anyway*" functions as a self-fulfilling prophecy which both reinforces the prejudice towards young teachers and justifies the inequitable redistribution of hours.

3.2. Micromanagement of Teachers

Even under the previous system, teachers complained that they had to fill out too much formulaic paperwork that took time away from pedagogical work. Each and every supplement (in particular, lesson preparation and grading student notebooks) had to be documented and the deputy school director or, in larger schools, the head of the departments supervised the work carried out by teachers. Even though, after the 2011 salary reform in Kyrgyzstan, fewer supplements existed than before, the micromanagement of teachers increased

rather than decreased. The move from *a teaching load* to a *teaching hour system* implies that the school administrator must record *for each hour* the work of a teacher. In practice, this entails that the school administrator must spend all day going round the school to ensure that teachers are doing what they are paid for, that is, teaching, grading student notebooks, preparing classes, mentoring other teachers, engaging in extra-curricular work, etc. In also means that teachers have to constantly keep track of their activities, fill out forms and submit numerous reports documenting their working day.

The 2006 Public Expenditure Tracking Survey in Mongolia documents in detail how deputy principals punished teachers at the time for all kinds of "infractions" by having a portion of their salary supplements or, in more severe cases, a portion of their base salary deducted for missing class, coming late to class, for superficially grading student notebooks, for poor lesson preparation, and also if students damaged equipment in the classroom, came late to schools, or showed in any other way, by Mongolian standards, unruly behavior or signs of being insufficiently disciplined [World Bank, 2006; Steiner-Khamsi, Stolpe, 2006. Chapter 7].

Nurbek Teleshaliyev examines in great detail how the micromanagement of teachers damages teachers' professional identity and leaves little room for professional standards and work ethics [Teleshaliyev, 2013]. Both current value systems—the post-Soviet value system, inherited from the past and endured into the present, and the global teacher accountability policy, championed by some international donors—have led to the micromanagement of teachers and to a further decline in the social status of teachers.

3.3. Overcrowding of Schools

One striking phenomena is the overcrowding of schools or, put another way, the lack of school facilities in urban and semi-urban areas in Kyrgyzstan. As a result, a great number of teachers work in two shifts. In 2012, 22.5% of all schools were teaching in one shift (497 schools), 73.7% in two shifts (1,624 schools), and 3.8% in three shifts (83 schools). In other words, three out of four schools in the country were operating in two shifts. Overcrowding is often a transitional phenomenon that results from a process of urbanization, that is, internal migration from rural to urban areas. Educational systems throughout the region had to face the challenge of overcrowding in the 1990s and possibly in the first few years of the new millennium when living standards and job opportunities between rural and urban areas became unequal. Most educational systems in the CEECIS region, however, systematically built new schools in both the capital and semi-urban locations in order to not only suspend teaching in three shifts altogether but also to dramatically reduce the number of schools who taught in two shifts.

There are no signs of such a development in Kyrgyzstan and in fact, quite to the contrary, schools pride themselves of being overcrowded

and having enrolled student numbers beyond the capacity of their facilities. Curiously, they regard overcrowding as a quality indicator because the school has evidently succeeded in attracting many students. It is very popular among teachers to work in schools that have several parallel classes per grade and offer multiple shifts. It enables them to take on additional hours and thereby boost their salary. Thus, ultimately overcrowded schools do indeed attract experienced teachers but these teachers who work in two or three shifts end up having fewer hours for preparing their lessons, providing formative evaluation of students, or engaging with their peers or students' parents.

The two-shift system is unpopular among parents but, as explained above, very popular among teachers. The Per Capita Financing (PCF) scheme, which was scheduled to be scaled up throughout the country in 2013 but was then delayed, will most likely reinforce the negative trend. In the PCF scheme, student enrollment determines the size of the salary fund and it is in the financial interest of the school and the teachers—but not necessarily in the pedagogical interest of the students—to over-enroll students.

3.4. Vacancies as Placeholders or "Strategic Vacancies"

An interesting phenomenon identified for the first time in the 2014 study was the fluctuation of documented vacancies over various months of the school year. Even though school administrators are explicitly requested to fill vacancies *before* the start of the new school year[2], some principals prefer to keep a number of positions vacant so that they can split the vacant hours and redistribute them among the existing teaching workforce of the school. As a result of this redistribution practice, the average teaching load and the average salary of teachers is higher than projected at the beginning of the school year. Our UNICEF research team in Kyrgyzstan proposed to label such unfilled positions *"strategic vacancies"* and considered them to be a cause of great concern. This practice is common in urban and semi-urban areas where schools are large and teachers may easily take on additional hours if the appropriate funds, saved from unfilled positions, are made available. Even though this practice is considered illegal, there is evidence from the comparison of tariff tables (which shows vacancies) and salary disbursement forms (where vacancies disappear or rather the vacant hours are distributed among teachers) to suggest that such a practice does exist. The mere fact that so many schools in Bishkek and in other urban areas claim to be unable to fill vacant positions should be cause for suspicion and further scrutiny. These are locations where the supply of young specialists is high and where most and many of them remain unemployed. Upon further

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[2] See Government decree no. 270 entitled "Approval of the procedure for the calculation of wages for employees of educational institutions," 31 May 2011.

questioning during interviews, one of the school principals explained that

> "After the reform we did hire young teachers, but they left after a few months. Now we would rather leave the vacancies vacant and distribute the hours among the older teachers that stay. It is also a way for us to keep good teachers in the profession."

In seven of the ten schools who took part in the study, there were vacancies reported that could be considered "strategic vacancies," that is, positions that were intentionally left unfilled. In effect, these schools were purposefully understaffed. To be fair, some of these strategic vacancies were in subjects where the instructional hours/week are very low (e. g., music, physical education, labor classes) and where it would be difficult to employ a full-time teacher.

However, the opposite was also in operation: overstaffing. The other three schools were in rural locations where the size of the student population was small and the allocation of additional hours was not possible. In fact, one of the schools in the sample experienced a sizeable student loss over the past few years and used the inverse approach to teacher employment: almost all of the teachers had less than a regular teaching load (twenty hours) and many of them were only part-time teachers, that is, were teaching ten hours or less. This was a strategy of the school administration to keep teachers on the payroll despite dwindling student numbers. In this particular instance, schools function as a safety net and help produce wage earners, and later on pension recipients, in a village that otherwise has a subsistence economy.

The additional data on fluctuations of vacations over the course of the school year substantiates and provides further statistical evidence for the phenomenon of strategic vacancies. The Human Resource Department of the Ministry of Education and Science of Kyrgyzstan records monthly the number of vacant positions. It is therefore possible to compare the reported vacancies in September (beginning of school year) and in January (in mid-school year) of every year. The study investigated monthly fluctuations for five school years (2009/10 until 2013/14) and found that the number of vacancies is consistently higher in the month of September compared to the month of January. Less than one-third of the vacancies are filled by mid-school year (January) and the rest of the vacancies are broken up in vacant teaching hours and redistributed among teachers in the school. For example, in school year 2013/14, 1,553 vacancies were reported nationwide in September 2013. By January 2014, 412 of them were filled (27%) and the remaining 1,141 (73%) were redistributed among other teachers at the school.

Having said this, it is difficult to make causal inferences based on descriptive statistics alone. Arguably, it is impossible to draw a

conclusion as to whether two-thirds of vacancies remain unfilled by January of each year because (a) no qualified teachers were found who were willing to assume the openings, (b) positions were purposefully kept vacant in order to redistribute vacant hours and thereby boost the salary of the teachers at the school ("strategic vacancies"), or (c) whether new teachers were hired in October, November, or December but then left after the winter break. Judging from the interview data in the 2014 UNICEF Kyrgyzstan study, all three scenarios seem to apply. These three causes for vacancies are not mutually exclusive.

In fact, a teacher's salary is low compared to the salaries of specialists in other professions. Therefore, it is possible that young specialists either do not apply or, if they apply and accept the position, leave as soon as they find a better paid job. In the same vein, experienced teachers are frustrated about their low income, especially in Bishkek. Therefore, they exert pressure on the school administration and demand additional teaching hours to improve their income. The 2011 salary reform eliminated "categories" (salary ranks) and placed a greater weight on formal qualifications by assigning the highest salary rate to teachers with a Master's degree. The losers of the 2011 salary reform were clearly both the urban and the older teachers given the significant increase in allowances granted to teachers in rural and mountainous areas as well as the rise in the entry salary for young specialists who typically graduate with the equivalent of a Masters degree, that is, they have a higher qualification than older teachers. Therefore, more than before, the older and experienced teachers felt entitled to be assigned additional teaching hours as well as bonus payments. It goes without saying that the ones left behind in the battlefield were the young teachers. In the intergenerational fight over additional hours and bonus payments [UNICEF Kyrgyzstan, 2014; Belyavina, 2015], the young specialists are left vulnerable, powerless and defeated contributing possibly to their decision to leave the school or exit altogether from the teaching profession.

It is interesting to observe that the assignment of teaching hours is one of the few areas where school administrators are given complete autonomy and uncontested decision-making authority. In an attempt to curb favoritism and nepotism in the redistribution of vacant teaching hours, deputy principals in Mongolia (called education managers in Mongolia) were required to discuss the redistribution of vacant teaching hours at the beginning of the school year with the teacher collective. In a similar spirit, the 2011 salary reform in Kyrgyzstan limited the number of hours that principals and deputy principals were permitted to teach themselves. However, how policies, rules, and regulations such as the ones listed in this paragraph are modified, undermined, or reverted *at the school level*, is a research question of utmost importance which, compared to the educational research carried out in other countries (e. g., [Cuban, 1998]), is severely understudied in the CEECIS region.

3.5. Excessive Teaching Loads

Compared with educational systems in the region and in other parts of the world, the ceiling for the maximum amount of permissible teaching hours (31 hours) is very high in Kyrgyzstan. School administrators may assign an even higher teaching load if they are in a position to demonstrate that a teacher shortage exists. As explained before, it is common to list vacancies in the tariff tables, which then disappear over the course of the school year because they are either filled (national average approximately one-third) or because the vacant hours are redistributed among the teachers of the school (approximately two-thirds of vacancies). Given the symbolic nature of the specific line item on the tariff table listed as a "vacancy" (referred to in the UNICEF Kyrgyzstan study as "strategic vacancies"), the requirement of providing sufficient evidence of a shortage is not enforced. That is, there is in practice no upper limit for teaching.

In other words, the option of taking on excessive teaching loads has not been resolved with the 2011 salary reform. As before, school administrators are at liberty to make the case for the need of a few teachers at their school to take on teaching loads that well exceed the maximum permissible weekly workload (if teaching hours and other hours are combined) that the Labor Law allows.[3] Overall, it is a small number of teachers that teach excessively and most of them are in urban and semi-urban areas. The interviewed school administrators and teachers justify their need to take on an excessive teaching load. For example, a group of teachers unanimously exclaimed during a group interview: "We don't want more free time, we want more money." Similarly, a group of teachers in the capital city referred to the high living cost in Bishkek to explain why they work in two schools, why they depend on working in two shifts, and why they do not mind taking on an excessive teaching load:

> "For a city teacher, 10,000 *som* is kopeks.4 For a rural teacher, 10,000 *som* is capital."

3.6. The Redistribution of Teaching Hours to Non-Specialists

A redistribution of hours is to some extent unavoidable and flexibility in the teaching schedule is key for any well-functioning school. However, it is problematic if (a) positions are purposefully kept vacant and, as explained above, young specialists are shut off from employment and (b) if hours are distributed to teachers regardless of their area of specialization only to help boost their salaries.

The UNICEF Kyrgyzstan study asked teachers in ten schools ($N=217$) to indicate their subject specialization or qualification, list their weekly teaching hours and to include a breakdown by hours of

[3] See Labor Law of the Kyrgyz Republic, article 379, entitled "The working time of teachers" (decree no. 106, 4 August 2004).

[4] Refers to the Russian rubles currency used previously in Kyrgyzstan. *Kopeks* are associated with small denominations, that is, very little money.

the subjects they teach. This allowed the research team to specify (i) the *actual* teaching load (as compared to what is reported in tariff tables) and to determine (ii) how many teaching hours are taught in one's own subject specialization as opposed to how many are taught in *other subjects* for which the teacher does not possess training, a specialist diploma or a degree.

A number of responses included teachers specifying the grade levels of the subject(s) they teach. The research team purposefully disregarded grade level in their analysis to make the definition of "own subject specialization" as comprehensive as possible. For example, a teacher of Russian language and literature is considered teaching in her own subject even though she may have indicated that she is teaching these subjects in elementary grades. Only the teachers who indicated that they teach elementary grades as their main subject were enumerated as elementary school teachers. The same applies to Kyrgyz and English language and literature teachers as well. The number of teachers in the sample with a subject specialization in computer science, drawing, ethics, information technology, physical education, history, geography, informatics, music, and military preparation was small (N=38). We therefore grouped them in Table 14 under the category "other subjects." Finally, nine out of 217 teachers either did not indicate the subject that they teach or did not specify the number of hours that they teach. They are listed in Table 14 in the rubric as "no main subject or no hours reported."

The last column in Table 14 illustrates the wide range of actual teaching loads as reported in the teacher survey. In some schools, Russian teachers and English teachers take on excessive loads teaching up to 39 hours or 46 hours per week, respectively. The current system also allows for part-time teachers in music, arts, physical education, computer science (subjects with low weekly instructional hours) or for teachers who choose teaching as a secondary profession, teaching only half a day or only a few hours per week, and devote most of their time to other economic activities outside the school. The lowest teaching load in the survey was for teachers of Geography (2 hours per week) and Kyrgyz (3 hours per week).

In 2014, the actual teaching load for elementary and secondary school teachers in Kyrgyzstan was on average 22.42 hours per week. Table 1 represents weighted averages and thus reflects the large number of elementary school teachers (N = 50) in the sample. Secondary school teachers tend to take on more teaching hours than elementary school teachers.

From the 22.42 hours per week, 17.96 hours are taught in one's subject specialization and 4.46 in a second or third subject for which the teacher neither has a qualification nor training. This means that on average, four and a half hours per week or close to 20% of all teaching hours are taught in substitute subject(s). This is an extremely high proportion of hours taught by non-specialists.

Table 1. **Hours Taught in Own Specialization and in Other Subjects**

Subject specialization	Teachers in sample	Average of total teaching hours/week: all subjects	Average of teaching hours in own subject	Number of teachers teaching in other subject(s)	Highest/lowest teaching hours in own subject
Elementary School	50	20.90	19.76	7	31/11
English	18	26.50	25.11	4	46/8
Kyrgyz	32	23.28	20.50	17	33/3
Math	26	26.88	18.38	19	34/4
Science	15	25.13	20.27	9	36/8
Russian	29	24.34	16.79	23	39/3
Other subjects	38	20.29	12.82	23	40/2
No main subject or no hours reported	9	22.50	5.00	1	
All Subjects	217	22.42	17.96	103	42/2

Source: Adapted from [UNICEF CEECIS, 2011. P 39].

Math and Russian teachers, in particular, tend to be used ubiquitously, that is, they are assigned the greatest number of additional hours in subjects for which they have no qualification. The English language teachers are the ones who are able to accumulate additional hours within their own subject specialization, that is, they tend to take on only a few non-specialized teaching hours. There is a common misconception that “only” teachers of subjects with low instructional hours (computer science, art, history, geography, physical education) teach, out of necessity, subjects for which they do not have a qualification. It is accurate that these teachers (listed in the row “other subjects”) take on additional hours in second and third subjects. In fact, 60.53% of them do take on additional hours in non-specialized subjects. But it may come as a surprise that this group is surpassed by Russian and math teachers: close to 32% of the hours that a math teacher takes on are in subjects for which the math teacher may not qualification. The same applies to Russian language teachers. Over 30 of the hours that a teacher of Russian takes on are in a subject for which she or he does not hold any diploma or degree.

The PISA 2006 study identified the practice of substitute teaching or “subject cross-over” as the main source for the low quality of instruction (see [UNICEF CEECIS, 2011]). In Kyrgyzstan, 62% of all schools reported vacancies in science and almost all of these schools (59% countrywide) cope with this shortage by filling their vacancies with teachers who take on additional lessons in science, or by assigning unqualified teachers (that is, teachers qualified in other subjects but with no training in science) to teach science.

The sensitivity over the importance of subject specialization visibly increased over the past few years. In the 2009 UNICEF Kyrgyzstan study, school administrators and teachers did not problematize it as an issue that teachers take on hours in subjects that do not correspond to their area of specialization. However, five years later, it is addressed as an issue. In fact, administrators and teachers tried to avoid answering the question of how many hours they teach in subjects for which had not received any training. MOES issued two letters or guidelines in 2011 (No. 04–7/3603 from 7 July 2011) and 2014 (No. 04–7/471 from 27 January 2014) specifically addressing this issue. In these letters, MOES instructed school directors to only endorse the practice if the school's Teachers Advisory Board recommend the practice and if the teachers consents to undergoing re-training prior to teaching subjects for which she or he had no training. However, in practice, substitute teaching or teaching a subject for which the teacher has had no training is very common. From the 217 teachers that filled out the questionnaire, only 19 of them (9%) declared a second teaching specialization.

Other governments of the region have acknowledged the teaching of subjects by non-specialists as a quality problem and either trained teachers in the additional subjects by means of in-service teacher training (example: Uzbekistan; see [UNICEF CEECIS, 2011]) or piloted pre-service teacher education programs in which future secondary school teachers were trained for a subject area (2–3 subjects) rather than one single subject.

4. Conclusions

Raising the salary of teachers and changing the composition of a teacher's monthly remuneration are no small endeavors. In most countries, personnel remuneration absorbs 75% or more of the national education budget [UIS, 2013], leaving too little room for other important items such as teaching/learning supplies, maintenance of facilities, targeted support for poor students and for students with special needs, and professional development of staff.

The fragmentation of the teacher salary, a main feature of the *stavka* system, used to follow a compelling logic that attempted to secure the supply of qualified teachers for all schools in the country, regardless of location, language of instruction, and type of school. The uniform but low base salary, supplemented with an ever-increasing number of professional supplements, enabled the justifcation of different salary levels in a society that, by political dictum, had to appear egalitarian. Perhaps one of the greatest differentiations across and within countries of the region was the extent to which local or municipal governments were able to complement the teacher salary with allowances in the form of an additional salary payment (e. g., 13th salary), discount for utilities and public transportation, or housing subsidy. To this day, most systems have a bonus *(premie)* structure

in place that is added as a percentage of the institution's salary fund and, against its original purpose, is more often than not distributed equally among the staff at the school.

Today the great fragmentation of the salary creates a managerial problem as it requires a large bureaucratic apparatus at school and central level that enforces the standards for supplements which, taken individually, only have a low nominal value. The fragmented salary structure inevitably results in an unpredictable monthly salary because deductions from salary supplements are made if the tasks are not fully carried out in a given month. Overall, the low base salary, the need to closely supervise and control teacher's work (not quality nor performance of work but rather hours worked on the task), the fragmentation of the salary, and the unpredictability of the salary have turned teaching into an unattractive profession.

Clearly, there are a few issues that make this particular salary structure difficult to sustain. Apart from the problems that are generic to this type of salary structure (notably, the micro-management of teachers, that is, the task of deputy-principals to closely monitor and record teachers' work hours on different activities), there are also external challenges. In most countries of the region, the private sector is offering much higher salaries than the public sector and therefore creates a domestic brain drain from the public to the private sector. In an attempt to make the teacher salary more attractive, four different reform strategies have been tried in the ECA region:

(i) periodical *linear* salary increases for all teachers, typically in response to inflation or political change;
(ii) salary increases by means of *incremental* reforms: that is, the structure of the *stavka* system is kept intact but the statutory teaching load is decreased, the number of supplements is increased, or the nominal value of supplements is increased resulting in an overall increase in teacher pay. Teachers' Unions in the region tend to refer to these kind of incremental reforms as "cosmetic changes," because they do not lead to visible improvements in the situation of teachers;
(iii) selective salary increases using a *targeting strategy* by either targeting salary increases for teachers at particular schools, in particular locations, or high-performing teachers.
(iv) salary increases by means of *fundamental or structural* reforms either by (a) abandoning the teaching system and replacing it with a workload system, or by fully integrating the salary supplements into the base salary and setting a weekly limit for teaching hours,

The two examples of fundamental teacher salary reforms (Mongolia in 2007, Kyrgyzstan in 2011), interspersed for the purpose of illustration throughout this article, are worth comparing in greater detail. Both reforms have been well documented and analyzed in UNICEF-funded

policy research [UNICEF Mongolia, 2012; UNICEF Kyrgyzstan, 2014]. The reforms were similar in many regards with two noted exceptions:

First, the increase of teacher salaries was significant in Mongolia, lifting the below-average teacher salary to the 5–10 highest percentile of public service jobs [UNICEF Mongolia, 2012]. Clearly, the Government of Mongolia used the economic boom of the country, fueled by the mining industry (gold, copper, coal), to significantly raise the salaries of its public servants. Such a policy window did not open in the context of the Kyrgyz reform. There, the salaries were also raised approximately three times as a direct result of the 2011 reform. But they remained below the average salary of public servants in Kyrgyzstan [UNICEF Kyrgyzstan, 2014].

Second, the Kyrgyz salary reform was issued in a great rush because of tremendous pressure from the street: dissatisfaction among teachers was considerable. Beginning in 2008, teachers started to organize themselves and demanded retroactive payment of the teaching experience supplement *[pedstaj]* not only on the base salary but also on e additional hours. Two years later, after the Revolution of April 2010, political tensions were high and masses of public servants took to the street. The three most vocal groups were military, medical, and education workers. In response to public pressure, the Ministry of Education and Science, with the support of the State Teacher Union had national expert groups develop possible solutions and scenarios for replacing the teaching load system with a new system based on the weekly workload. The new reform went into effect a few months later. It was issued on January 19, 2011.

The fundamental salary reform of 2011 was well intended: it meant to resolve the teacher shortage in rural areas and attract teacher education graduates to the profession. As mentioned above, an unintended side effect was that the same policy that incentivized teachers in rural schools and young teachers, was disastrous for older teachers and teachers in urban areas. Under the old system, older or experienced teachers benefited twice from the *stavka* system: their base salary was higher than that of young teachers because of their teaching experience *[pedstaj]* and because of the semi-automatic promotion that already catapulted them into the highest salary rank or "category" after 15 years of service or less. In the new post-2011 system, they not only lost their entitlement to a higher salary based on their rank or category, but also they were put at a disadvantage vis-à-vis younger teachers who tended to have a higher qualification (M.A. degree) than they held. In addition, teachers in urban schools who were accustomed to amassing additional teaching hours to boost their salaries, suffered from the 2011 reform that initially (lasting for a few months only) strictly enforced a statutory teaching load of 20 years.

Both points regarding the differences in context, mentioned above, need to be taken into consideration: the timing of fundamental reforms and the support from those affected by a reform matter a

great deal. Every fundamental reform, perhaps most visibly in the area of salary reform, implies a re-stratification process. That is, some groups that used to be under-privileged under the old policy (in Kyrgyzstan: young teachers and teacher in rural schools), gain income, entitlement, and status, and other groups (in Kyrgyzstan: older teachers and teachers in urban schools) lose in all three regards. In Kyrgyzstan, the re-stratification process led to a revolt of those who lost in the wake of the reform. Within a period of only two years, they ensured that the *stavka*-system was, with a few exceptions, put back in place benefiting those who were on the teaching workforce long enough to know how to manipulate the teaching load system to their own benefit.

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Why Incentives Don't Pay:
Introducing Bonus Pay in the Kyrgyz Republic and the Undoing of Reforms

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Abstract. In 2011, the Kyrgyz Republic implemented a teacher salary reform aimed at attracting new teachers to the profession and motivating teachers to improve the quality of their work. A key component of the reform was the introduction of the Stimulus Fund, an incentive pay structure. Although the Stimulus Fund comprised only 10 percent of the budget allocated to schools for staff compensation, this paper shows that it nevertheless played a significant role in the reform implementation process.

This article examines whether the Stimulus Fund was successful in motivating teachers and the extent to which it was employed as intended to incentivize and reward high-performing teachers. The theoretical framework for this research builds on the scholarship of Larry Cuban [1998], who posits that schools and not policy makers are the key influencers of whether reforms are adopted or rejected. What this study suggests is that contrary to policy goals, the introduction of incentive pay had a deleterious impact on teacher motivation and resulted in a number of unintended consequences, including intergenerational rifts among teachers, a rejection of other components of the 2011 teacher salary reform, and a failure to make progress in overcoming the persisting challenge of attracting and retaining qualified teachers. As early as six months after the reform was announced, it began to be dismantled by schools and teachers. I argue that the Stimulus Fund was a catalyst for undermining the entire new teacher salary reform.

Key words: Kyrgyz Republic; teacher salary reform; incentive pay; policy implementation

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Data was collected for a UNICEF Kyrgyzstan project (with Gita Steiner-Khamsi as the principal investigator) that was a situation analysis of teachers in the country, including teacher salary, teaching hours, and quality of instruction. I am grateful to UNICEF for allowing me to use the data collected to contribute to scholarship on the teaching profession and to Professor Steiner-Khamsi for the opportunity to contribute to this research study.

Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, the Kyrgyz Republic has undergone significant structural reforms within its economic sector, including rapid liberalization and privatization of the labor market. Over the course of the last 25 years, public sector jobs, including the education sector, have seen profound change owing to the shift in the economy from a centralized state-run system to a liberal and competitive market economy [Heyneman, 2004; Dudwick et. al, 2003]. The economic changes in the country lead to inequalities as people came to compete for limited employment opportunities and not rely on the government for either a work placement or a supportive safety net.

During the Soviet era, while base salaries for state workers were low, a nuanced system of rewards that included bonuses and allowances, plus non-pecuniary benefits such as access to housing and vacation packages, made public sector work, including the teaching profession, a desirable occupation [Filtzer, 1994; Bereday, Schlesinger, 1963]. The structure of the Soviet remuneration system was based on teachers taking on one or more *stavkas*, or one teaching load (comprised of between 14–18 hours of teaching). Teachers also had the flexibility to take on less than one *stavka*, or additional teaching loads, ranging from half to a full second *stavka*. This gave teachers a highly flexible work life, allowing them to earn extra money by taking on a larger teaching load, while providing many of the supplemental benefits to all teachers regardless of their teaching load.

In post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan, state allocations to the education sector decreased and the government no longer provided supplemental teacher benefits such as discounted transportation, free utilities and allocation of plots of land for housing (and farming in rural areas). Many teachers left the education sector, leaving a shortage of teachers in the profession. Those who stayed in the teaching profession came to rely on the salary for teaching hours, increasingly taking on two or in some instances even more than two *stavkas* (effectively teaching over 36 hours each week). The education sector in the Kyrgyz Republic also came to rely on teachers taking on increasingly large teaching loads due to the shortage of teachers in the profession.

Following Kyrgyzstan's low performance on the PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) test in both 2006 and 2009, it came to light that among the key contributing factors of declining student performance outcomes was the shortage and decreasing quality of teachers [UNICEF, 2009]. International donor agencies, including UNICEF and USAID painted a 'crisis scenario' of the country's teaching workforce, including a shortage of teachers overall as well as teachers in the ranks who were not qualified to teach the subjects they were assigned to teach, teachers of retirement age who taught part time to supplement their pensions, and teachers who divided their time between two or more schools [UNICEF, 2009; Shamatov, Sainazarov 2010].

With pressure from local and international communities, in 2011, the Kyrgyz Ministry of Education and Science (MOES) introduced a teacher salary reform (hereafter, "the reform" or the "2011 reform") aimed at increasing teacher salaries and improve teaching quality. It was determined that teachers needed to be motivated to improve the quality of their teaching. As such, a new incentive component of the teacher salary was introduced, called the *Stimulus Fund*. The incentive component became one of three teacher salary components, the two others being the 'guaranteed' salary component (based on the teachers' assigned teaching hours) and the 'allowances' portion of the salary (supplements based on various criteria such as teaching at

a specialized school, working in a mountainous region, and length of tenure in the profession). Although the *Stimulus Fund* comprised only 10 percent of the budget allocated to schools for staff compensation, it nevertheless had a significant impact on there form implementation process.

This paper examines whether schools in the Kyrgyz Republic use the *Stimulus Fund* as intended, to motivate and reward high-performing teachers. The paper also asks whether the *Stimulus Fund* played a role as a catalyst for teachers to begin to undo the 2011 reform that many teachers came to believe undermined the status and salary of the most experienced teachers and advantaged young teachers and new entrants to the profession [UNICEF, 2014]. The paper begins with the theoretical framework for this study followed by a brief methodological overview; the context that shaped the introduction of the reform in 2011 will subsequently be discussed, followed by a detailed overview of the *Stimulus Fund* structure in design and in practice; an analytical perspective will be offered on the impact of the *Stimulus Fund* on teacher quality and reform implementation, and concluding observations will be made on the relevance of examining reform implementation by examining the logic of how and why schools and teachers modify reforms.

Education reform: development and implementation

Countries that face teacher shortages and challenges in attaining education quality aim to attract new and qualified teachers to the profession. Education policy makers look for remedies to teacher shortages that are suitable for their country, often by 'borrowing' ideas that have been tried in other contexts, nationally or internationally [Chabbott, 2009; Steiner-Khamsi, Silova, Johnson, 2006]. However, borrowed policies that are implemented locally are not necessarily a fit within the context of the country, particularly when the ideas are based on so-called 'best practices' from other sectors or education systems in other countries [Steiner-Khamsi, 2012]. When policies are adopted based on models that do not fit local cultural norms, reforms are often met with local resistance (Ibid). When new policies are perceived to be deleterious to salary, status, or social hierarchies, the affected individuals are likely to galvanize to resist reforms and maintain the status quo [Daly et. al., 2009].

Larry Cuban [1998] writes that schools and not policy makers are the core policy implementers and key influencers in whether reforms are adopted or rejected. There is a discernable difference in the legitimization process of reforms that takes place at the policy and practitioner levels. Policy makers are apt to assess reforms on goal oriented outcomes and achievements, whereas teachers scrutinize reforms based on a code of "moral and service values inherent to teaching that differ from the technical and scientific values that policy elites possess" [Cuban, 1998. P. 459]. When there is a disparity in

the legitimization process of a reform between policy makers and practitioners, the way in which the reform is implemented at the school level may not reflect the intended goals of the policy makers. As such, we can observe that "schools change reforms as much as reforms change schools" [Cuban, 1998. P. 455], a process that will be explored in this paper to argue that in the case of the Kyrgyz Republic, teachers and schools have been key reform change agents in modifying and largely undoing the 2011 salary reform.

In theoretical terms, the logic of reform goals at the policy level must match the logic of legitimacy and implementation capacity at the school level. If new policies are judged to be incongruent within school contexts, educators are likely to mobilize to reject the reform. As this paper will show, the 2011 reform in the Kyrgyz Republic was judged by teachers to contradict social norms within schools and in the course of several years was largely undone. As early as six months after the reform was announced, it began to be dismantled by the teachers. In this paper, I will argue that the *Stimulus Fund* was the catalyst for undermining the reform.

Sources of empirical data

This paper draws on research that was conducted in the spring of 2014 by a team of researchers including myself to assess the implementation of the 2011 reform and its impact on the situation of teachers in the Kyrgyz Republic.[1] This mixed-method study includes statistical information collected on teacher salaries at 279 schools across the country. Ten schools located throughout the country were selected through a purposive sampling technique to ensure diversity of representation by location (urban, rural/mountainous), school size (under enrollment, over enrollment), language of instruction (Kyrgyz, Russian, Uzbek, multiple-language), and school status (gymnasium, regular school). Across the ten schools, interviews with 54 school administrators were conducted as well as focus groups with 148 teachers. A total of 217 teachers completed a questionnaire about their salaries before and after the reform. The organization and distribution of the *Stimulus Fund* was examined at each school. Seven of the schools shared data of the *Stimulus Fund* distribution amounts and/or the criteria used to determine *Stimulus Fund* payouts to staff.

Context shaping the 2011 teacher salary reform

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Kyrgyz Republic began to undergo significant economic transformation as it transitioned from a communist to a capitalist state. The emergence of the private

[1] Data was collected for a UNICEF Kyrgyzstan project which was a situation analysis of teachers in the country, including teacher salary, teaching hours, and quality of instruction. I am grateful to UNICEF for allowing me to use the data collected to contribute to scholarship on the teaching profession.

sector affected the labor market of the country with the private sector becoming the most lucrative, and as such, the most attractive employment sector. As enterprises formerly owned and operated by the state were privatized and incorporated into private ownership, the private sector attracted into its labor force people previously employed by the state.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the public sector in the Kyrgyz Republic has witnessed declines in earning potential as compared to the private sector, including significant declines within the human services sector. In 2010, the education sector in the Kyrgyz Republic reported salaries far below the average salaries in other professions [National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic, 2014]. Teachers had among the lowest salaries of public sector employees in the country, second only to the agricultural sector (*Jubilee Statistical Yearbook: The national economy of USSR*, http://istmat.info/node/). Low earnings have resulted in a loss of prestige in the teaching profession and the attrition of teachers, many of whom have left to work in the private sector including private tutoring as well as trade and petty commerce [Silova, 2010; Niyozov, Shamatov, 2006]. This has subsequently left the country with enormous challenges in attracting and retaining new teachers. The vast majority of university students who complete their studies in teacher education either never enter the teaching profession or leave the classroom after a year of work [UNICEF, 2014]. Approximately just 15 percent of all students who study teaching end up in a teaching career; this includes 'budget students' who receive government scholarships for obtaining university degrees and majoring in teaching [UNICEF, 2009. P. 33]. Consequently, the quality of education in the Kyrgyz Republic has seen a precipitous decline in the last two decades. In both 2006 and in 2009, the Kyrgyz Republic ranked last in the PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) test of student learning, raising national concerns about the declining quality of education in the country. Following the PISA results, the situation of teachers was determined to be a key contributing factor to the decline in educational outcomes [Shamatov, Sainazarov 2010].With internal and international pressure, the Ministry of Education and Science (MOES) of the Kyrgyz Republic resolved to introduce reforms in the teaching profession to make it a more attractive profession with goals set for retaining quality teachers and attracting qualified new teachers to join the ranks.

Introducing the 2011 salary reform

MOES worked with international and local consultants and donor agencies[2] to revamp the teacher salary structure to make the profession more attractive. The salary reform introduced in 2011

[2] This included Kyrgyzstan-based Socium Consult, USAID and UNICEF.

included three core components[3]. First, eliminating the Soviet *stavka* salary schema and replacing it with a weekly workload structure that caps the number of teaching hours and standardizes the workloads of teachers. Second, introducing a compensation rubric based on education criteria rather than the antiquated *categories* system that functioned as a semi-automatic teacher promotion scheme. And finally, a new component, the *Stimulus Fund*, was introduced to incentivize teachers to improve the quality of their work and was intended for distribution to teachers based on their performance.

Each of these salary components was aimed at improving the quality of teachers. First, by capping the number of hours that teachers spend teaching in a given week, the quality of teaching was to be increased by unburdening teachers from excessive teaching loads. An equitable distribution of teaching hours among all teachers was also a measure to instill a uniform and equitable distribution of work hours, regardless of teachers' tenure. Second, replacing wage calculations based on a semi-automated promotion system of teacher *categories* with education credentials criteria was a move to attract more qualified teachers into the profession. Finally, the introduction of the *Stimulus Fund* was intended to motivate all the teachers to increase their work competency and continually improve the quality of their work.

Despite what were good intentions and a concerted effort to modernize the salary system and align the Kyrgyz Republic's teacher remuneration structure with that of teacher salary schemes around the world, what was evidently not accounted for by policy makers is that this reform would contradict the age-stratified norms of compensation among teachers in Kyrgyz schools. Each reform component was viewed by senior teachers (teachers with over 20 year of teaching experience or nearing retirement age) as a mechanism to decrease their salary and undermine their status and social standing within schools. Placing a ceiling on the number of teaching hours that teachers could take on was deemed as a deductive measure to decrease the teaching hours of the most experienced teachers and limit their potential earnings. Shifting the compensation structure to reflect educational qualifications rather than experience and *categories* earned during a teacher's professional life course was seen as an overt policy to reduce the wages of senior teachers. And finally, the introduction of bonus pay that encourages all teachers regardless of age and tenure to compete for extra pay was deemed as a tactic to undermine senior teachers' experience and competence. Competing for merit-based pay with beginner teachers was seen as an insult to experienced teachers

[3] Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic (2009) Government decree No. 18 on introduction of new salary system of employees of educational institutions; Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic (2011) Education development strategy 2011–2020, Background paper. MOES: Department of Strategic and Analytical Work.

who had dedicated their professional lives to their work as teachers. Shortly after the introduction of the reform, senior teachers became the most vociferous opponents of the reform and the main proponents of reverting the salary structures back to the old system [UNICEF, 2014].

While the first two components of the new salary scheme were centralized and implemented with oversight of the MOES, the *Stimulus Fund* component, including the organization, criteria-setting, and distribution of the bonus pay was relegated to the discretion of schools. Because schools were given the authority to decide how to allocate and distribute *Stimulus Funds* among their administrative and pedagogical staff, it is this component of the salary structure that reveals the reform reactions at the school level and the dynamics within schools among key influencers as reflected in the implementation of the new reform. *Stimulus Fund* allocations also reveal the allegiances and power dynamics within schools, including among teachers, between teachers and administrators, and between the school and the policy makers. In the following section, I will show how *Stimulus Fund* criteria were determined at the school level, share several examples of how bonus pay was calculated at schools, and suggest that the introduction of bonus pay in the Kyrgyz Republic became a catalyst for undoing the 2011 teacher salary reform.[4]

The *Stimulus Fund*

Competition for bonus pay among teachers is not a new phenomenon for post-Soviet countries. During the Soviet era, teachers in the Kyrgyz Republic and throughout the republics of the Soviet Union were incentivized to support students by preparing them to participate in *Olympiads*, or academic competitions, organized at district and national levels. Those teachers whose students competed successfully in the *Olympiads* received salary premiums, which were often sizable amounts. As previously mentioned, what was different about the introduction of a formal bonus pay structure is the perception by senior teachers that it was intended to reallocate a portion of the salary formerly awarded to senior teachers in the form of *category* supplements to all teachers, regardless of their tenure or experience. Competing for merit-based pay with all other teachers was seen as an insult to experienced teachers, many of whom had volunteered time throughout their careers to mentor new teachers and improve the quality of work of all teachers—something that seniors were now expected to do on a competitive basis.[5]

[4] For an examination of how teachers undid the other components of the reform please see [Steiner-Khamsi, Belyavina, 2016; UNICEF Kyrgyzstan, 2014].

[5] The *Stimulus Fund* accrues 10 percent of the total salary fund allotted for school staff and is transferred to schools every three months. With some guidelines and oversight from MOES, schools decide how exactly to allocate the bonus pay funds to teachers and administrators.

Table 1. ***Stimulus Fund* criteria, as recommended by MOES**

Criterion
Complexity and intensity of teaching
Quality of extracurricular activities
Preparation and organization of conferences and workshops
Preparation of students for academic competitions (Olympiads)
Authoring original content or curricular activities
Curriculum development and lesson preparation
Condition of classroom
Absence of administrative penalties
Quality maintenance of documents and school records
Work discipline (e. g. promptness, adherence to dress code, etc.)

Source: MOES

Although the idea of bonus pay is itself not new, the introduction of the *Stimulus Fund* as incentive pay to motivate teachers to improve their performance was seen as contradicting the values and work life of teachers, many of whom felt that they were already working at full capacity and saw incentive pay amounting to 10 percent as patronizing rather than motivating [UNICEF, 2014].

In announcing the salary reform, MOES offered suggested model criteria for how schools could allocate the *Stimulus Fund* to motivate teachers (Table 1). However, the final criteria design was left to the discretion of schools. Bonus pay is disbursed to teachers on a quarterly basis and schools were instructed to form *Stimulus Fund Committees* comprised of teachers and administrators to set the performance criteria for the bonus pay and to oversee the process of tracking teacher performance throughout the quarter to determine the bonus pay earnings for each teacher as well as each school administrator.

The following section presents an analysis of how schools in the Kyrgyz Republic have integrated the *Stimulus Fund* into their salary structure and school environments.

Implementing the *Stimulus Fund* at the school level

Because allocation of the *Stimulus Fund* criteria and the distribution of incentive paywas relegated to the authority of the school, there is wide variation in school distribution patterns of incentive pay. While the MOES provided sample protocols for distributing the funds based on performance metrics, the Ministry did not stipulate that it would hold

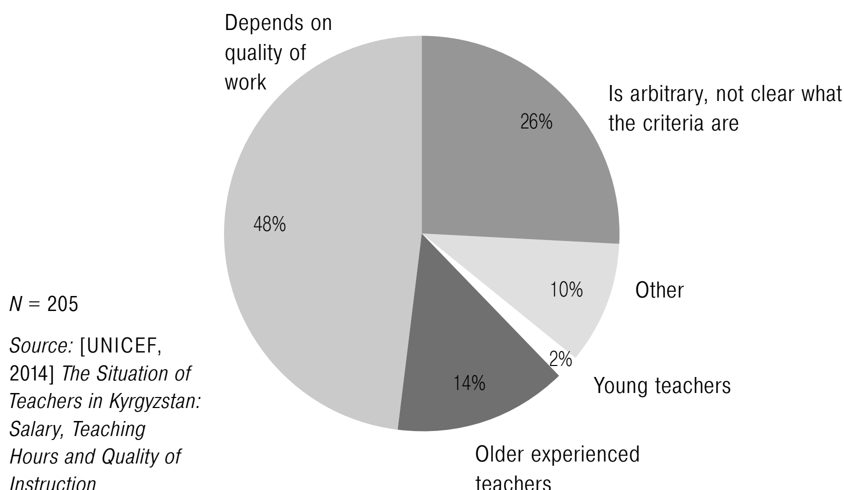
schools accountable for implementing the recommended criteria. For this reason, the ways in which the *Stimulus Fund* was implemented around the country shows a range of techniques in which schools adapted the *Stimulus Fund* to reconcile the other components of the salary reform that were challenged by the teachers. While some schools implemented the criteria exactly as recommended by the MOES, other schools used the incentive fund allocation to undermine and revert the reform by, for example, disbursing the funds to compensate senior teachers for the eliminated *categories* component of the salary or equally among teachers. This study has identified four patterns of how schools distributed the funds from the *Stimulus Fund* to the teachers of the school. They include:

- *Category* replacement distribution
- Teacher micro-management or compliance distribution
- Egalitarian distribution
- Performance-based distribution.

The *category* replacement distribution pattern suggests that some schools reserve bonus pay funds to compensate the most experiences teachers, owing to the eliminated *categories* structure from the *stavka* system, which resulted in dismayed and disgruntled senior teachers. Other schools use the incentive pay fund to ensure administrative compliance of all teachers by rewarding the most diligent teachers more than others, but only marginally so. Research on the distribution patterns of the *Stimulus Fund* in this study reveals that there is an overwhelming emphasis in schools in the Kyrgyz Republic on a distribution of incentive funds that reflect an egalitarian approach, or distribution of funds that do not amount to significant distinctions in bonus pay between teachers. This scheme of egalitarian distribution of funds represents the most explicit rejection of the *Stimulus Fund* policy as intended by MOES, whereby schools reject the pay for performance model and opt instead to distribute incentive funds equally among all teachers. Finally, some schools do distribute *Stimulus Funds* based on teacher performance. The metrics selected for assessing performance, however, do not necessarily reflect teaching quality but rather other aspects of teachers' work, most notably the fulfillment of administrative duties.

In a survey administered to over 200 teachers, approximately half responded that the *Stimulus Fund* is distributed based on the quality of teachers' work (Figure 1). However, a quarter of the respondents indicated that the criteria of the *Stimulus Fund* are either arbitrary or nontransparent at their school. Another ten percent indicated that there were other metrics based on which the *Stimulus Fund* is allocated. Interestingly, significantly more teachers reported that the *Stimulus Fund* aims to reward older and more experienced teachers than young teachers. This is contrary to the goals of the MOES, which

Figure 1. **Teacher responses on distribution of Stimulus Funds at their school**



N = 205

Source: [UNICEF, 2014] *The Situation of Teachers in Kyrgyzstan: Salary, Teaching Hours and Quality of Instruction*

envisioned that opportunities for bonus pay would make the teaching profession more attractive to young people and recent university graduates.

It is significant that 48 percent of the survey respondents indicated that the incentive pay is determined on the quality of teachers' work. The following section examines at the school level the criteria designated by *Stimulus Fund Committees* to assess quality of teachers' work.

Stimulus Fund criteria at the school level

In introducing the reform, the MOES provided recommendations for *Stimulus Fund* criteria that schools may consider for determining *Stimulus Fund* distribution to teachers. Table 1, presented in the introductory section on the *Stimulus Fund* enumerates these recommendations.

What is notable about these suggested criteria is that all but one of them reflect dimensions that measure tasks other than student learning. The only criteria that does reflect student learning is the preparation of students for *Olympiads*. However, even the preparation of students for academic competition concentrates the teacher's effort on one or several students rather than on improving the education outcomes of all students. The other dimensions that are recommended in the MOES criteria that may contribute indirectly to student learning are teaching preparation work, professional development, and extracurricular work of teachers. By far the most prominent criteria category of measuring teachers' quality of workincludes administrative functions, such as the maintenance of

documents and record keeping and the absence of administrative penalties. While these are important professional responsibilities of teachers, they do not bear a direct impact on any improved quality of teaching and learning.

Four schools in the sample which were visited as part of this study provided information about the criteria used for determining *Stimulus Fund* allocations at their school. Each of the schools used most of the criteria as recommended by MOES, with one school using all of the criteria. Two of the schools included a number of additional criteria ranging from teacher professional development to the development of training manuals and teacher publications in newspapers and magazines. Only one school made significant additions to the *Stimulus Fund* criteria that reflect teacher contributions to student learning (See school 4 in Table 2). Criteria at this school include the use of active and interactive teaching methods, the application of new educational methodologies, and work with students who are falling behind, including collaborating with the parents of these students.

What is not clear and merits further study is how schools track and implement these criteria on a day-to-day basis. The evidence that is available, although not matched to the same schools as those that provided *Stimulus Fund* criteria, is how schools organize the *Stimulus Fund* pay structure.

Four schools in the study provided data on the incentive pay salary component paid out to teachers for one quarter. Table 3 shows the key summary data of how *Stimulus Funds*were disbursed at four schools in the Kyrgyz Republic.

Table 3 shows that the average amount of bonus pay received by teachers per quarter is similar across schools, with a difference of 405 som in the average amount received between the school with the highest and lowest average bonus payment. What is also interesting to note that is that three of the four schools awarded a large number of matching bonus payouts to teachers, that is payments wherein at least two staff members received the same amount. One plausible explanation for this is that this approach allows for a more egalitarian distribution of funds than if all bonus pay allocations were individualized. Another possibility is that this type of distribution simplifies the bookkeeping processes of tracking each teacher's bonus pay accruals based on the numerous criteria schools adopt to calculate the bonus pay.

For the purpose of comparison, what follows is a comparative detailed analysis of the organization and distribution of the incentive pay structure in schools B and C (Table 3). These schools are compelling in their comparisons because they are comprised of an almost identical number of staff yet have very different numbers of matching payouts, suggesting that the organization of their bonus pay and bookkeeping practices are distinct.

Table 2. ***Stimulus Fund* criteria comparison across four schools in the Kyrgyz Republic, 2013/14**

Stimulus Fund Criteria	School 1	School 2	School 3	School 4
Complexity and intensity of teaching	✓	✓		✓
Quality of extracurricular activities	✓	✓	✓	✓
Preparation and organization of conferences and workshops	✓	✓	✓	✓
Preparation of students for academic competitions (Olympiads)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Authoring original content or curricular materials	✓	✓	✓	
Curriculum development and lesson preparation	✓	✓	✓	
Condition of classroom	✓		✓	✓
Absence of administrative penalties	✓			
Quality maintenance of documents and school records	✓		✓	✓
Work discipline (e. g. promptness, adherence to dress code, etc.)	✓	✓	✓	
Providing additional educational services	✓			
Teacher professional development		✓		✓
The quality of students' knowledge of subjects (assessed at the end of quarter)			✓	
Attitude towards work and work quality			✓	
Developing student exams, work practices and training guides			✓	
Articles published in newspapers, magazines (media)			✓	
Participation in competitions within district, city and at national level			✓	
Reports to the district, city and at national level			✓	
Substitute work (including planning, documentation, tidiness)			✓	
Portfolio (of teacher, students)			✓	
Merits (e. g. certificates, diplomas, awards)			✓	
Self-driven professional development and departmental development			✓	
The use of active and interactive teaching methods				✓
Work with students who fall behind in coursework, including parent involvement				✓
Maintaining an environment conducive to learning				✓
Disciplinary and behavioral work duties				✓
Use of technology in classroom				✓
Organization of work in classroom				✓
Fulfilling administrative duties (e. g. tracking class rosters, student health records, tracking student well being)				✓
Incorporating innovative education methodologies				✓
Working on class publications				✓

Note: Criteria noted in bold text are recommended by the Ministry of Education and Science; all others are assigned by individual schools.

Table 3. ***Stimulus Fund* distribution comparison across four schools in the Kyrgyz Republic, 2013/14,** (amounts as reported, in Kyrgyz som)

	School A	School B	School C	School D
Highest Payout	6,979	3,757	5,413	4,016
Lowest Payout	256	257	0 *(200 lowest amount paid)*	156
Average	1,838	1,789	2,004	1,599
Median	1,328	1,700	2,375	1,807
Total staff	32	64	63	19
Number of matching payouts (matching at least one other staff member)	15	60	6	11

Calculating the *Stimulus Fund*

School B has organized its *Stimulus Fund* structure based on a points accumulation system. The school closely follows the MOES recommended criteria (Table 1). Each of the Stimulus Fund criteria outlined by the school corresponds to one or two points. Additionally up to ten points are allotted for teachers whose students participate and win awards in *Olympiads*.The school has allocated a numeric pay value for each point earned in the bonus system, valued at approximately 179 som. Staff members receive the total accumulated bonus payout each quarter. The minimum number of points earned by a staff member at this school in the period examined was two and the maximum was 21. As such, 60 out of 64 staff members at the school earned a bonus amount that was similar to the pay of at least one other staff member. Notably, this type of bonus system is fairly easy to calculate and the amounts are equitably distributed to teachers regardless of their work hours, years of teaching experience, education qualification, or any other criteria. However, because this system of bonus tabulation is based on awarding one point for each criteria (See Table 1), it is a categorical assessment of teacher performance, and does not allow for a gradation of performance assessment of a particular task. Instead teachers are awarded or penalized based on whether a given task or criteria was met or not. As such, this bonus structure, while transparently and equitably distributed among teachers, nevertheless appears to emphasize that the micro-management of teachers and compliance with the school’s administrative functions is rewarded over student learning outcomes and the quality of the pedagogical work of teachers. This system can easily be used as a punitive measure or seen as permitting favoritism wherein some teachers benefit from the goodwill of the *Stimulus Fund Committee* while others do not.

School C appears to have a more individualized formula for calculating bonus pay for teachers and administrators. Of 63 staff

members, only six received the same bonus pay as other staff members. This school devised a different approach for calculating the *Stimulus Fund* payout than School B to arrive at the more differentiated totals. However, the final differentiated bonus payout conceals a calculation formula that is similar to that of School B. Staff are all assigned points based on the criteria of the *Stimulus Fund* as recommended by the MOES. Each month the staff are evaluated based on this criteria and accumulate points for their performance that are converted to payment amounts in som, in the same manner as at School B. Bonus pay at School C is calculated based on a total of 40 points rather than ten as in School B. Each criterion corresponds to anywhere from 1–7 points. The criteria that earn staff up to seven points are 'quality maintenance of documents and records' and 'work discipline', which correspond to a maximum of seven and six points, respectively. The lowest points allocations are for 'incorporating innovative teaching methods', 'observing colleagues' lessons', and 'minimal absences,' valued at one point each. This distribution of bonus pay points suggests that this school also prioritizes teacher micro-management and compliance rather than teacher quality as pertains to student performance.

How is it that this school arrives at differentiated bonus payouts and why? Once the staff members' bonus points for three months are tallied and converted to the monetary equivalent for each month, they are averaged. This average amount is then multiplied by the staff member's average 'work rate coefficient'—that is the quotient of full time work averaged over three months. (e. g. a coefficient of 0.8 or 1.1 are common). Finally, this is multiplied by a single 'coefficient of additional wages' determined for the entire school, and thus the same for all staff. This formula is illustrated in Table 4.

Table 4 illustrates the formula of bonus pay differentiation that takes place in School C. While it is not clear why the school opted to apply this differentiating formula to the calculation of incentive pay, there are several things that are evident in this data. First, as the 'Bonus Pay' columns in Table 4 illustrate, there is in fact not much individualized differentiation in calculating teacher bonus pay from month to month. It is feasible that staff members are tracked into a set monthly bonus pay that appears differentiated only at the net amount. What is also notable in this incentive pay allocation scheme is that the work effort is taken into account in the formula, thus prorating the incentive pay based on the overall work contribution of the staff member. Given that more senior teachers tend to be given more teaching hours, the *Stimulus Fund* at School C advantages experienced teachers over beginner teachers.

School C offers an example of how schools that objected to the *Stimulus Fund* component of the reform undermined the new incentive structure, both by devaluing the performance indicators that reflect pedagogical quality and by distributing this compensation component

Table 4. **Sample of *Stimulus Fund* Distribution at School C, Kyrgyz Republic, 2013/14**

	Bonus Pay				Coefficient of Additional Wages	Work Rate Coefficient				Total Stimulus Fund Pay (in som)
	October	November	December	Average		October	November	December	Average	
Staff Member 1	2,886	2,886	2,886	2,886	0.3087	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	713
Staff Member 2	9,823	7,465	9,823	9,037	0.3087	1.1	1.1	1.0	1.1	2,976
Staff Member 3	3,162	2,529	3,162	2,951	0.3087	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	638

based on the assigned workload, which is more rewarding of senior teachers. The intricate formula of calculating bonus payouts in fact conceals a uniform and redundant month-to-month assessment of teacher performance based on the set criteria.

Among the most notable findings in this analysis is that the intended recipients of the Stimulus Fund—new recruits to the teaching profession who were enticed to join a workforce that enables individuals to receive bonus pay for quality work-were in fact disadvantaged because schools used the *Stimulus Fund* to meet their priorities, be it to enforce work discipline, ensure the fulfillment of administrative duties of teachers, or to assuage the discontent of senior teachers who were distraught over the elimination of *categories*, the introduction of a cap on teaching hours (which was steadily lifted over the course of three years), as well as the shift to remuneration rewarding education credentials over tenure. The *Stimulus Fund*, which introduced competition among teachers but the administration of which was relegated to schools, became the catalyst and the modality for teachers and administrator to modify and revert many aspects to the 2011 teacher salary reform to the previous salary structure. The *Stimulus Fund* was the locus of control which enabled schools and educators to adapt the reform to fit their school and maintain the social hierarchies within that shape the allocation of work hours and salaries. As the analysis of four school *Stimulus Fund* criteria, four *Stimulus Fund* finance distribution schemes, and two in-depth analyses of *Stimulus Fund* formula rationales show, schools have organized their*Stimulus Fund* distribution schemes based on one of four models:

- *Category* replacement distribution
- Teacher micro-management or compliance distribution
- Egalitarian distribution
- Performance-based distribution.

Each of these reflects social dynamics, power relations, and collective visions of each school. How schools utilized the *Stimulus Fund* to change the reform also reflects the potential of teachers to be strong

advocates in shaping the future of their profession. The impact of teachers and schools on reforms is a topic that I am currently exploring further.[6]

Conclusion

As countries such as the Kyrgyz Republic seek to identify solutions to local challenges that have been tried globally, the implementation of 'best practices' such as incentive pay are not necessarily a fit within local contexts. Reforms in remuneration policies within the public sector are especially precarious in implementation because they have a wide-spanning impact and are remarkably challenging to modify given the significantresources necessary for even smalladjustments. Because salaries impact the livelihoods of people, reforms in this sphere also deeply affect many and are susceptible to scrutiny, resistance, and discontent. This is particularly so if the reform advantages—or even appears to advantage—one group at the expense of another, as was the case with the teacher salary reform of 2011 in the Kyrgyz Republic that aimed to attract young teachers into the profession and alienated senior teachers.

In this paper, I have examined the implementation of the *Stimulus Fund* and the extent to which schools in the Kyrgyz Republic use the *Stimulus Fund* to reward high-performing teachers and attract new teachers to the profession. The evidence shows that the goal of the *Stimulus Fund* to motivate teachers to improve the quality of their work does not match the values of educators who are affected by this salary structure. Senior teachers deemed the *Stimulus Fund*'s goals as incongruent with the "moral and service values inherent to [their] teaching" practice (Cuban 1998, p. 459), which includes making tremendous sacrifices to stay in the teaching profession and with incentive pay as reward for quality of work to be insulting rather than incentivizing given the context of low salaries of the teaching profession in post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan. .

Among the goals of the salary reform was to simplify the salary structure by eliminating the cumbersome *stavka* system, aligning the pay scale by education level to increase teacher qualifications, and introducing a bonus pay structure to incentivize teachers to continually improve the quality of their work and to reward the top performing teachers. The unintended consequences of this reform however are significant, and include an emerging intergenerational rift among teachers in Kyrgyz schools [UNICEF, 2014], persisting challenges in attracting and retaining qualified teachers, and a need for re-visioning teacher salary policies to meet the goals of the Ministry that are also better aligned with the values of all teachers.

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[6] My dissertation research topic focuses on teachers as reform changers and how senior teachers in the Kyrgyz Republic impact education reforms.

As the implementation of the salary reform at the school level shows, schools and teachers are the core agents of policy implementation and are key influencers in whether reforms are adopted or rejected. The standards that policy makers have of reform implementation may differ substantially from the standards of how reforms are received by institutions and individuals. At the policy level, reforms are tested against standards of fidelity to intent and effectiveness of implementation [Cuban, 1998] whereas at the school and individual levels, reforms are examined based on their values and adaptability to suit the local context (Ibid). For successful reform implementation, the logic of reforms at the policy level must match the logic at the school level. In the context of the Kyrgyz Republic, assessment of new reforms is a particularly sensitized matter given the volatility of the teaching profession and the resistance of teachers to change after two decades of transformation within the country. As the case of the Kyrgyz Republic shows, while the structure of the *stavka* system may be antiquated, the logic inherent in its reception as an equitable system of salary distribution continues to hold steadfast in the country and in the region.

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Are Principals of Russian Schools Ready for Transformational Leadership?

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Abstract. Based on results of TALIS-2013, of which Russia was a participant for the first time, we analyze the demographic characteristics, years of work experience and workload of school principals, their competencies and opportunities for professional development, as well as their working conditions, responsibilities and priorities. We also discuss how principals participate in teacher performance assessments and delegate their school management powers, which resources they need, and how they assess the performance of their schools. Research was conducted in 14 regions of Russia and revealed different levels of leadership potential in educational institutions. The recent changes to the education system (the new Federal Law "On Education" and the new Federal State Educational Standards) require principals to work in a transformational leadership style, but only few of the respondents appear to succeed in this. Principals prefer "operating manually" and interacting with individual teachers, not staff groups. Authoritarianism and unwillingness to delegate power are the major handicaps to the transformational leadership of schools principals. There has been no established system for school principal training in Russia so far. Only a few of the regions are reported to have trained over 20 percent of candidates prior to employment; meanwhile, there are some regions with no principal training at all. It is imperative that school principal training programs teach teambuilding, delegation of power and distributed leadership skills.
Keywords: school principals, transformational leadership, administrative tasks, school management, induction, self-assessment, instructional leadership, governing board, distributed leadership.

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TALIS in Russia

In this paper we use TALIS (Teaching and Learning International Survey) data to analyze the characteristics of Russian school principals, paying specific attention to the differences in their qualities and competencies across different regions covered by the survey.

TALIS is conducted by the OECD every five years to describe, study and compare information on school teachers and principals in different countries. The first round of TALIS was held in 2008. However, Russia primarily participated unofficially and only became a full-fledged TALIS participant in 2013. The main phase of the project in Russia took place in 2014.

TALIS-2013 provides extensive information on such key issues as:

- Distribution of the teaching force;
- School management and administration;
- Training and professional development of teachers;
- Teacher performance appraisal;
- Teachers' beliefs, attitudes and practices;
- Teachers' job satisfaction and confidence in their professional skills;
- Assessment of the overall school environment and student body.

TALIS involves surveys of school teachers and principals. The 2014 online questionnaires were translated into Russian and came with the relevant glossaries.

The TALIS principal questionnaire consisted of 39 questions covering the following areas:

- Sociodemographic information (gender, age, level and forms of education, years of working experience);
- School background information (location, number of students and staff);
- School leadership (activities of the school management team and the governing board, distribution of duties and responsibilities);
- Opportunities for professional development;
- Formal teacher appraisal;
- School climate;
- Teacher induction and mentoring;
- Job satisfaction.

Sampling and Data Analysis Organization

In order to provide comparability of survey results from different countries, a representative sample of regions was surveyed in Russia. Fouteen regions were selected from the list of federal subjects of the Russian Federation. The sample was designed to include schools from each federal district. Each region supplied a number of schools reflecting the share of regional schools in the total number of schools in Russia, with due regard to the size of the teaching force. The resulting sample included the following subjects of the Russian Federation:

1) Moscow (30 schools);
2) Moscow Oblast (28 schools);

3) Republic of Tatarstan (20 schools);
4) Saint Petersburg (18 schools);
5) Altai Krai (14 schools);
6) Chelyabinsk Oblast (15 schools);
7) Volgograd Oblast (14 schools);
8) Nizhny Novgorod Oblast (20 schools);
9) Tambov Oblast (8 schools);
10) Belgorod Oblast (10 schools);
11) Ryazan Oblast (8 schools);
12) Komi Republic (5 schools);
13) Republic of Ingushetia (4 schools);
14) Pskov Oblast (4 schools).

All in all, the TALIS questionnaire was completed by 198 principals.

The questionnaire answers were analyzed using IDB Analyzer software[1]. We provide descriptive statistics of the principals' answers (in percentages and arithmetic means for items measured on an interval scale). While analyzing the data, we used weighting factors that allowed us to extend the sample results to the statistical population and to the country as a whole.

Transformational Leadership

Many researchers have focused on the problems of leadership in education over the last few decades. In this article, we rely upon the transformational leadership theory, which defines leadership as the ability to promote changes in both personal beliefs and social systems. One of the key distinctive features of this leadership style is the ambition of the leader to not only have followers but also to make independent leaders out of them who would be able to pick up the work and encourage new changes [Bass, 1998]. According to Bernard M. Bass and Ruth Bass, there are several fundamental competencies of a transformational leader:

- Ability to pay close attention to the needs of one's followers, providing empathy and support to them. The leader should maintain communication with their team, motivate their followers and approve the achievements of each member of the team;
- Ability to challenge the established ideas, run risks and promote the ideas of one's followers. The leader appreciates independent thinkers and sees opportunities for development in unforeseen situations;
- Ability to make one's beliefs appealing to followers. The leader should have optimistic outlooks and try to achieve their goals without compromising quality;

[1] http://www.iea.nl/data.html

- Ability to be a role model and to make oneself respected by others [Bass, Bass 2008].

Michael Fullan, one of the greatest supporters of transformational leadership in education, emphasizes that a successful leader learns constantly to enhance the performance of their organization and obtains followers through such enhancement [Fullan, 2011]. The major obstacles on the way to transformational leadership include:

- Punitive accountability, where the leader doesn't perceive the organization's goals as their own but rather as imposed from above;
- Working with individuals, not groups of people, which inhibits changes in the organizational culture and formation of leaders in certain growth areas;
- Imposed teaching technology or policy decisions without thorough understanding of them; such technology and decisions are often rejected [Ibid.].

To provide continuity in improving school performance, the leader should be constantly engaged in the professional development of their colleagues, head teachers in the first place.

Andy Hargreaves, another important advocate of the transformational leadership approach, argued that one of the main functions of the school principal as a leader is to help subordinate employees, i.e. the school staff, to manage uncertainty. Referring to the Finnish case, he says that school performance improvement is provided by distributed leadership, where the whole school staff acts as an expert community [Hargreaves, Shirley, 2009].

In this paper, we are going to see to what extent Russian school principals conform to the abovementioned criteria of transformational leaders and how this conformance differs across regions.

Demographic Characteristics, Years of Work Experience and Workload of School Principals

Women hold three of four school principal positions in nearly all of the regions of Russia (Fig. 1). As we mentioned in our earlier publications [Lenskaya, Brun, 2015], the high proportion of female principals shows that women have more social mobility opportunities in Russia than in any other TALIS participant country, where the average proportions of female teachers and female principals are 68% and 49% respectively. There are some regions with female school principals only: Belgorod Oblast and Pskov Oblast. However, there are also regions where male principals prevail, even though the proportion of men in the teaching workforce is low, such as the Komi Republic and Tambov Oblast where the percentage of female principals is lower than the mean TALIS value.

The oldest principals were found in schools in Ingushetia, Ryazan Oblast, Volgograd Oblast and Moscow, while the average age of the

Figure 1. **Proportions of female school principals across regions**

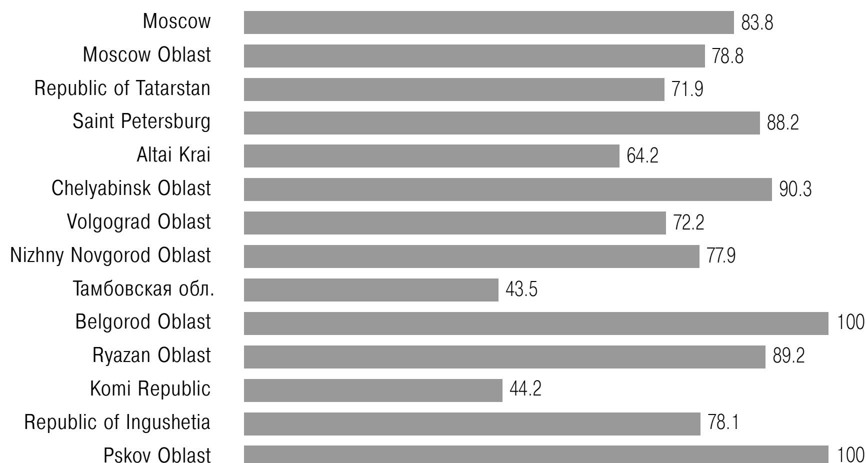
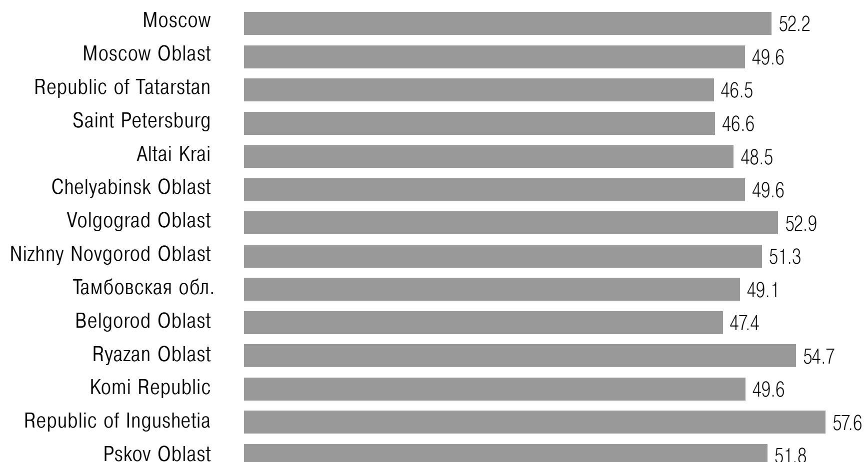


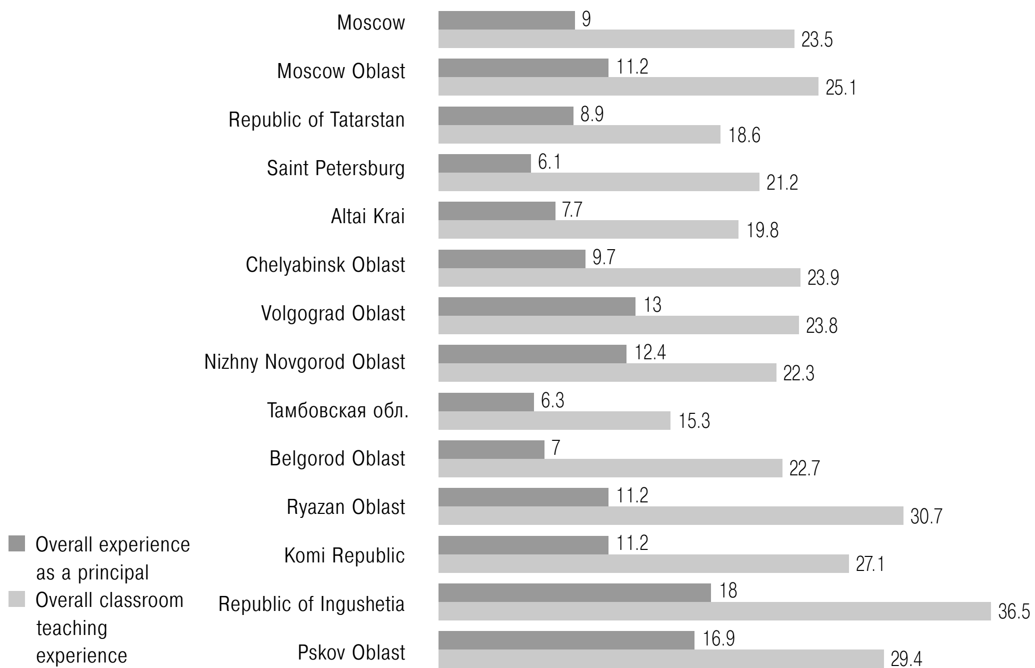
Figure 2. **Average age of school principals across regions**



school principals in Tatarstan, St. Petersburg and Belgorod Oblast is almost 5 (10 as compared to Ingushetia) years lower (Fig. 2). At the time of the survey, the school restructuring process was under way in Moscow, but it did not bring younger people into principal positions.

The principals in Ingushetia, Pskov Oblast and Volgograd have worked in their positions longer than their colleagues in other regions (Fig. 3). Meanwhile, the overall work experience (school administration plus previous classroom experience) sometimes exceeds 32 years for the principals in Moscow, Moscow Oblast, Chelyabinsk Oblast, Volgograd Oblast, Nizhny Novgorod Oblast, Ryazan Oblast, Pskov Oblast, the Komi Republic, and Ingushetia. It is clear that school

Figure 3. **Principals' years of working experience**



principals have not become considerably younger. Contrastingly, the respondents from Tambov Oblast report that their schools give principal positions to people whose overall teaching and school administration experience does not exceed 16 years.

Moscow schools show the highest percentage of principals who do not combine administration with teaching: 55%, as compared to roughly 20% in most other regions covered by the survey. Naturally, the restructuring is reflected here: not only principals of educational parks but also administrators of in-park structures just do not have enough time for teaching due to the high load of administrative tasks associated with the transition to the new status. The Moscow case approaches the statistical mean across the countries participating in the TALIS survey. In the meantime, principal research in the UK and Canada has revealed that principals who also teach are the most successful school leaders. Academic performance in their schools on average is higher than in schools of their administrating-only counterparts.

Can we expect that the principals in the regions with considerably refreshed staff will be more prepared to become transformational leaders? We will try to answer this question in the chapters that follow.

Table 1. **Hindrances to professional development** (as a percentage of the number of respondents in the region)

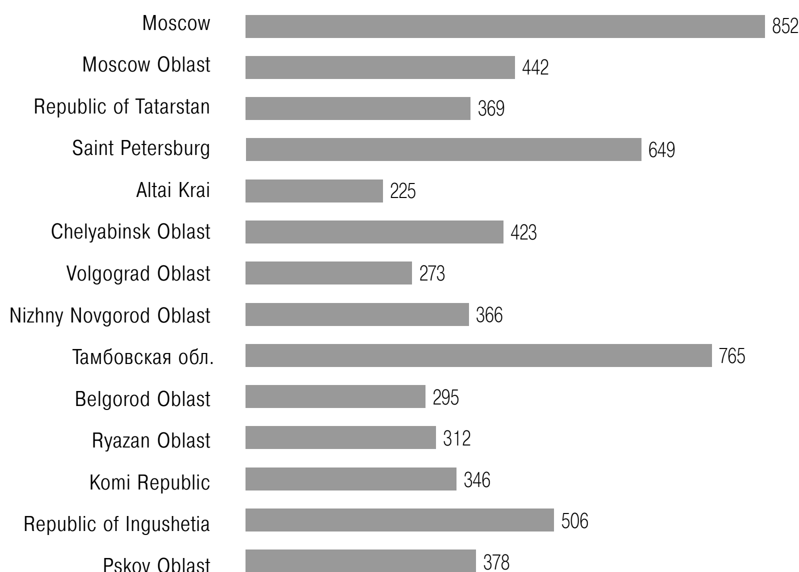
	I do not have the pre-requisites (e. g. qualifications, experience, seniority)	Professional development is too expensive/ unaffordable	There is a lack of employer support	Professional development conflicts with my work schedule	I do not have time because of family responsibilities	There is no relevant professional development offered	There are no incentives for participating in such activities
Moscow	4.0		11.0	4.3	11.8	1.1	
Moscow Oblast	8.8	27.1	25.2	49.5	5.6	22.8	10.9
Republic of Tatarstan	2.4	29.7	26.9	48.3	33.6	17.1	18.2
St. Petersburg			4.8	21.5	16.2		2.5
Altai Krai	11.1	30.0	27.0	12.1	15.7	14.3	15.9
Chelyabinsk Oblast	3.3	27.4	14.9	15.9	6.0	3.3	
Volgograd Oblast	12.6	12.6	18.5	19.7	25.2	3.5	30.8
Nizhny Novgorod Oblast			10.2	29.2	20.4	11.8	32.2
Tambov Oblast		20.4		19.1			23.9
Belgorod Oblast		18.1		28.4	28.4	5.2	
Ryazan Oblast		27.9		8.9		5.8	36.8
Komi Republic			14.8	93.5		14.8	28.6
Republic of Ingushetia		74.4	32.7	85.2		10.8	21.9
Pskov Oblast							

School Principal Training and Professional Development Opportunities

Most Russian regions show a very low proportion of principals who pass school administration classes before taking up their positions. Only Moscow, St. Petersburg and Ryazan Oblast demonstrate a proportion of 20%, which is zero in such regions as Altai Krai, Nizhny Novgorod Oblast and Tambov Oblast. Over 80% of the principals in Volgograd Oblast and Ingushetia learned school management when they were already in office. There is no region with a percentage of pre-trained principals approaching that of countries like Singapore, where two-thirds of school principals complete specifically designed training prior to getting into office.

Opportunities for professional development differ strikingly across the regions (Table 1). Seventy-five percent of the principals in Ingushetian schools complain about the cost of advanced training being too high, while the proportion of principals seeing the high price as the major hindrance for professional development does not exceed 30% in the other regions, remaining at zero in Moscow and Niznhy Novgorod Oblast. Altai Krai, Moscow Oblast, Tatarstan and Ingushetia show the highest proportion of school principals unhappy with the support for their efforts from above. Principals in Moscow and Tatarstan are especially cumbered by the busy work schedule, which is also a prob-

Figure 4. **Mean number of students per school**



lem for nearly all principals in Ingushetia and Komi. Family circumstances distract school principals from professional development in the Republic of Tatarstan and Ryazan Oblast, whereas in some of the regions this is not considered at all to be an inhibiting factor. Principals in Moscow Oblast wish the range of courses offered were broader. Between 10% and 26% of principals in every region except St. Petersburg are dissatisfied with not being offered incentives for professional development. No school principal in Pskov Oblast agreed that any of the abovementioned factors was really a hindrance to their professional development.

Therefore, school principals in the small republics of Komi and Ingushetia have the least amount of opportunities for professional development. Enhancing one's professional skills in Tatarstan is also quite challenging, despite all the efforts undertaken by the government. The rest of the surveyed regions demonstrate indicators close to the statistical means across the TALIS participating countries, while the situation in Moscow is even much better.

Working Conditions of School Principals

Russian schools are mostly small, the average number of students rarely exceeding 650 even in St. Petersburg. The largest schools are located in Moscow and Tambov Oblast with their abundance of rural schools; the number of students in these two regions is approximately twice as high as in Altai Krai, Belgorod Oblast or Volgograd Oblast (Fig. 4).

Principals' answers to the question "To what extent do the following limit your effectiveness as a principal in this school?" give us a

Table 2. **Limitations to the effectiveness of school principals (as a percentage of the number of respondents in the region)**

	Extent	Moscow	Moscow Oblast	Republic of Tatarstan	St. Petersburg	Altai Krai	Chelyab-insk Oblast	Volgograd Oblast	Nizhny Novgo-rod Oblast	Tambov Oblast	Belgorod Oblast	Ryazan Oblast	Komi Republic	Republic of Ingushetia	Pskov Oblast
Inadequate school budget and resources	Not at all	38.6	10.8		14.7	10			2.9	22.7	18.1	20.2	6.5		
	To some extent	56.9	58.5	71.6	67	36.8	24.2	55	59.6	63.5	45.8	24.6	0	67.3	86.3
	A lot	4.5	30.6	28.4	18.2	53.2	75.8	45	37.5	13.8	36.1	55.2	93.5	32.7	13.7
Teachers' absences	Not at all	66.9	36.5	32	27.8	44.3	30.2	36.3	24.9	36.5	23.7	51.3	6.5	47.5	19.5
	To some extent	28.2	47.7	60	62.8	45.7	64.3	57.7	55.6	63.5	40.2	42.9	93.5	52.5	80.5
	A lot	4.9	15.8	8	9.4	10	5.5	5.9	19.5		36.1	5.8			
Lack of parent or guardian involvement and support	Not at all	38.2	11.8	10.5	32.9	30	15.4	17.2	3.3	20.6	5	20.2	6.5	47.5	
	To some extent	48.7	86.3	84.8	67.1	44.3	63.2	67.2	96.7	79.4	76.9	79.8	55.9	52.5	100
	A lot	13.1	1.9	4.8		25.7	21.4	15.6			18.1		37.6		
Teachers' career-based wage system	Not at all	51	27.5	33.2	32.5	29	33.3	21	27.8	42.5	36.6	46.2	6.5		40.7
	To some extent	45.7	65.7	63.7	54	61	66.7	66.4	57.9	45.1	63.4	53.8	78.7	100	45.6
	A lot	3.3	6.8	3.1	13.5	10		12.6	14.2	12.4			14.8		13.7
Lack of opportunities and support for my own profes-sional development	Not at all	58.5	44.4	43.5	58.6	34.2	44.7	40.7	22.5	87.6	13.4	70.8	62.4	14.8	54.4
	To some extent	41.5	52.1	56.5	41.4	61.6	55.3	59.4	77.5	12.4	68.6	29.2	37.7	85.2	45.6
	A lot		3.6			4.3					18.1				
Lack of opportunities and support for teachers' professional development	Not at all	57.2	42.8	54.3	45.4	38.9	28.4	28.1	40.7	100	23.7	54.3	62.4		54.4
	To some extent	33.7	55.8	45.6	42.9	61.1	54.5	69	56.8	0	58.3	45.8	37.6	89.2	45.6
	A lot	9.1	1.5		11.7		17.1	2.9	2.4		18.1			10.8	
High workload and level of responsibilities in my job	Not at all	37.9	23.2	3.5	10.6	34.7	15.6	8.4	2.9	24.3		26	6.5	14.8	
	To some extent	58.8	45	72.2	81.2	27.5	68.3	88.7	73.2	75.7	35.5	74	78.7	85.2	54.4
	A lot	3.3	31.8	24.3	8.1	37.8	16.1	2.9	23.8		64.5		14.8		45.6
Lack of shared leadership with other school staff members	Not at all	53.3	52.6	54.7	44.6	38.9	51.9	68.3	25.7	100	49.5	32.2	62.4	14.8	54.4
	To some extent	43.3	47.4	45.3	55.3	61.2	48.1	19.1	64.2	0	32.4	60.2	37.7	85.2	45.6
	A lot	3.4						12.6	10.2		18.1	7.6			

good idea of the factors that complicate the work of schools, particularly in a certain regions (Table 2). Ninety-three percent of the school principals in Komi complain about inadequate school budgets and resources. Their answers depict the situation in the republic as disastrous. More than half of the principals in Altai and Ryazan Oblast also suffer from a dire shortage of resources. Meanwhile, Moscow schools, as well as those in Tambov Oblast and Pskov Oblast, are quite well-off in this aspect with only 4.5% of their principals claiming similarly lacking resources… According to the respondents, the restructuring of the school network helps to optimize the distribution of resources.

The principals in Belgorod Oblast suffer more than others from the absence or lack of teachers: 36% of the respondents claim that staffing shortfalls are a serious problem for them. It is also a major issue for Novgorod Oblast (19.5%). However, the lack of teachers is barely identifiable in the other regions. Only 5–10% of the principals have "a lot" of concern about it in most regions, yet the answer "to some extent" was given by over 50% of the principals in Chelyabinsk Oblast and Ingushetia as well as by 40% in Tatarstan. The Komi Republic suffers almost no staff shortage despite its budget deficit, and neither does Pskov Oblast nor, even more so, Moscow, where 67% of the school principals are satisfied with the staffing support.

The lack of parent or guardian involvement and support is especially unsettling for the school leaders in the Komi Republic. On the whole, nearly half of all their principals complain about the lack of support, with the exception of Pskov Oblast, which is virtually unfamiliar with the problem. Generally, this means that the principals have not yet learned to interact with parents or guardians in a way to encourage their support for the school. The reasons for a situation like this become clear, for instance, when we analyze how parents participate in the governing boards: although most principals believe that they provide enough parent engagement in school management, parents actually take no part in any decision making.

The career-based wage system is quite a new experience for Russian teachers, so it is no wonder that it is a challenge for over half of the principals. The situation is best in Moscow, where only about one-third of principals expressed their concern over the use of the system, and worst in Belgorod Oblast and Pskov Oblast, where the principals obviously need some specific training.

The lack of opportunities for personal professional development is a major concern for the principals in Belgorod Oblast, Nizhny Novgorod Oblast and Altai Krai, the situation being more favorable in the rest of the regions. However, there has been no pre-employment training for school principals not only in Nizhny Novgorod Oblast but also in Pskov Oblast and Tambov Oblast. This is why, perhaps, we should not draw any conclusions on the available resources for professional development from the principals' assessments.

The lack of opportunities for teachers' professional development is felt more by the principals than the problem of their own enhancement. The survey shows that there are very few opportunities for professional teacher development in Belgorod Oblast, Altai and Ingushetia; meanwhile, these are the regions where schools struggle to attract highly qualified teachers. It appears that a complex of staffing measures should be elaborated for those regions.

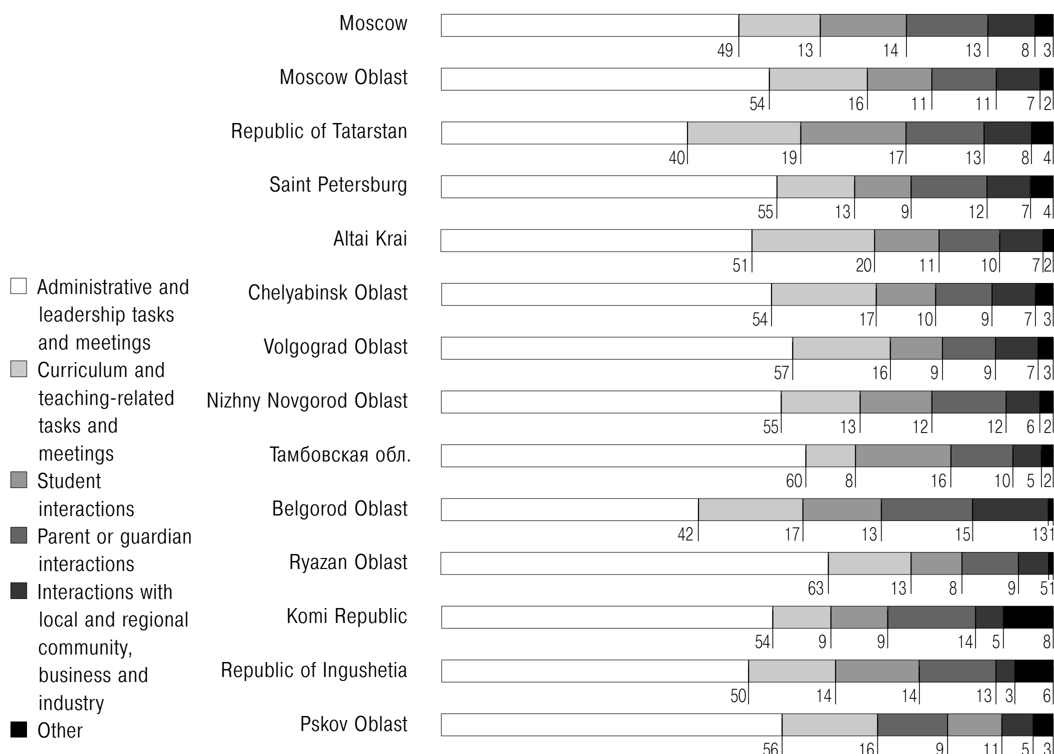
The school principals seem to be most concerned about the workload and the level of responsibilities in their job: so too are over 50% of the respondents in the majority of the regions and over 75% in Tatarstan, Chelyabinsk Oblast, Nizhny Novgorod Oblast, and the Komi Republic. An excessive workload is felt least by the principals of Moscow and Tambov Oblast schools, while it would seem that the restructuring should have vested principals with much more responsibilities, putting them in charge of whole educational parks. It may be just that a transformational attitude helps to accept the associated workload as explicit and natural.

The lack of shared leadership with other school staff members is a minor concern for most respondents. It is no surprise, as management teams and governing boards are available in almost every school. However, half of the principals in Belgorod Oblast suffer from undistributed powers despite reporting that their schools have both governing boards and management teams. Obviously, the principals are unable to or do not want to delegate their duties, and become overloaded as a result. Many of the principals in Pskov Oblast, Nizhny Novgorod Oblast and Altai Krai would perform much better if they learned some distributed leadership techniques, which are little taught in Russia, unfortunately. Failure to delegate powers is a great hindrance for transformational leadership and the nurturing of followers.

Responsibilities and Priorities of a School Principal

Distribution of principals' working time does not differ significantly across the regions, yet there are some differences (Fig. 5). Russian principals on average spend more than half of their time (56%) on administrative and leadership tasks, including meetings, reports, and responding to requests. This percentage is higher than the TALIS statistical mean, which is 41% only. However, there are regions approaching the indicators shown by the majority of the European countries: for example, administrative tasks account for about 40% of a principal's working time in Belgorod Oblast and the Republic of Tatarstan. The highest administrative load was found in Tambov Oblast (60%), probably due to the recent restructuring, and in Ryazan Oblast (63%). In Russian schools, principals spend much less time on curriculum and teaching-related tasks and meetings than their colleagues in most leading countries, even though the majority of Russian principals continue teaching and thus include their teaching hours in the teaching workload. Tatarstan and Altai principals spend more time on teach-

Figure 5. **Distribution of principal's time**, %



ing-related tasks than their counterparts from the other regions; however, nearly the same amount of time is spent on student interaction in Tatarstan, while the percentage in Altai Krai is almost twice as low. As for the "Interactions with local and regional community, business and industry" item, Belgorod Oblast stands out here, performing almost twice as well as the other regions, which is a clear indicator of good partnership relations between educational institutions and businesses.

The survey reveals that many principals spend their working time ineffectively by assuming irrelevant functions (Table 3). For instance, all Ingushetian principals reported to have collaborated with teachers "very often" to solve classroom discipline problems. The principals of Komi and Belgorod Oblast admitted doing it "often", while no St. Petersburg school leaders selected the "very often" answer. At the same time, the principals of Ingushetian schools assess the school environment as quite favorable: there is no violence among students, virtually no vandalism and theft, and even cheating is a concern for only 21% of the principals. Then a natural question is raised: is this favorable situation the fruit of principals struggling tirelessly to maintain discipline in the classroom, or do the principals see flawless discipline as a key outcome of their work?

Table 3. **Activities of school principals (as a percentage of the number of respondents in the region)**

		I collaborated with teachers to solve classroom discipline problems	I observed instruction in the classroom	I took actions to support co-operation among teachers to develop new teaching practices	I provided parents or guardians with information on the school and student performance	I checked for mistakes and errors in school administrative procedures and reports.	I collaborated with principals from other schools
Moscow	Never or rarely	20		3.2	4.1	6.5	
	Very often		2.7	5.2	13.8	18.3	31.1
Moscow Oblast	Never or rarely	18.2		6.2	1.8	6	
	Very often	1.1	16.1	13.6	11.1	21.1	28.8
Republic of Tatarstan	Never or rarely	11.3		11.3		8.8	
	Very often	6.4	10.9	5.1	23.5	15.6	40.9
Saint Petersburg	Never or rarely	40.1		6			
	Very often			7.7	31	10.5	17.5
Altai Krai	Never or rarely	10		14.3			
	Very often				15.7	12.1	32.1
Chelyabinsk Oblast	Never or rarely	9		3.3		3.3	
	Very often			5.9	19.7	4.7	15.9
Volgograd Oblast	Never or rarely	12.6				3.5	
	Very often		12.6	5.9	25.2	15.6	50.5
Nizhny Novgorod Oblast	Never or rarely	5.2		8.7	8.2	25.7	
	Very often	10.2	10.2		14.7	7.4	35.3
Tambov Oblast	Never or rarely	11.3				7.9	
	Very often				9.1	9.1	33.4
Belgorod Oblast	Never or rarely						
	Very often					23.2	40.2
Ryazan Oblast	Never or rarely	19.8			8.9	5.8	
	Very often				10.8	7.6	46.6
Komi Republic	Never or rarely	42					
	Very often				42		
Republic of Ingushetia	Never or rarely				10.8		
	Very often		36.7		21.9	21.9	36.7
Pskov Oblast	Never or rarely	65.1			21.1	13.7	
	Very often		100	21.1			21.1

All of the principalsin Pskov Oblast report having observed instruction in the classroom very often. "Often" was selected by most principals in Tatarstan, Altai and Komi, by almost all of the principals in Belgorod Oblast, and by 65% of Moscow school leaders. Yet, the same principals claim that the percentage of time they spend on teaching, classroom observations and mentoring teachers does not exceed 20%. Another natural question is: where do they find time to attend lessons so often? The viability of assuming this function by principals is highly disputable in a situation where they have a management team, which usually consists of head teachers. Ninety-six percent of the school principals confirmed that they had such management teams. According to Fullan, face-to-face interaction with teachers is a false driver of reforms which should give way to working with teams or groups of teachers.

However, taking action to support co-operation among teachers is an immediate task of a transformational principal leader. Between 21% and 74%, depending on the region, reported having often engaged in such actions, the highest proportions shown in Altai and Ryazan Oblast.

Over 50% of the principals have provided parents or guardians with information on student performance on a regular basis. Yet, it is disturbing that a certain proportion of principals (up to 21%) in some regions have not bothered to keep parents informed about the school at all.

Quite a lot of principals find time to check for mistakes and errors in school reports. In most regions, between a third and a half of the respondents claim to engage in this activity. Eighty-five percent of the principals in the Komi Republic, for instance, consider report checking their indispensable duty. This way, reporting often becomes more important to principals than teaching. Reports are assessed with praise or punishment, so principals prefer reserving this task for themselves. Fullan refers to such close attention to bureaucratic procedures as "punitive accountability" and believes it rather has a negative impact on reforms.

No one had difficulty with the item on collaborating with principals from other schools: the overwhelming majority of the respondents interact with their counterparts, either often or very often. However, almost one-third of the principals in St. Petersburg and Nizhny Novgorod Oblast do it much less frequently than anywhere else, although the collaboration between school leaders in large cities must be mutually effective, allowing them to analyze the diverse experiences under similar conditions.

Participation of Principals in Teacher Formal Appraisal

Methods and forms of formal teacher appraisal greatly affect teachers' demands concerning their professional development. By analyzing this aspect of a school principal's work, we can see how appraisal triggers professional development and to which extent it includes assessment for learning, i. e. assessment for the purpose of boosting professional growth.

Over 50% of Russian teachers report that feedback is most often provided to them by the principal or the head teacher. On the one hand, this means that Russian principals pay attention to instructional leadership; on the other hand, the limited role of assigned mentors is hard to believe. Russia is falling behind the average TALIS values in terms of feedback provided by mentors. Meanwhile, the number of mentors per teacher in Russia is higher than the average number across the TALIS-covered countries, exceeding even the number of teachers who need mentorship. The institution of mentorship exists in almost 100% of schools. The only region where it is less widespread is Belgorod Oblast, but even there 79% of schools have mentors. Most principals are convinced that mentorship is a must-have, but some regions find the concept rather dubious. In Volgograd Oblast and Ingushetia, only one in every two principals consider it very important.

Russian teachers also receive feedback from student surveys which are most often conducted by head teachers or principals. This type of feedback is much more popular in Russia than in any other TALIS country, where principals and head teachers are on average twice less likely to initiate student surveys. The efficiency of such surveys is hardly assessable: it is considered unethical to ask students about the performance of specific teachers in some countries. Yet, in a number of countries students rate their teachers, the results of such ratings being available to the relevant teacher and the principal only.

As a rule, Russian school principals take rather mild measures following a teacher appraisal (Table 4). In most cases, they discuss the feedback with teachers and prepare individual development plans, sometimes appointing mentors but rarely applying punitive measures like dismissal, salary cuts, or non-payment of financial bonuses. Nevertheless, the proportion of principals reported to apply punitive measures is slightly higher in Russia than the average TALIS percentage. The answer “Sometimes” to the question whether low appraisal leads to teacher dismissal was most often given in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Nizhny Novgorod Oblast, Ryazan Oblast, Belgorod Oblast, and Ingushetia. As for the Republic of Tatarstan, 9% of their principals say they always dismiss poor performers. Thus, school principals in half of the regions consider punishment to be the most effective way of increasing the quality of teaching. Meanwhile, 100% of the principals in Komi claim they never resort to dismissals.

Although most principals gave a high appraisal of mentors’ work, many regions only use this resource sporadically to help underperforming teachers. Nearly 50% of the respondents in Moscow and Tatarstan report that they engage mentors from time to time or even not at all, and similar answers were given by over 70% of the school leaders in Nizhny Novgorod Oblast, Volgograd Oblast, and Altai Krai. In Ryazan Oblast, one-fourth of the principals have never assigned a mentor in their career. It follows that either principals do not use even the resources at hand or these are ghost resources, existing on paper only.

Table 4. **Measures taken by Russian school principals following a teacher appraisal** (as a percentage of the number of respondents in the region)

		Measures to remedy any weaknesses in teaching are discussed with the teacher	A development or training plan is developed for each teacher	If a teacher is found to be a poor performer, material sanctions such as reduced annual increases in pay are imposed on the teacher	A mentor is appointed to help the teacher improve his/her teaching	A change in a teacher's work responsibilities (e. g. increase or decrease in his/her teaching load or administrative/managerial responsibilities)	A change in a teacher's salary or a payment of a financial bonus	A change in the likelihood of a teacher's career advancement	Dismissal or non-renewal of contract
Moscow	Never			10.2	6.0	6.9	31.3	61.5	38.2
	Sometimes	13.9	13.9	58.0	43.7	59.6	52.5	34.8	61.8
	Most of the time	27.8	43.5	21.9	29.9	22.4	16.2	3.7	
	Always	58.3	42.6	9.9	20.4	11.1			
Moscow Oblast	Never			4.0	6.2	19.1	30.6	28.1	53.0
	Sometimes		10.2	60.4	16.2	55.6	39.4	54.3	41.5
	Most of the time	35.7	66.7	24.2	43.4	19.2	20.7	17.5	5.6
	Always	64.3	23.1	11.3	34.2	6.1	9.3		
Republic of Tatarstan	Never			25.3		16.5	34.8	49.3	30.4
	Sometimes	6.6	28.7	44.3	50.6	67.1	56.4	31.8	56.7
	Most of the time	22.3	9.6	21.5	30.4	16.3	8.8	18.9	4.0
	Always	71.1	61.7	8.8	19.0				8.8
St. Petersburg	Never			12.8		2.8	43.7	21.6	44.0
	Sometimes	3.7	37.3	43.6	45.4	68.8	40.0	58.6	48.4
	Most of the time	33.0	38.9	33.4	48.8	21.7	9.0	17.4	7.7
	Always	63.3	23.8	10.2	5.8	6.7	7.3	2.5	
Altai Krai	Never			54.7	10.0	34.7	38.3	59.0	76.8
	Sometimes	28.3	23.7	11.1	50.0	35.3	59.6	18.9	23.2
	Most of the time	10.0	41.1	32.1	20.0	30.0	2.1	22.1	
	Always	61.7	35.3	2.1	20.0				
Chelyabinsk Oblast	Never			34.1		33.1	54.0	36.2	71.8
	Sometimes	7.7	8.8	38.8	20.9	62.1	34.1	60.3	28.2
	Most of the time	9.9	45.2		65.9	4.8	12.0	3.4	
	Always	82.4	46.0	27.1	13.2				
Volgograd Oblast	Never			42.0	45.3	35.4	38.5	54.9	86.2
	Sometimes	11.2	48.9	58.0	31.0	64.6	61.5	33.9	13.8
	Most of the time	77.7	25.3		23.6			11.2	
	Always	11.1	25.8						
Nizhny Novgorod Oblast	Never			46.9	13.2	24.8	42.8	47.0	47.9
	Sometimes	5.9	25.7	34.4	59.6	51.3	43.7	38.7	52.1
	Most of the time	57.2	44.7	18.7	21.7	23.8	3.3	14.3	
	Always	36.9	29.6		5.5		10.2		

		Measures to remedy any weaknesses in teaching are discussed with the teacher	A development or training plan is developed for each teacher	If a teacher is found to be a poor performer, material sanctions such as reduced annual increases in pay are imposed on the teacher	A mentor is appointed to help the teacher improve his/her teaching	A change in a teacher's work responsibilities (e. g. increase or decrease in his/her teaching load or administrative/managerial responsibilities)	A change in a teacher's salary or a payment of a financial bonus	A change in the likelihood of a teacher's career advancement	Dismissal or non-renewal of contract
Tambov Oblast	Never			22.1	11.3	8.6		55.0	84.4
	Sometimes		7.9	29.7	59.1	91.4	88.7	45.0	15.6
	Most of the time	33.4	25.5	48.2	9.1		11.3		
	Always	66.6	66.6		20.6				
Belgorod Oblast	Never			5.2	18.1	39.3	80.6	54.2	28.3
	Sometimes			57.4	22.7	19.5	4.0	45.8	61.4
	Most of the time	63.4	49.5	27.1	54.2	41.2	5.0		10.3
	Always	36.6	50.5	10.3	5.0		10.3		
Ryazan Oblast	Never			7.6	26.4	32.2	34.0	52.4	26.4
	Sometimes		40.4	75.8	13.4	36.8	55.2	47.6	66.0
	Most of the time	26.4	22.3	16.6	49.4	31.0	10.8		7.6
	Always	73.6	37.2		10.8				
Republic of Komi	Never		13.9	20.4	13.9	6.5	20.4	71.4	100.0
	Sometimes		37.6	79.6	6.5	51.5	79.6	28.6	
	Most of the time	79.6			79.6	42.0			
	Always	20.4	48.5						
Republic of Ingushetia	Never					21.9	21.9	74.4	21.9
	Sometimes	63.3	78.1	47.5	14.8	78.1			67.3
	Most of the time	36.7	21.9	52.5	85.2		78.1	25.6	10.8
	Always								
Pskov Oblast	Never			45.6			45.6	45.6	78.9
	Sometimes		13.7	40.7	33.2	100.0	54.4	54.4	21.1
	Most of the time	59.3	21.1	13.7	21.1				
	Always	40.7	65.1		45.6				

Delegation of Powers

Unwillingness, inability or failure to delegate powers is perhaps the largest bottleneck for sustainable transformational leadership. Large-scale transformations are impossible to execute whilst being in charge of every task and every activity by oneself [Apple, 2014; Frost, 2014; Fullan, 2011; Hargreaves, Shirley, 2009]. The principals of all regions are unanimous that their staff members are allowed to participate actively in making school-related decisions (Table 5). All of the principals in seven of the regions and the great majority of the principals in the other seven regions maintain that their schools also provide parents or guardians with opportunities to actively participate in school decisions. The only exception is Ryazan Oblast where 20% of the principals do not agree with this statement. Opinions are divided on whether such opportunities are provided to students. In Tambov Oblast, Bel-

Table 5. **Delegation of school management powers by principals** (as a percentage of the number of respondents in the region)

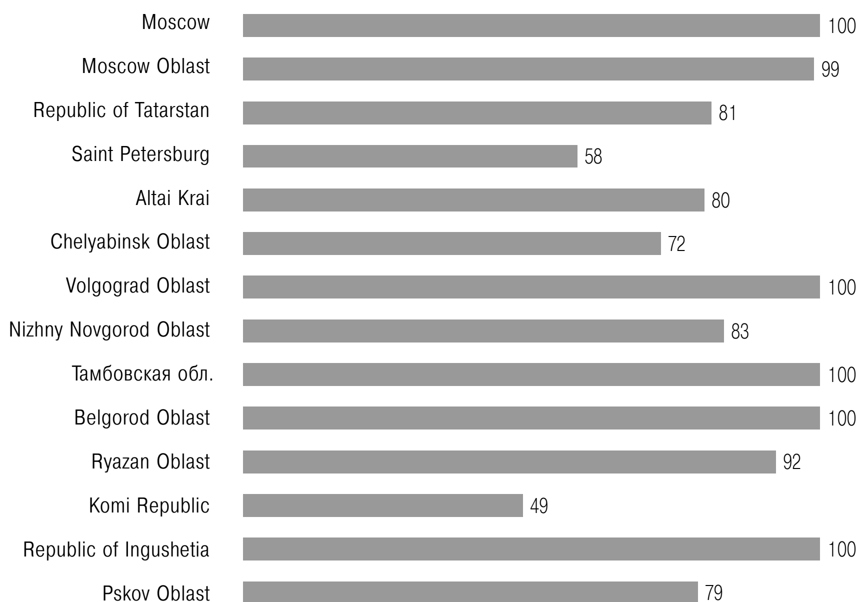
	This school provides staff with opportunities to actively participate in school decisions		This school provides parents or guardians with opportunities to actively participate in school decisions		This school provides students with opportunities to actively participate in school decisions		I make the important decisions on my own		There is a collaborative school culture which is characterized by mutual support	
	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree
Moscow		100.0	4.0	96.0	8.9	91.1	69.5	30.5	3.0	97.0
Moscow Oblast		100.0	8.3	91.7	13.8	86.2	56.5	43.5	5.0	95.0
Republic of Tatarstan		100.0		100.0	4.0	96.0	35.5	64.5		100.0
St. Petersburg		100.0	6.7	93.3	34.5	65.5	69.3	30.7		100.0
Altai Krai		100.0		100.0	2.1	97.9	66.8	33.2		100.0
Chelyabinsk Oblast		100.0	11.6	88.4	21.8	78.2	74.5	25.5		100.0
Volgograd Oblast		100.0		100.0	5.5	94.5	23.2	76.8		100.0
Nizhny Novgorod Oblast		100.0	7.3	92.7	15.0	85.0	18.1	81.9	10.2	89.8
Tambov Oblast		100.0		100.0		100.0	21.0	79.0		100.0
Belgorod Oblast		100.0		100.0		100.0	90.8	9.2		100.0
Ryazan Oblast		100.0	20.2	79.8	20.2	79.8	83.4	16.6		100.0
Komi Republic		100.0	13.9	86.1	37.6	62.4	79.6	20.4	22.9	77.1
Republic of Ingushetia		100.0		100.0		100.0	100.0			100.0
Pskov Oblast		100.0		100.0		100.0	86.3	13.7		100.0

gorod Oblast, Pskov Oblast and Ingushetia 100% of the principals assert that their students are allowed to actively participate in school decisions, while one-third of the school leaders in St. Petersburg and Komi disagree with this item.

However, while it may seem that such answers should be indicators of a high level of democracy in school management, we have to throw them into question, as at the same time a large proportion of the principals report to make the important decisions on their own. Their agreement with the relevant statement allows us to define the school leadership style as authoritarian. Authoritarian principals are most often found in Nizhny Novgorod Oblast, Tambov Oblast and Volgograd Oblast, whereas Belgorod Oblast and Pskov Oblast have the most democratic school leaders with authoritarian principals accounting for only 10–15%. No principal in Ingushetia agrees with the statement.

We received mostly positive answers to the question "Do you have a school governing board?" Governing boards are available in all of the schools in six of the regions and in 70–90% of schools in the other re-

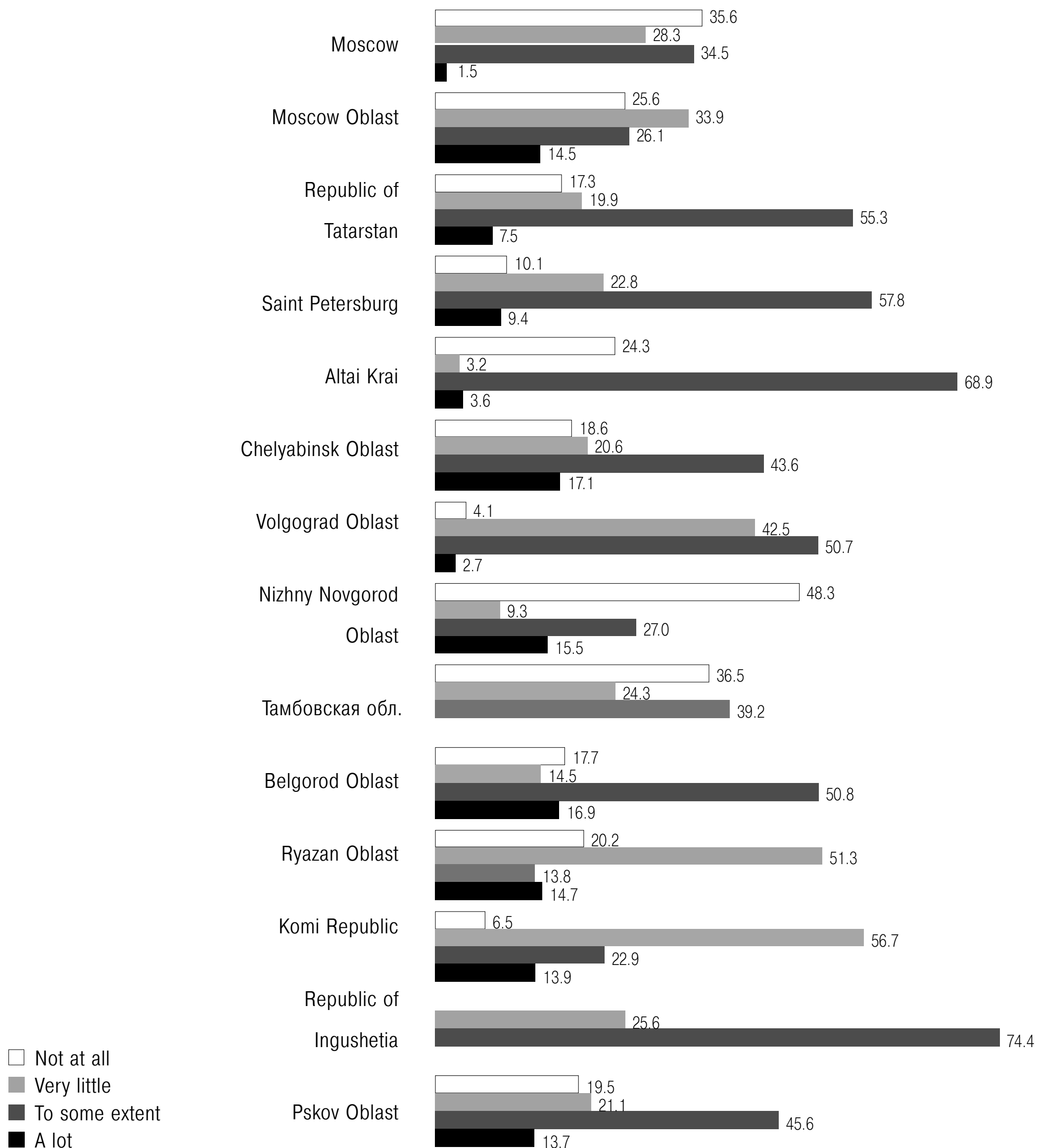
Figure 6. **Availability of school governing boards**



gions, except for St. Petersburg and Komi, where the number is much lower (Fig. 6). However, the availability of a governing board alone is not enough to call a school's leadership democratic: there are regions where each school has a governing board, but many principals do not delegate their decision-making powers. For example, 100% of the schools in Volgograd Oblast have governing boards, but nearly 77% of the principals make all of the important decisions on their own. This is also true for Tambov Oblast: only 21% of the principals entrust decision making to governing boards, which are available in every school. This implies that governing boards in these and some other regions only exist on paper and do not perform their functions, thus depreciating the very idea of collaborative state and public administration. This TALIS data is also confirmed by other studies. In particular, in her Master's thesis [2015], Yuliya Galyamina analyzes the role that governing boards played in the merger of Moscow schools and kindergartens into educational parks. Forty-seven percent of the surveyed parents report that neither before nor after the reform did they know about the introduction of governing boards. About the same proportion of the respondents were not aware of the decisions the governing boards made on the merger. Moscow schools also each have a governing board, but it turns out that those who these boards are designed to represent know nothing about their activities or even existence.

As can be seen above, it is still too early to say that staff refreshment encourages distribution of transformational leadership strategies in terms of power delegation.

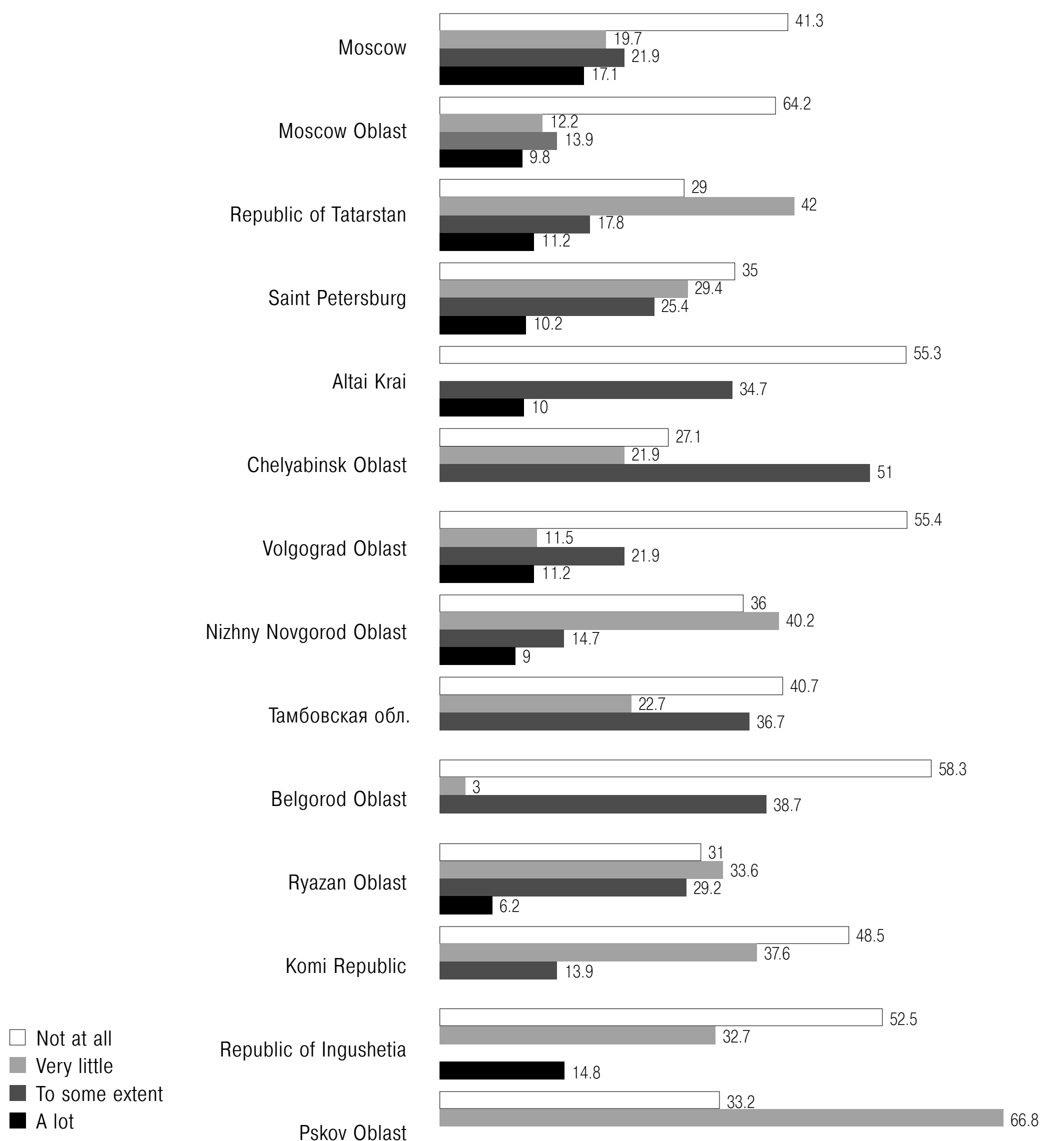
Figure 7. **Shortage of qualified teachers**



Resources that Principals Need Most of All

Despite the measures undertaken by schools to improve academic performance and teaching quality, Russian principals report the shortage of a number of vital resources. Forty-four percent of the principals believe that their schools lack qualified teachers, and 10% find the shortage severe. The principals in Tatarstan, St. Petersburg, Pskov Oblast, Altai and Ingushetia seem to be the most concerned about the lack of qualified teachers. In the latter two regions, the issue is a major concern for almost 70% of the school leaders (Fig. 7). Meanwhile, the

Figure **8. Shortage of teachers with competence in teaching students with special needs**



majority of principals in Moscow, Moscow Oblast, Volgograd Oblast, and the Komi Republic are satisfied with the quality of teaching.

Only 30% of all school principals report a shortage of teachers with competence in teaching students with special needs, and only 6% see it as a great hindrance (Fig. 8). In Pskov Oblast and Belgorod Oblast, no one chose the “A lot” answer, and 60–80% of principals in most of the regions have no concerns about the issue. The most severe shortage of staff members with competence in dealing with stu-

dents with special needs is observed in Moscow and Altai Krai. It is highly probable that inclusion is indeed on the policy agenda of these regions.

Russian principals observe insufficient Internet access and a shortage or inadequacy of instructional materials, computers, computer software and even library materials more often than their foreign colleagues. Little more than 20% of Australian, French, English and Canadian principals report the shortage of these resources, and some isolated cases can be found in Singapore.

Material support differs a lot between schools in different regions (Table 6). Only 10% of the principals in Moscow and Nizhny Novgorod Oblast feel a shortage of some resources; the problem is irrelevant in Tambov but very acute in Chelyabinsk Oblast, with 82% of the school leaders complaining about the lack of instructional materials. The shortage or inadequacy of computers is a concern for every region to some extent, but the most critical shortages are reported by Belgorod Oblast, Chelyabinsk Oblast, Altai Krai, and even Moscow Oblast, while Tambov Oblast and Moscow appear to be the least affected. Ingushetia experiences a disastrous situation with Internet access, which bothers virtually all the principals. Komi and Altai also face rather grave Internet access problems. The principals in these regions find it difficult to provide an adequate learning environment because the need for the Internet is very high due to the distance from the center yet using the web is almost impossible. The shortage of computer software is least perceptible in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Tatarstan and Tambov Oblast, and is suffered most by the schools in Ingushetia and Komi. The situation in Pskov Oblast is controversial: one half of the respondents do not feel the shortage of software at all, while the other half find it a major concern. We can only suggest an extremely uneven distribution of resources in the region. The shortage of library materials is acute in the schools of Pskov Oblast only. Yet, 5–10% of respondents in every region are unhappy with their library stock. In large cities, however, this is hard to explain unless the principal is unable to provide necessary resources for the school themselves.

The shortage of support personnel is a much smaller concern for Russian school principals than for their foreign counterparts, though Russian schools are poorly staffed as compared to Western European schools with their teaching assistants. What is more, foreign schools work to expand this staff category. The attitude of principals to support personnel comes from the education policy. In Moscow and Tambov Oblast, which are undergoing a restructure, the principals have to get rid of support personnel and thus cannot feel any shortage of it. Conversely, the principals of St. Petersburg and Pskov Oblast schools face an acute shortage, as reported by over 50% of the school leaders.

Table 6. **Factors hindering school's capacity to provide quality instruction** (as a percentage of the number of respondents in the region)

Region	Extent	Shortage or inadequacy of instructional materials (e. g. textbooks)	Shortage or inadequacy of computers for instruction	Insufficient Internet access	Shortage or inadequacy of computer software for instruction	Shortage or inadequacy of library materials	Shortage of support personnel
Moscow	Not at all	71.1	48.7	70.7	43.5	55.2	63.7
	A lot	11.8	3.6	3.6	11.8	9.7	8.1
Moscow Oblast	Not at all	67.7	21.8	26	19.3	48.9	32.6
	A lot		13.8	9.8	7.3	3.6	13.1
Republic of Tatarstan	Not at all	46.2	52.7	57	37.7	25.6	14.9
	A lot	4.2	1.8	15.4	6.6	6.6	27.7
St. Petersburg	Not at all	52.1	20.8	45.6	13.9	44.8	25.4
	A lot	3.7	9.4	7.2		3.7	5.6
Altai Krai	Not at all	25.3	20	10	10	10	20
	A lot	3.6	5.7	10	22.1	13.6	5.7
Chelyabinsk Oblast	Not at all	3.9	24.5	34.5	24.5	20.3	30.1
	A lot	39.2	21.4	28.8	28.8	5.5	17.1
Volgograd Oblast	Not at all	11.2	25.8	23	27.6	4.1	49.2
	A lot	13.8	28.7	25	28.7	11.2	25.3
Nizhny Novgorod Oblast	Not at all	56.8	34.4	50.8	32.4	48.3	50.5
	A lot		12.7				13.1
Tambov Oblast	Not at all	86.2	43.7	39.7	31.3	31.3	72
	A lot						
Belgorod Oblast	Not at all	9.2	22.2	39.1	34.3	12.6	68.6
	A lot		16.9	33.9		16.9	
Ryazan Oblast	Not at all	22.8	22.8	52.4	22.8	5.8	31
	A lot	8.9	8.9		8.9	8.9	15.1
Komi Republic	Not at all	63.3	48.5				71.4
	A lot		28.6	77.1	35.2		
Republic of Ingushetia	Not at all						
	A lot	14.8	21.9	36.7	36.7	14.8	14.8
Pskov Oblast	Not at all	40.7	54.4	54.4	54.4	33.2	
	A lot		45.6		45.6	45.6	45.6

Assessment of School Climate by School Principals

In most regions, the principals gave honest answers about students arriving late at school (Fig. 9). The distribution of the answers is similar to that in other countries. Yet, some of the regions demonstrate purely positive statistics: students are never late in Belgorod Oblast and rarely arrive late in Tambov Oblast.

The situation with unjustified absences is more favorable in Russia than in most TALIS-participating countries. Belgorod Oblast and Tambov Oblast look spotless here again with either no or rare cases of absenteeism (Fig. 10).

According to the survey results, vandalism and theft are uncommon in Russian schools, with only some principals in Nizhny Novgorod Oblast and Altai reporting weekly cases (Fig. 11).

The same two regions provided a more unbiased picture of student conflicts and physical injuries (Fig. 12). The principals of most regions claim that children in their schools never have fights or injuries, but this information is hardly credible. Such ignorance may be a result of the inefficiency of children's rights institutions or non-reporting by students.

Nearly all of the principals deny that students in their schools consume alcohol or drugs — allegedly it never happens in 8 out of the 14 regions (Fig. 13). It is probable that the principals prefer to evade this "hot" issue. Chelyabinsk Oblast is the only one where the principals admit the problem.

TALIS-2013 data differs strikingly from the results obtained in 2008. In TALIS-2008, 57% of the principals admitted numerous cases of student misconduct, 35% reported a decline in academic performance, and 27% confirmed that drug abuse and theft were common in their schools. It is unlikely that the use of drugs could have virtually ceased in five years.

Cheating is the only type of misconduct admitted by school principals in every region (Fig. 14). In many of the regions (Moscow Oblast, Ryazan Oblast, Republics of Tatarstan, Komi and Ingushetia), between 20% and 30% of the principals report that students cheat daily, and only a few schools in Moscow and Moscow Oblast can boast zero cheating, according to their principals. The transparency on this item is probably explained by the fact that cheating is almost impossible to conceal during final examinations, and 2013 saw an unprecedented number of cases, which the principals perceived as a direct threat to their performance evaluation.

On the whole, the survey results show that Russian school principals are not used to focusing on the problems they face: school performance monitoring and inspections exist rather for punitive purposes than to support school development.

When development is a priority, principal self-assessment is an important component of the overall principal performance measurement. If a principal can see her or his setbacks and report about them explicitly, an inspection will serve to help the principal find ways to

Figure 9. **Students' arriving late at school**

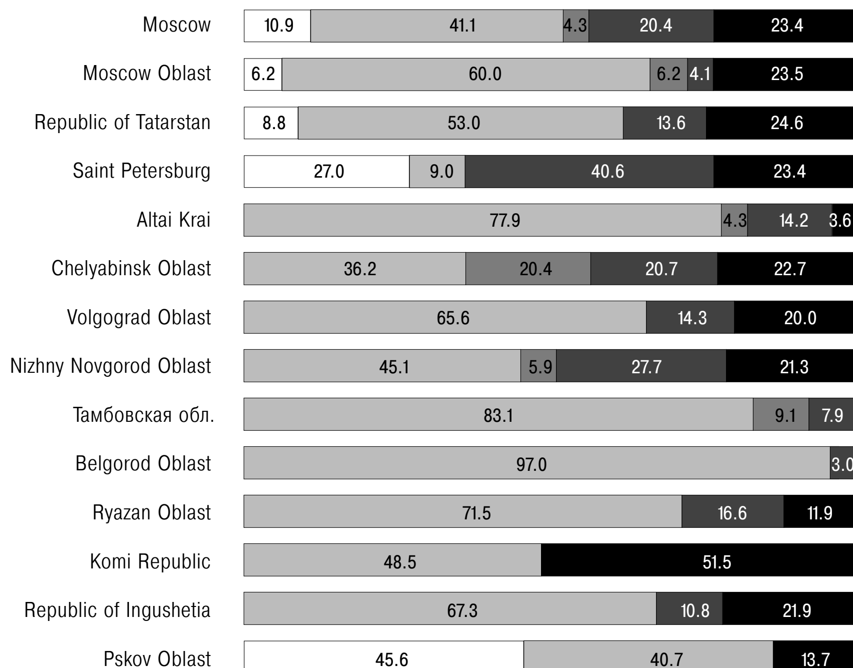


Figure 10. **Student absenteeism**

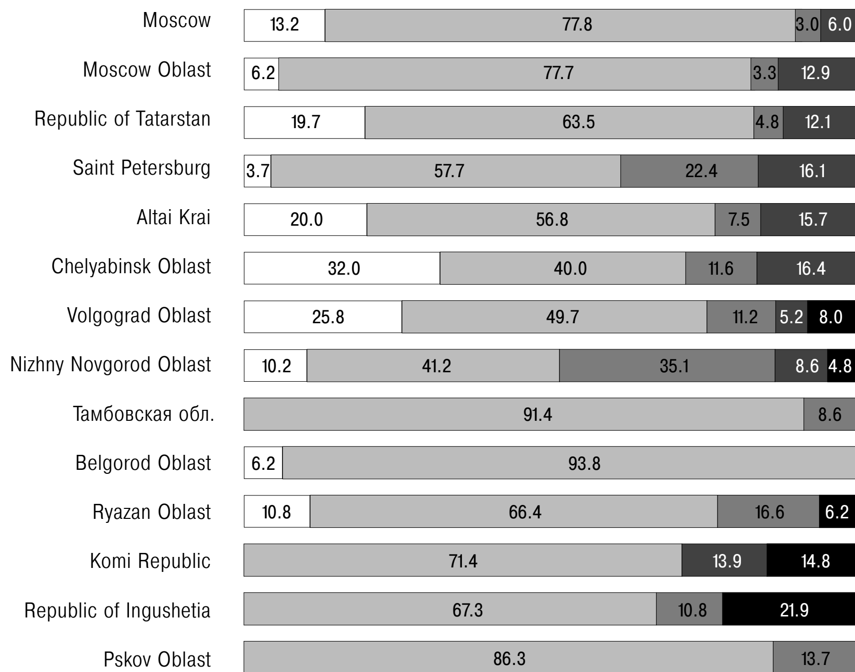


Figure 11. **Vandalism and theft**

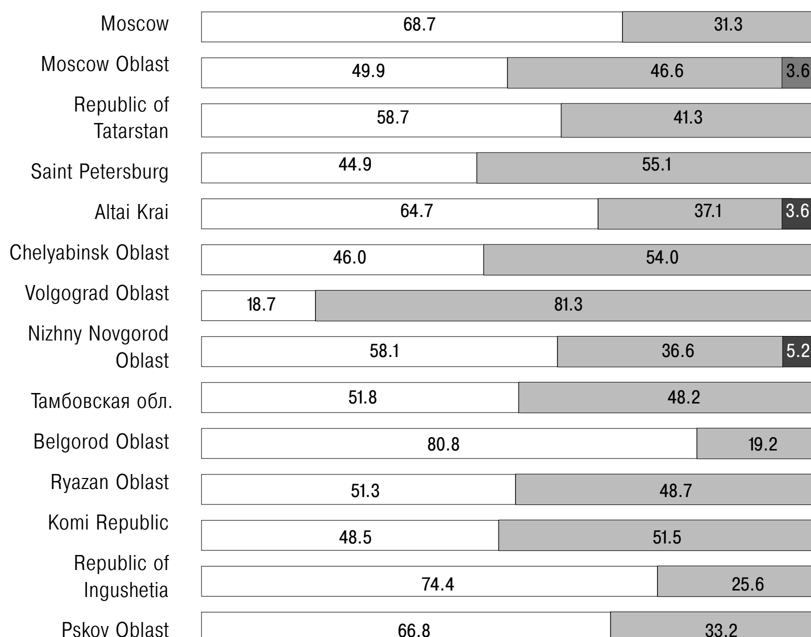


Figure 12. **Physical injury caused by violence among students**

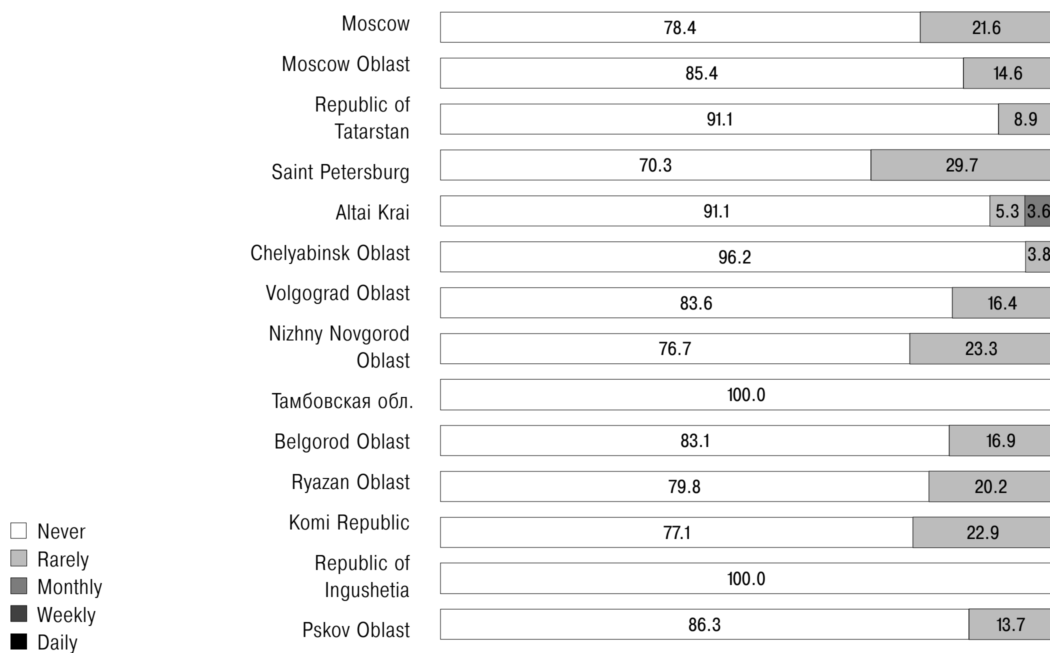


Figure 13. **Use/possession of drugs and/or alcohol**

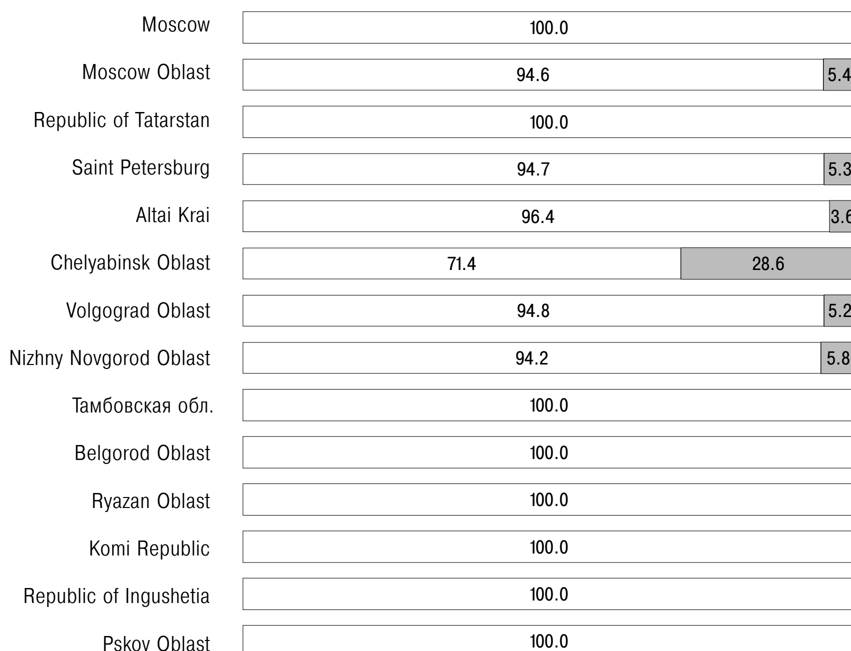


Figure 14. **Cheating**

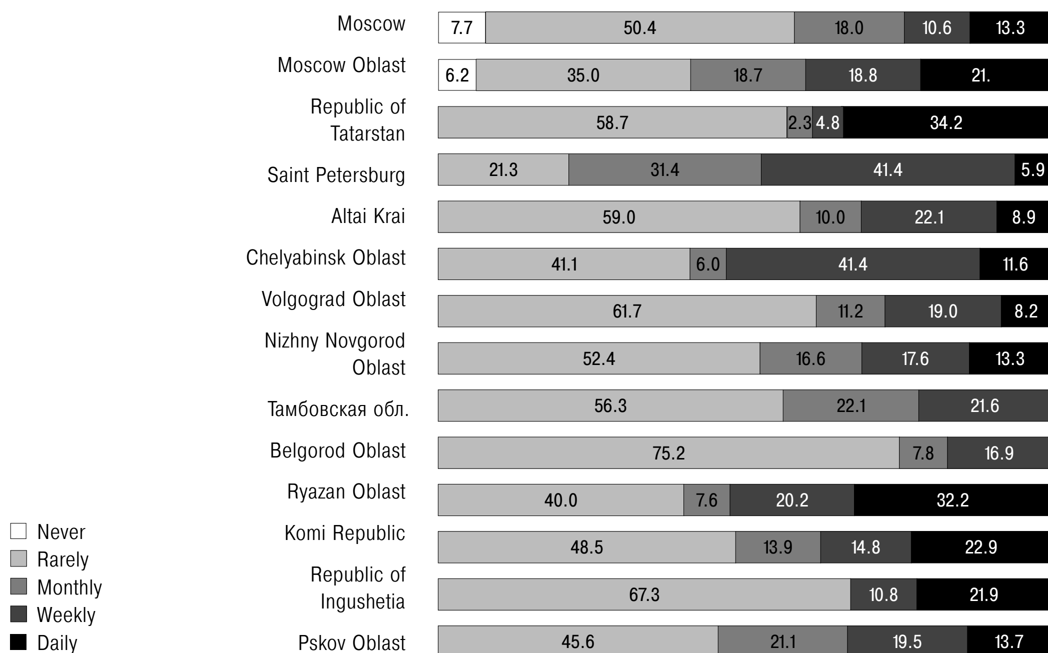


Table 7. **Job satisfaction of school principals** (as a percentage of the number of respondents in the region)

		The advantages of this profession clearly outweigh the disadvantages	If I could decide again, I would still choose this job/position	I would like to change to another school if that were possible	I think that the teaching profession is valued in society	I am satisfied with my performance in this school	All in all, I am satisfied with my job
Moscow	Disagree	14.4	5.0	93.9	16.2	5.3	4.0
	Agree	85.6	95.0	6.1	83.8	94.7	96.0
Moscow Oblast	Disagree	16.2	14.6	98.5	58.9	6.7	6.7
	Agree	83.8	85.4	1.5	41.1	93.3	93.3
Republic of Tatarstan	Disagree	20.1	18.8	100.0	41.9	18.8	11.3
	Agree	79.9	81.2		58.1	81.2	88.7
St. Petersburg	Disagree			100.0	13.4	17.8	
	Agree	100.0	100.0		86.6	82.2	100.0
Altai Krai	Disagree	17.9	4.3	86.4	46.4	23.7	
	Agree	82.1	95.7	13.6	53.6	76.3	100.0
Chelyabinsk Oblast	Disagree	17.1	28.6	100.0	34.5		
	Agree	82.9	71.4		65.5	100.0	100.0
Volgograd Oblast	Disagree	33.1	19.3	100.0	51.0	16.9	17.0
	Agree	66.9	80.7		49.0	83.1	83.0
Nizhny Novgorod Oblast	Disagree	10.5	10.5	100.0	23.9	4.9	
	Agree	89.5	89.5		76.1	95.1	100.0
Tambov Oblast	Disagree		11.3	100.0	29.5		
	Agree	100.0	88.7		70.5	100.0	100.0
Belgorod Oblast	Disagree	28.4	10.3	100.0	59.2	18.1	
	Agree	71.6	89.7		40.8	81.9	100.0
Ryazan Oblast	Disagree	7.6		91.1	69.0	34.9	14.7
	Agree	92.4	100.0	8.9	31.0	65.1	85.3
Komi Republic	Disagree	42.0	14.8	85.2	28.6	14.8	
	Agree	58.0	85.2	14.8	71.4	85.2	100.0
Republic of Ingushetia	Disagree	21.9	21.9	100.0	21.9	74.4	21.9
	Agree	78.1	78.1		78.1	25.6	78.1
Pskov Oblast	Disagree			100.0	100.0	59.3	
	Agree	100.0	100.0			40.7	100.0

handle those setbacks. However, if an inspection only aims to search for setbacks and punish the guilty, school leaders will try to hide the setbacks in every possible way, and such inspections are unlikely to promote any development.

Most principals rate their job highly and are not willing to change their profession or the school they work for (Table 7). At the same time, they evaluate the outcomes of their own work highly. Of the principals in Tambov Oblast and Chelyabinsk Oblast, 100% are completely satisfied with their own performance, while being unhappy with teacher performance and having cheaters and late arrivals in school. Some principals in other regions are not quite satisfied with their own performance, but they account for barely 20%. Only in Ryazan Oblast and Pskov Oblast are more than one-third of the principals not satisfied with the outcomes they have achieved.

Conclusions

1. The work of a principal in aiming to develop and transform their school begins with evaluating the situation as objectively as possible. If the principal is unable or unwilling to do so, they will rarely succeed in their efforts. Of course, participation in an international survey may motivate principals to make their school, their region and their country look as good as possible, but a critical attitude to one's own performance is still required. This is how principals treat their achievements in countries with the highest education outcomes, such as Singapore, Finland, etc.
2. As a result of the reforms and school network optimization, schools in a number of Russian regions are now led by young principals who are more optimistic about both their own potential and the opportunities at work. However, they are still unable to work in a team and delegate power.
3. To date, there has been no established system for school principal training in Russia. Only a few regions report to have trained over 20 percent of candidates prior to employment; meanwhile, there are regions with no principal training at all. The Governments of these regions as well as the school principals should pay special attention to staff training, since an unprepared principal cannot provide a high level of performance, and there is no time for learning on the job.
4. Many school leaders even complain about problems that they have the power to overcome. For instance, the lack of library materials is quite a solvable problem in large cities, but principals often adopt a parasitical behavior style, which makes successful transformational leadership impossible. However, there are objective problems too: schools in some of the regions have virtually no Internet access for students, experience an acute shortage of budget funds and suffer a lack of teachers. Solving those

issues is a mission, not so much for the principals, but for the local governments.

5. Nearly all principals actively appraise teachers but many of them assume irrelevant functions, substituting themselves for head teachers or mentors. Mentorship exists only on paper in a number of regions: all principals acknowledge its importance but do not trust mentors to remedy weaknesses in teaching. Consequently, school principals prefer "operating manually" and interacting with individual teachers, not staff groups.
6. Authoritarianism and an unwillingness to delegate power are the major handicaps to the transformational leadership of school principals in many regions. In some of the regions, school leaders continue making all of the important decisions on their own despite having governing boards and sometimes they even work for the governing board while at the same time complain about the lack of assistance. Principal training programs should thus teach team-building, power delegation and distributed leadership skills.
7. In many regions, principals report a shortage of qualified teachers. However, effective advanced training programs for teachers have been organized rather poorly, and the principals do not seem to feel responsible for providing this type of training. Instructional leadership is another aspect of principal training that deserves special focus.
8. Staff refreshment as such does not prepare school principals for transformational leadership: as we can see, even the youngest principals found in Moscow and Tambov Oblast are unlikely to delegate powers, are satisfied with their performance and are ignorant of difficult students, just as their more experienced colleagues are. We have to admit though that staff refreshment does not provide quick outcomes, so the next round (TALIS-2018) will give us a more detailed picture.
9. In a large number of the regions, the principals prefer to turn a blind eye to the faults in their schools, but there are also regions where honest self-assessment prevails. The ability to identify and admit one's failures is an indispensable quality of every successful leader, and one which is critical for school performance.

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Professional Development and Training for Young Teachers in Russia

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Abstract. Based on TALIS-2013 results, we analyze the formal education of young teachers in Russia, their allocation, induction, professional development, the challenges they meet in teaching, and their satisfaction with the feedback they receive from their colleagues and school administration. We show that Russian teachers are not a homogeneous whole, as evaluations made by teachers of different ages differ greatly in all areas. Young teachers face challenges in professional communication and barriers to participation in professional development. At the same time, they are not prepared to solve practical teaching tasks and have insufficient knowledge of modern teaching techniques. We come to the conclusion that young teachers need more opportunities for professional development, particularly for active learning methods and learning in groups. Their chances of successful adaptation to school teaching standards could be increased by providing them with a specific induction and adaptation period to support their basic motivation and prevent the flight of young teachers from school due to low job satisfaction.

Keywords: school, young teachers, professional development, feedback, job satisfaction, professional competencies.

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There is a growing ageing population among the school workforce, as discovered by Russian and foreign comparative studies. A major effort has been made over recent years at both national and regional level to support young teachers, increase their salaries, provide mentorship and foster the development of their professional competencies.

We use TALIS (Teaching and Learning International Survey) to acquire information on the problems faced by young teachers, their professional needs and deficiencies. The TALIS-2013 data allowed us to analyze the state of the Russian teacher community with due regard to the age of the respondents and to the social context they work in. The analysis revealed that Russian teachers should not be treated as a homogeneous and consolidated group with the same professional attitudes and views on the current situation in education. The teachers are differentiated by their social context (workforce characteristics) and age, with a number of problems being most overtly reported by specific categories of teachers, in particular by young teachers.

Formal education of teachers

The results of TALIS-2013 allow for a conclusion that the problems faced by young teachers have their roots in formal education or, rather, in the lack of some vital components to this education.

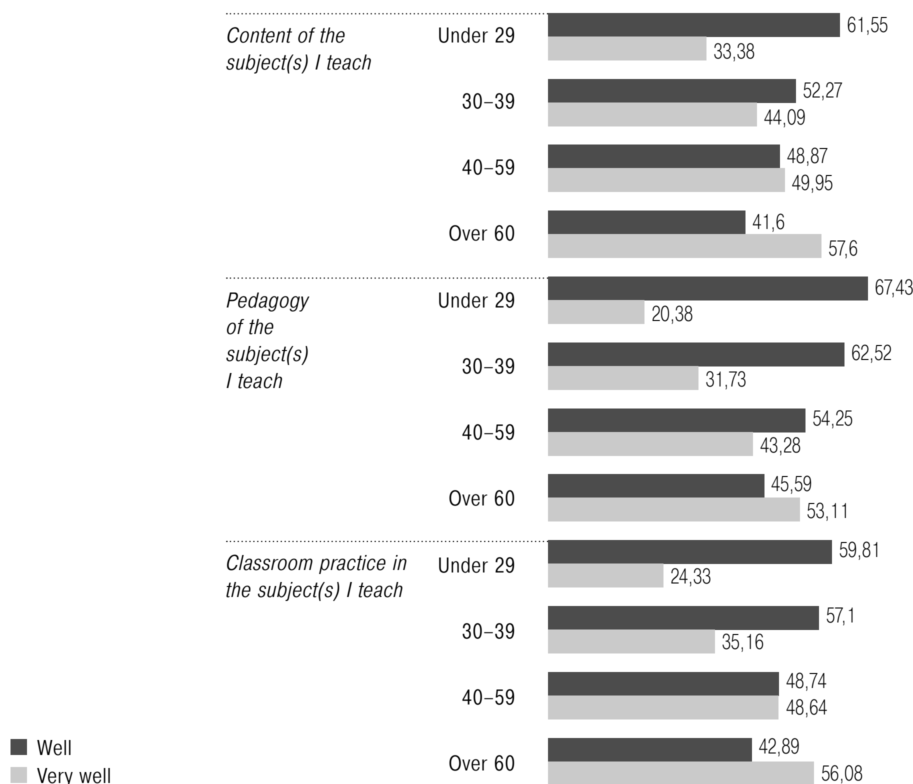
Despite the lack of large-scale studies, there is enough evidence of the efficiency of the field experience teacher education component. Upon four years of research on 28 teacher training schools and departments in the U.S., Arthur Levine describes the most successful programs as follows: "These teacher education programs are committed to preparing excellent teachers and have clearly defined what an excellent teacher needs to know and be able to do. The field experience component of the curriculum is sustained, begins early, and provides immediate application of theory to real classroom situations. There is a close connection between the teacher education program and the schools in which students teach, including ongoing collaboration between academic and clinical faculties. All have high graduation standards." [Levine, 2006. P. 81]

This connection between theory and practice, university and school, is what is missing in the formal education that Russian teachers have been obtaining.

All researchers admit that clinical preparation during studies is a crucial requirement in making a good teacher. The US National Research Council identifies such clinical preparation (or "field experience") as one of the three "aspects of teacher preparation that are likely to have the highest potential for effects on outcomes for students" along with content knowledge and the quality of teacher candidates [National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, 2010].

Having acknowledged the role of quality field experience, it is important to identify what builds this quality. Linda Darling-Hammond believes that the most powerful programs require students to spend extensive time in the field throughout the entire program, including at least a full academic year of student teaching under the direct supervision of one or more teachers who model expert practice with students who have a wide range of learning needs [Darling-Hammond, 2006]. International experts in teacher education also stress that su-

Figure 1. **The proportion of teachers in different age groups who feel well or very well prepared in specific elements of teacher education**



pervised clinical experiences should be integrated with more formal coursework [Cooper, Alvarado, 2006]. Such experiences give young teachers the opportunity to learn vital professional competencies required for quality teaching such as classroom management skills, and the ability to use assessment instruments and assessment result analysis techniques.

Young Russian teachers surveyed by TALIS-2013 reported feeling very well prepared much less often than teachers in any other age group (Fig. 1). We compared the answers of teachers aged over 60 and those under 29 to the question on the elements included in their formal education or training (Fig. 2). If what the respondents say is true, the formal education obtained by the oldest teachers differs little from that of the youngest ones. That is to say, it has little changed over 30 years, and there has been no substantial redistribution of time spent on different education elements.

Meanwhile, international research shows that formal education of today's young teachers is hugely different from the training received by their senior colleagues in that it offers more field experience. Today,

Figure 2. **Elements of teacher education.** Evaluations by Russian teachers as compared to the international means

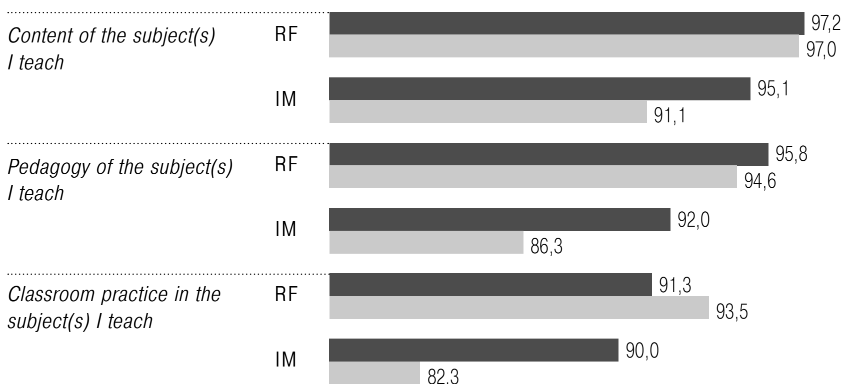
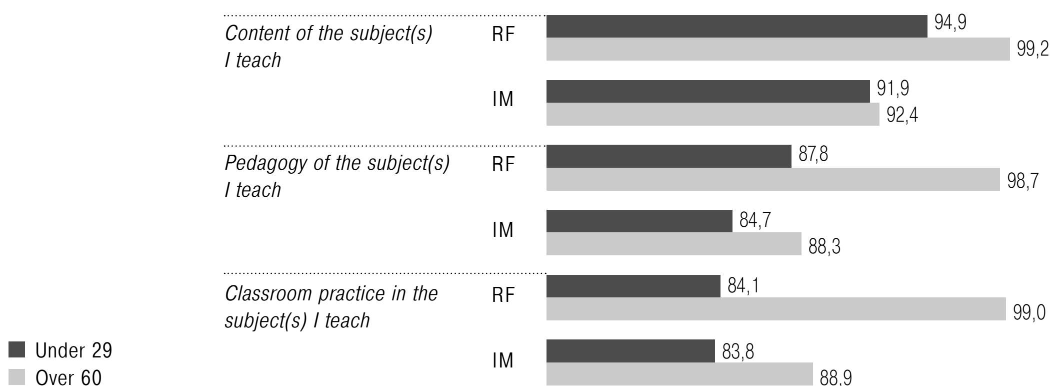


Figure 3. **The proportion of teachers who feel well or very well prepared in specific elements of teacher education.** Evaluations by Russian teachers as compared to the international means



prospective teachers focus less on the content and engage more in pedagogy and clinical practice. However, the field experience element has slightly shrunk in Russian teacher training programs.

The gap in feeling prepared between young and experienced teachers in Russia is much wider than the average in the international sample, particularly in pedagogy (Fig. 3).

What stands out in this figure is the overall higher self-assessment of Russian teachers over 60. Additional research is required to find out the reasons for such overconfidence, but this circumstance does not negate the problem identified regarding the organization of teacher education.

The proportion of teachers with no higher education is greater among the younger workforce (Table 1). Graduates of teacher training

Table 1. **The highest level of formal education completed by teachers in different age groups** (%).

	Age			
	29 or younger	30–39	40–59	60 or older
Secondary or elementary education	0.12	2.00	1.72	0
Secondary vocational education	15.51	4.38	7.94	6.70
Higher education	84.04	92.55	89.94	92.33
Candidate or doctor degree	0.32	1.07	0.39	0.97

colleges have actively headed to schools over the recent years. Some of them might have been distance students at the time of the survey.

Allocation

A definitely positive trend is that most young and inexperienced teachers in Russia are allocated to advantaged schools, which is rarely true for the other TALIS countries [OECD, 2015]. The OECD report says that new and less experienced teachers are more likely to work in challenging schools, where they cannot cope with the challenges they face. As a result, student performance gets worse and the proportion of young teachers in the profession drops [Ingersoll, 2002]. Russian schools, however, are lucky to avoid such allocation patterns. Among teachers under twenty-five, 50.34% work in the least challenging schools, 39.17% in medium-challenging schools and only 10.48% in the most challenging schools.

Professional development

Andreas Schleicher's report *Building a High-Quality Teaching Profession. Lessons From Around the World* prepared for the International Summit on the Teaching Profession in 2011 shows that contemporary education programs for new teachers in many countries focus not so much on content but rather on on-site training to combine theory and practice effectively. Apart from an academic course with emphasis on research methods and ultramodern teaching practices, a prospective teacher should undertake over a year of classroom practice in a school that keeps in touch with the university. This classroom practice is designed to help teachers develop and try out innovative methods and techniques and, of course, engage in their own research on learning and teaching practices.

The levels of professional teacher education, induction programs and professional development should be interconnected to provide continuous learning for teachers.

In many countries, teacher education is not restricted to building a comprehensive subject-related knowledge database and teaching

Table 2. **The proportions of teachers participating in induction programs by age group (as a percentage of the total population of the relevant cohort)**

	Age			
	29 or younger	30–39	40–59	60 or older
I participate(d) in an induction program for new teachers	43.67	50.77	64.36	65.39
I participate(d) in informal induction activities for new teachers which are not part of an induction program	38.37	42.67	50.89	49.60
I participate(d) in a general and/or administrative introduction to the school for new teachers	58.96	57.68	66.53	61.12

pedagogy and related sciences. Instead, it also implies the development of analytical and research skills to be applied in the classroom. Education systems in Finland and Shanghai illustrate how prospective teachers develop research competencies which are considered to be the foundation of professional training [Schleicher, 2011]. The ability to analyze student learning mechanisms and conditions allows teachers to adjust to the needs of students who fall behind, have conflicts with peers or need support in any other way.

Mentoring is widely used in providing clinical practice for teachers. According to research, mentoring of new teachers has close to zero effect on performance outcomes [Hattie, 2009]. However, it does have an effect on attitudes, motivation [Ibid.] and the well-being of new teachers [Totterdell et al., 2004]. Ultimately, mentoring results in growing new teacher retention rates and reduced teacher attrition costs [Darling-Hammond, 2003].

About one-third (30.3%) of Russian teachers under 30 report having mentors, which is a much lower proportion than that accepted by contemporary international teacher training and induction programs. Young teachers believe that they fall behind their senior colleagues in the quality of professional development right from the the beginning of their induction period (Table 2).

Formal induction programs for teachers are quite widespread, covering over 60% of new teachers. The proportion of new teachers engaged in formal induction programs is higher in the countries considered to be exemplary in terms of professional teacher education: over 80% in Canada, over 90% in the Netherlands, Australia and Japan, and nearly 100% in Singapore.

According to the survey results, young teachers have less access to various professional development activities while already working, as compared to other age groups (Fig. 4).

Figure 4. **The proportions of teachers in different cohorts who participated in any of the listed professional development activities during the last 12 months**

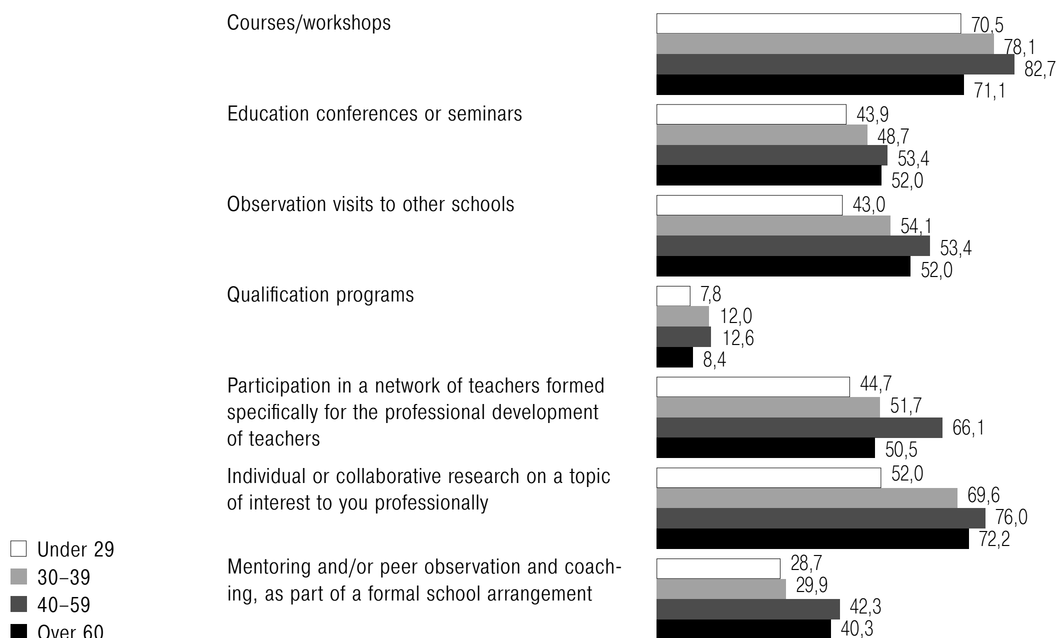


Table 3. **Participation of teachers in professional development programs by age group** (as a percentage of the total population of the relevant cohort)

	Age			
	29 or younger	30–39	40–59	60 or older
Pedagogical competencies in teaching my subject field(s)	79.74	89.66	88.66	87.85
Student behavior and classroom management	78.63	82.29	78.18	80.35
School management and administration	15.21	25.39	22.13	11.91
Approaches to individualized learning	56.29	66.14	69.93	74.23
Teaching students with special needs	25.79	29.11	29.02	37.79
Approaches to developing cross-occupational competencies for future work or future studies	54.52	62.44	67.81	64.23
Student career guidance and counseling	35.41	46.29	58.05	60.46

Young teachers confirm participation in professional development programs less often than any other age group in nearly all activities, including those that conform to the Federal State Education Standard and the Occupational Standard in Teaching (Table 3).

Figure 5. **Professional development activities that teachers of different ages took part in during the last 12 months**

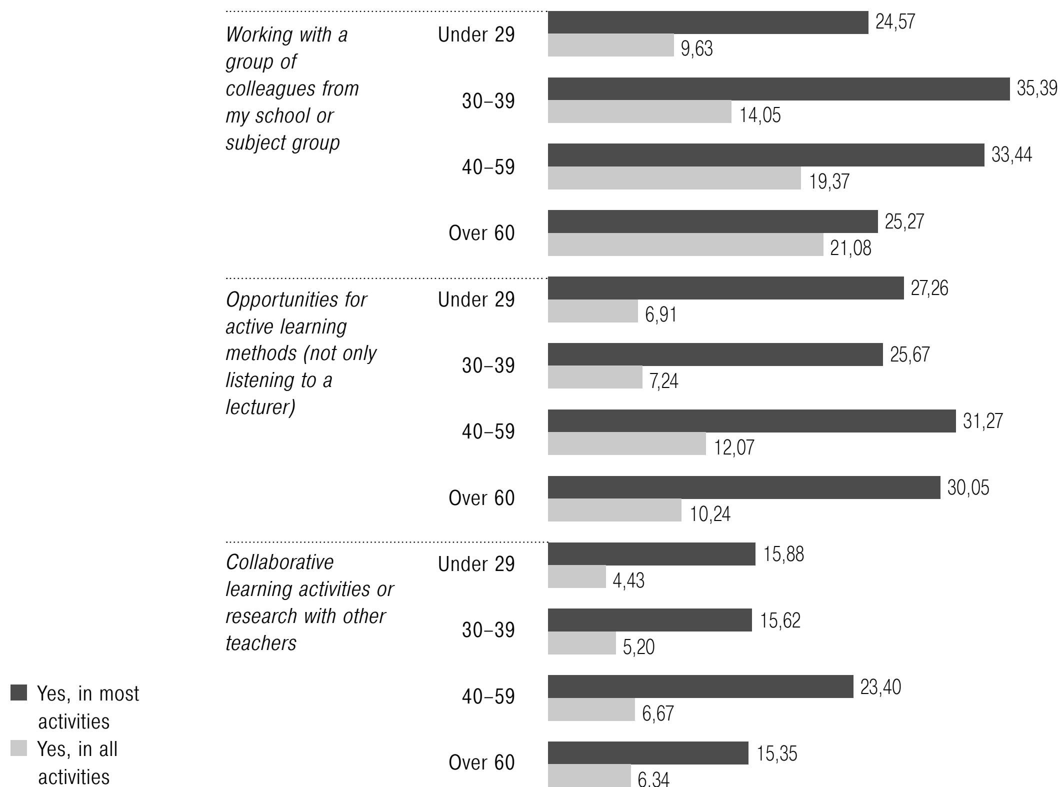
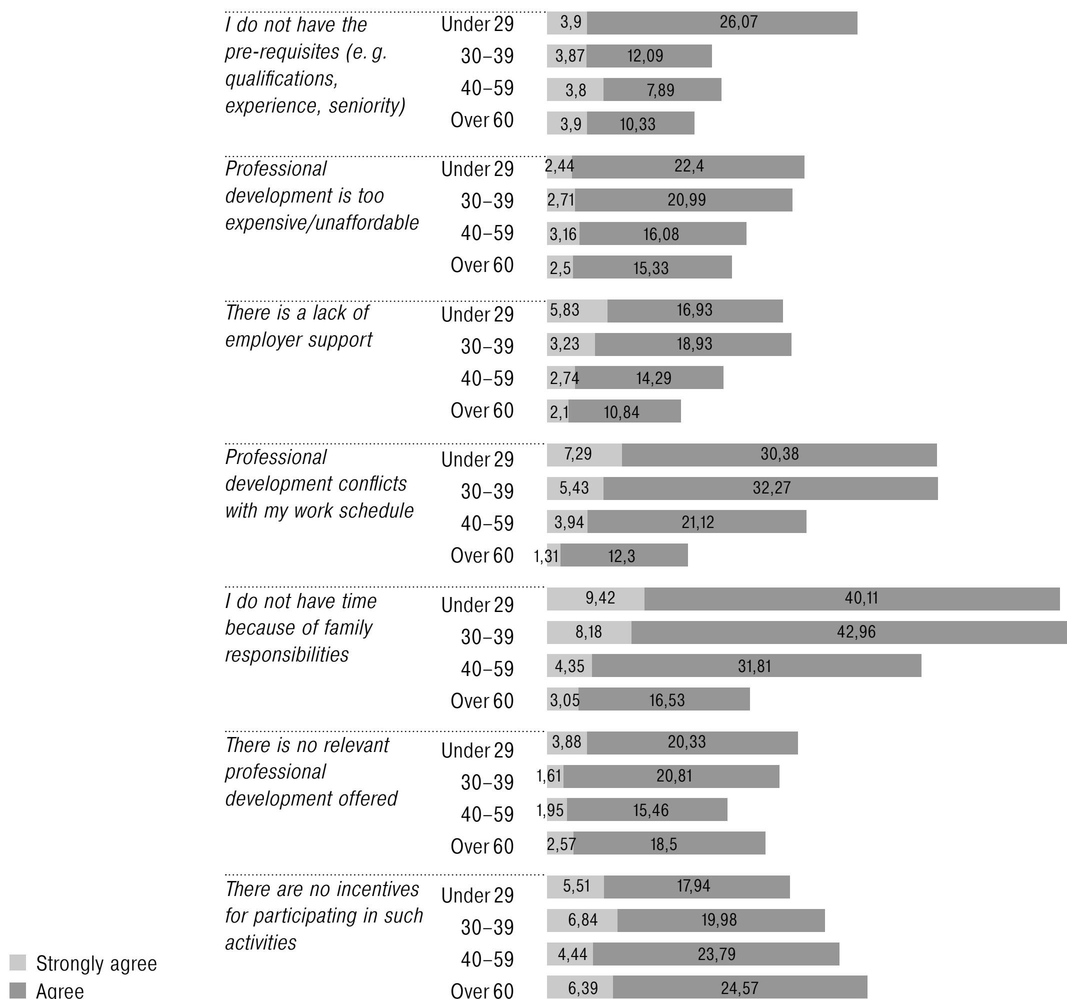


Table 4. **School administration's support for the professional development of teachers by age group (as a percentage of the total population of the relevant cohort)**

	Age			
	29 or younger	30–39	40–59	60 or older
I received scheduled time for activities that took place during regular working hours at this school	52.79	54.04	60.73	51.88
I received a salary supplement for activities outside working hours	34.55	32.22	34.52	32.50
I received non-monetary support for activities outside working hours (reduced teaching, days off, study leave, etc.)	25.22	23.27	24.46	21.99

Figure 6. **The proportions of teachers who agree that the listed factors present barriers to their professional development**

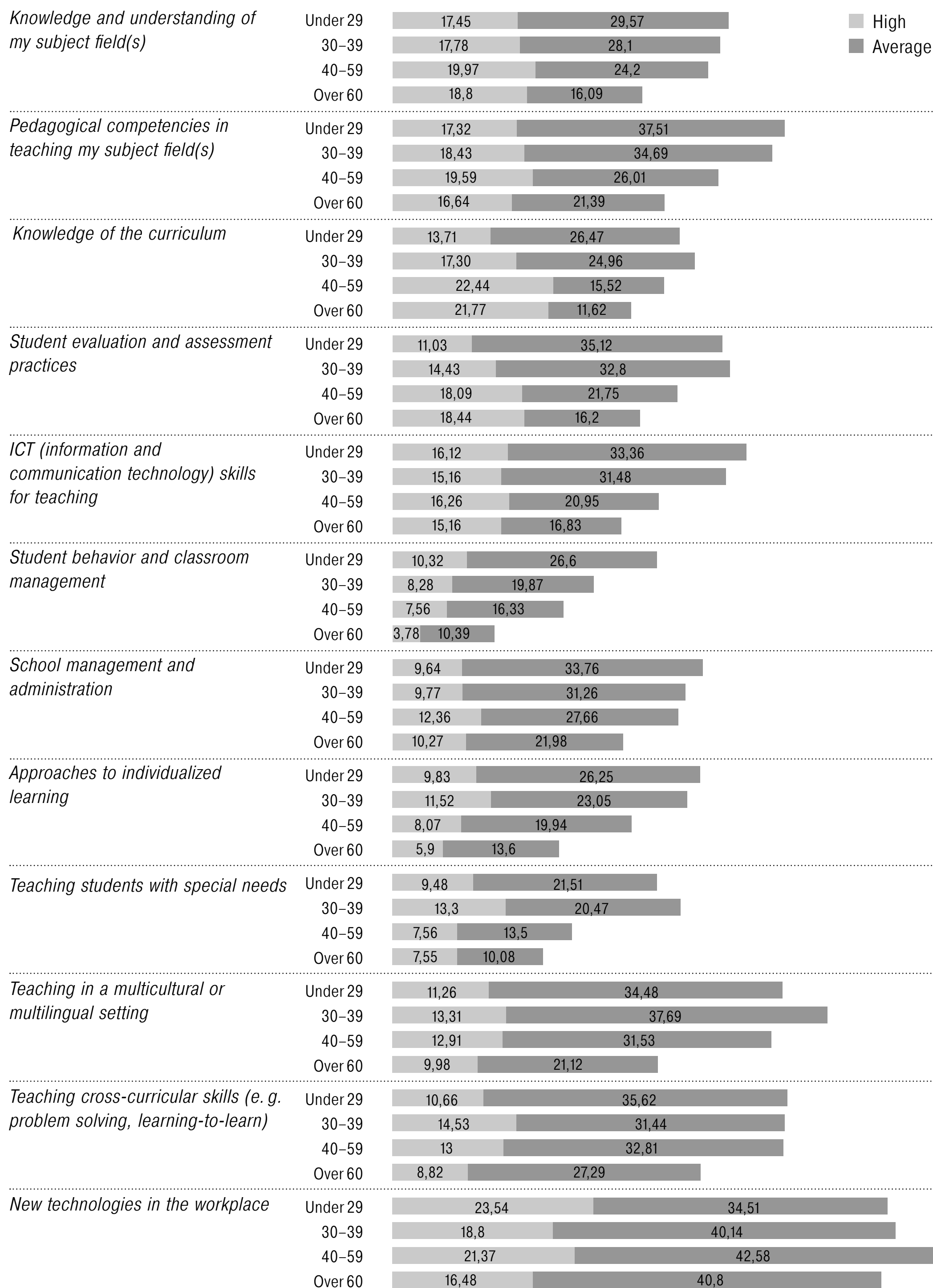


Young teachers were the least likely to confirm participation in the most active forms of professional development based on collaboration and involving research (Fig. 5).

Meanwhile, no considerable difference was revealed between reports of young teachers and teachers from other age groups on incentives and support for professional development provided by the school administration. Table 4 proves that new teachers are supported just as well as their more experienced colleagues.

However, young teachers report more often about barriers to their professional development than their senior colleagues, despite the support received (Fig. 6).

Figure 7. **High and average demand for advanced teacher training in various elements across different age groups**



According to young teachers, the lack of time because of family responsibilities and an inconvenient work schedule are the major barriers to their professional development. At the same time, they are the least likely to agree that there are no incentives for participating in professional development activities.

Young teachers have high demands for professional growth and development (Fig. 7). The survey shows that they also assess their professional deficiencies more adequately.

The nature of teachers' demands measures the efficiency of contemporary higher education for teachers. The lack of classroom management skills and the advantage in ICT skills are understandable and natural for new teachers. However, when young teachers who have just completed their formal education lack pedagogical and teaching competencies required by the Federal State Education Standard and the Occupational Standard in Teaching (such as approaches to individualized learning or teaching students with special needs), it is clear that the teacher education system is seriously failing somewhere.

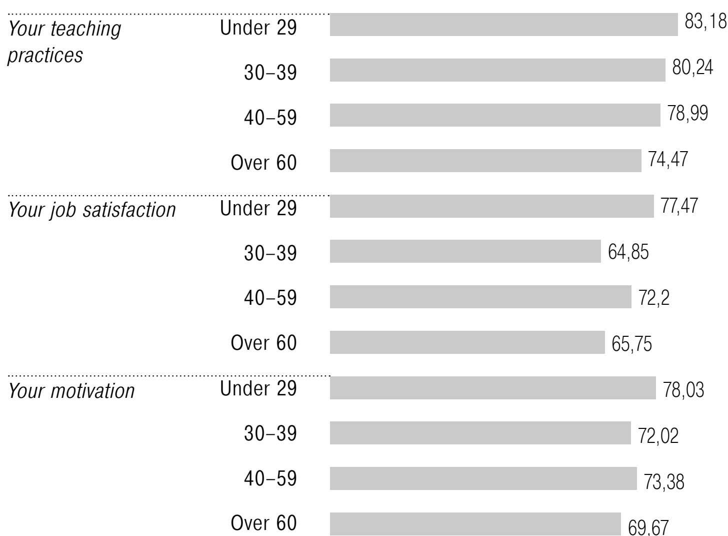
Teacher feedback

Young teachers are the least satisfied with the feedback they receive about their work from colleagues and school administration. Those who feel less prepared and explicitly demand professional development are more likely to be unhappy with the lack of specific feedback, which means that they do not receive teaching and pedagogical support in the workplace. Many young teachers have assigned mentors. However, the proportion of those who get feedback from mentors amounts to just 27.8% in one aspect, " Feedback following direct observation of your classroom teaching". Feedback from mentors following an assessment of content knowledge is provided to 22.3% of young teachers, while other types of feedback, including feedback following analysis of students' test scores, are only provided to 10–15%.

Young teachers rate the emphasis placed on various aspects of their professional activities by their colleagues and school administration much lower than teachers in other age groups. In particular, 28% of young teachers report that "collaboration or working with other teachers" was considered as low importance or not considered at all. Only 10.6% of middle-aged teachers provided the same answer. We can clearly see the lack of professional communication suffered by a large proportion of young teachers.

In addition, the effect of feedback on motivation is much more critical for young teachers than for their senior colleagues. Young teachers are more likely to believe that the feedback they have received has led to moderate or large positive changes in their motivation and job satisfaction. They are also a trifle more likely to see positive changes in their teaching practices (Fig. 8).

Figure 8. **The proportions of teachers in different age groups who see positive changes caused by the feedback they have received**



A we can see, young teachers are the most likely to show an interest in teacher feedback, and aswith professional development, they are the least satisfied with how their demands are met.

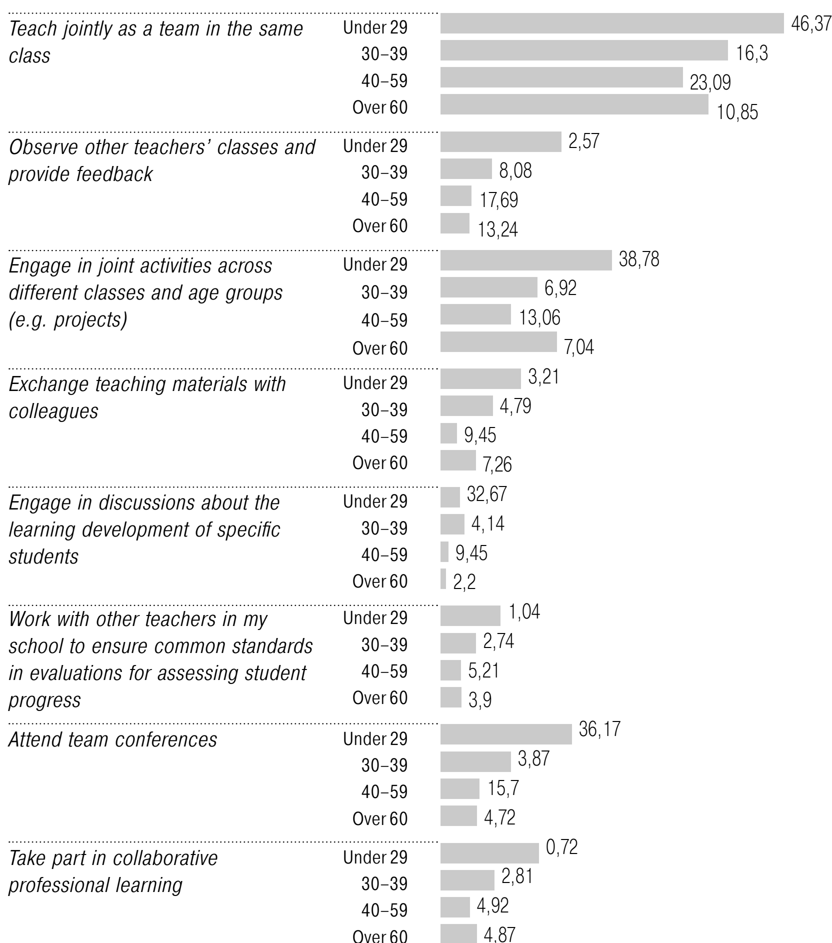
Young teachers are more critical about the quality and productivity of teacher appraisals in their schools. For instance, they are less likely to agree that the best performing teachers receive the greatest recognition and are more likely to report that teacher appraisal and feedback are largely done to fulfill administrative requirements and have little impact upon the way teachers teach in the classroom. Besides, they believe less often, as compared to their senior colleagues, that feedback is provided to teachers based on a thorough assessment of their teaching or helps improve their teaching, e. g. by serving as the basis for a development or training plan.

Teaching

Young teachers are apparently not satisfied with the organization of professional communication in teaching, just as in any other aspects of school life, choosing "Never" to the question "How often do teachers in your school work in close collaboration?" more often than their senior colleagues (Fig. 9). The proportion of those who never take part in collaborative professional learning is much higher among young teachers, even though this is what they need the most. The most positive answers were provided by middle-aged teachers.

Young teachers assess their teaching skills to be lower in all aspects than their colleagues in other age groups (Fig. 10).

Figure 9. **The proportions of respondents who chose "Never" to the question on participating in various professional communication activities by age group**

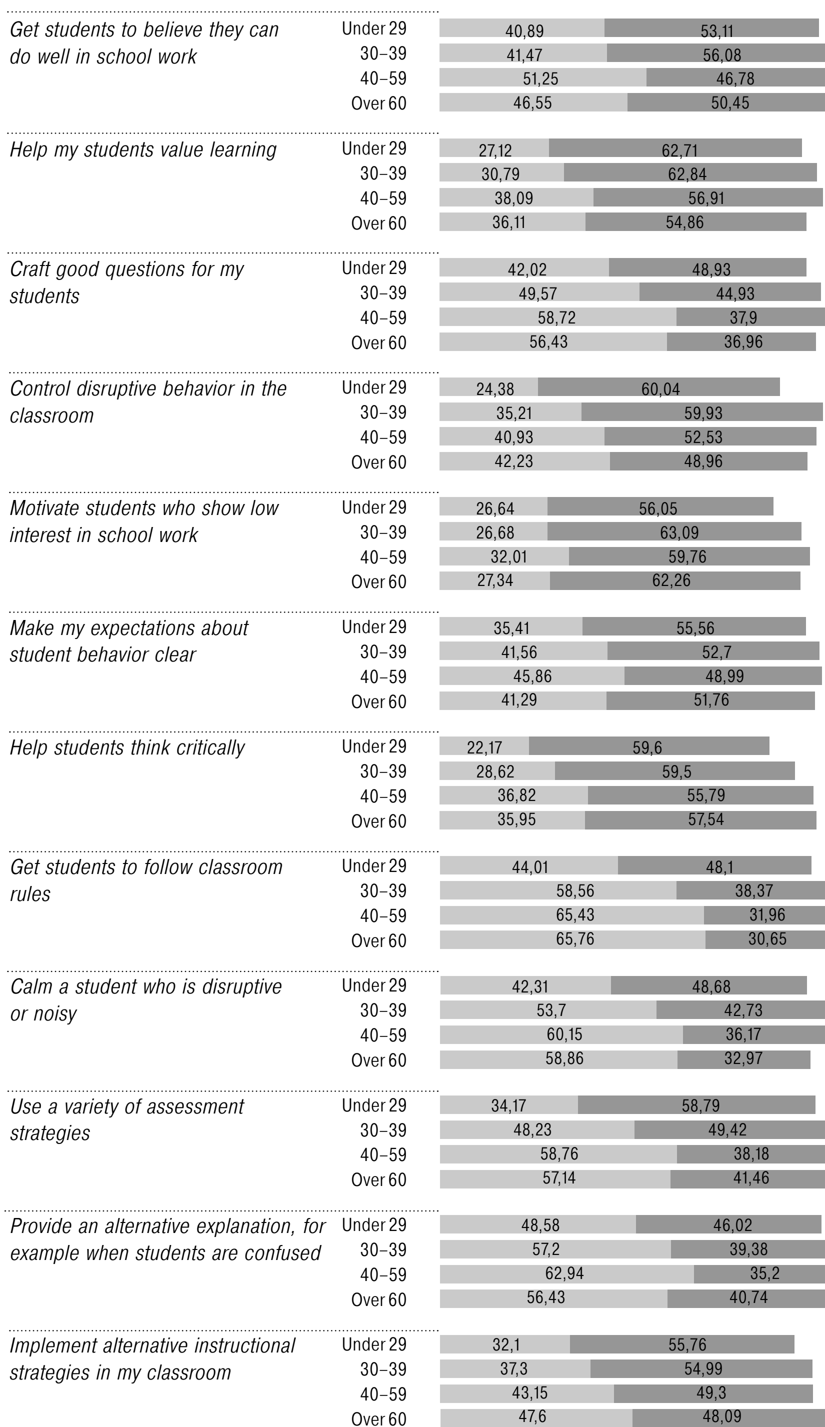


Managing student behavior and classroom time presents difficulties for young teachers, who spend more time on administrative tasks and keeping order in the classroom than on actual teaching (Table 5).

Figure 11 demonstrates that young teachers find student behavior and classroom management more challenging than their more experienced colleagues.

Young teachers possess a restricted repertoire of teaching skills, so their students have fewer opportunities for independent active work in the classroom. At least this is the feedback from the answers of young teachers to the question about the classroom activities that happen throughout the school year (Fig. 12).

Figure 10. **The proportions of teachers who report having specific classroom skills by age group**



Quite a bit
To some extent

Figure 11. **Assessment of challenges in student behavior and classroom management by teachers of different age groups**

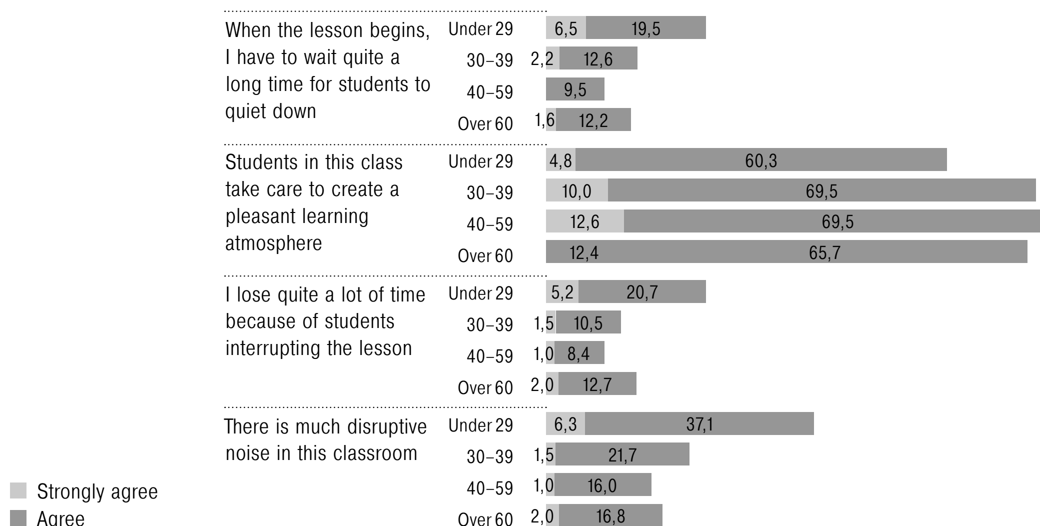


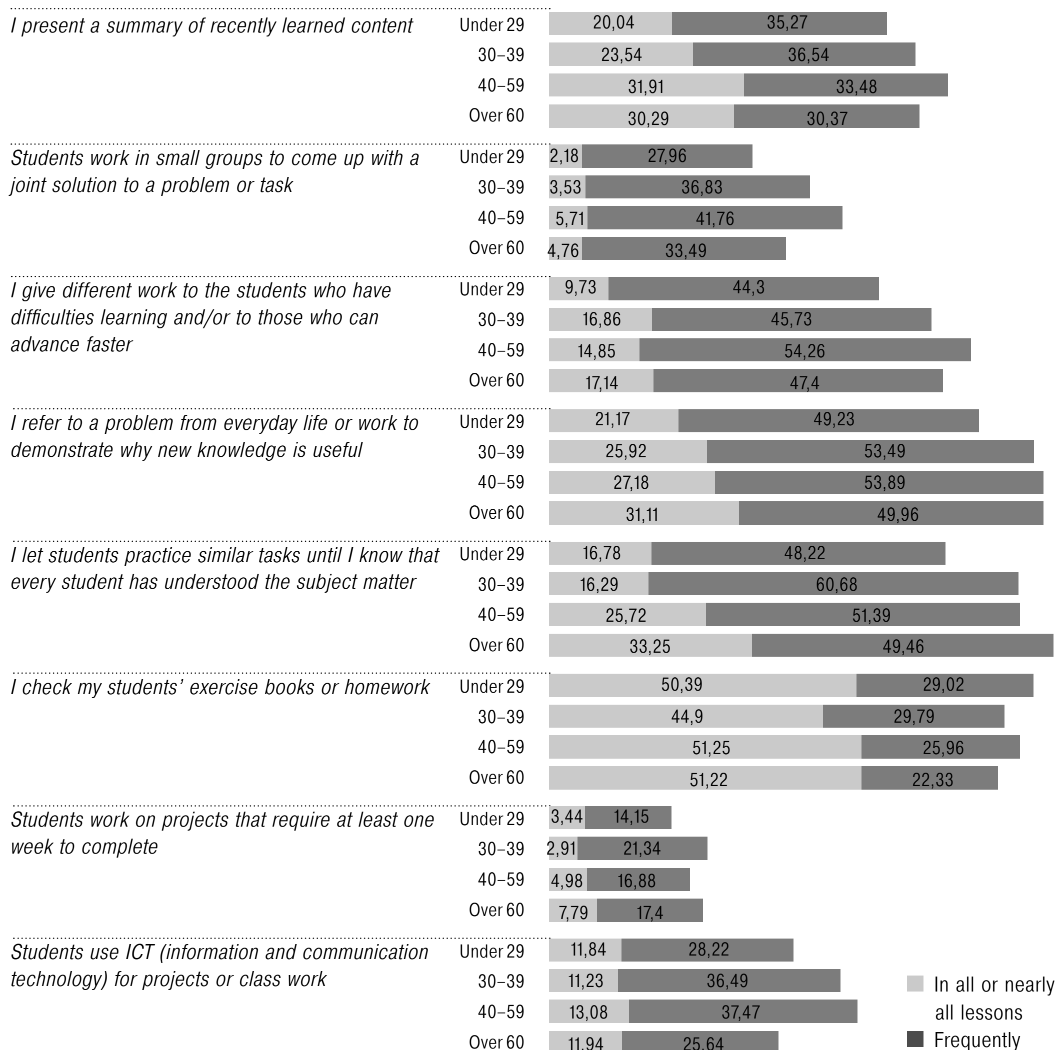
Table 5. **Distribution of classroom time by teachers of different age groups**

	Age			
	29 or younger	30–39	40–59	60 or older
Administrative tasks (e. g. recording attendance, handing out school information/forms	9.35	7.79	6.10	5.64
Keeping order in the classroom (maintaining discipline)	12.35	7.23	4.96	5.18
Actual teaching and learning	77.65	84.79	87.63	88.66

Paradoxically, the survey reveals that young teachers report not only less opportunity for their students to work in small groups and practice tasks independently but also a lower level of ICT use, the paradox being that at their age they should enjoy an obvious advantage in ICT skills.

Young teachers do not feel confident using assessment instruments other than conventional marking: Figure 13 compares how often they use such instruments as compared to the average Russian sample frequency and the international mean. Young teachers are more likely to say “Never” to the questions on using their own assessment system, providing written feedback on student work in addition to a mark, and encouraging students to evaluate their own progress.

Figure 12. **Frequency of various classroom activities undertaken by teachers of different ages**



Job satisfaction

On average, young teachers find the school climate in more favorable than their senior colleagues (Fig. 14). As for their job satisfaction, the data is conflicting. On the one hand, young teachers tend to value the prestige of the teaching profession higher than older teachers: 58.7% of young teachers believe that the teaching profession has a high social value, as compared to only 41% of middle-aged teachers. On the other hand, 32–33% of all teachers under 40 wonder if it would have been better to choose another profession, while the proportion is only 18% among middle-aged teachers (Fig. 15).

Figure 13. **The proportions of teachers using specific student assessment methods** (Russian sample mean, international mean, mean for Russian teachers aged under 30)

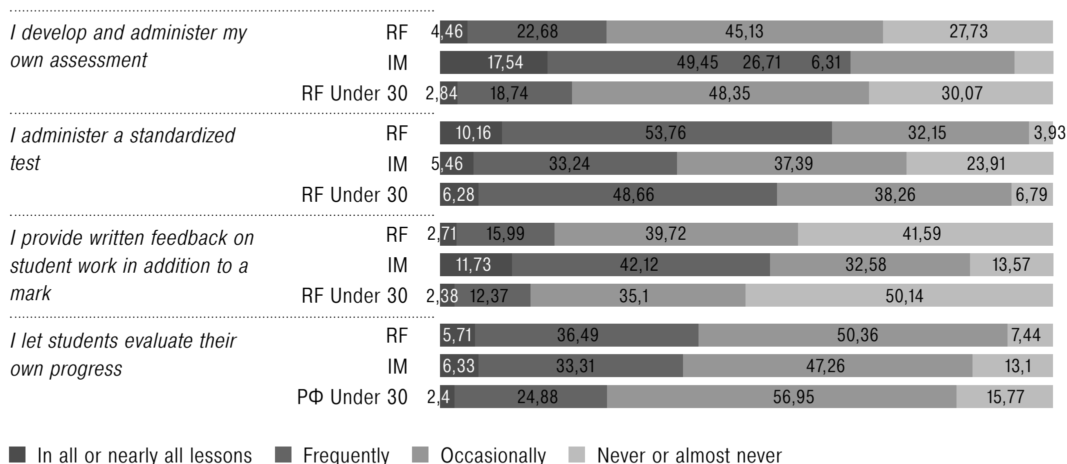
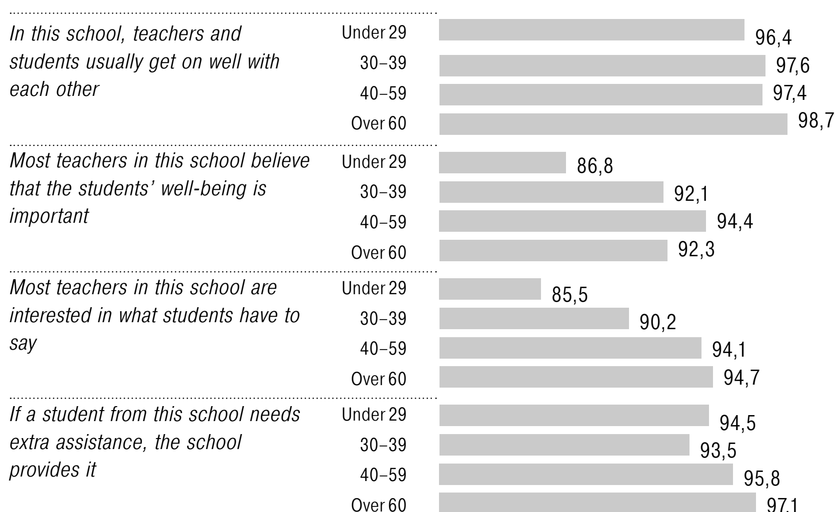
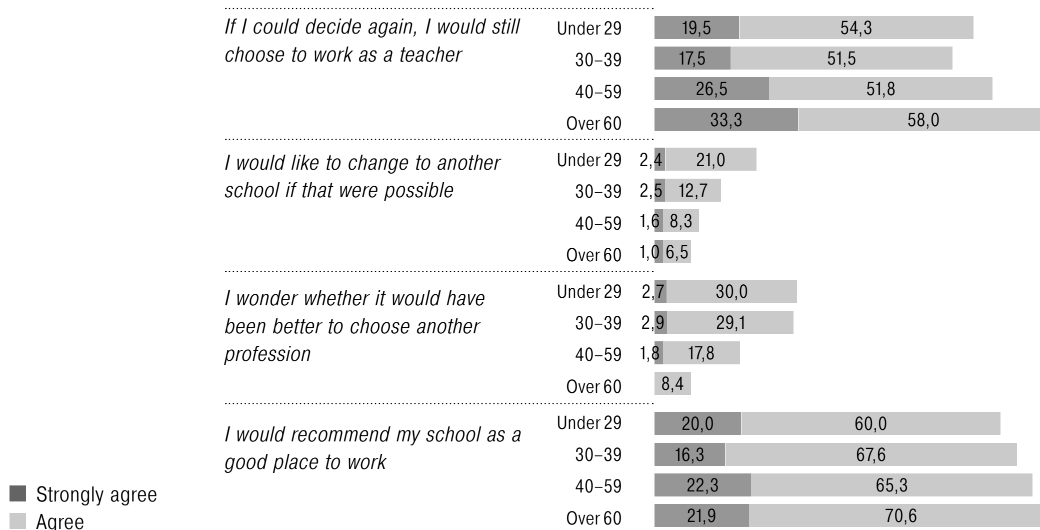


Figure 14. **Assessment of school climate by teachers of different age**



The survey results make it clear that the Russian teachers cannot be regarded as a monolithic and homogeneous whole. There is obvious differentiation between the attitudes and assessments of teachers in different age groups, the youngest teachers being the most critical. Hence the question: what if this critical attitude is a typical feature of young teachers who do not depend on the peculiarities of the national education system and policies? To answer this question, we compared the answering patterns of TALIS respondents of different ages in the Russian and international samples.

Figure 15. **Job satisfaction of teachers in different age groups**



Comparing the results in the Russian sample to the international means

We compared the indicators for different age groups in the Russian and international samples measured on complex TALIS scales that integrate answers to specific questions in the major survey units. The diagrams below show the average results on the scales with a 95% confidence interval.

Young teachers in Russia display much lower job satisfaction than their foreign peers, whereas assessments in the other age groups are pretty close to the international mean values. On the whole, age-specific satisfaction patterns in Russia are obviously different from the average TALIS ones (Fig. 16).

Differences are also found in the age-specific patterns of assessing the opportunities for professional collaboration and professional development as well as one's classroom management skills. Conversely, evaluations of young teachers in Russia are close to those of their international peers, while more experienced teachers evaluate professional collaboration, opportunities for professional development and discipline in the classroom considerably higher than the average international indicators in their age groups (Fig. 17, 18, 19).

In all of the cases, the curves of the international means look much smoother than those of the Russian sample, which means that the differentiation of opinions across the age groups is less pronounced and the evaluations of young teachers are not starkly different from those of their experienced colleagues.

The curves showing how teachers evaluate their self-efficacy and their demand for professional development look slightly less different (Fig. 20, 21).

Figure 16. **Job satisfaction of school teachers by age group in the Russian sample as compared to the international mean values**

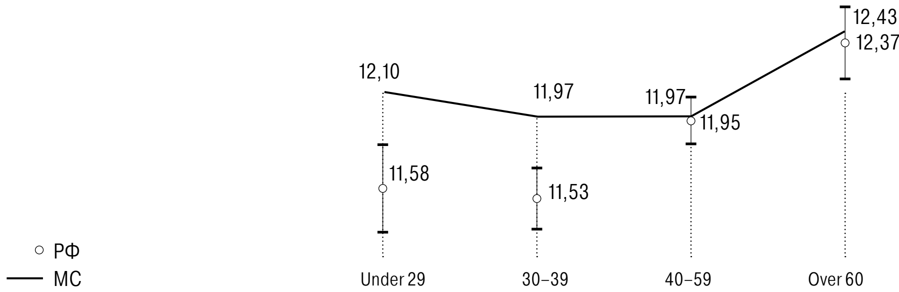


Figure 17. **Evaluation of professional collaboration by teachers in different age groups in the Russian sample as compared to the international means**

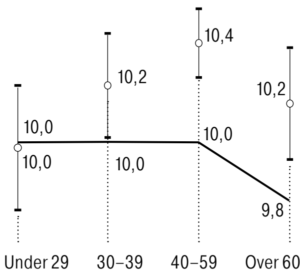


Figure 18. **Evaluation of the quality of professional development by teachers in different age groups in the Russian sample as compared to the international means**

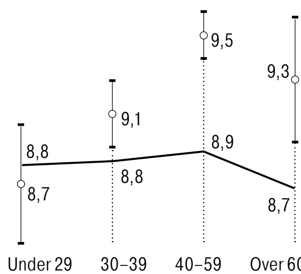


Figure 19. **Evaluation of discipline in the classroom by teachers in different age groups in the Russian sample as compared to the international means**

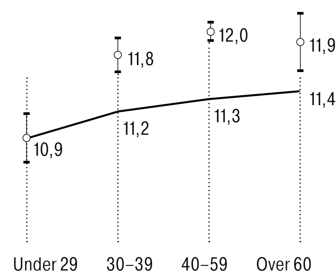


Figure 20. **Self-efficacy evaluated by teachers in different age groups in the Russian sample as compared to the international means**

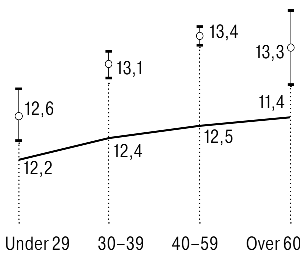


Figure 21. **Demand for professional development evaluated by teachers in different age groups in the Russian sample as compared to the international means**

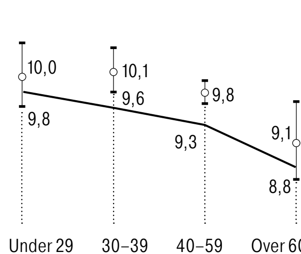
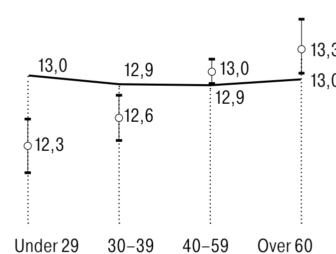


Figure 22. **Constructivist orientation of teachers in different age groups in the Russian sample as compared to the international means**



For these two parameters, the evaluations of Russian teachers are higher than the international means in all age groups, the patterns being quite similar. Therefore, young teachers in Russia as well as in other TALIS countries assess their performance lower than their senior colleagues and express a higher demand for professional development.

Constructivism scale measures teachers' orientation to using activity-based approaches to classwork to encourage student involvement. According to the international indicators, such orientation is equally typical of teachers in all age groups in TALIS countries (Fig. 22). As for the Russian sample, commitment to advanced teaching methods grows in tandem with the age of teachers, the youngest teachers being the least committed.

The credibility of the survey data on age-specific differences between teachers' evaluations and attitudes should be verified by testing a reasonable hypothesis: could it be that Russian teachers are likely to overestimate themselves with age, indulging in wishful thinking? This question provides a starting point for further research.

Conclusion

Summing up the major TALIS results describing the status of young teachers in Russian schools:

- of teachers aged under 30 claim that they did not take part in activities with a group of colleagues from their school or subject group during the last 12 months, as compared to only 3% of teachers aged 40–59;
- of teachers aged under 30 report that the professional development activities they took part in did not include opportunities for active learning methods, as compared to only 9% of teachers aged 40–59;
- of teachers aged under 30 believe that they do not have the pre-requisites for professional development (e. g. qualifications, experience, seniority), as compared to only 15% of teachers aged 30–39 and 10% of teachers aged 40–59;
- young teachers experience difficulties in classroom management; they are not prepared to use advanced teaching methods, holding a more traditional orientation than their senior colleagues;
- of young teachers do not agree that students learn best by finding solutions to problems on their own, as compared to only 9% of teachers aged 40–59;
- of young teachers say that their students never use ICT for projects or class work, as compared to only 10% of teachers in the oldest age group;
- only 25% of young teachers report that their students often analyze and evaluate their own progress, as compared to 40% of teachers aged 40–59.

Thus, as we can see, young teachers face challenges in professional communication and barriers to participation in professional development. At the same time, they are not prepared to solve practical teaching tasks and have insufficient knowledge of modern teaching techniques. The education that they complete does not enable them to teach in compliance with the present-day active learning requirements, neither does it provide them with the teaching skills required by the Federal State Education Standard and the Occupational Standard in Teaching.

Young teachers need more opportunities for professional development, particularly in active learning methods and learning in groups. Their chances of a successful adaptation to school teaching standards, especially with challenging classrooms, could be increased by providing a specific induction and adaptation period to support their basic motivation and prevent the flight of young teachers from schools due to low job satisfaction.

Of course, these measures do not exclude the need to modernize teacher education and increase the field experience element. Quite naturally, the synchronization of training and advanced training programs for teachers with the occupational standard requirements will affect all groups of teachers, not only the youngest.

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Teachers as Reflective Learners:

Teacher Perception of Professional Development in the Context of Azerbaijan's Curriculum Reform

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Abstract. This paper builds on current research trends on professional teacher development in Eurasian countries, including the diversification of teacher training, opportunities for professional teacher networking, and developing a collaborative community culture within schools and the broader education community. This study aims to explore teacher beliefs and thoughts on the effectiveness of professional development, specifically in the context of the Education Sector Reform Project (ESRP), implemented in Azerbaijan during 2008–2013. This study analyzes quantitative data from two surveys—the teacher self-assessment and the education reforms assessment. In the prevailing conventional teacher training system, teachers are perceived as beneficiaries of professional development programs. However, over the last decade, policy-makers are beginning to attach greater importance to professional development where teachers are seen as learners that are encouraged to make professional development decisions based on their needs. Including teachers in the design of professional teacher development programs might be suggested as a way to ensure learning activities have a greater impact on the quality of teaching. Such a participatory approach that strengthens teachers' roles as decision makers in their professional development has the potential to advance teacher support during education reforms. Education researchers also have an important role as facilitators mediating dialogue between teachers and policy-makers in order to build an effective partnership within the education community.

Key words: professional teacher development, curriculum reform, teacher perception, collaborative learning culture, professional networking

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1. The Reform Context in Azerbaijan

After the "crisis of the socialist public-political system and break-down of the Soviet Union" and gaining its independence, Azerbaijan, from the middle of the 1990s, gradually started to revive from "political chaos, economic paralysis and social collapse" and has set up its development priorities[Presidential office of Azerbaijan, 2012. P. 2]. In the area of education these priorities were stated as the "… development of human capital… which leads to drastic changes in the education system" [Ibid. P. 7] and the "adaptation of Azerbaijani education system to standards of the world education system" [State Commission on Education Reforms, 1999. P. 2]. In 1999, the Government initiated the Education Sector Reform Project (ESRP) led by the Ministry of Education (MoE) with co-funding and technical assistance from the World Bank (WB).

The ESRP was aimed at reforming public schooling in the country by introducing new curricula for preschool, primary and secondary education. The main goal of the new national curriculum for primary schools, which was introduced in 2006[1]and was first implemented in schools in 2008, was to transform a traditional approach to curriculum that emphasized academic knowledge and academically talented pupils towards a learner-centered approach.

In order to evaluate and document the curriculum reform, the World Bank commissioned a three-phased monitoring study that took place in 2010, 2012, and 2013.[2] These studies, the baseline study in 2010, the midterm in 2012, and the final study in 2013, assessed teacher attitudes toward the reform process. The goals of the reports were to reveal teacher attitudes towards the reform process to policy makers and to begin a decentralization of the educational system from the highly-centralized and authoritarian system into a more evidence-based education system functioning as a professional community of learners, teachers and leaders in order to sustain change.

Within the curriculum reform, teachers were required to adopt a new vision of pupils as active learners with their own interests, diverse needs, learning styles, and strengths. Teachers were also asked to use interactive child-centered teaching methods and to facilitate the development of higher-order thinking skills, creativity, critical thinking, and motivation for lifelong learning among their pupils—traits deemed necessary for the modernization of Azerbaijani society. Finally, teachers were asked to utilize new textbooks and teacher aids and to employ new assessment methods to track pupil achievement.

[1] The new National Curriculum was first introduced at the primary school level, which encompasses the first four years of schooling and is compulsory for all children starting at the age of 6.

[2] The Monitoring Studies were conducted by two local firms—the Center for Innovations in Education, a local non-governmental organization and the "Sigma" Research Center for Development and International Collaboration

The curriculum reform also introduced innovative changes to the delivery of professional teacher development. Traditionally all in-service teacher training was conducted by the Azerbaijan Teachers Institute and the Baku In-Service Teacher Training Institute, two large state institutes. The ESRP project opened the market to a diverse group of licensed and non-licensed, commercial and non-profit teacher training providers. All school teachers implementing the new curriculum were provided with relatively intensive training on curriculum applications prior to each school year.

The monitoring study revealed that teachers consistently reported difficulties they faced throughout the implementation of the new curriculum. They reported on difficulties related to every aspect of the new curriculum including the use of interactive teaching methods, the use of new assessment methods, new textbooks, and teacher aids. After these difficulties were revealed in 2010, the ESPR management extended the duration of in-service training on the new curriculum from 36 to 60 hours, introduced a procedure to vet trainers, and allowed the use of diverse training packages developed by teacher training providers instead of a single package developed by the MoE at the beginning of the curriculum reform.

Why, in spite of the professional support provided, did teachers continuously face challenges with the implementation of the new curriculum? What aspects of the professional development provided were insufficient in meeting teacher needs? What did teachers think of the professional support provided within the reform process? What kind of professional development do teachers think they need in order to cope with innovations?

These questions were examined through the analysis of quantitative data gathered during the three monitoring study phases. Our research attention was focused on teacher opinions on their innovative experience and the perceptions of their professional needs in the process of new curriculum implementation.

2. Teacher perceptions of professional needs during reform

The education reform projects initiated in post-Soviet countries during the last 20 years considered teacher professional development as a crucial issue that affected successes and failures of the innovations introduced [Silova, 2010]. Analysis of this teacher professional development has usually been conducted based on monitoring reports representing the viewpoints of donor organizations and state institutions, while the voices of teachers have been absent from the process. This research however, uses “teacher voices” to get feedback from educators and to ensure participative decision making and effective planning of innovations implemented in the area of professional teacher development [Hustler et al,, 2003; Hipsher, 2014; Johnson, 2011]. The teacher views on new curriculum applications are of particular importance in the context of the curriculum reform in Azer-

baijan because they have the potential to inform policy makers and education officials about the relationship between reform efforts and its impact on professional teacher growth, from the point of view of teachers themselves.

Teacher perception of professional development has recently begun attracting the interests of researches in post-Soviet countries. Research conducted in the contexts of Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Georgia and Azerbaijan [Niyozov, 2004; Joldoshalieva, 2006; Silova, Moyer, 2010; Gorgodze, 2013; Karimova, Kazimzade, 2014] share important features of reform initiatives undertaken across the region.

These similar features include:

1. *Diversified delivery.* Many Eurasian countries have shifted from the highly centralized

in-service teacher training model (INSET) to a decentralized and diversified teacher training model. In Azerbaijan the decentralization was realized through the involvement of the non-state institutions as primary providers of training on the new curriculum [Karimova, Kazimzade, 2014]. The reform process also increased the diversity of types or forms of professional development. For example, one issue was the difference between out-of-school and "in-house" professional teacher development programs. How does the system tackle the issue of traditional out-of-school training vs. school-based support? How are mentoring, peer coaching and other forms of teacher support valued by teachers? What are the opportunities available at schools to ensure such forms of teacher professional development?

2. *Collaborative learning community.* In order to cope with the challenge of adapting innovative teaching practices and meeting reform expectations, teachers have to be provided with opportunities to mediate and interact with their colleagues and to exchange ideas and experiences. Teachers discovered professional networking as a great opportunity to gain constructive feedback and advice from colleagues [Silova, Moyer, 2010; Joldoshalieva, 2006]. How is the teachers' need for a collaborative learning community addressed in professional development activities? How are the opportunities for professional teacher partnerships and cooperation ensured by schools?

Using data from the monitoring study, this paper makes an attempt to respond to these questions on the new curriculum implementation process, their professional needs, and teachers' satisfaction with both the quality of support provided by schools and r with training providers and local education departments.

3. The Monitoring Study

This paper reflects on findings of the monitoring study on the impact of the curriculum reform implemented in primary schools from 2009–2013. The analysis provides a data-driven look at primary school teachers' assessment of multiple aspects of the reform process in-

cluding the use of interactive teaching methodologies, applications of curriculum at the classroom and school levels, the use of diverse assessment strategies, the effectiveness of teacher training programs, and teacher perceptions of required professional support.

3.1. Research Instruments

Two surveys including a teacher self-assessment and an education reform assessment were conducted among teachers within the monitoring study.

The teacher self-assessment survey was conducted using a self-administered anonymous questionnaire, which consisted of five parts. Each part contained a certain number of questions, including multiple choice items and open-ended questions. The questions focused on the following areas: (1) background information of respondents such as age and gender, educational attainment, job experience and duration of work experience (9 questions); (2) assessment of on-going reforms and implementation of new curriculum; (3) assessment of teaching and learning processes, teaching practices, and the use of textbooks and teacher aids; (4) assessment of pupils' achievements; and (5) assessment of professional development provided in the process of the new curriculum implementation such as training and methodological support.

Education reforms assessment (The General Population Survey) consisted of four questionnaires for four respondent groups: teachers, school principals, parents, and students. The questionnaires for adults consisted of multiple choice items and open-ended questions on the following themes: (1) awareness of and support for education reforms and particularly the curriculum reform; (2) attitudes toward preschool education: (3) school library usage: (4) awareness of the importance of preschool education for children's school readiness and its impact on students' successful learning.

For the purpose of this particular research paper the relevant data gathered from teachers in both surveys was employed in order to provide an in-depth analysis of teacher perceptions of their professional needs in the process of the curriculum reform.

3.2. Study Participants

Throughout the Monitoring study phases more than 7,700 teachers were surveyed, including approximately 2,700 teachers who took part in the Teacher Self-Assessment Survey between 2010–2013, and 5,080 teachers who were surveyed within the All Population Survey.

4. Research Findings

4.1. Teacher Challenges in Coping with Innovations

One would expect that teachers practicing innovations would bring about better awareness of and more clarity in coping with innovations in the teaching process. However, the study data revealed that teacher challenges remained throughout the phases of the study. Teachers identified difficulties related to all aspects of the teaching process.

This included lesson planning and preparation, planning for individual differences, selecting useful resources, designing group work, and identification of assessment criteria.

Based on the teachers' self-reporting of the difficulties they face in the teaching process, the most common challenges could be classified as follows:

Individualization of teaching instruction and planning developmentally appropriate teaching practices: teachers reported being challenged when working with weak and low achieving pupils, taking into account individual characteristics of pupils in the teaching process, and developing various tasks differentiated based on pupils' skills and capacities. Teachers were also challenged when trying to take into account pupils' previous knowledge and skills, as well as developing tasks which were of pupils' interest.

Planning active learning lessons and using interactive teaching methods: teachers were progressively reporting difficulties planning and preparing lessons, selecting learning materials for pupils, preparing tasks for all stages of active learning lessons, choosing or preparing tasks for applying the pupils' knowledge, and meeting the lesson goals when executing tasks.

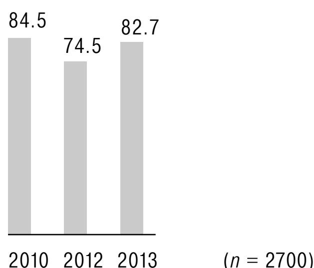
This research found that implementing interactive teaching methods, a requirement of the new curriculum, proved to be a challenge. Many teachers reported using either a blend of interactive and traditional teaching methods or continuing using traditional teaching methods. Throughout the Study phases teachers progressively reported difficulties implementing interactive teaching methods while ensuring compliance between teaching goals and methods. Other reported issues include choosing between types of classroom activities (whole class activities, or group work, peer activities or individual work) and organizing all lesson parts based on active learning.

Fostering motivation of pupils' learning: the Study revealed challenges teachers face during lesson delivery such as motivating pupils for learning; getting their attention and keeping them focused throughout the lesson; and strengthening pupils' motivation for group work and engaging them in a cooperative learning.

Using new assessment strategies: in 2013 half of the teachers believed that understanding and content memorization are qualities and skills required by the new learning standards. This misconception was confirmed by the 2013 data which indicated that the majority of teachers assess a level of memorization of the knowledge acquired by pupils.

Teacher challenges in meeting new curriculum requirements at the level of their teaching practices, as well as their professional needs remaining unmet, necessitated the analysis of professional development opportunities provided in the Curriculum Reform process. Teacher perceptions of the provided professional development opportunities are presented below.

Chart 1. **What does determine the overall quality of education in your opinion?**



4.2. What teachers want and what teachers need in order to meet the Curriculum reform challenges

Teacher respondents demonstrated a high motivation towards professional development:

Throughout the Monitoring Study phases teachers were continuously prioritizing professional development as a primary condition for quality of education. The majority of teachers surveyed reported their interest in professional development and expressed a strong demand for in-service teacher training courses.

The Study also revealed that teachers were continuously reporting unmet professional needs as well as needs emerging in the process of new curriculum implementation. Because curriculum reforms require the application of new skills in classroom management, teaching children with special educational needs, and differentiated instruction, more than half of the teachers surveyed in 2013 reported that they had insufficient knowledge of subject curricula, teaching instruction, assessment strategies, and ICT skills.

The need to improve ICT skills was indicated as a major issue for professional teacher development throughout all the Study phases. The majority of teachers repeatedly identified a difficulty with the ICT application and searching for information as the main areas in which they needed to be supported.

It is also especially important to analyze the supply of professional teacher support in the process of implementing a new curriculum. The Monitoring Study findings present the teacher perceptions of three factors: delivery, diversity, and participation in the professional development process provided.

4.2.1. Diversified Delivery as an Issue Highlighted by Teachers

Professional support to teachers for the quality implementation of new curricula was designed to be provided at three levels: 1) in-service training delivered by teacher training providers contracted by the MoE; 2) support provided by local education departments with the participation of local level actors such as curriculum centers methodologists,

Excellency centers and best performing schools; and 3) school-level support provided by school administration, methodological councils, school-based curriculum centers, and school methodologists. All the listed actors are directly responsible for the quality and effectiveness of the teacher professional support provision.

Teachers implementing a new curriculum were provided with a single 10-day grade-specific in-service teacher training course during the summer break just before the school year started. Training on the new curriculum being initiated and funded by the MoE was delivered by teacher training providing organizations. The training program covered various aspects of the new curriculum such as the use of interactive teaching methods, new assessment methods, planning and individualization of teaching instruction, creating conducive learning environment, the use of new textbooks and teacher aids, building partnership with and fostering involvement of parents and community members, etc.

By 2013 almost all teachers were trained on new curricula and the vast majority of them evaluated the effectiveness of the trainings as “excellent” and “good”. Almost half of the teachers surveyed in 2013 thought that their professionalism increased either “significantly” or “to some extent” as a result of the in-service training which had been provided.

However, in spite of the positive evaluation of the effectiveness of the in-service teacher training provided, many of the teachers surveyed were concerned with different aspects of those trainings. Throughout the Study phases more and more teachers assessed training materials as being difficult to understand and criticized the training design for overloading them with too much information. Teachers were concerned about the quality and preparedness of trainers, the length of the training, and the quality and content of training materials. As the Study data shows, teacher concerns regarding the quality of the in-service training progressively increased. The issues that they continually raised highlight questions about *the reliability of the in-service training content and the capacity (reliability) of trainers*.

Teachers shared their perceptions of the potential for supporting actions to improve their teaching practice (Charts 2 and 3). They recommended examining the content, delivery context, and methods of the in-service training they had been provided with, in order to improve the effectiveness of the training. According to surveyed teachers, more regularly provided training sessions would be more beneficial than a ten-day kick-off training. In addition, teachers cited a need for improved training materials[3] and didactic resources.

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[3] Content of training on new curriculum was developed by the MoE in the initial stages of the curriculum implementation and served as a basis for delivery of those trainings by other organizations. There is no reliable information regarding the revisions of the training materials and content of the program.

Chart 2. **What would you recommend for the improvement of the new curriculum application in elementary schools?**
More effective inservice teacher trainings should be organized…

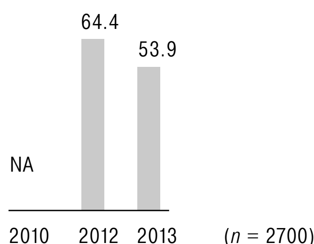
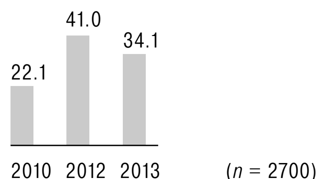


Chart 3. **What would you recommend for the improvement of the new curriculum application in elementary schools?**
Trainers on new cirriculum often visit our school, provide advising to teachers, clarify some of the issues, and help with preparation of teaching materials



The concerns of Azerbaijani teachers regarding the quality of in-service teacher training echoed theconcerns of teachers in the Kyrgyzstani school context: "*teachers are highly concerned about … quality of professional development in terms of content and pedagogy, structure and relevance;… course insensitivity towards teachers' needs and teacher trainers' poor professional expertise*" [Joldoshalieva, 2006. P. 796]. However the Kyrgyzstani teachers' concerns were related to in-service training provided by the State Teacher Training Institute following a centralized model of teacher training provision. This probably means that Azerbaijani teachers favor needs-based professional development programs, rather than the specific mode of provision such as the traditional INSET model. Research suggested that conventional forms of professional development such as courses and workshops may serve only limited purposes of professional teacher development and it has definitely moved away from the INSET model towards more diverse forms including involvement in informal activities [Avalos, 2011].

Teacher concerns with regards to training content and teacher resources are also shared by international consultants. The new curriculum contains a list of recommended strategies and methods for achieving the learning outcomes indicated. However it lacks explanations and rationale for the use of those methods or for the sequence of suggested activities. Likewise, teacher aids for the new curriculum did not clearly and consistently lay out the theoretical foundations for the new pedagogical approaches. This concern was raised in the new curriculum evaluation conducted by A. Crisan [UNICEF, 2007]. The latest was regarded as "eclectic…coming from very different theoretical backgrounds" and representing different methodologies. [UNICEF, 2007. P. 20] Such a lack of clarity was going to create confusion and lead to misunderstanding among teachers and methodologists. This

actually confirms that teacher perceptions should not be underestimated as a reliable source of information for the design and improvement of professional development programs.

Research [Joldashaliyeva, 2006; Niyozov, 2004] informs us that in many countries in the region professional teacher development activities "are subjected to top-down approaches and outside-in training, where their (teachers in Tajikistan) knowledge and wisdom are largely ignored" [Niyozov, 2004. P. 57].

Azerbaijani teachers in the Curriculum Reform process heavily depended on in-service professional development opportunities offered as short-term training courses. However, according to the surveyed teachers, there is a need for more diverse professional development opportunities inside and outside of their schools. In order to ensure quality implementation of new curriculum during the Curriculum Reform process, on top of in-service teacher trainings, teachers were supposed to be supported at the level of local districts. However, the research revealed that on-going support from local level actors was not effective enough to meet teacher challenges and support them in their everyday teaching work.

Only half of the teacher-respondents indicated that they were supported professionally at the local district level. They listed two main formats of professional support: i) support provided by methodologists in local education departments and ii) support provided by Excellence Centers established at the best performing schools, serving as centers for continuous professional advice to teachers in local schools.

Support from Excellence Centers was reported to be less significant than support provided by methodologists. In 2013 the majority of surveyed teachers assessed meetings with methodologists regarding new curriculum implementation as either "very useful" or "useful to some extent". However the Study data revealed that teachers prefer having ongoing professional support. Almost a quarter of the teachers surveyed in 2013 cited that they were having difficulty getting on-going support from methodologists. About 10% of teachers reported that they have never had any methodological support with the new curriculum implementation.

When teachers were asked to analyze the impact of other local level professional development activities, they listed educational conferences or seminars, observation visits to other schools, and research as having the least impact.

In spite of this, the majority of teachers surveyed in 2013 perceived school-based professional support as helpful. Still, almost 20% of teachers in 2013 assessed support provided by school methodological councils, school administration, and exchanges between experienced and young teachers as just "satisfactory" or even "bad." Interestingly, more than half of the surveyed teachers indicated that when faced with challenges when implementing new curriculum they approach either teacher colleagues (*informal support)* or engage in

self-learning (*self-initiated support)* rather than turning to the school administration or to the school methodologist who are formally responsible for supporting teachers.

According to the 2013 survey results, teachers are attaching greater importance to diverse forms of professional development. For example, about half of the teachers surveyed in 2013 reported that participation in teacher networks had a high impact on their professional development. The data on professional teacher development shows that teacher opinions changed from a strictly positive review of all the professional development activities provided in 2010 (baseline phase), to a more critical assessment of activities in 2013. This suggests that teachers are looking for more diverse professional development opportunities. Teachers are most satisfied with activities that are oriented to their individual needs and provide long-term opportunities for collaboration among participants.

Teachers have a need for diverse forms of professional support. Community level support includes strengthening mentoring and experiential exchanges between schools, and strengthening professional cooperation and collaboration among teachers from different schools. At the school level teachers want every school to have a methodologist who is always available to support them. Teachers desire to change the methodologist's traditional role of inspecting, checking, and controlling to one of supporting them and sharing experience and knowledge as an experienced colleague. Teachers also recommended strengthening the within-school collaboration and sharing between teachers and establishing a system of peer coaching and mentoring between more experienced teachers and younger teachers. Suggestions made by teachers regarding changes that should be made to improve their professional support within the Curriculum reform indicate the same growth of the rational choice in favor of cooperation between teachers. That demand for more professional cooperation among teachers increased threefold between the 2010 and 2013 study phases. In 2013, teachers attached a greater importance to collaborative learning between teachers and engaging in joint professional projects, in addition to in-service training sessions. In the recent study conducted in 2015 the number teachers who reported a high demand for participation in teacher networks increased by 11% compared to 2013. A remarkable fact is that since 2013 a growth of informal social networks where teachers with common professional interests share information and exchange conversations has been observed in the country. These informal networks serve as a platform for professional development moderated by teachers themselves. Currently, approximately 30% of teachers are active users of online educational networks created and moderated by educators[4].

[4] From interview (March 2016) with Aygun Azizova, a social media education expert

4.2.2. In Search of a Collaborative Learning Community

The findings presented above demonstrate that teachers are demanding new forms of professional development that have the potential to create collaborative learning environments within schools. The new curriculum implementation puts new pressures on the teacher. Other research on professional teacher development has also pointed to a collaborative culture as an important factor contributing to the effectiveness of professional development. For example, "collaboration proved to be an important part of teacher learning which could be mediated through dialogues, discussions, conversations and interactions centered on innovations, new resources or new methods." " [Avalos, 2011. P. 16].

Exchanges of internal learning experiences within the school will in turn enable the development of *professional learning communities* where professionals learn from each other and support each other through generation and exchange of ideas [Sahlberg, 2005]. Peer mentoring is regarded as one of the most effective models of individual teacher development and one of the most popular continuous professional development forms (CPD)[European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2013]. The research provides evidence that school structures supporting "teachers in providing programs for development and creating teacher networks" are very important [Joldoshaliyeva, 2006. P. 800]. The productivity and adaptability of schools can be enhanced by creating the structures that facilitate collaboration among teachers.

It seems that the challenge of new curriculum implementation motivated teachers to work in the professional community. "Teacher professional learning …requires cognitive and emotional involvement of teachers individually and collectively" [Avalos, 2011. P. 11]. The importance of dialogue and collaboration among teachers has been repeatedly stressed by many researchers [Sachs, 2004; Fullan, 2005; Polard, 2005; Tschannen-Moran, 2000; 2011]."In order for teachers to rise successfully to the challenge of adapting their teaching practices to meet the changing expectations of various reform initiatives, they must have opportunities to participate in dialogue with other teachers to support and challenge one another" [Tschannen-Moran, 2000. P. 311]. Teacher collaboration has personal, professional, and political impacts on their professional growth. The political aspects of teacher collaboration refers to bringing a variety of education actors into a dialogue with teachers, including school administrators, local education leaders, education researchers, and policy makers.

4.3. Teachers as Decision Makers in their own Professional Development

What is the role of teachers in professional development programs? Do they have decision making power over the design of the programs? Are teachers' voices heard in the preparation and implementation of the programs? Research indicating that teachers' professional needs remain unmet seem to signal that there is a high demand for encouraging teachers to provide input with regards to their own professional

learning needs and thus to contribute to the effectiveness of professional support initiatives. On the other hand, discussions about Curriculum reform lack teacher participation.

Another challenge is developing a collaborative culture and trust between teachers at the school level, as well as at the level of the professional community at large. "Trust aspect cannot be minimized in a social system undergoing a drastic change from an environment of non-trust (under a Soviet system) to a more open one" [Moyer, Silova, 2008]. The education system in Azerbaijan is still making important decisions from top to bottom without interactive discussion and dialogue with teachers and the educational community at large. Yet there is a demand for broader participation and more dialogue.

There is a need for a meaningful mechanism to channel teachers' thoughts, views, and perceptions to policy makers and education authorities. For the most part a conventional teacher training system is still prevailing, one in which teachers are perceived as beneficiaries of professional development programs rather than teacher-learners encouraged to make decisions based on their individual needs.

If an inclusive process of engaging teachers in discussions about their professional needs cannot be created, those needs will continue to remain unmet. According to TALIS [2012], in countries where professional teacher development is predominantly defined by a top–level educational authority, teachers' needs for professional development remain high. "Able teachers are not necessarily going to reach their potential in settings that do not provide appropriate support..." [OECD, 2005]. Teachers are best placed to determine the appropriateness and relevancy of professional development opportunities. Inclusion of teachers in the design of professional teacher development programs will increase the impact of learning activities on the quality of teaching at the classroom level. Such a participatory approach to strengthening the teachers' role as decision makers in their professional development is supported by this research.

5. Concluding Remarks

This paper deals with how Azerbaijani teachers perceive the professional development opportunities provided for the implementation of new curricula. Quantitative research findings derived from the Monitoring Study provide evidence for the way teachers need and want to be supported professionally.

According to our findings, teachers recognize the need for change and do attempt to change their teaching practices. However it seems the Curriculum reform introduced in 2008 has only partially been able to bring about positive effects to the professional lives of Azerbaijani school teachers. Similar to the results seen in other countries in the region "it has resulted in uncertainties and multiple responsibilities" [Joldoshaliyeva, 2006. P. 801], requiring more professional development efforts towards ensuring continuous support for teachers. The

findings also revealed that the professional development provided to support teachers has not been fully able to meet either their preexisting needs or needs emerging during the reform process.

The changing needs of society, changing expectations of schools, and the changing sets of needs being brought about daily by each pupil make teaching a demanding and a very dynamic task. The complex considerations that teachers take into account when making the myriad decisions that they face every day requires that there should be a deep understanding of their purposes and how such purposes may be accomplished [Leithwood, Steinbach, 1995]. This probably necessitates "re-conceptualization" [Moyer, Silova, 2008] of professional teacher development and a movement towards the development of a culture of trust between teachers and between teachers and policy-makers.

The current stage of the professional teacher development provision seems to have brought about change in the mindset of Azerbaijani teachers regarding the improvement of their teaching practice. The reform process has directed teachers from formal structures such as in-service courses and workshops towards ongoing mediations and more interactive and collaborative forms of professional support. However, "diverse formats of professional development have impact of some kind or degree…not every form of professional development, even those with the greatest evidence of positive impact, is of itself relevant to all teachers. Some of those forms are more appropriate and conducive to learning than others" [Avalos, 2011. P. 17].

Research conducted in different cultural and school contexts as well as on various forms of professional development confirm that many factors may equally affect this process, such as the nature and operations of educational systems, education policy environments and reforms, school cultures, prior beliefs and perceptions, historic factors, school ethos and social environments (beliefs, traditions), social and cultural values, and other contextual elements. The importance of these various factors cannot be discounted when evaluating the impact of professional support.

The present research might be considered as one of the first steps on the way towards the development of a culture of trust and collaboration between teachers and policy makers in the Azerbaijani education system. After presenting the results of the baseline phase of monitoring study to policy makers, the decision on piloting mentoring might be considered a promising example of such collaboration. A new research agenda exploring teachers' perceptions, views, and thoughts, thus informing policy-makers and the professional community, should become an integral part of the reform agenda. Education researchers could play an important role facilitating the dialogue between teachers and policy makers in order to build an effective partnership within the national education community.

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Teacher Satisfaction in High Poverty Schools:

Searching for Policy Relevant Interventions in Estonia, Georgia, and Latvia

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Abstract. Provided the shared post-soviet context and the rapidly declining school age population, this comparative study of teachers in Estonia, Georgia, and Latvia can shed light on alternative approaches to increased teacher satisfaction for countries in similar contexts that are unable to make across the board increases in teacher salary. The focus on high poverty schools is essential in these countries as the changing demographics and present school funding mechanisms disproportionately affect rural schools which are often high poverty. This study addresses two pressing research questions, exploring each independently for Estonia, Georgia, and Latvia: 1) How does teacher satisfaction and other teacher characteristics differ by school poverty level? 2) What policy relevant factors are related to increased satisfaction for teachers in high poverty schools? Data from the 2013 Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) were used in this study. Given the dichotomous measures of the outcome variable (teacher satisfaction), hierarchical generalized linear modeling (HGLM) was the primary method of analysis. Although the policy implementation and internalization process is challenging, this study indicates that simplistic, externally driven policy solutions, such as introducing induction programs or changing the contract status of teachers, are not as effective in increasing teacher satisfaction as investments that contribute to a positive school climate where teachers feel valued and included as professionals.

Keywords: teachers, high poverty schools, teacher satisfaction, school climate, autonomy, induction programs, Estonia, Georgia, Latvia.

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Teachers in high poverty schools are less satisfied with their current employment than their counterparts in medium and low poverty schools, fuelling teacher turnover that can plague students already facing the challenges of high poverty schooling. Teacher satisfaction and retention are directly related and can shape school culture

and student outcomes as the mood of those less satisfied can spread throughout the school. In an attempt to ensure a proportionate distribution of experienced and high quality teachers across schools, some interventions have attempted to financially entice teachers to take positions in more difficult-to-staff schools. These interventions have not always been successful and do not ensure that teachers that take advantage of the incentive are the strongest teachers. Policies that focus on retaining rather than attracting teachers promote an approach of continuous professional development and interact with all of the teachers in the school, not just the novices. These in-service support policies can make a significant difference in teacher satisfaction and the corresponding school culture.

Research on teacher satisfaction in post-soviet countries is sparse and reveals mixed levels of satisfaction, with some teachers reporting satisfaction with their job while others are entirely dissatisfied. Often focusing on teacher salaries or remuneration, few studies explore alternative factors affecting teacher satisfaction. By taking into account the shared post-soviet context and the rapidly declining school age population, this comparative study of teachers in Estonia, Georgia and Latvia sheds light on alternative approaches to increased teacher satisfaction in countries with similar contexts that are unable to make across-the-board increases in teacher salaries. The focus on high poverty schools is essential in these countries as the changing demographics and present school funding mechanisms disproportionately affect rural schools which are often high poverty. Although, to our knowledge, this study is the first piece of research explicitly comparing teachers' satisfaction across poverty levels in these nations, research of other countries' contexts suggest high poverty schools face unique challenges in teacher satisfaction and retention. This study addresses two pressing research questions, exploring each independently for Estonia, Georgia, and Latvia: (1) How do teacher satisfaction and other teacher characteristics differ in regards to school poverty level? And (2) What policy-relevant factors are related to increased satisfaction for teachers in high poverty schools?

This article is composed of five main sections. First, the literature review describes why high poverty schools are an important area for study and summarizes pertinent literature on teacher satisfaction and its corresponding factors. The second section describes the post-soviet context of Estonia, Georgia, and Latvia, detailing the key education reforms and demographic shifts over the past twenty-five years. The data and methods section then introduces the data set used for this study, the 2013 Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS), as well as the variables used to capture teacher satisfaction and the Hierarchical Linear Generalized Model (HGLM) used in the analysis. Results compare teacher satisfaction in high, medium, and low poverty schools in each country and illustrate the relationship between potential policy interventions and teacher satisfaction in high

poverty schools. Finally, the discussion section summarizes the main findings and provides policy suggestions and areas for future research.

1. Literature Review

1.1. Why Focus on High Poverty Schools?

Research comparing high poverty schools and teacher satisfaction is absent in Estonia, Georgia, Latvia and Post-Soviet countries in general; however, studies exploring other countries' contexts suggest that high poverty schools have unique characteristics that must be understood when attempting to support teachers. High poverty schools are inherently inequitable due to, among other factors, less satisfied and inadequately prepared teachers, greater concentrations of high needs student populations, and fewer overall resources resulting in severe consequences for students [Moore, 2012; Moore Johnson et al., 2004]. These high needs student populations include minorities, culturally and linguistically diverse learners (CLDLs), students from low-income homes, and students otherwise considered at risk [Darling-Hammond, 2006, 2004; Peske, Haycock, 2006]. High poverty schools, and consequently their students, are more likely to have inexperienced, uncertified, poorly educated, and underperforming teachers than low poverty schools [Eisenschmidt, 2011; Moore Johnson et al., 2004]. This lack of quality teachers for poor, CLDLs and minority students prohibits them from adequate academic achievement [Moore Johnson et al., 2004; Peske, Haycock, 2006].

1.2. Unique Characteristics of High Poverty Schools

Teachers strongly influence student learning [Darling-Hammond, 2006, 2004; Moore Johnson 2004] and perhaps the most egregious disparity is that poor, CLDL, minority and at risk students rarely have access to effective and quality teachers. Student achievement is more of an outcome of "well-prepared, expert, experienced" [Darling-Hammond, 2010. P. 17] teachers than of any other school resource. This is especially true for students living in low-income communities [Darling-Hammond, 2004; Moore Johnson et al., 2004]. A teacher's effectiveness is contingent on their academic background, teaching experience and preparation, content knowledge, and certification status [Darling-Hammond, 2010; Peske, Haycock, 2006, Murnane, Steele, 2007]. High poverty schools have fewer qualified and quality teachers due to, among other reasons, the higher cost in hiring [Darling-Hammond, 2006], lower teacher satisfaction [Moore Johnson, 2006], and higher teacher attrition [Darling-Hammond, 2004; Murnane, Steele, 2007]. The issue of unqualified teachers is present in Estonia and Georgia [Iris, Turk, 2012; Ingvarson et al, 2013]. Iris & Turk [2012] report that less than 50% of the teachers in high poverty (rural) schools are qualified to teach in Estonia.

Students in high poverty schools often have several ineffective teachers throughout their academic years. Consequently, the cumulative effect of ineffective teachers leads to high rates of student remediation, grade retention and student drop-out [Darling-Hammond, 2010,

2004; Peske, Haycock, 2006]. Those who teach without qualification, preparation, and experience tend to burnout faster than other teachers due to not being able to adequately perform their job, contributing to the ever present high numbers of inexperienced teachers in high poverty schools [Darling-Hammond, 2004; Murnane, Steele, 2007; Peske, Haycock, 2006]. Finally, the entire school community faces problems due to the revolving door of new and unprepared teachers [Darling-Hammond, 2004, Darling-Hammond, 2010]. The continual hiring needs and instability create conditions in which the experienced and qualified teachers must contend with an erosion of appropriate professional development, instructional burdens, and draining of financial and human resources. Schools lack of human resources prevents the conditions necessary for a productive learning environment and the ability to support sound educational decision making or collegial learning [Darling-Hammond, 2010, 2004].

A teacher "support gap" exists where new teachers in high poverty schools are less likely than their counterparts in low poverty schools to receive supports to aid in their success [Darling-Hammond, 2010; 2004, Moore Johnson et al., 2004; OECD, 2016]. High poverty schools often do not have established mentoring practices or do not have the experienced and qualified teachers to mentor new teachers [Darling-Hammond, 2004; Moore Johnson et al., 2004]. In fact, there is lower trust among colleagues in high poverty schools [Van Maele, Van Houtte, 2011]. High poverty schools often lack a full curriculum aligned with standards [Moore Johnson et al., 2004]. The official curriculum is a mechanism of support and guidance; however, high poverty schools are more likely than low poverty schools to have prescriptive curricula and requirements of using instructional time on test preparation activities, both of which contribute to teacher attrition [Moore Johnson et al., 2004].

1.3. Importance of Teacher Satisfaction

Teachers' job satisfaction impacts student achievement [Ronfeldt, Loeb, Wyckoff, 2013]. Job satisfaction is closely tied to teacher turnover [Green, 2014] and students experiencing high teacher turnover score lower on standardized assessments [Ronfeldt, Loeb, Wyckoff, 2013]. The impact of teacher satisfaction and attrition is not limited to the students of dissatisfied or former teachers, teachers who stay and their students also experience negative effects [Guin, 2004; Maslach, Schaufeli, Leiter, 2001; Ronfeldt, Loeb, Wyckoff, 2013].

Job dissatisfaction and turnover impact all students' learning and teachers' work environment [Moore Johnson, 2006; Patridge, 2007; Ronfeldt, Loeb, Wyckoff, 2013]. The development and maintenance of social capital are disrupted, including staff collegiality, community and trust [Bryk, Schneider, 2002; Ronfeldt, Loeb, Wyckoff, 2013; Van Maele, Van Houtte, 2011]. Not only are important knowledge and skills associated with school programs, structures and supports affected when teachers leave, but it takes time for new hires to gain the

essential knowledge and skills to navigate the unfamiliar curriculum. In schools with high turnover rates the continual need to 'start over' for new teachers is a burden on financial and human resources. Veteran teachers often suffer from a lack of professional development because of this unceasing cycle of new hires. Not only does veteran teachers' job satisfaction diminish, but their students also lose out on the untapped potential of their teachers [Ronfeldt, Loeb, Wyckoff, 2013]. The progress of school, teacher and student achievement improvements are undermined by resources being diverted into recruitment, hiring, and, hopefully, training new teachers [Moore Johnson, 2006; Ronfeldt, Loeb, Wyckoff, 2013].

1.4. Key Policies Associated with Teacher Satisfaction

In addition to the well documented literature linking increased teacher satisfaction with higher teacher salaries [Burns, Darling-Hammond, 2014; Darling-Hammond, 2004; Moore Johnson, 2006], a variety of other policy interventions can play a role in teacher satisfaction. These non-salary interventions are important to explore given the challenging economic climate in many countries and the recognition that teachers, when choosing their occupation, are often more influenced by intrinsic than monetary motivations [Ingersoll, 2002]. The complimentary and synergistic nature of salary and non-salary interventions suggests that, ideally, a more comprehensive approach to teacher satisfaction would be taken.

The contract status of teachers can affect their level of satisfaction. Full time teachers and teachers with a permanent contract are more satisfied with their position than those that work part time or are on a temporary contract [Gujjar, Ahmed, Naoreen, 2009; Kaiser, 2011; Koustelious, 2001; McKenzie et al., 2014]. For example, in Koustelious' [2001] examination of 354 primary and secondary school teachers in Greece, teachers working part time or on temporary contracts were less satisfied with their pay and their school as a whole than those that had secure jobs. Additionally, teachers on permanent contracts in Pakistan were more satisfied with their jobs across a range of dimensions, such as atmosphere, relations with colleagues and job security, as well as overall job satisfaction [Gujjar, Ahmed, Naoreen, 2009]. A more stable contract status may increase the odds that low-income schools retain strong teachers and reduce the high-turnover common in hard-to-staff schools [Burns, Darling-Hammond, 2014; Darling-Hammond, 2004].

Positively affecting teacher satisfaction are support programs for new teachers, such as induction and mentoring [Burns, Darling-Hammond, 2014; Ferguson, Frost, Hall, 2012; OECD, 2005; Patridge, 2007; Van Maele, Van Houtte, 2011]. Induction and mentoring programs help acclimatize novice teachers to the professional practice of a school and results in greater occupational commitment and understanding of shared norms [Burns, Darling-Hammond, 2014; Moore Johnson et al., 2004]. Well-designed programs that incorporate con-

tinual engagement with a highly trained mentor can improve retention rates for new teachers as well as shape their attitudes, feelings of efficacy, and instructional skills [Darling-Hammond, 2010]. Teacher collaboration and mentoring can build collegial relationships and social supports that create positive work environments and contribute to job satisfaction [Patridge, 2007, Burns, Darling-Hammond, 2014, Ferguson, Frost, Hall, 2012]. When exploring longitudinal data of first year public school teachers in the U.S., Kaiser [2011] found that teachers assigned a mentor during their first year were less likely to leave in the first two years (10% left) than those that did not have a mentor (23% left). This pattern is especially troubling in high poverty schools where teachers are less likely to have mentors, and those who do have mentors are less likely to be paired with experienced teachers in the same school, grade or subject, or experience rich two-way discussion [Moore Johnson et al., 2004].

Within the school, how teachers are assigned and engaged can shape their satisfaction. Teachers that teach outside the field that they were trained in or take on assignments that cross multiple fields of study are less satisfied than teachers whose assignments are properly aligned with their preparation [Moore Johnson, 2006]. Additionally, teachers that take on leadership roles and feel like they have input into school decisions are more satisfied than those that feel isolated and voiceless [Bogler, 2005; Burns, Darling-Hammond, 2014]. Limited teacher involvement in school decision-making, in addition to poor work conditions, are the most common reasons for teacher attrition [Burns, Darling-Hammond, 2014; Ferguson, Frost, Hall, 2012; Moore Johnson, 2006].

Engaging teachers can be partially accomplished by principals that distribute leadership across the school or lead through a transformational leadership style [Burns, Darling-Hammond, 2014; Harris, 2008]. In a survey of over 300 teachers from mainly urban schools in Estonia, Heidmets and Liik [2014] found that in schools where principals practiced a transformational leadership style, focused on a culture of removing self-interest for the greater good of the community by emphasizing common goals and targets, teachers were less likely to burnout and felt more secure in their job than in schools where principals had a transactional leadership style where exchanges between teachers and principals were characterized by self-interest. They concluded that "the more transformational style and less transactional style teachers perceive in their school principal's behavior, the greater their subjective bond with their school and the higher their affective and cognitive identification with the school happened to be, and they also consider leaving the school more unlikely" [P. 47]. Hulpia et al. [2012] came to a similar conclusion in their study of secondary school teachers in Belgium, where cooperative leadership and shared goals led to greater school commitment. Furthermore, teachers recognize and are

attracted to principals that are good instructional leaders and appreciate principals that provide useful feedback [Darling-Hammond, 2010; Moore Johnson et al., 2004; Robinson, Lloyd, Rowe, 2008].

School climates that are positive and unifying engage teachers and reduce teacher attrition [Darling-Hammond, 2004; Menon, Papanastasiou, Zembylas, 2008]. Positive school climates incorporate collaboration among all stakeholders to promote professional learning and work towards shared visions and goals [Burns, Darling-Hammond, 2014; Meyer, Allen, 1997]. Issues in school climate and working conditions contribute to teacher stress and satisfaction. Teacher stress is defined by Kyriacou [2001] as, "the experience by a teacher of unpleasant, negative emotions, such as anger, anxiety, tension, frustration or depression, resulting from some aspect of their work as a teacher" [P. 28]. Negative work stress can lead to depression and anxiety and is highly linked with lower job satisfaction [Ferguson, Frost, Hall, 2012; Green, 2014]. All three, stress, depression, and anxiety, are significant negative predictors of job satisfaction [Ferguson, Frost, Hall, 2012]. Rhodes, Nevill, and Allan [2004], in examining 368 primary and secondary teachers in the UK, found that teachers were more satisfied if they felt like they were surrounded by a friendly staff and worked in a climate of achievement.

Finally, a lack of autonomy provided to teachers can undermine attempts to create a collaborative environment. Zembylas and Papanastasiou [2006] found that limited autonomy was related to dissatisfaction amongst teacher in Cyprus. Other studies have pointed to the importance of teacher control over teaching practices, grading, discipline and homework [Kreis, Brockopp, 1986; Moore, 2012; Pearson, Moomaw, 2005].

2. Country Context

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 newly independent post-soviet states went through a chaotic transition period from totalitarian, centralized economies to democratic, market economies. Education during the Soviet era focused on preparing students for industrial jobs [Ruus, Reiska, 2015] and was successful in universalizing access to free education and reducing illiteracy [Andguladze, Mindadze, 2015]. For example, in Estonia during the Soviet era the mandatory years of education rose from seven to nine years and by the late 1980s, 99% of eighteen year olds were on a path that could qualify them for university [Ruus, Reiska, 2015]. The remainder of this section explores the post-Soviet context and the similar educational challenges found in Estonia, Georgia, and Latvia. To conduct a comparative analysis, these countries were chosen as three of the four post-Soviet countries that participated in the 2013 Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS). Although the Russian Federation was also included in the TALIS sample, it was excluded from this study as less than 5% of its teachers taught in high poverty schools.

Table 1: **Key Education Statistics for Estonia, Georgia, and Latvia**

	Spending as % of GDP	Teacher salaries as % of GDP per capita	% of teachers that are female	% of teachers over age 50	Student-teacher ratio	Relative performance on international assessment	Compulsory Schooling
Estonia	5.5%	68%	81%	48%	10 : 1	Above Average	Age 7 to 17
Georgia	2.6%	62%			9 : 1	Well Below Average	Age 7 to 16
Latvia	5.0%	52%	84%	44%	10 : 1[a]	Near Average	Age 5 to 16
OECD Average	6.1%	125%	67%	34%	14 : 1	Reference Category	

Sources: [Andguladze, Mindadze, 2015; OECD, 2014; Tatto et al., 2012; Zogla, Andersone, Cernova, 2015].
Notes: Empty cells indicate data does not exist or is not applicable. Lower secondary data is used when disaggregated data exist.
[a] Student-teacher ratio for Latvia is from the 2012/2013 school year in urban areas. Rural area student-teacher ratio in Latvia is 7 : 1.

Reforms following the collapse of the Soviet Union have differed across post-soviet states but one of the primary focuses has been in ensuring teachers are able to understand and adapt the classroom to the new goals of education which generally focused on decentralization, democratization, and depoliticization [Silova et al., 2010; Zogla, Andersone, Cernova, 2015]. The post-soviet context and Estonia, Georgia, and Latvia's response to the transition frames education and must be recognized in order to understand the role of teachers in each country.

Similarities in the current state of education across the three countries are detailed in Table 1. Teachers in all countries are underpaid, making well below the national GDP per capita. The teacher workforce in each country is feminized and aging, with nearly 50% of teachers over the age of fifty. The low student-teacher ratios are partially the result of demographic shifts which included significant emigration and reductions in birth rate. For instance, between 2000 and 2011 Latvia lost 9.1% of its total population [OECD, 2014]. The decline of the school age population outpaced the departure of teachers in these countries resulting in the deflated student-teacher ratio [Hazans, 2010]. The shrinking school age population disproportionately impacted rural schools that often closed as a result. In the 2012/2013 school year alone, fifty-eight educational institutions were closed in Latvia and a further eighty-five were merged or reorganized [Zogla, Andersone, Cernova, 2015].

The following sections highlight some of the key differences in post-soviet reforms in Estonia, Georgia, and Latvia. In addition to national education spending and student achievement (illustrated in Table 1 above), this section quickly reviews national education focus, level of autonomy, and teacher status.

2.1. Estonia

Transition in Estonia started before the collapse of the Soviet Union where there was a push by teachers to establish a new Estonian general curriculum tha`t would virtually eradicate communist ideology and introduce market-based economics. Quickly following the collapse, the Estonian government passed one of its first laws, the 1992 Education Act [Ruus. Reiska, 2015]. Since the Education Act internationalization has consistently been a "guiding principle" to educational development in Estonia [Ibid.]. Over the past twenty years Estonia has worked to integrate itself with the global community, including joining the Bologna Declaration in 1999, the EU in 2004, and the OECD in 2010. The education system in Estonia has evolved into one of the most decentralized systems in Europe with approximately 66% of decisions taking place at the school level [OECD, 2008]. Although minimum teacher salaries are set by the central government, schools have the responsibility of hiring and firing teachers and rationing out monetary resources [Irs, Turk, 2012; OECD, 2014]. The high levels of autonomy are matched with an accountability system that is designed to provide parents, acting as consumers, free school choice and motivate schools to attract students, as funding is linked to each student [Irs, Turk, 2012; OECD, 2014]. Although some steps are taken to ensure teachers are in high needs schools, challenges still remain. For example, even with an incentive of 12,750 EUR over a three year period provided to new teachers willing to work in small towns or rural areas [OECD, 2014], recruiting for rural schools remains a big problem with less than 50% of teachers in rural schools meeting the qualifying standards [Eisenschmidt, 2011; Irs, Turk, 2012].

Past research has found that teachers in Estonia tend to be dissatisfied with their job [Eisenschmidt, 2011]. This is partially attributed to the poor working environment and lack of collegial support [Veisson, Ruus, 2007]. The status of teachers in society appears to be mixed with Ruus and Reiska [2015] claiming that the general public feel "solidarity with the teachers in their dissatisfaction with poor salaries" [P. 248] but the ministry's 2010 strategic document, *The Five Challenges of Estonian Education*, identifies the relative status of teachers as one of the five strategic pillars to be addressed by 2020. Increasing the status of teachers has been one of the rationales behind the implementation of mandatory induction and in-service training for teachers. Induction, first introduced in 2004, is a one year program with an assigned mentor while teachers are also required to complete 160 hours of in-service training every five years [Eisenschmidt, 2011].

2.2. Georgia

The post-soviet transition in Georgia was marked by economic and political upheaval. Civil war immediately after the collapse was accompanied by a sharp economic downturn with GDP decreasing by 75%. Education was hit particularly hard as government spending on education was reduced by 95% between 1989 and 1996. The void of public spending was partially filled by households whose spending in 2011

made up 30% of all education expenditure. The move towards privatization was encouraged by the 2004 change in the financing model to one where funding follows the student in the form of a voucher. Some of the autonomy provided in 2004, however, was rolled back in 2010 as Georgia started to recentralize. This included the Ministry of Education and Science assuming authority to hire and fire school head teachers and reducing the decision making authority of local school's Board of Trustees [Andguladze, Mindadze, 2015].

Past research indicates that equity concerns are not as present in Georgia. Enrollment rate differences between poor and non-poor populations, urban and rural populations, and across ethnic groups are minimal throughout compulsory education [Ibid.]. This may be due, in part, to the salary supplements provided to strengthen and attract teachers to schools at higher elevations and to work with large minority language populations [Andguladze, Mindadze, 2015; Public Policy Research and Training Center, 2014].

Teacher salary and status is low in Georgia. According to the national report provided for the 2008 Teacher Education and Development Study in Mathematics (TEDS-M): "teaching is one of the least desired professions in Georgia. The ongoing depreciation of the profession includes decreased salaries as well as the decreased social status of teaching. While teaching was one of the most respected professions in the Soviet times, it became less appreciated when teachers appeared to be unprepared for the transition period faced by the country" [Tatto et al., 2012. P. 43]. Teacher salaries are three times below the desired level reported by teachers [Ingvarson et al., 2013]. However, despite the low salary there is little teacher turnover [Public Policy Research and Training Center, 2014]. This is potentially due to the overall high unemployment rate preventing teachers from gambling that they will find another job [Andguladze, Mindadze, 2015].

2.3. Latvia

Similar to Estonia, the post-soviet era in Latvia has included greater autonomy and decentralization, as well as an emphasis on internationalization. At the turn of the 21st century the government's *Concept of Educational Development (2002–2005)* emphasized alignment across educational actors and with international standards, including the European Commission and the UNESCO program Education for All. This trend continued in the education quality assurance plan for 2007 to 2013 which pushed for comparisons with internationally comparable education indicators [Zogla, Andersone, Cernova, 2015]. In 2009 the funding mechanism for education shifted from input based to a per-pupil model. This 'money follows the student' model, however, has been damaging, especially for rural schools [Hazans, 2010]. As Zogla, Andersone & Cernova [2015] pointed out, the model created an "unequal distribution of salaries for the same load and further negatively impacted the proportion of teachers and learners in different regions" [P. 444]. The potential negative consequences of this mod-

el, however, may be mitigated by the increased autonomy allocated to local authorities who, in addition to hiring and firing teachers [OECD, 2014], have the ability to transfer funds to smaller schools in their jurisdiction [Hazans, 2010].

Teachers in Latvia, in general, feel satisfied with their job and believe they are making a positive constitution to society [Geske, Ozola, 2015; Persevica, 2011]. The public perceptions of teachers in the country, conversely, are low with parents at times considering "teachers as service personnel whom they can teach or scold" [ESF, 2007. P. 4]. Contributing to the low status of teachers is the low wage and flat pay scale [OECD, 2014; Zogla, Andersone, Cernova, 2015] as well as the lack of induction or teacher practicum requirements once initial pre-service training is completed [OECD, 2014].

3. Data and Methods

Data from the 2013 Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) were used in this study. TALIS is a cross-national survey of teachers and school environments, focusing primarily on lower secondary education. The 2013 TALIS collected information from thirty-seven countries or participating economies through teacher and principal questionnaires. The stratified samples are nationally representative of teachers nested in schools. Data from participating post-soviet countries were included in this study. To ensure adequate statistical power when exploring high poverty schools, countries with less than 5% of their teachers working in high poverty schools were omitted from the analysis. From these limitations data from Estonia, Georgia, and Latvia were used in the study. Analyses were conducted separately, by country, with regression coefficients compared to examine between country differences.

3.1. Identifying High Poverty Schools

The identification of high poverty schools follows the approach of the OECD (2016) who used principal responses to questions asking them to identify the broad percentage of students in their school that come from socioeconomically disadvantaged homes. Schools with less than 11% of students coming from socioeconomically disadvantaged homes are considered low poverty schools. Schools with 11% to 30% of students coming from socioeconomically disadvantaged homes are considered medium poverty schools and schools with greater than 30% of students identified as socioeconomically disadvantaged are considered high poverty schools. The majority of this analysis focuses on teachers in high poverty schools. Descriptive statistics for teachers in Estonia, Georgia, and Latvia, by school poverty level, can be found in Appendix A, B, and C, respectively.

3.2. Outcome Variables

To examine teacher satisfaction, teacher responses to three statements, specific to their current place of employment, are used as outcome variables in this study: (1) "I would like to change to another

school if that were possible"; (2) "I enjoy working at this school"; and (3) "I would recommend my school as a good place to work". Statements are reverse coded as needed so that a score of 1 indicates dissatisfaction with their current place of employment.

3.3. Predictor Variables

Predictor variables in this study are drawn from previous research and include actionable policy levers that education leaders could incorporate in their attempts to improve teacher satisfaction. They include variables at both the teacher and school level. To capture the importance of contract status in job satisfaction included measures to identify part time status (part time = 1, full time = 0) and whether the teacher is on a permanent contract (permanent contract = 1, fixed term contract = 0). Participation in induction and mentoring programs may also influence job satisfaction, especially for novice teachers. Differences in participation in a formal induction program are included in this study (yes = 1, no = 0). However, as the percentage of teachers participating as a mentor or mentee in Estonia, Georgia, and Latvia was marginal, participation in a mentoring program is not included. Teaching outside of their trained field is captured by the creation of a teacher mismatch variable. Teachers teaching a subject in the current year that they do not have formal education or training for are considered mismatched. The final teacher level predictor variables identifies teachers' perceptions of whether the school provides staff opportunities to actively participate in school decisions (agree or strongly agree = 1, disagree or strongly disagree = 0).

At the school level included predictor variables identify the principal's experience and whether teachers are provided autonomy. The principal's experience is divided into their experience at the school and their experience as a teacher. Autonomy provided is a composite variable taken from the OECD thematic report on teacher professionalism (OECD, 2015). The composite has a range from 0 (no autonomy provided) to 5 (full autonomy) and consists of five areas of autonomy: curriculum choices, learning materials, course content, assessment policies, and discipline policies.

3.4. Control Variables

Three[1] control variables are included at the teacher level: sex, years of experience, and participation in teacher training. The teacher's sex is coded 1 for female and 0 for male. Years of experience is a continuous variable that captures the years the teacher has spent at their current school. Participation in a teacher training program is self reported and coded 1 for yes and 0 for no.

3.5. Analytic Strategy

Given the dichotomous measures of the outcome variable (teacher satisfaction), hierarchical generalized linear modeling (HGLM) was

[1] School type (private or public) was not included as a control variable as no high poverty schools in the three countries under investigation are private.

the primary method of analysis used in this study. HGLM acknowledges the nested, or hierarchical, nature of data [Raudenbush, Bryk, 2002], adjusting the standard error as necessary and making it the appropriate method for this study where teachers are nested in schools. Prior to model specification, cases with missing data in the outcome variables were deleted and missing data in predictor and control variables was replaced using school mean substitution. The xtmelogit command in Stata version 12 was used for the analysis. The complete two-level random intercept model it illustrated below.

Model 1 outlines the teacher level with teacher level control variables and pertinent policy predictor variables used to predict teacher dissatisfaction for each teacher i in school j. The teacher level error term is represented by v.

Model 1 $$\text{Teacher Dissatisfaction}_{ij} = \beta_{0j} + \beta_{1j}(\text{Female}) + \beta_{2j}(\text{Years of Experience}) + \\ + \beta_{3j}(\text{Teacher Training}) + \beta_{4j}(\text{Teacher Predictor Variable}) + v_{0j}\,.$$

Model 2 outlines the school level with school level predictor variables used to predict the intercept (β_{0j}) of Model 1. The school level error term is represented by ε.

Model 2 $$\beta_{0j} = \gamma_{00} + \beta_{10}(\text{School Predictor Variable}) + \varepsilon_{ij}\,.$$

The complete model substitutes Model 2 into Model 1. Note that in the analysis a single teacher level predictor or school level predictor was included, in addition to teacher level controls. The complete model below demonstrates the model used with a teacher predictor variable. In the complete model we see that teacher dissatisfaction is predicted by the primary variable of interest (Teacher Predictor Variable) while controlling for female, years of education, and whether the teacher has completed teacher training. To explore the differential effects of all teacher and school level predictor variables, results compare the corresponding coefficient (β_{4j}).

Complete Model $$\text{Teacher Dissatisfaction}_{ij} = \gamma_{00} + \beta_{1j}(\text{Female}) + \beta_{2j}(\text{Years of Experience}) + \\ + \beta_{3j}(\text{Teacher Training}) + \beta_{4j}(\text{Teacher Predictor Variable}) + v_{0j} + \varepsilon_{ij}\,.$$

4. Results

Across all three countries, teachers in high poverty schools are less satisfied with their job. Figure 1 illustrates that teachers in high poverty schools in Estonia and Latvia are more likely to want to change the school they work in, relative to their peers in low poverty schools. In both countries more than one in five teachers in high poverty schools would change schools if given the chance. A similar trend, with a greater percentage of unsatisfied teachers in high poverty schools, is found in Georgia, although the differences by school poverty level are not significant.

Figure 1: **Percentage of teachers who would like to change schools by country and school poverty level.**

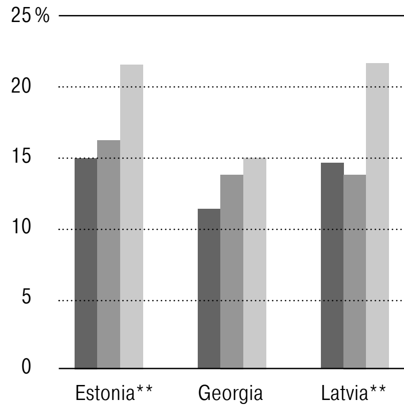


Figure 2: **Percentage of teachers who do not enjoy working at their school by country and school poverty level.**

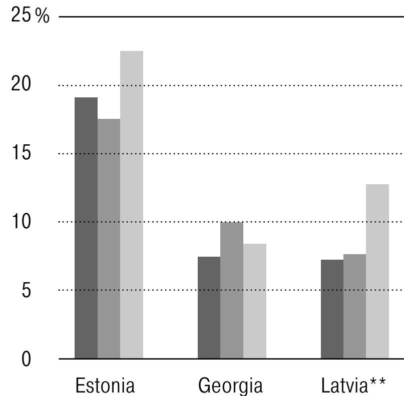
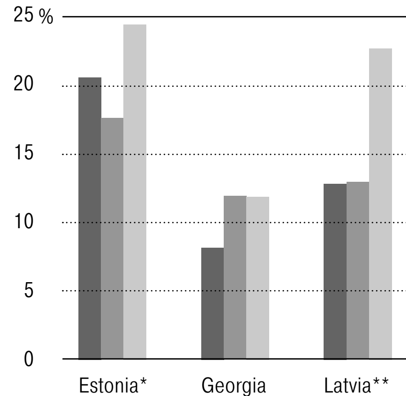


Figure 3: **Percentage of teachers who do not recommend working at their school by country and school poverty level.**



* $p < .10$
** $p < .05$

Low poverty
Medium poverty
High poverty

Figures 2 and 3 indicate that Estonia has is a greater percentage of teachers across all school poverty levels that do not enjoy working at their school and would not recommend their school as a good place to work. The greatest differences between teacher satisfaction in high and low poverty schools are present in Latvia. Compared to teachers in low poverty schools, nearly two times as many teachers in high poverty schools in Latvia do not enjoy working at their school (low = 7.2%, high = 12.8%) and would not recommend their school as a good place to work (low = 12.8%, high = 22.7%). Teacher satisfaction in Georgia

Table 2: **High poverty teacher profiles**

Estonia	Georgia	Latvia
• Want to change schools • Does not recommend their school as a good place to work • Work part time • Participated in induction program • Feel staff can participate in school decision making		• Want to change schools • Does not enjoy working at their school • Does not recommend their school as a good place to work • Work part time • Less experience at their school

Table 3: **High poverty school profiles**

Estonia	Georgia	Latvia
• Public school • Older principal • Principal with more experience as a principal • Principal with more experience as a teacher	• Female principal • Public school • Younger principal • Principal with less experience as a principal • Principal with more experience as a teacher • Provide teachers with greater autonomy	• Male principal • Public school • Principal with less experience as a principal • Provide teachers with greater autonomy

does not significantly differ across school poverty levels, suggesting that teachers in low, medium and high poverty contexts in Georgia are, on average, equally satisfied.

Bivariate analyses were then conducted to identify teacher and school characteristics more common in high poverty schools. One way ANOVAs and chi-square tests revealed teacher and school profiles for high poverty schools in each country. Only significant differences between high poverty and low poverty schools ($p<.05$) are included in the profiles. Full analyses are available from the authors upon request.

High poverty teacher profiles (see Table 2) indicate that, in addition to differences in teacher satisfaction, teachers in Estonia are more likely to work part time, have participated in an induction program, and feel staff can participate in school decision making. In Latvia, additional characteristics of teachers in high poverty schools include less overall experience at the school and a greater likelihood of working part time.

Table 3 identifies high poverty school profiles. In contrast to the non-existent statistical differences between teachers in high poverty and low poverty schools in Georgia, school level characteristics reveal several interesting differences. Specifically, high poverty schools in Georgia are more likely to have a female principal, a principal that is

Table 4: **Association between teacher control variables and whether teachers want to change schools**

	Estonia	Georgia	Latvia
Female	.830	2.739*	1.320
Years of Experience at School	.980	.999	1.006
Participated in Teacher Training	7.966**	.700	1.269
Constant	.053	.063	.144
Random Effects			
Residual	.572	1.425	.679
Model Fit Statistics			
AIC	344.10	230.85	361.12
BIC	363.14	249.04	380.40

Notes: Odds Ratios provided. Smaller AIC and BIC values indicate better model fit. * $p < .10$; ** $p < .05$; *** $p < .01$.

younger, with more experience as a teacher and less experience as a principal. High poverty schools in Latvia are also more likely to be run by less experienced principals while high poverty schools in Estonia have principals with more experience both as a teacher and a principal. High poverty schools in both Georgia and Latvia are more likely to provide their teachers with greater autonomy.

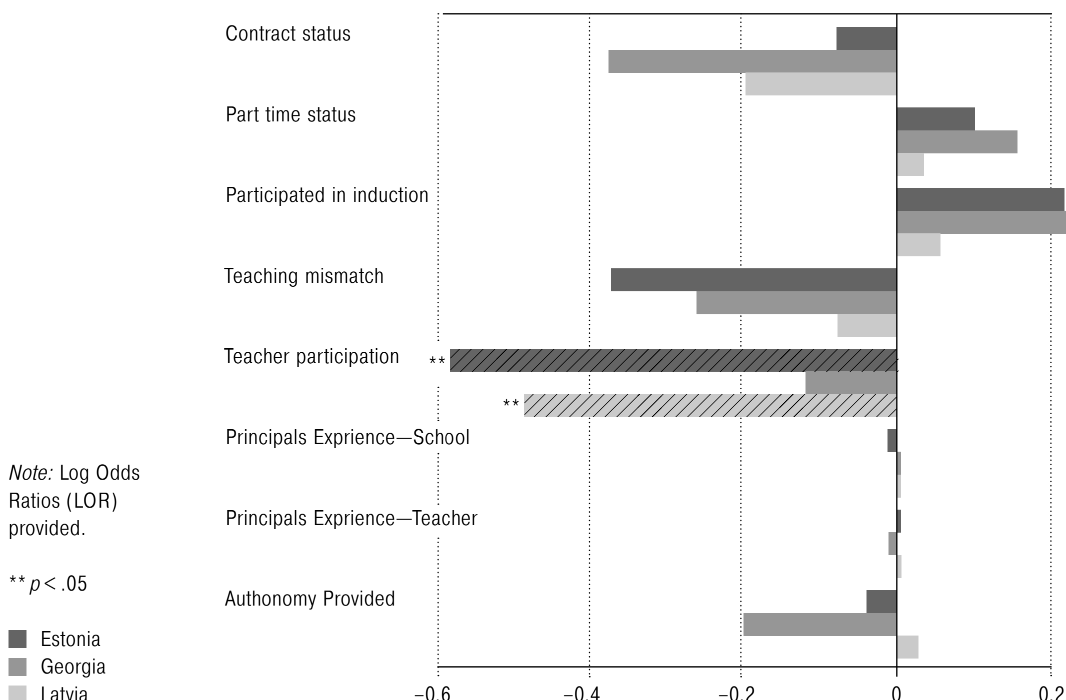
To explore which factors predict teacher satisfaction in high poverty schools, separate HGLMs are conducted by country. Samples for this analysis are restricted to teachers in high poverty schools. Coefficients can therefore be compared across countries and interpreted as the mean association between the given predictor or control variable and the identified teacher satisfaction variable. Negative coefficients in all tables and figures indicate a reduction in teacher dissatisfaction.

4.1. Factors Associated with Teacher Dissatisfaction

Table 4 provides the odds ratio for the two level HGLM predicting whether the teacher would like to change schools. The model includes only the teacher level control variables, with the school level error term included at the second level. Results indicate that the odds of female teachers in high poverty schools in Georgia wanting to change schools is 2.739 times greater than their peers in low poverty schools ($p < .10$). In Estonia, teachers in high poverty schools that have participated in teacher training are more likely to want to change schools ($OR = 7.966$, $p < .05$). Years of experience at the school is not significantly associated with teachers' desire to change schools in any country.

Adding teacher and school level predictor variables independently to the model containing control variables revealed that the vast major-

Figure 4: **Association between teachers desire to change schools and select predictor variables**



ity of predictor variables were not associated with a teacher's desire to change schools. As illustrated in figure 4, only the teacher's perception of participation in Estonia and Latvia was significantly related to their desire to change schools. Results indicate that, for Estonia, the odds that teachers in high poverty schools that feel they have an opportunity to actively participate in school decisions would want to change schools is approximately 0.26 times the odds of those that do not feel teachers have the opportunity. In Latvia the odds for teachers in high poverty schools were 0.32 times that of teachers in low poverty schools, indicating that in both countries teachers that feel they can participate in school decision making are more satisfied and less likely to want to leave.

Table 5 provides the odds ratio for whether the teacher does not enjoy working at their school and teacher control variables. Of the control variables, years of experience at the current school is the only variable associated with teacher enjoyment. Although only significant in for teachers in high poverty schools in Latvia ($p < .10$), the odds ratios below one suggests that teachers with more experience at the school tend to enjoy working at their school more. The direction of

Table 5: **Association between teacher control variables and whether teachers do not enjoy working at their school**

	Estonia	Georgia	Latvia
Female	1.157	.557	1.294
Years of Experience at School	.983	.997	.966*
Participated in Teacher Training	2.216	1.288	.589
Constant	.148	.101	.261
Random Effects			
Residual	.484	.620	.627
Model Fit Statistics			
AIC	359.80	167.76	270.15
BIC	378.81	186.03	289.43

Notes: Odds Ratios provided. Smaller AIC and BIC values indicate better model fit. * $p < .10$; ** $p < .05$; *** $p < .01$.

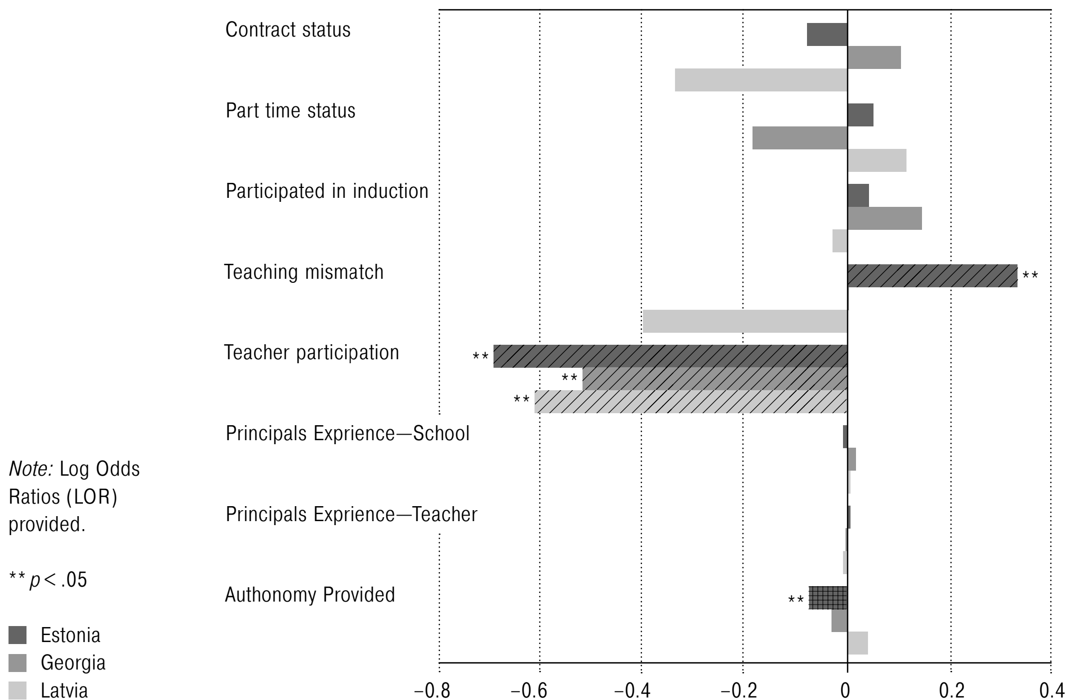
this relationship, however, cannot be determined as those that do not enjoy working at their school may be more likely to leave their school.

Figure 5 indicates that a greater number of predictor variables are associated with teacher enjoyment. Teachers' perception that staff are included in decision making is related to greater enjoyment of their job in all three countries. Additionally, in Latvia teachers in high poverty school on a permanent contract are more likely to enjoy their job than their peers on fixed term contracts. In Estonia, teachers teaching out of their field (teaching mismatch) are less likely to enjoy their job while teachers in high poverty schools that provide greater autonomy are more likely to enjoy their job.

Table 6 provides the odds ratio for whether the teacher does not recommend working at their school and teacher control variables. Once again there are few relationships between the control variables and the included teacher satisfaction variable. The only significant result comes from Georgia where female teachers in high poverty schools are less likely to recommend working at their school than their male peers.

Similar to previous teacher satisfaction variables, teachers' perception of participation in decision making is also related to the increased likelihood that they would recommend their school as a place to work (see Figure 6). Surprisingly, teachers that teach out of their field in Latvia are more likely to recommend their school to others. Autonomy provided to teachers is related to whether the teacher would recommend the school in Estonia, with more autonomy associated with a greater likelihood to recommend. Finally, principals' experi-

Figure 5: **Association between teachers who do not enjoy working at their school and select predictor variables**



Note: Log Odds Ratios (LOR) provided.

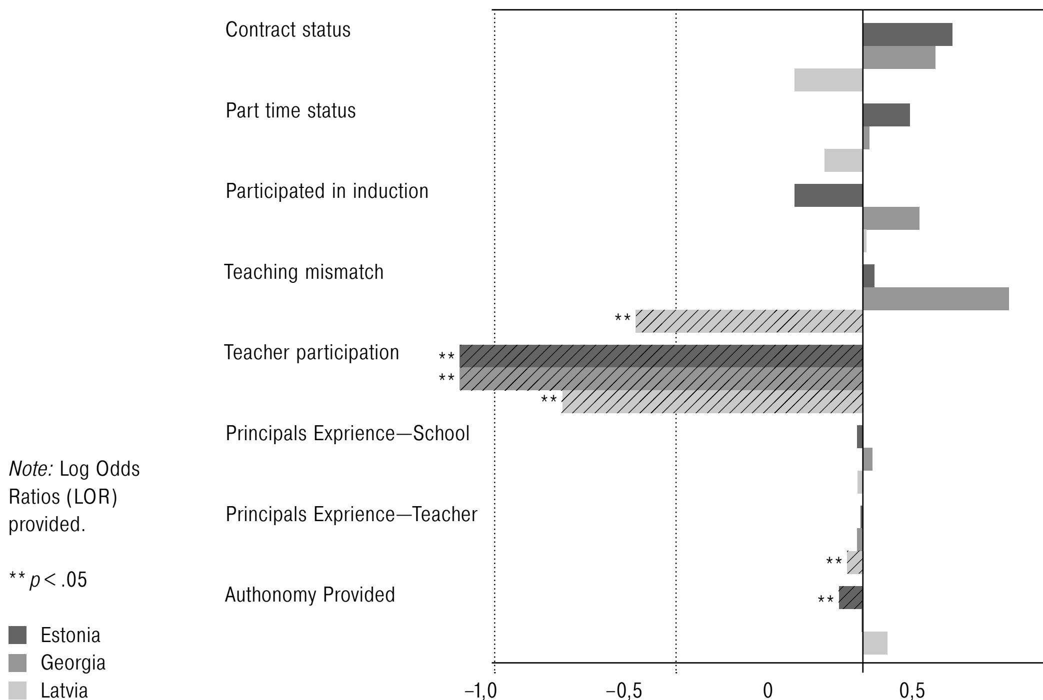
** $p < .05$

Table 6: **Association between teacher control variables and whether teachers do not recommend working at their school**

	Estonia	Georgia	Latvia
Female	1.018	.455*	.933
Years of Experience at School	.990	.978	.992
Participated in Teacher Training	1.526	1.380	1.362
Constant	.256	.256	.230
Random Effects			
Residual	.001	.312	.785
Model Fit Statistics			
AIC	381.50	214.37	373.01
BIC	400.51	232.70	392.30

Notes: Odds Ratios provided. Smaller AIC and BIC values indicate better model fit. * $p < .10$; ** $p < .05$; *** $p < .01$.

Figure 6: **Association between teachers who do not recommend working at their school and select predictor variables**



ence as teachers is associated with teachers being more likely to recommend their school in Estonia and Georgia. In Estonia, the odds of a teacher not recommending their school for teachers in schools with principals that have one standard deviation more experience as a teacher is 0.77 times that of their peers with principals with the mean years of experience as a teacher. In Georgia, the difference is more substantial with the odds of a teacher with a more experienced principal 0.57 times that of their peers.

6. Discussion

Teachers in high poverty schools are less satisfied with their job than their peers in relatively lower poverty schools. Although the trend was present in all countries, it was most pronounced in Latvia where nearly two times as many teachers in high poverty schools responded that do not enjoy working at their school or would not recommend their school, compared to teachers in low poverty schools. Teachers in high poverty schools in Estonia are also more likely to work part time, have participated in an induction program, and feel like staff can participate in decision making. In Latvia, teachers in high poverty schools are more likely work part time and have less experience at their school.

The lack of significant differences between teachers at high poverty schools and low poverty schools in Georgia reinforces the minimal differences found in past research between high and low needs schools throughout compulsory schooling in the country. Furthermore, the situation in Georgia may be partially explained by the country's recentralization, which has limited between-school heterogeneity [Andguladze, Mindadze, 2015].

Given the demographic composition and post-Soviet context of Estonia, Georgia, and Latvia, the low satisfaction of teachers may not result in teacher attrition [Public Policy Research and Training Center, 2014]. A declining student age population and economic challenges have led to school closures, reducing the teacher-student ratio and leaving those in the profession, often thankful for their position. This is especially true in Georgia, where teaching, as a low status position, is met by drastically underfunded public education. With unemployment hovering around 30% [Andguladze, Mindadze, 2015] and declining opportunities elsewhere in education, it is perhaps wise for teachers to maintain their position, no matter how satisfying.

Yet, teacher satisfaction should be a focal point of education policy even if dissatisfied teachers are unlikely to leave. Increased teacher satisfaction has been linked to increased student achievement [Ronfeldt, Loeb, Wyckoff, 2013] and improved school climate [Darling-Hammond, 2004; Menon, Papanastasiou, Zembylas, 2008]. Results indicate that the most consistent and often the only policy-relevant factor in teacher satisfaction in Estonia, Georgia, and Latvia is a teacher's perception that staff can be involved in school decision making. For all outcome variables (except whether the teacher would like to change schools in Georgia) teachers in high poverty schools that feel staff can participate, are more satisfied than those that do not feel that opportunity is available. This is in line with the research of Hulpia et al. [2012] who found that "teachers who believe they have a voice in school decision making, report feeling more committed to the school than do their colleagues who state that they do not have opportunities to participate in school decision making" [P. 1769]. Other areas significantly related to greater teacher satisfaction include permanent contract status (in Latvia), teaching in their field of study (in Estonia), increasing autonomy provided to teachers (in Estonia), and increasing principals experience as a teacher (in Estonia and Georgia). The latter factor may indicate that principals with more experience as a teacher are more likely to include teachers in a collective school environment, practicing a transformational leadership style that is associated with decreased teacher burnout [Heidmets, Liik, 2014].

The factors associated with teacher satisfaction illustrate the complexity and challenges of incorporating education policy into the school climate. Similar to the OECD's [2016] study, which found that Latvia offered more equitable support for high needs schools but the support did not translate into an increased likelihood of teacher satis-

faction; results indicate that merely providing opportunities for teachers is not enough to ensure satisfaction. For instance, although both providing autonomy to teachers in high poverty schools and having teachers perceive participation in decision making are related to increased teacher satisfaction in Georgia, the magnitude of the effect size differs drastically with teacher perception far outweighing the effect of increased autonomy provided. Additionally, the non-significant relationship between autonomy provided and teacher satisfaction in Latvia and Estonia indicates that the challenge lies not in providing the opportunity but in having the opportunity to be meaningfully incorporated into the school climate. Future research should focus on how school policies transition from making responsibility available to making it meaningfully felt by teachers.

Finally, results support the previous work of Persevica [2011], who found that internal factors are more important for teacher satisfaction than external factors. Similar to the literature that emphasizes the importance of school climate [Darling-Hammond, 2004; Menon, Papanastasiou, Zembylas, 2008], increasing teacher satisfaction in Estonia, Georgia, and Latvia requires a collaborative process where teachers feel included as vital members of the school community and recognize their role as important contributors in school decisions. Although the policy implementation and internalization process is challenging, this study indicates that simplistic, externally driven policy solutions, such as introducing induction programs or changing the contract status of teachers, are not as effective in increasing teacher satisfaction as investments that contribute to a positive school climate where teachers feel valued and included as professionals.

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Appendix A: Descriptive Statistics for Estonia

Notes: Standard deviations provided in parentheses.

	Poverty		
	Low	Medium	High
Number of Teachers	1435	1305	350
Percent of Teachers	46.44%	42.23%	11.32%
Would Change Jobs if they Could	15.01%	16.22%	21.53%
Does Not Enjoy Working at their School	19.14%	17.52%	22.55%
Does Not Recommend Working at their School	20.61%	17.68%	24.63%
Female	82.65%	83.22%	84.00%
Years Experience at the School	13.66 (10.60)	14.76 (11.26)	13.68 (11.12)
Completed Teacher Training	94.69%	94.29%	92.20%
On a Permanent Contract	84.48%	84.99%	80.69%
Working Part-time	36.48%	34.52%	47.56%
Participated in Induction	17.02%	18.85%	22.74%
Teaching Mismatch	6.08%	6.16%	8.16%
Teachers Perception of Participation	80.44%	85.15%	87.13%
Private School	8.64%	1.84%	0.00%
Female Principal	63.28%	53.70%	64.57%
Principal's Years of Experience as a Principal	11.12 (8.41)	13.68 (9.70)	14.39 (11.28)
Principal's Years of Experience at the School	8.58 (7.70)	12.02 (9.41)	10.49 (9.66)
Principal's Years of Experience as a Teacher	19.90 (10.48)	24.30 (11.58)	25.11 (11.61)
Amount of Autonomy Provided to Teachers	3.93 (1.47)	4.26 (1.03)	3.91 (1.66)

Appendix B: Descriptive Statistics for Georgia

	Poverty		
	Low	Medium	High
Number of Teachers	1504	611	344
Percentage of Teachers	61.16%	24.85%	13.99%
Would Change Jobs if they Could	11.33%	13.72%	14.92%
Does Not Enjoy Working at their School	7.43%	10.00%	8.49%
Does Not Recommend Working at their School	8.03%	11.80%	11.80%
Female	81.12%	86.91%	81.40%
Years Experience at the School	17.50 (12.79)	18.91 (11.88)	18.26 (12.39)
Completed Teacher Training	90.15%	92.40%	91.15%
On a Permanent Contract	16.39%	17.12%	15.09%
Working Part-time	54.55%	54.87%	60.59%
Participated in Induction	14.90%	14.29%	13.33%
Teaching Mismatch	7.50%	6.69%	5.3%
Teachers Perception of Participation	91.40%	92.16%	92.64%
Private School	17.29%	0.00%	0.00%
Female Principal	55.85%	72.88%	76.16%
Principal’s Years of Experience as a Principal	9.84 (8.31)	9.74 (8.30)	7.93 (4.73)
Principal’s Years of Experience at the School	8.57 (6.71)	7.61 (6.08)	8.94 (9.11)
Principal’s Years of Experience as a Teacher	22.91 (10.66)	22.81 (10.01)	24.01 (10.96)
Amount of Autonomy Provided to Teachers	.74 (1.07)	1.13 (1.30)	1.32 (1.35)

Appendix C: Descriptive Statistics for Latvia

	Poverty		
	Low	Medium	High
Number of Teachers	928	553	310
Percent of Teachers	51.81%	30.88%	17.31%
Would Change Jobs if they Could	14.64%	13.75%	21.65%
Does Not Enjoy Working at their School	7.16%	7.77%	12.78%
Does Not Recommend Working at their School	12.81%	12.94%	22.73%
Female	88.80%	87.50%	87.32%
Years Experience at the School	15.54 (10.31)	16.42 (10.54)	14.03 (10.64)
Completed Teacher Training	91.18%	90.35%	90.68%
On a Permanent Contract	92.70%	93.51%	90.70%
Working Part-time	14.58%	19.40%	20.85%
Participated in Induction	36.63%	37.38%	38.87%
Teaching Mismatch	8.73%	9.42%	10.95%
Teachers Perception of Participation	84.86%	84.79%	84.90%
Private School	1.82%	3.01%	0.00%
Female Principal	75.89%	52.12%	80.56%
Principal's Years of Experience as a Principal	12.93 (9.15)	17.27 (7.83)	11.67 (7.47)
Principal's Years of Experience at the School	12.16 (9.73)	13.26 (8.59)	12.66 (6.91)
Principal's Years of Experience as a Teacher	26.00 (10.99)	28.17 (12.00)	26.74 (10.30)
Amount of Autonomy Provided to Teachers	3.29 (1.69)	3.06 (1.71)	3.63 (1.23)

Teachers' Plight and Trainees' Flight:

Perceived, Lived, and Conceived Spaces of Schools

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Abstract. Teacher recruitment and retention are often examined as technical problems that can be solved by providing teachers with incentives, evaluations, or more practical initial preparation. This paper proposes a reconceptualization of pre-service teachers' flight from the profession. By applying Lefebvre's (1991) theory of space to the analysis of ethnographic data collected in the Russian Federation between 2011 and 2014, this paper highlights how the teachers' plight in schools and in society at large shapes student teachers' career aspirations. Based on classroom observations and focus group data, as well as media artifacts, I show that the perceived, lived, and conceived spaces of schooling hold little promise for students in teacher education programs. Teachers' pay, their work structures, and students' attitudes towards teachers reveal that schools have come to occupy a peripheral position in Russian society. Teachers' experiences in schools, as managed professionals burdened with bureaucratic responsibilities and undergoing significant amounts of stress, make teaching a precarious occupation. Representations of schools and teachers' work in the media and public service announcements portray schools as irrelevant and immoral spaces where only "losers" go to work. In this situation, meaningful educational change would require both a reimagining of the spaces of schooling and a collective dialogue on the role education should play in Russian society.

Keywords: teacher recruitment, teacher retention, teacher education, foreign language teacher preparation, educational reform, critical theory of space, ethnography

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During an interview, a Ministry of Education official in Ognensk[1]—a former teacher and a pedagogical university graduate—raised the question of graduate employment. "What difference does it make that we have a great pedagogical university in our city when most students

[1] All geographic and personal names used in this paper are pseudonyms created to protect participants' identity and ensure confidentiality.

don't go to work in schools?" he complained to me (Interview № 5; November, 2013). I asked if there were data that the ministry was collecting on that matter. Several days later, he forwarded to me a letter from the pedagogical university which stated that six out of several hundred of its graduates found employment in schools. It was not clear whether this letter reflected the actual number of graduates that were recently newly employed by schools or just the number that the university was able to procure. Yet, as I was researching teacher education reforms in the Russian Federation between 2011 and 2014, I often came across this framing of the problem: young teachers don't go to work in schools because pedagogical universities do not prepare them well for the practical work of teaching [Bolotov, 2014; Kasparzhak, 2013]. To address this problem along with several others, the Ministry of Education has supported efforts to modernize pedagogical education.

The problem of teacher attrition or turnover is not unique to Russia alone. A number of studies demonstrated that identity, professional preparation, time pressures, and leadership in schools affect teacher recruitment and retention [Darling-Hammond, Berry, Haselkorn, Fideler, 1999; Day, 2002; Kyriacou, Kunc, 2007; Müller, Alliata, Benninghoff, 2009]. Among university students considering teaching as a future career, teachers' pay, working conditions, the attitude of the general public towards the teaching profession, as well as the desire to help students learn, each play an important role [Stokes, 2007; Johnson, Kardos, 2008].

Despite these observations, international organizations have focused on the technical aspects of attracting and retaining teachers: competitive entry, incentives for teaching in high-need areas, teacher evaluations, and "useful" practical preparation [OECD, 2005; World Bank, 2012]. Across a variety of international contexts, reformers argue that young teachers choose not to go into or leave teaching because their preparation programs are too theoretical and do not prepare them for the practical work of teaching in schools [Furlong, Cochran-Smith, Brennan, 2013]. Thus, teacher preparation is increasingly moved to schools, particularly in the UK and the US.

The goal of this paper is to shift the focus from the education system's failure to prepare student teachers for working in schools on to how student teachers perceive schools and teachers' work. Instead of treating the problem of teacher recruitment and retention as a technical problem, i. e. insufficient preparation, I examine how university students' observations of the teachers' plight in schools contribute to their flight from the teaching profession. The reason for this shift is simple: if schools are not attractive places to work, if teaching as a profession holds little promise for young people to realize their potential, if continuous reforms turn work in schools into a high-stress occupation, then reforming pedagogical education without stabilizing school environments is unlikely to bring forth the desired change.

My paper is based on the premise that treating teacher recruitment and retention as a technical problem makes certain aspects of students' and graduates' decision-making invisible. To address this invisibility, I reconceptualize this problem by drawing on Lefebvre's [1991] theory of space and ethnographically examine how pre-service teachers experience and narrate the constructions of schooling spaces and affiliations with them. My analysis shows that when pre-service teachers experience spaces of schooling as sites of low status, limited safety, bureaucratic control, and stress-related burnout, increased practical preparation may be of little help to bring about educational change. This focus leads me to suggest that if policymakers seek meaningful change in the teaching profession, they should start not with teacher preparation, but rather with the space of schooling.

1. Theoretical Framework

In my analysis I draw on Lefebvre's [1991] theory of space where space is not approached as a given category, but rather as a social product. Lefebvre emphasizes the need to examine ways in which space is perceived, lived, and conceived [Elden, 2004]. *Perceived* space is the space imbued with meanings and interpretations, whereas the *lived* space is the space filled with human activity performed by human bodies. *Conceived*—also referred to as "representations of space"—is the space planned, engineered or reproduced through maps, designs, texts or images. These distinctions are helpful when thinking about multiple dimensions of the schooling spaces: as they are narrated or imagined by pre-service teachers, as they are experienced by practicing teachers, or as they are represented on TV or in public service announcements. Lefebvre's work, however, is an important reminder that space is replete with politics and represents power struggles or social inequalities that constitute the life of a capitalist society. Read through this lens, space can reveal how professionals whose activities are associated with schools can become stigmatized, marginalized or disempowered. Multiple readings of space are helpful for thinking about ways in which pre-service teachers come to understand schooling and the teaching profession. What comes to matter are not abstract constructions of schools, but the multiple meanings that spaces of schooling are imbued with by various actors associated with them.

2. Methodology

This paper is based on a multi-sited critical ethnographic study that I conducted in the Russian Federation during a series of trips: Dobrolyubov (June 2011; June 2012; March—June 2014), Ognensk (May 2012; September—December 2013), and Lyutvino (January 2014—March 2014). The study was conducted primarily at two pedagogical universities, but also followed "multiply produced logic" [Marcus, 1995] in the educational community outside these universities through interviews with teachers, educational researchers and ministry offi-

cials. At the pedagogical universities, I conducted regular classroom observations, participated in the foreign language departments' daily lives, and regularly interacted with both the faculty and the students. My continual presence in classes and department events allowed me to establish rapport and develop relationships with many participants in my study.

The two universities were selected based on their different geographic positions in the country. Ognensk State Pedagogical University (OSPU) occupies a more prominent position in the educational community and enjoys greater prestige than Dobroyubov State Pedagogical University (DSPU). Located away from Russia's decision-making centers, DSPU has average rankings nationally. Both are public universities that primarily serve to prepare teachers, but similar to other narrowly-specialized institutions of higher learning in Russia, they prepare students for a variety of professions, including economics, law and management.

The primary data for this paper comes from 15 student focus groups conducted in Russian at these sites over the span of this study. The size of the focus groups varied from three to twelve participants. To allow for maximum variability in data, I conducted focus groups with students in different stages of their programs (from the first year to the fourth) and in different majors. While this allowed for a range of perspectives to be elicited, the study focused primarily on foreign language departments. My choice of these departments was intentional—foreign languages tend to maintain their prestige and often have competitive entry into the program when other programs do not. Even though such a narrow focus poses some limitations for the study findings, students in other majors that I interacted with expressed similar sentiments to the ones presented in this paper.

As this study is based on the principles of humanistic anthropology [Johnson, 1976], I employ a narrative style and incorporate visuals that illustrate the key points of my argument. I present accounts of the perceived spaces of schooling as narrated by pre-service teachers, lived spaces of schooling based on a teachers' accounts, and conceived spaces of schooling as portrayed by the media. Together these portrayals capture how unattractive and undesirable spaces of schooling can become for future teachers. Returning back to Lefebvre's account, I suggest that in order to introduce meaningful educational change, it is important to change how the spaces of schooling are constructed.

3. "A double no, a double blow"

At OSPU, during my observation of a methods class for third year students, Irina Borisovna—the faculty member teaching the course—quite surprisingly invited me to participate in the class discussion. Gradually, the conversation switched to teachers' low sala-

ries in Russian schools. Irina Borisovna disagreed with the students on this point.

> "There is money in schools,"—she explained to them. "You can find meaningful work there. Listen, it feels better to be a teacher than to be a secretary. And you can always get students to tutor for extra pay. I was on a vacation and this one woman asked me about my job. I told her I was a teacher. She could not believe it: 'You must have a really rich husband' And I said to her, 'Why would you say that?' Anyway. I think teaching can be a good job."
>
> Katya turned to me, "Can I ask you a question? How are teachers treated in the United States?"
>
> "Are you asking about the social status?" the faculty tried to clarify her question for me.
>
> Vika chimed in, "Yeah, you see, here, a teacher... That means you get a lot of contempt."
>
> The room got filled with yes's and sighs. I faked naiveté, "What do you mean?
>
> Irina Borisovna decided to help us out, "Here, in Russia, teachers are treated very poorly. There is what is called a system of 'double no.'"
>
> One of the students in the room turned to her neighbor and whispered, "A system of double blow." They both giggled.
>
> "Yes, a double no. In society. There was an old article about it. Those who have been rejected everywhere else go to a pedagogical university," Irina Borisovna was looking at me, as she was explaining this.
>
> Katya interrupted, beating her fists on the desk, "No! That is simply not true."
>
> Irina Borisovna looking intently at me continued, "And those who cannot get any jobs anywhere else end up working in schools. Of course, it is not true." She turned to the students. "But what can you do? That's where such treatment comes from: no, no, you are an absolute loser."
>
> Katya looked up from her notebook, "It feels awful to be treated like an idiot" (OSPU; Field Notes, October, 2013).

I walked away from that conversation very impressed with the students—they were sharp, curious, and thoughtful. The exchange about the negative conceptions of teachers' work stuck with me. Even though Irina Borisovna had changed the wording slightly, she was speaking about "double negative selection" (Rus. *dvoynoy negativny otbor*)—the idea that only the weakest students enter pedagogical universities and the weakest graduates go to work in schools (Kasparzhak, 2013). Several weeks later, when I conducted the focus group interview with these students, Katya told me that she came from another city, got accepted both by the economics department at one

of the top universities in the country and by the pedagogical university in Ognensk. She chose to come to the pedagogical university because she loved foreign languages. It is true that she did not want to be a teacher. She dreamt of being an interpreter but someone in the department's admissions committee said that her scores were not high enough to be admitted to the interpreter's specialization. So, she switched. A year later she found out that her scores were high enough and the person on the admissions committee was not truthful but it was too late. She was thinking of doing a Master's degree in translation studies next. Katya was a perceptive and thoughtful young woman who, similar to many others on her program, did not fit the paradigm of "double-negative selection."

This interaction reveals the moves that the faculty and the students make as they construct narratives of school spaces and teachers' work. The policy push to hold pedagogical universities accountable for their graduates' employment in schools placed a burden on many teacher educators to encourage graduates to work in schools. I often observed how instructors extolled work in schools during methods, pedagogy, and even general language classes. To ensure greater connections between schools and the university-based teacher preparation, some faculties designed tasks that relied heavily on artifacts and activities that students brought from their school placements. Advertisements about vacancies in schools hanging on university bulletin boards or displayed on TV monitors by the entrance informed students of available positions. For students, these reminders seemed excessive: some of them complained that they were "fed-up" with being told to work in schools by way of their faculties' "constant nagging" (Rus. *postoyanno na mozgi kapayut*).

In the exchange above, the faculty's attempt to present schools as potentially desirable spaces of employment rests on two elements: one is opportunities for financial gain ("there is money in schools) and another one is a degree of autonomy that a teacher can enjoy ("it is better to be a teacher than a secretary"). This attempt is counteracted by students' skepticism which pushes the faculty to provide an alternative explanation for how the problematic space of schooling is constructed. Irina Borisovna shared the narrative of the conceived spaces of pedagogical universities and schools that educational policies present to the public—as the spaces where only "losers" go.

The students' response to this narrative is indicative of how they experience the conundrums and contradictions of having chosen to be associated with the teaching profession as "a double blow." On the one hand, many of them reported how much disdain they received for having chosen to enter a pedagogical university. As one of them explained to me, "If you say that you are a student at a pedagogical university, people look at you and think that you are deficient or something." Others added that their families, relatives, friends, and even their school teachers strongly discouraged them from choos-

ing teaching in schools as a potential career. What this exchange reveals is that despite a faculty's efforts to encourage students to view schools in a positive light, students perceive schools as problematic spaces and teachers' work as the one that draws a lot of contempt from society.

4. Perceived Spaces of Schools: Pre-service Teachers' Narratives

4.1. Before and After Practicum

Through the focus groups, interviews, and informal chats with students in Ognensk and Dobrolyubov, I noticed a pattern in the students' responses to work in schools: among first year students there were significantly more students who wanted to become teachers. Similar patterns have been observed by other studies conducted in Russia [Sobkin, Tkachenko, 2007]. Unlike those studies, however, I noticed that it was students' practicum experiences in schools that had the most significant influence on deterring them from choosing work in schools as a viable option. Those temporal boundaries played out most clearly during the focus group interviews. For instance, focus group 2 was conducted in 2011 and comprised third-year students. At that time, the university followed the second generation of state standards that required only one practicum placement in the fourth year of studies. Thus, third year students lived in anticipation of their practicum placements:

> R: Are you planning on working according to your specialization? Are you going to become teachers?
>
> S2: Everything will depend on the practicum.
>
> S1: Yes, we are waiting for the practicum. We have not had the practicum.
>
> S2: We are waiting and we are scared of the practicum.
>
> S1: We don't know what it is like, only in theory; methods classes just started and we are getting familiar with something. But for now, we don't know. (DSPU; Focus Group 2, Year 3 students, 2011)

In contrast, focus group 4 was carried out with students in their fourth year at the end of the spring semester, after they had gone to schools on a practicum:

> R: How many of you want to become teachers?
>
> S1: No one.
>
> R: Why?
>
> S1: We tried it this year and we did not like it.
>
> R: During the practicum?
>
> S1: Yeah.

R: Why didn't you like it?

S1: It was interesting but…

S2: It is a stressful profession. We waste our nerves for nothing.

S4: When I entered the university, I was 18 years old. It was very difficult to imagine what the teaching profession means. After 4 years at the university, I realize how difficult it is and I do not want to become a teacher. (DSPU; Focus Group 4, 2011)

Among the 12 students who participated in focus group 4, no one wanted to work as a school teacher after the practicum. Even if a few students did not object to the possibility of becoming a teacher when they applied to the university, a practicum experience in a school made them re-consider those aspirations.

What is commonly discussed in literature is that students choose not to work in schools because they lack preparation [Bolotov, 2014]. While some students mentioned it as an area of concern, many felt that the knowledge they were receiving at the university was adequate for work in schools. For example, in discussing their knowledge of English, students shared that they were disappointed that it was not stronger. But eventually, they admitted, "For us it is necessary to know how to teach. Our schools don't have such a strong level, so they prepare us for school and that is enough" (DSPU; Focus Group 3, 2011). In other conversations, I heard students mention that they would prefer to have more practice. The new standards issued in 2009 and implemented in pedagogical universities in 2011, in fact, require that students have three practica in schools during their studies. Students who followed the new curriculum rarely brought up the desire for more practica. Instead, they more often discussed how they did not want to become teachers after graduation—after each new placement in schools, the number of those who still perceived teaching as a viable career declined.

Not everyone goes through such dramatic transformations after they are placed in schools and some still considered becoming teachers afterwards. An important factor in their decision-making was the type of school. Students shared with me during the focus groups that "schools can be quite different" (Rus. *shkola shkole rozn'*) (OSPU; Focus Group 7, 2013). Gymnasiums or lyceums[2] were often kept as viable options for future employment. Private language schools or language courses were perceived as desirable places to work. To

[2] Gymnasiums and lyceums represent schools that can specialize in particular disciplines and can be more selective about the students they admit. The new educational law has eliminated legal differences between different types of schools but the practices of selectivity and higher expectations remain.

accommodate students' desires for a variety of professional experiences, the department in Dobrolyubov allowed some of them to do their practice teaching in language schools. From the students' perspective, the only downside of those schools in comparison to state schools was "the social package"—the insurance and other forms of social support that have recently become available for school teachers in Russia. Overall, however, conversations with students showed that in making professional choices they drew careful distinctions between the types of spaces schools represented: private schools were seen as relatively desirable options, schools with special status (such as gymnasiums or lyceums) were seen as possibilities, whereas state schools (often called "regular schools" (Rus. *obychnye shkoly*)) were only regarded as viable opportunities if students had studied at those schools themselves or had a good experience during the practicum placement. For example, a fourth-year student preparing for graduation that year shared with me during an informal chat:

> I am not going to work at a school! Who needs that? With all of their sanitary norms and desks screwed to the floors, so that there is nothing you can do with them! I want a job that would allow creativity. I won't be able to survive in a school. I tried working at a private Jewish school. I liked that. Feel free to do whatever you want. I would consider that type of a school. But I am not going to work in a regular school. (OSPU; Field Notes, October, 2013)

This quote illustrates the distinctions in the constructions of space of schooling: drawing on her practicum experiences, Alla emphasized how the desks screwed to the floors, even if only metaphorically, constrain creativity in state schools, which compels her to seek employment elsewhere. Excessive regulation and bureaucratic control over the spaces of state schools make teaching there an undesirable path. Only the freedom provided by the private establishment keeps teaching a viable career trajectory. This quote demonstrates that the construction of the perceived space of state schools deserves more attention.

4.2. Perceived Spaces of State Schools

Throughout the focus groups and informal interviews, pre-service teachers shared their narratives of perceived spaces of state schooling by drawing on their experiences in schools as students and as trainees on practica. Most students were terrified by exhausted teachers, disrespectful students, inordinate amounts of paperwork, and the oppressive atmosphere of the workplace that they witnessed during their teaching placements.

One of the most commonly expressed perceptions that many students had about schools was that they were places where teachers' salaries were low. As one student commented, "It might be possible to go to work in school. Maybe a miracle would happen and teachers' salaries would be raised" (DSPU; Focus Group 5, 2012). Many pre-ser-

vice teachers worked as private tutors and knew that their teachers often generated supplementary income through private tutoring as well. But those considerations rarely factored into their perceptions of school spaces. Those were still based on the assumption of "bad salaries," "low income," and "little money." These perceptions suggested that being associated with a school was akin to being submersed in poverty, even after teachers' salaries were raised in 2013.

Focusing on the reforms and changes in society, some students described schools as conservative spaces where teachers' capacity for creativity and autonomy was hampered either by established rules or by a general anti-change attitude. A conversation with a group of third-year students, for example, demonstrates a contrast between the spaces of university preparation and the spaces of state schooling:

> S1: Young people are afraid, afraid to lose their skills, because school puts you in a box (Rus*. stavit v ramki*). Here, they teach us differently, broader than in school. In schools, judging by our teachers, all of this gets wiped out and only the minimum remains.
>
> S2: yes, yes…
>
> S1: And everything that they taught us in pedagogy classes, we don't see, from our personal experience.
>
> S2: Teachers, not college instructors. In methods, you could say. Where are all these methods that they are teaching us? [laughs]
>
> S1: We are just sitting there and thinking: we were taught differently in schools. Everything was different. What we are being taught now and what we had in school, two different sides, two different processes.
>
> I: How are they different?
>
> S2: Probably in conservatism… Old paradigm, it is called. Old paradigm of education.
>
> S1: They tell us about students' freedom of speech…
>
> S2: Humane attitude towards students…
>
> S1: Humane attitude…
>
> S2: Personally-relevant approach…
>
> S1: And even simple variety at school, of subjects, games. In reality, all of this is just a quarter of the truth, of what goes on in schools, of what they talk about. We had freedom of speech, but all of it was voluntarily-forcefully (Rus. *dobrovol'no-prinuditel'no*). You have freedom, but you don't have it.
>
> S3: It does not depend on teachers alone though.

Ss: Of course.

S3: Lack of time, very little, forty-five minutes. For students, it is not little, but in principle to deliver the program (Rus. *dat' programmu*), so that each student answers, it is not enough. That's why it is all done this way: the one who is more active, he answers, but the others, oh well.

S2: And there are not that many hours in a regular school. In special schools yes, but in a regular school, no.

I: So, what turns out, what you are being taught at pedagogy classes, the new modern methods, and they are not practiced in schools...

S3: Not everywhere, only by young teachers. They try but then they lose the desire.

S2: If they let them do it.

S1: Yes, they come with new ideas, with innovations, with a desire to change something, to do something new, but with time they lose interest in all of it and simply judging by our own teachers who came young, enthusiastic and everything, the work is bubbling, and then they wither, and it becomes usual, can't say interesting, used to be more interesting... […]

I: What is your attitude to conservatism and modernization? Where do you see yourself?

S2: Closer to modernization, it seems.

I: Got it, you all [see yourself closer] to modernization...

S2: Yes, because that is how they are bringing us up.

S1: That is how they are teaching us here, in the university (DSPU; Focus Group 2, Year 3 students, 2011)

Similarly to other students, these students described how conservative state schools can be, and contrasted that conservatism with the instruction they receive at the university where they are encouraged to learn more innovative approaches to teaching. In constructing this perceived space of schooling, these students drew on their own memories as students and described how different young teachers were when they tried to use new methods and new approaches. Important in their narrative is the hidden conflict between young teachers who try to introduce change and "they" that may not let them engage in more innovative teaching. For these students, forces of conservatism can be embodied in other older teachers or school administrators that may discourage young teachers from consistently using new approaches.

For other students who discussed school conservatism during our interviews, the structure of teachers' work in state schools (also brought up in this conversation) was a more pronounced concern. Having spent one or two months in schools on practica, students quickly learned that powerpoints with numerous images or lessons full of hands-on activities take a significant amount of time to prepare. Some students that I interacted with during their school placements described to me how fortunate they felt to have the time to look for pictures online or to cut up strips of paper for games in class. These students no longer blamed school teachers for a lack of desire to modernize their teaching. Rather they saw conservatism in teaching as an outcome of the exigencies of the context. With four or five classes every day, little time set aside for planning, and a heavy load of checking students' work, most teachers could only afford to rely heavily on the textbook.

Furthermore, many of the foreign language teachers in state schools also had to be ready for inspections that checked whether they were using textbooks approved by the Ministry of Education. This meant that textbooks published by international publishing houses perceived to be more engaging for learners were borderline illegal; only national textbooks that followed a more traditional paradigm of education were allowed to be used in the classroom. Together these constraints made students feel that they were being set up for failure: reformed teaching was advocated for at the university and at the policy level, but not supported in schools. They saw very few opportunities to deliver the type of teaching they were hoping to do and opted for pursuing ways to realize their potential elsewhere.

Furthermore pre-service teachers perceived schools as spaces of disrespect and having a lack of safety for teachers. In focus groups, in informal conversations, and in class activities, pre-service teachers lamented the fact that state schools became sites where teachers were no longer respected. The excerpt below illustrates how students perceived potential relationships that school sites could afford them.

> S2: Nowadays, the new generation is different from the previous ones. The children are naughty, noisy…
>
> S1: And lazy…
>
> S2: And they don't want to obey and it is difficult to manage them.
>
> S3: In the past, no one complained to the director.
>
> S1: Children cannot care less about their studies now. They cannot care less about anything… […]
>
> R: Do schools have a lot of old teachers?
>
> S2: Yes, very few young people become teachers now. There have been so many TV programs about how poorly teachers are treated. Parents beat them up. Teachers are afraid to go to school.

> R: Why is it that kids couldn't care less about studies?
>
> S3: Upbringing. Values have changed.
>
> S4: Values. It is easy for them to come home from school and sit down in front of the computer instead of doing homework.
>
> S1: Enter Vkontakte.[3]
>
> S: Parents used to be stricter in how they brought up children. Now they are much more lax.
>
> R: Values, what does the society value now?
>
> S4: Materialism.
>
> R: What influences the changes in the upbringing?
>
> S2: The mass media.
>
> S3: Money.
>
> S1: And parents themselves bring children up this way.
>
> S3: Or do not bring up at all. Parents are at work. Children are left to their own devices, they do whatever they want.
>
> S2: And they work because they need money. Everything comes down to money. (DSPU; Focus Group 4, 2011)

This exchange reveals that the spaces of state schooling represent relational webs in which a teacher occupies a contradictory position: on the one hand, the teacher is responsible for educating children against their will because children themselves do not care about education. On the other hand, teachers receive little support for this hard work and may find themselves in danger at the hand of the parents or students. While in this focus group students discussed what they learned about the dangers of teaching from TV shows that they watched, one of the graduates that I kept in touch with after she started working in a school shared how one of the parents beat up a PE teacher for a low grade that his son had received. In February 2014, a high school student shot his Geography teacher[4] because he had received a lower grade than he expected. Reporting on that story, the media focused on the student's psychological state whereas many educators and educational researchers that I interacted with at that time felt that the incident revealed well-hidden sores of Russian schools. While together these cases might be few and far between, the stories about them contribute significantly to the construction of state schools as

[3] VKontakte is a Russian social network website.

[4] http://www.bbc.com/russian/russia/2014/02/140203_moscow_school_hostages

spaces of limited safety and even a threat to those who choose to become teachers.

Most importantly, however, the excerpt above and the instances when teachers are hurt by parents or students reveal that the transition to the capitalist mode of production placed schools on the periphery of social relations: when education holds no promise of collective progress or individual advancement, schools become sites of irrelevance and obstruction. As a result of this change, teachers who work there become scapegoats for social ills, rather than heroes of social progress. Quite often pre-service teachers along with the faculty themselves explained how little interest modern children had in education: those who came from well-off families knew that their parents' wealth will help them get ahead in life; those who came from struggling backgrounds knew that no matter how hard they tried, they would not be able to escape the poverty they found themselves in. In themselves, these explanations are not new as they echo an extensive body of research conducted in the US and the UK [MacLeod, 2009; Willis, 1981]. But for postsocialist Russia, these explanations constitute a departure from the imagined spaces of socialist schooling—spaces where hard work was presumably valued and where teachers were allegedly held in high regard. This departure is most strongly visible in representations of teachers and schools in public spaces and in the media. Before I turn to those representations, however, I will explore the lived spaces of schooling from teachers' own personal accounts.

5. Lived Spaces of Schools: A Teacher's Story

One particular teacher's account helped me see ways in which spaces of schooling became sites of disorderly reform activity, in which teachers' voices and well-being and students' learning were of little consequence. Anna Vladimirovna—an elementary school teacher working for a gymnasium in a residential part (Rus. *spal'ny rayon*) of Ognensk—scheduled the meeting with me for 7 pm on a Friday night. Herself a graduate of OSPU, she had taught in schools for over twenty years. She had to stay at the school that night to finish entering students' grades into her electronic records book. She indicated that it was customary for her to stay at the school until 9 or 10 pm to catch up on all the paperwork that she had to keep. During the interview, Anna Vladimirovna showed the new curricula guides and the quarterly, weekly, and daily plans that the teachers were "forced" to design because of the introduction of new school standards (Figure 1). This introduction was accompanied by the adoption of new textbooks that, from Anna Vladimirovna's perspective, happened for dubious reasons which seemed have less to do with children's learning and more to do with the authors' alleged connections at the Ministry of Education. The problem with these new guides was that teachers did not use them in their daily teaching but they still had to be designed every year. The

process of introducing new school standards made the teachers' labor on these papers a "waste to be thrown away" and teachers themselves "pawns that have to carry out someone else's orders." The pressure to follow the standards, however, made it hard to meet the needs of individual children. She saw that some of the students could not keep up with the pace, but she could not slow down to accommodate their needs because of the pressures from above.

There were other changes happening as well. Traditionally teachers had to keep two forms of record-keeping—a class record book (Rus. *klassny zhurnal*) that was stored at the school and a student's record book (Rus. *dnevnik*) that students took home to show to their parents. Both of these were required to be hand-written. Now the record-keeping doubled: in addition to the hand-written records, teachers were required to keep an electronic record of students' performance that both administrators and parents could access. All records kept on paper had to perfectly match those which were stored in the electronic system. The problem was not that the new system was introduced; the problem was that the old system was not done away with. This doubled her paperwork load for the week without a corresponding increase in pay. As Anna Vladimirovna explained, "If I was making 50,000 rubles a month, I could sit here peacefully and entertain myself with all these papers. But I have to work three jobs to survive. To earn the 50,000, I have to work from the early morning until late at night. Where am I supposed to find time for this?" This conversation happened after the widely discussed presidential decree from May 2012 which allegedly brought teachers' salaries in line with regional averages. Collectively, these changes left no time for teachers to engage in activities that would help them improve their teaching or engage in "creative work." Instead, they left teachers feeling insecure and frustrated, as the quotes below demonstrates.

> They constantly make up new things up there (Rus. *naverkhu*). We have no stability at all. All of us teachers constantly feel that we are just hanging in the air (Rus. *nakhodimsya v podveshennom sostoyanii*). We have this feeling that someone is constantly experimenting on us and we are just guinea pigs, "What else are they going come up with? What other surprise are they going to dump on us?" We have absolutely no security and no protections. (Interview 40, December 2013)

Explaining all the unreasonable expectations placed on her, Anna Vladimirovna noted that she was under a lot of stress. She showed her arms and neck covered with a red rash and said, "With all the stress, I had to be hospitalized several times this year. I can't do this anymore." Several minutes later, I asked her if young teachers came to work in schools.

> I don't know. Last year we had a young teacher join the school. She started all bright and shiny. Smiled all the time. This year, in the middle of the year, she resigned. She was going around darker than a storm cloud. As a young person, she could not understand what was happening. There was no way she could survive it. (Interview 40, December 2013)

In the midst of our chat, Anna Vladimirovna's colleague popped in to say good bye to her. She also stayed on late at the school, working extra hours to catch up with her paperwork. She was too exhausted to continue and was heading home. After her colleague left, Anna Vladimirovna pensively commented, "I am forty-three, my colleague is forty. We are the youngest ones at this school." She described herself as an enthusiastic teacher who always enjoyed doing activities with children and engaging in creative work. Yet the constant pace of reform, the pressures of daily work, and the powerlessness in the face of bureaucratic control made the wait for retirement appear unbearable.

I met Anna Vladimirovna at a protest against the new educational reforms organized by the alternative teachers' union called "Teacher" (Rus. *Uchitel'*) and by several other activist groups in higher education. Anna Vladimirovna was one among several other teachers who had joined the protest because they were so fed up with what was happening in their schools that they could no longer keep silent. This was also a part of the reason why she agreed to an interview with me. Another colleague of hers also agreed to an interview but it never took place because she was going through stress-related mental health problems.

It is possible that I might have stumbled into a few disgruntled teachers while I was conducting my ethnographic study. Indeed, other teachers that I met during my research did not always complain about being covered in a red stress-induced rash or failed to participate in an interview because of a mental breakdown. Yet, Anna Vladimirovna's account was not that unusual and echoed many of the stories I heard from other people about stress-related health issues, about young teachers leaving after major burn-outs, and about a pace of reform that left teachers powerless and insecure. But the troubles within schools were not the only pressures that constituted the teachers' plights. The representations of school spaces and of teachers' work in public spaces and in mass media only further exacerbated the situation.

6. Conceived Spaces of Schools: Representations of Teachers' Work and Schooling in Society at Large

Students' career aspirations were affected not only by their interactions with schools, but also by societal perceptions of what teaching as a profession has become. During my time in Ognensk, I incorporated into my focus group interviews the image of billboards that read, "It is prestigious to be a teacher. Happy Teachers' Day to all pedagogues!" (Figure 4). Those were put up along city roads to commemorate International Teachers' Day on October 5.

Figure 2. **"It is prestigious to be a teacher."**

In the focus groups, some students felt that it was a good idea for the government to use such "propaganda" to improve teachers' status, but most perceived this billboard as yet another "declaration" and "empty words." For example, one group of students shared their feelings about how "unnatural" and "fake" the billboard message felt. When I asked, what their reaction towards the billboard was, Vika answered first:

> S1: Laughter.
>
> R: Laughter? Why? [*no one is laughing*]
>
> S1: There is something fake about this (Rus. *naigrannoye*)…
>
> S2: There is no such perception (Rus. *obraz*) in the society that it is prestigious to be a teacher.
>
> S2 and S1: This [image] is not true.
>
> S1: It is not even that it is not prestigious…
>
> S2: There is no such opinion at all.
>
> S1: There are no ads that say, 'It is prestigious to be a lawyer.' [*I laugh—she is right about that*]. And then you think, 'Hmm…' Everyone knows the truth… (OSPU; Focus Group 3, November, 2013).

Students read the sign as a performance that by its very presence undermines its own message: why say that teaching is prestigious, if it

really were so? Other groups in discussing this billboard lamented a lack of respect afforded to a teacher, a teacher's diminished authority, and a teacher's low social status. Many students agreed that when they told their own teachers that they had entered a pedagogical university, their teachers were terrified and tried to talk them out of pursuing their degrees there. "Do you want to be like me?" they asked. In a society that used to hold teachers in high regard and in the nation where the state promoted teachers as its heroes (Counts 1961; Ewing 2004), this question reveals a dramatic change that is rarely acknowledged in policy texts or educational reform proposals.

Negative attention paid to teachers and schools on TV reflects broader social trends that affect students' choices. The scandalous TV series "Shkola" (Eng. *school*) that focused on teenagers' pursuit of sex, drugs and alcohol in schools, portrayed teachers as angry, incompetent and sex-craving losers. "The Geography Teacher Drank Away the Globe" both as a book and as a movie depicts the story of an alcoholic who aimlessly meanders into the school, fails as a teacher, takes a group of students on a highly dangerous trip, nearly seduces one of the female students, and gets fired afterwards. In these movies, spaces of schooling are represented as sites of moral decay and irrelevance. The bodies that occupy those spaces are there involuntarily; the minds take flight away from those spaces at every opportune moment.

The problem with these movies is that they were rarely approached as fiction. Guy Germanica's TV series "Shkola" make it impossible to imagine schools otherwise. Shot in the style of a documentary where the camera seems to follow naturally occurring events, it leaves little room for the viewer to contest the presented construction and conjure alternative images of schooling. Faculty teaching courses in pedagogy at pedagogical universities had to remind students that "not all schools are like the one in 'Shkola'" (OSPU; Field Notes, September, 2013). In policymaking circles, many treated those as accurate depictions of how much school changed and who teachers were—references to these movies were often used to underscore the importance of reforms.

Pre-service teachers are not impervious to the discourses of teachers as losers and schools as spaces that contain them. A moment of rupture during the Pedagogical Olympiad in Lyutvino revealed this tension to me. Students were asked to create a poster for any profession: one group drew a manager (Figure 3) and another one a Biology teacher (Figure 4). After the presentation, to the pedagogy professor's chagrin, students added glasses to the picture of the teacher and added details to her wardrobe that made her come across as "a bluestocking"—an unsuccessful angry woman. Underneath the picture, they also wrote, "I am walking all so ..." (from a song by a Ukrainian cross-dresser Verka Serdyuchka—Verka "the Angry One"). The picture of the manager remained cheerful and positive, with his last

Figure 3. **Poster of a manager.**

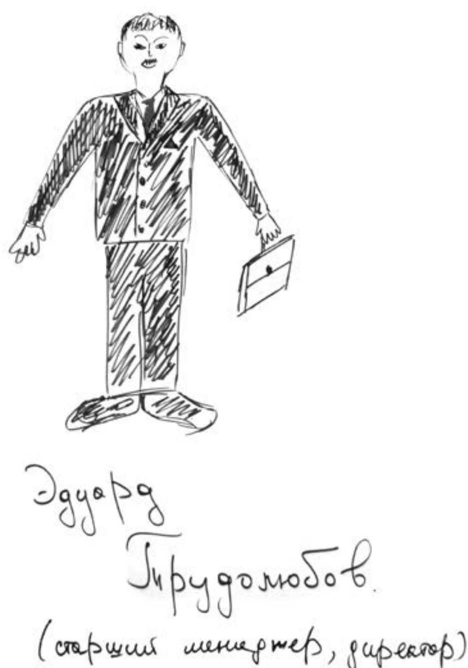

Figure 4. **Poster of a Biology teacher.**

name "Trudolyubov"—"the one who loves work"—and the title of his job "senior manager, director" carefully scribbled underneath his picture.

The contrast of how these two occupations were presented and treated by students was particularly striking because it happened during the Pedagogical Olympiad created by one of the country's leading universities to support new generations of teachers and educators. If those who participate in the Olympiad reproduce the discourses of a teacher as a failure and, by extension, schools as sites where "losers" work, the problem of graduate employment in schools is not likely to be solved by reforming pedagogical universities. The constructions of perceived, lived, and conceived spaces of state schooling suggest that the problem of Russian education lies elsewhere and may require a wider collective effort on the part of Russian society to determine what role it will allow education to play and what place schools should occupy in its social life.

7. Conclusion

In this paper, I presented an analysis of how lived, perceived, and conceived spaces of schooling are connected with pre-service teachers' flight from the profession. After they see the teachers' plight in schools, pre-service teachers more often than not seek alternatives to state school employment. Even though my analysis is based on data

collected in the Russian Federation, it is relevant to other contexts as well as more countries seek new solutions for teacher recruitment and retention problems. I have argued throughout this piece, however, that the focus on spaces of schooling as they are constructed and represented is helpful for re-framing these problems. It helps us to see that any technical solutions of reformed teacher preparation are unlikely to change pre-service teachers' aspirations if schools do not change so as to become more welcoming and healthy spaces. Lefebvre's call to transform the space if one desires to see change is particularly important here. Yet this change is not about more reforms that may at times contradict each other or even further overwhelm teachers with more work. Rather this change is about providing teachers with support, autonomy, freedom, and room for creativity as well as about making school spaces appealing for bodies and minds. After all, for creative and productive activity to occur, the space has to be conducive to it.

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The Effects of Apprenticeship of Observation on Teachers Attitudes towards Active Learning Instruction

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Abstract. Active learning instruction is promoted by the most recent version of the National Program for the Development of Education in Kazakhstan as it is believed to provide more meaningful learning and deeper understanding compared to traditional instruction. In order to achieve greater utilization of the instructional approach at schools, teachers must be aware of active learning techniques and know how to use them. This paper studies whether 'apprenticeship of observation' during a graduate course using active learning techniques has an impact on novice and experienced teachers' attitudes towards active learning instruction. The study used data from a survey of students taking the course, which was focused on educational issues rather than methodological training. The results of the study confirmed the hypotheses that 'apprenticeship of observation' has an influence on teachers not only during pre-service training, but also at later stages of their careers, when they become involved in professional development or continuing education. This influence was especially obvious for teachers with no or little exposure to professional development. Based on these results the paper also suggests some practical implications. Limitations and biases that could affect results are also mentioned.

Keywords: active learning instruction, apprenticeship of observation, professional development of teachers, in-service training of teachers.

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Introduction

Active learning instruction is generally defined as any instructional method that engages students in the learning process by offering them complete meaningful learning activities; and by allowing them to reflect upon what they are doing [Bonwell, Eison, 1991]. It is believed to be able to produce more meaningful learning experiences for students [Dewey, 1916; Piaget, 1952; Piaget, 1954; Kelly, 1991; Vygotsky, 1978] in contrast to the traditional lecture and rote memorization,

where students are treated as passive recipients of information [Pedersen, Liu, 2003]. A positive impact of active learning instruction on student performance, even after controlling for other variables including student background and prior achievement, has been demonstrated in many empirical studies [Barron, Darling-Hammond, 2008; Michael, 2006; Omoyeva, 2011; Prince, 2004]. According to a study by Lester, Onore [1990], the extent to which the benefits of active learning instruction may be realized depends on whether teachers hold constructivist beliefs about learning, and whether they are skilled in active learning methods.

Active-learning and child-centered instruction have been widely discussed in the process of educational reform in Kazakhstan. For example, a change in "the role of the student in the process of learning …from passive recipient of information to active participant of the educational process" has been stated as one of the goals of the National Program for the Development of Education 2005–2010[1]. Despite the high level of commitment, there was no particular success in the practical implementation of the approach in Kazakhstan for a number of reasons. First, teacher training in the country is greatly based on the old Soviet curriculum that emphasizes more traditional teacher-centered instruction and that is typically delivered by authoritarian teachers trained in the same tradition [Burkhalter, Shegebayev, 2012; Burkhalter, 2013; DeYoung, 2006; Long, Long, 1999]. Second, in-service teacher training in post-Soviet Central Asia is chronically underfunded, provides few regular or equal opportunities for teachers' development, and resembles a patchwork of workshops, seminars, and courses, which update subject knowledge rather than teach skills [DeYoung, 2006]. These issues resulted in criticism towards the current approaches to in-service training of teachers. Recently, the National Center for Professional Development (of teachers) "Orleu" has been established in an attempt to improve the existing approaches. There are some signs that a more systematic approach to teacher training will be developed and that more attention will be paid to training teachers in innovative methodologies; however, to what extent these goals will be realized remains to be seen.

Not only do teachers in Kazakhstan lack specialized training in innovative instructional methods, they also have few opportunities for and little support in using them in the classroom. Teacher shortages, as well as the resulting teaching overload, multi-subject teaching, and poor motivation are serious issues [Silova, 2009]. Additional challenges to teachers' flexibility regarding classroom procedures are created by the centralized control of the curriculum and assessment [Furlong, 2005], combined with increasing accountability and bureaucratic regulations [Steiner-Khamsi, Silova, Johnson, 2006; Whitty, 2006].

[1] Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan (2004) National Education Strategy 2005–2010. http://ru.government.kz/resources/docs/doc8

Finally, teachers' resistance to change is another factor that hinders the implementation of active-learning techniques in the classroom [Burkhalter, Shegebayev, 2012; Burkhalter, 2013]. Interestingly, even after specialized training in more innovative constructivist techniques, teachers continue to use the old array of teacher-centered methods. Burkhalter and Shegebayev [2012] explain that this behavior is a product of the social-cultural influence of the formative Soviet and the current Kazakhstani authoritarian culture, which is not conductive to critical thinking by teachers with a subsequent effect on the teachers' ability to teach using active learning techniques. Burkhalter [2013] argues that Kazakhstani teachers' prior educational experiences in the Soviet system were largely based on fear, which is "impenetrable to cognitive control" and is based on automatic activation mechanisms, which are involuntarily triggered [Ohman, Mineka, 2001. P. 483]. The automatic nature of the fear reaction makes teachers' behaviors difficult to change.

An alternative explanation of the phenomenon of teacher resistance to the use of active-learning techniques, which was observed by Shegebayev and Burkhalter [2013] among teachers in Kazakhstan, is provided by the concept of 'apprenticeship of observation', which was first introduced by Lortie [1975]. According to Lortie, a teacher's past experience as an observer of his/her own teacher's classroom, which took place at an early age, form much of the future teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning and overall instructional philosophies. In continuation of the idea Chong, Wong, and Lang [2010. P. 1] stated: "The unsubstantiated beliefs that pre-service teachers bring with them have been shown to affect what they learn from teacher education and how they learn from it." In other words, the example of teaching that has been observed by potential teachers at an early age impacts on their interpretation of subsequent theoretical methodological training and influences the overall teaching approach used by them later in their teaching careers.

In the original paper, Lortie expressed a particular view of 'apprenticeship of observation', which is important to summarize here in order to explain the subsequent critique. Specifically, while using the metaphor of 'apprenticeship' to describe the way students' observations of their teachers influence their subsequent beliefs about teaching if they decide to become teachers, Lortie noted that the use of the term is "in stark contrast to the traditional notion of an apprenticeship in a trade in which the apprentice is privy to the thinking and reasoning of the master while observing the master at work…[because] in classroom interactions students…are not in a position to be reflective and analytical about what they see, nor do they necessarily have cause to do so" [Mewborn, Tyminski, 2006. P. 30].

Much of the later critique of Lortie's [1975] idea, as well as the studies concerned with ways to overcome apprenticeship of observation were based on a different assumption about the extent to which

students are or can be reflective of teacher's practices in classroom observation. Mewborn and Tyminski [2006] found in their study of the influence of prior classroom experiences on pre-service teachers' beliefs and teaching practices that some pre-service teachers are capable of being analytical and critical of their prior learning experiences. On a similar note, Zeichner and Gore [1990] suggested that some pre-service teachers "can focus more directly on their own learning as pupils and deliberately seek to create in their own teaching those conditions that were missing from their own education" [P. 333]. Ross [1987] argued that pre-service teachers are "highly selective in choosing from among the models thay have seen in order to meld several practices into the type of teacher that they become" (as cited in [Mewborn, Tyminski, 2006. P. 32]).

A series of studies on teacher education are concerned with ways to overcome the negative effects of apprenticeship of observation. Some authors claim that for effective pre-service training it is important to have students reflect upon and deconstruct their beliefs about effective and ineffective pedagogy in order to build on their prior experience (Calderhead, Robson, 1991; Fang, 1996; Feiman-Nemser, Buchman, 1983]. A series of more recent studies claim that self-reflection on one's own teaching practices and experiences should be, in fact, placed at the center of teacher-training [Kennedy, 1989; Loughran, 1995; Richardson, 1990; Ross, 1989; Smyth, 1989; Wildman et al., 1990] because, ultimately, what differentiates a novice teacher from an expert teacher is the ability and the extent of involvement in self-reflection [Cruickshank et al., 1981; Frieberg, Waxman, 1990; Van Manen, 1977; 1991; Wildman et al., 1990]. Grossman [1991] suggested more directly that it is important to make students cognizant of the phenomenon of apprenticeship of observation and its effect on teaching [Grossman, 1991]. She also pointed out that one of the ways to reduce the influence of negative past experiences is to "overcorrect" by "providing extreme examples of innovative practices" [Grossman, 1991. P. 350].

The motivation for this study was our concern that in existing research, the notion of "apprenticeship of observation" is applied exclusively to the analysis of the influence of the early educational experiences of teachers. We hypothesize that, given the life-long nature of education, the influence of "apprenticeship of observation" should not be limited to the early years of learning. What would happen to the instructional beliefs and practices of a teacher who had been negatively affected by the Soviet experience as a student in a teacher-centered classroom if the teacher completes a graduate course led by an instructor committed to, and skilled in, the use of active learning techniques? Would the new "apprenticeship of observation" have a transformative effect on the teacher's views of and practices in constructivist pedagogy?

Methods

Our study is based on the analysis of a very unique experience in Kazakhstan—a case study of the first graduate course of the inaugural graduate program in Educational Leadership offered in the country's newly opened Nazarbayev University. The first intake of students in the program was almost entirely composed of teachers from the Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools who entered the program to be trained as leaders in educational reform. The first course that the students had to take was Educational Context and Reform in Kazakhstan, a discussion-based course organized according to constructivist philosophy. While the course did not teach students active learning techniques explicitly, the instructor of the course actively used the techniques in the classroom, thus providing an opportunity for "apprenticeship of observation". Some of the techniques used in the course include the use of mind-mapping, in-class reflective writing, small-group discussions, large group discussions organized in the form of Socratic conversations, in-class group searches on the Internet, group work on small-scale projects such as preparing policy analysis and policy evaluation briefs, group presentations on assigned readings, small-group practical tasks such as proposing the composition of a school-board and a description of the board's responsibilities, etc.

Upon completion of the course, students participated in the study aiming to assess the extent to which the opportunity to attend a course which actively used novel instructional methods changed their understanding and commitment to the use of active learning instruction. The data for the study was collected via a paper-based survey administered at the end of the course. The survey contained four sets of questions: (1) questions assessing the prior teaching experience and professional development background of participants; (2) questions assessing students' perceptions about the extent and the effectiveness of the utilization of active learning techniques in the class; (3) questions assessing the extent to which "apprenticeship of observation" had changed students' understanding of and commitment to the utilization of active learning instructional techniques; and (4) questions assessing students' opinions about the usefulness of particular active learning techniques used in the classroom. At the end of the survey, the participants were asked whether they would like to continue to participate in the study because our intention is to conduct a follow-up study evaluating the extent to which the participants would increase the actual use of active learning techniques in future classes.

The study has three significant limitations. First, it relies on only one source of data collection—students' self-reports on their classroom experiences. These self-reports provide only a one-sided view of the phenomenon and can be biased. To address this limitation, it would be beneficial to triangulate data collection with a survey which uses some alternative method of data collection, such as class-room observation or teacher or student diaries. Second, the survey was conducted only in one class of students, who comprised a very small

Figure 1. **Years of teaching experience**

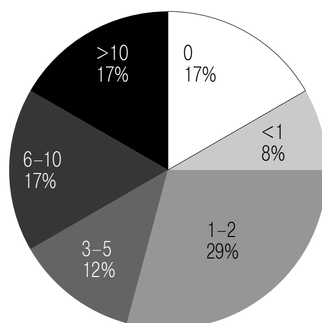
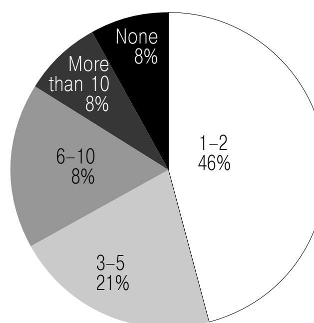


Figure 2. **Number of professional development courses in teaching**



sample. The results of the study cannot be generalized to a larger population of students in Kazakhstan. Third, the study assesses only immediate changes in the students' perceptions and commitments of the teachers after completing the course. It might be beneficial to assess long-term developments in the understanding of active learning techniques and their actual utilization in the classroom.

While the design of the study has several limitations, it is adequate for the purposes of exploring our hypothesis that 'apprenticeship of observation' may have effects in the later stages of a teacher's development. To explore the hypothesis in greater depth it is important to conduct a follow-up study using a greater variety of methods and a larger and more representative sample of participants.

Results

Twenty-four students participated in the survey. As Figure 1 shows, more than half of the participants were novice teachers: four (17%) of them did not have any prior teaching experience, two (8%) students had less than one year of teaching experience, seven (29%) students had one to two years of experience. Three students (12%) had three to five years of experience, while eight students (34%) had been teaching for over six years. The majority, or seventeen (85%) students, taught English in Kazakhstan.

Seventy-five percent of the twenty-four participants had undergone specialized teaching methods training during their studies at university.

As shown in Figure 2, fifty-four percent had none of very limited opportunities for professional development and had taken two or less professional development courses. Twenty-one percent of the participants had taken three to five courses in teaching after completing pre-service training. A quarter of the students took six or more courses in professional development.

Figure 3. **Influence of school teacher**

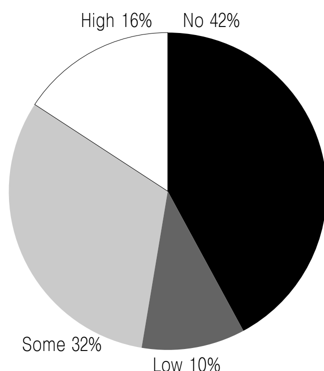


Figure 4. **Influence of university teacher**

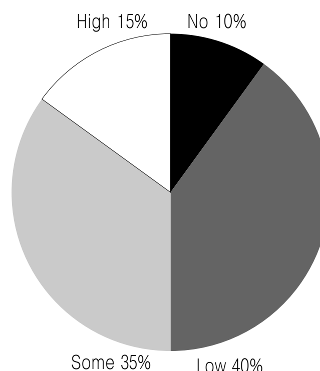


Figure 5. **Influence of peer observation**

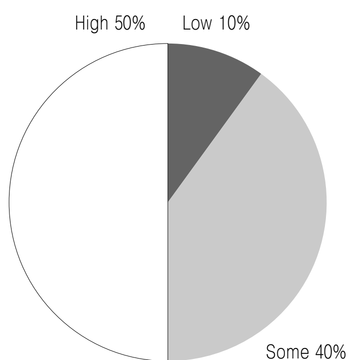


Figure 6. **Influence of independent reading on methods**

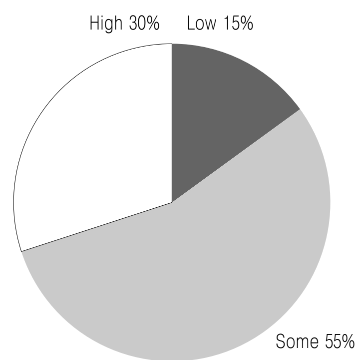


Figure 7. **Influence of university methods training**

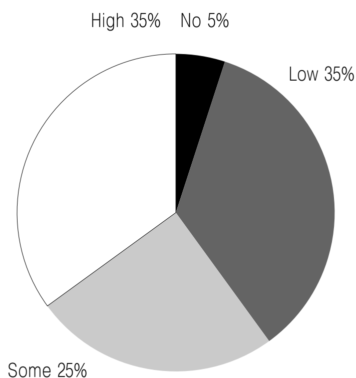


Figure 8. **Influence of methods training in professional development courses**

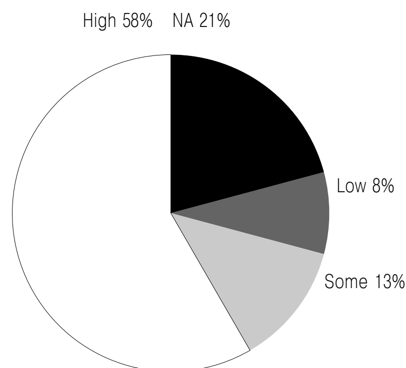


Figure 9. **Number of courses on active learning**

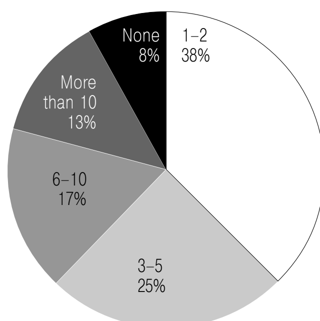
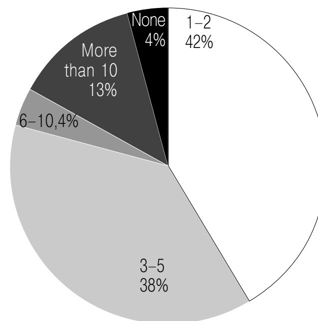


Figure 10. **Number of courses where active learning was used**



Students were asked to rate the extent of influence of their prior observation or professional training experiences on their current teaching practices. Their responses are presented in Figures 3–8.

Interestingly, 52% of the twenty participants who found the question applicable to them, responded that their school teacher had had no or very little influence on their current teaching compared with 48% who thought that their school teacher had been somewhat or highly influential. Half of the participants thought that the university faculty had exerted no or little influence on them as teachers. Peer observation seems to be much more influential on teachers—90% of the participants mentioned that it had somewhat or highly influenced them. The participants found direct training or self-education in methods more useful than following the example of their teachers. Eighty-five percent of students thought that independent reading had some or high influence on their current teaching. Sixty percent of teachers indicated that their university methods training were somewhat or highly influential. Seventy-one percent of participants thought that professional development courses had some or high influence on them as teachers.

A series of questions in the survey was designed to determine students' prior experience with active learning instruction demonstrated in Figure 9.

As shown, forty-five percent of the participants mentioned that they had discussed active learning techniques in two or fewer professional development courses or seminars. A quarter of the students mentioned that active learning techniques had been covered in three to five of the courses. Thirty percent of students had covered the novel instructional approaches in six or more of the professional development courses.

Discussions on active learning techniques in professional development courses is not enough, and participants were asked about courses where active learning was actually used (Figure 10).

Approximately half of the students had very limited exposure to professional development courses utilizing active learning techniques.

Only seventeen percent of the participants had been instructed with active learning methods in their professional development courses, while thirty- seven percent of students had such experience in three to five courses.

When asked what the extent of utilization of active learning methods in their teaching had been, compared with other approaches, the majority of students responded that they used the novel methods equally with other techniques (65%). Only twenty percent of the respondents used active learning instruction as the primary method, while fifteen percent of students used the innovative approaches less frequently than traditional instruction.

The majority of students (73%) felt that they were somewhat effective in the use of active learning techniques. Eighteen percent of the participants felt that they were less effective in active learning instruction than in other methods, while only nine percent found themselves very effective.

Prior to assessing the changes in the attitudes towards the participants' understanding of, and commitment to, the future use of constructivist approaches, they were asked a series of questions about the use of the techniques in the course. The majority of students (67%) thought that the course used active learning instruction as its primary teaching approach. A quarter of students felt that active learning techniques were used in the course at least equally with other approaches.

Students were also requested to evaluate the effectiveness and skills of the instructor in active learning techniques. Over half of the students (58%) thought that the instructor used active learning instruction very effectively, while 38% thought that the instructor was somewhat effective in the use of the methods in the course and 4% thought that the instructor was less effectively. Sixty-seven percent of students believed that the instructor was well–skilled in the use of the methods. Another quarter of the students evaluated the instructor as having excellent skills, 8% believed that the instructor was basic–skilled.

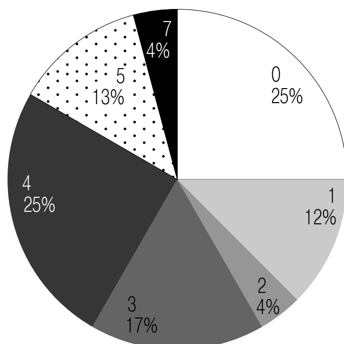
A quarter of the students said that their understanding of active learning techniques significantly improved as a result of the course. The majority of students (63%) said that their understanding of the techniques had somewhat improved, 13% said that their understanding of the techniques had improved a little.

Fifty-nine percent of students have learnt three or more new active learning techniques in the course; while a quarter of the students mentioned that they had not learnt any new techniques (Fig. 11).

Students were also asked questions on the change that occurred in their appreciation of active learning techniques as a learner *and* as a teacher.

Almost a third of the students felt that their appreciation of active learning instruction as a student had changed a lot as a result of the course. Sixty seven percent of students believe that their appreciation

Рис. 11. **Number of new ALT**



had improved somewhat. None of the students said that their appreciation had not changed at all and only four percent mentioned that it had improved only a little.

Similarly, seventy nine percent of students said that their appreciation of active learning techniques as a teacher had improved somewhat (50%) or significantly (29%). Twenty-one percent of the participants indicated that this appreciation had increased only a little.

As for the plans of students to use active learning in their lessons, fifty-eight percent of the participants were intending to use active learning instruction more frequently in their future teaching. The remaining quarter of students said that they would use the approaches as frequently as before, 17% are not going to teach.

Two of the questions on the survey attempted to reveal the change in the perception of effectiveness in the use of active learning techniques by the participants.

Half of the participants said that their self-evaluation in the effectiveness of the use of active learning techniques had not changed as a result of the course. Thirty-four percent of the participants mentioned that their self-evaluation had decreased as a result of the course. Only four percent of the participants said that their self-evaluation had improved.

All of the participants mentioned that their effectiveness in the actual use of active learning techniques had improved to some extent as a result of the course. Only thirteen percent of the students thought that their effectiveness had improved slightly. Eight percent of the respondents noted that their effectiveness had improved a lot. The remaining sixty-seven percent thought that their effectiveness had somewhat improved.

The active learning techniques that students found particularly useful in the course were (1) the large and small group discussions; (2) the mind-mapping and the use of other visual representations as a way to organize group work and to prepare students for large group discussions; as well as (3) the Internet search group projects in class,

where students were asked to explore a particular issue based on readings and Internet search. The majority of students had found the activities to be of great use.

The results of cross-tabulation of the responses has shown that the effect of the "apprenticeship of observation" resulting from attending the course has been greater for less experienced teachers who had less opportunities for professional development. These teachers also felt less effective and knowledgeable in the use of active learning techniques prior to the course and experienced a greater decrease in their self-evaluation of effectiveness as a result of the course. The less experienced teachers have demonstrated a greater improvement in their understanding of active learning techniques after taking the course, are more appreciative of constructivist approaches as both a learner and an instructor, and are more likely to continue to use the techniques in their subsequent careers. On the contrary, the more experienced teachers with more numerous opportunities for professional development feel more knowledgeable and more confident in their ability to use active learning techniques. Hence, they do not find the course particularly influential in terms of appreciation, understanding, self-evaluation or the likelihood of utilizing active learning techniques in their subsequent careers. We did not find any particular relationship between the extent to which an individual was influenced by their school or university teacher or by peer observation, and the extent to which they were influenced by the "apprenticeship of observation" in this course.

Discussion

The initial finding from our study is that teacher observation at the school or university level affected the subsequent teaching practices for no more than half of the students. This finding is consistent with ideas expressed by the critics of Lortie's 'apprenticeship of observation'. Teachers definitely vary in the extent to which they are influenced by modeling their own teachers. One potential explanation is that the students who participated in the study could have been exposed to different opportunities in terms of critical re-assessment of their school experiences during their pre-service teacher training. In addition to that, they could have developed different levels of self-reflection ability which have allowed those with higher levels of ability to re-assess the influence of their university faculty independently and, thus, become less subject to the influence of 'apprenticeship of observation' at the undergraduate level.

In addition to this, such a finding complicates the picture derived from the observation-based study conducted by Burkhalter and Shegebayev [2012] in Kazakhstan. This study claimed that professional development courses focusing on modern methodologies failed to change the behavior of teachers due to the influence of the teachers' past experiences as students. Past experiences may not be as influ-

ential on the views of teachers as Burkhalter and Shegebayev want to believe, rather there could be other explanations to the finding that teachers do not use the novel methodologies. Some possibilities include a lack of support, resistance to change, or misalignment of the incentives structure. Also, our study revealed that teachers consider peer observation to be most influential in changing their instructional approaches. This implies that more attention should be paid in professional development to peer observation.

Second, our hypothesis that 'apprenticeship of observation' can have an effect on teachers not only during pre-service teacher training and initial in-sevice training, but also after they start their teaching careers, has been somewhat confirmed by this largely descriptive study. Teachers seem to be affected by novel experiences as students in courses actively utilizing active learning instruction. Taking a course using active learning instruction appeared transformative for the majority of the students. One of the explanations as to why the course was so influential on students comes from Grossman's [1991] idea that 'overcorrection' and 'providing extreme examples of innovative practices' may counteract the negative influence of the school-level 'apprenticeship of observation'. The graduate level course was using a large variety of active learning techniques as its main method of instruction. A teacher of a conventional course at a secondary school would not be expected to use active learning techniques so intensively. Hence, in some sense, the course was using the extreme examples of innovative practices as suggested by Grossman.

The related finding that the course was particularly beneficial for teachers with less experience and prior professional development exposure can be explained by the idea of self-reflection. Expert teachers could have already become less influenced by school-level 'apprenticeship of observation' because they have had multiple opportunities for critical re-assessment of the experiences and, in addition, could have accumulated a broader repertoire of novel methodologies than the novice teachers. Hence, the experience was not as eye-opening and transformative for them as it was for the novice teachers.

An interesting finding of the study from the point of view of a practitioner is that students found mind-mapping, group discussions, and Internet-search-based projects most useful in the course. One explanation of the students' preference is the mere fact that the techniques were most frequently used in the course and that they were often used in combination. Small group discussions took place during every session to facilitate students' understanding and retention of the complex ideas in the assigned readings, as well as to provide an opportunity for critical analysis. Students were provided with tools to mind-map their small-group discussions in order to better address the needs of the visual learners, to allow those struggling with English to better express and capture their ideas, and to prepare students for the subsequent exchange of ideas in the large group discussions. Since a very

limited number of scholarly papers is available on education specifically in Kazakhstan, and more general readings on experiences in other countries were assigned to students, the small group discussions were followed by Internet-based searches on other projects aiming at exploring how the ideas in the readings work out in Kazakhstani settings. The Internet was used to explore the websites of various educational organizations in Kazakhstan and abroad as case-studies. The aforementioned way of using these three activities might have caused the positive response from the students.

Finally, one of the most likely explanations for the strong effect of the 'apprenticeship of observation' on students could be metacognition-related. Whilst being educated in pre-service teacher programs or professional development courses, teachers ultimately tend to learn how other people learn and think. They are predominantly taught the mechanics and the effects of various instructional methods. Sometimes, they might be provided with opportunities to practice the methods on other students. In such courses, students are subject to instructional methods themselves, but, as has been shown in the introductory section, teacher training and professional development approaches in Kazakhstan tend to be very conservative and tend to use old methods of instruction, so presumably not many students had exposure to active-learning techniques as students.

What made the course different from other instructional experiences of students was the fact that during the course the teachers were not taught the methods directly. Rather they were students of a different subject matter, but were taught with active-learning techniques and had a chance to experience them first-hand. Some of the responses indicate that the students may have realized the major effect that the techniques had on their own learning. In some sense, they understood how they themselves learn better, which is the act of metacognition. A related practical implication is that professional development and in-service training courses should not merely speak about and provide theoretical understanding of active learning methodologies, but should utilize and model the use of methodologies as much as it is feasible within a particular course. Future and practicing teachers taking the course might be affected more if they had transformative experiences as students in the courses, and if they had an opportunity to observe a skillful teacher, rather than if they are merely explained what active learning is and how it should be used in the classroom.

Several recommendations can be made from this study for future research. First, subsequent studies should explore the longitudinal effects of 'apprenticeship of observation' during graduate training by conducting follow-up studies. Such studies should attempt to use a larger and more representative sample of participants and should try to triangulate data collection methods to the greatest extent possible. It is also important to control for the effect of self-reflection on the extent of influence of 'apprenticeship of observation'.

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African-Brazilians and Natives in an Elite University:

The Impact of Affirmative Action on Students in Brazil

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Abstract. The best Brazilian universities are public, free of charge, and highly selective. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, many public universities began to allocate places on all of their courses to underrepresented groups. The targets of these affirmative action policies were usually African-Brazilian and Native students coming from public schools. This article introduces data on Brazil's higher education system since its early beginnings: its expansion, the segmentation between public and private sectors, and the elitist character of its public universities. It points out the specificities of race relations in the country since the arrival of the Portuguese, and the historical context that favored the introduction of inclusion policies in public universities. It then deploys qualitative data in order to present the experiences of African-Brazilians and Natives who entered one elite university—the Federal University do Rio Grande do Sul—through affirmative action policies. This university is located in the South of the country, in the region that has the highest percentage of white people amongst the general population. The analysis focuses on the educational trajectory, family support and expectations, race relations in the university, resilience processes, and one group of racial quota students' plans for the future. By reporting on this pioneering experience, the importance of diversity in the student body and the challenges the university has to tackle in order to face this new reality are highlighted.

Keywords: university students, affirmative action, racial quotas, resilience, elite university, Brazilian higher education, diversity in the university.

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1. Higher Education and Society in Brazil

1.1. The Origins of Higher Education

Higher education developed late in Brazil. Unlike Spain, which in the sixteenth century created five universities in its American dominions, Portugal avoided the establishment of university courses in its over-

seas colonies. For over three centuries (1500–1808), during the colonial period, there were no higher education institutions on Brazilian territory.

Students belonging to the Portuguese colonial elite—Brazilian-born Portuguese—had to move to the metropolis in order to graduate from the University of Coimbra in Portugal. This university's mission was to unify the Portuguese Empire elites. It sought to imprint cultural homogeneity into the children of Portuguese born in the colonies, thus preventing them from questioning metropolitan superiority. In the words of Anísio Teixeira, the University of Coimbra was Brazil's "first university" [Teixeira, 1989][1].

In 1808, the Portuguese Royal Family left Lisbon for Brazil, fleeing Napoleon's troops as they marched into Portugal. When the Regent Prince João VI arrived in the colony he created the first Brazilian Schools—of Medicine, of Law, and a Polytechnic. They were secular, professionally oriented, and independent from one another. These Schools, called *Faculdades,* had a highly elitist purpose. They were not part of a university [Oliven, 2014].

The first Brazilian university—the University of Rio de Janeiro—was founded by decree in 1920, as an aggregation of previously existing *faculdades*. Created two years before the celebrations of Brazil's Independence Centennial, it sustained the exclusive character of higher education, remaining far removed from the majority of Brazilians [Fávero, 1980].

Brazil's higher education system is highly influenced by the French elite professional schools created by Napoleon. University curricula are rigidly defined according to professional careers. Applicants to higher education institutions have to choose a professional degree—such as Medicine, Law, Geology, Psychology, or History—before they are admitted.

Admission is predicated on performance in the *vestibular* exam*,* which includes multiple-choice tests and an essay assignment based on a topic that changes every year. Between 1911 and 1996,[2] this exam was the only admission parameter for all university courses. It tested students on various subjects.

Passing the *vestibular* demands very tough and lengthy training. For many years, middle and upper class students, predominantly white and coming from elite private schools, have secured virtually all

[1] During the colonial period, over 2,500 students born in Brazil received degrees from this institution, in the fields of Theology, Canon Law, Civil Law, Medicine and Philosophy.

[2] Since 1996, with the new National Education Bases and Guidelines Law, the *vestibular* is no longer mandatory. However, many universities have maintained this tradition of carrying out entrance exams virtually identical to the *vestibular*.

the seats in the best public universities, thus benefiting from free, top quality education, funded by Brazil's population at large.

1.2. Urbanization and higher education expansion

In the early 1960s, Brazil was a predominantly rural society with 40% of its population illiterate and largely disenfranchised; to vote one needed to be able to read and write. Out of a population of around 70 million, it had only 102 thousand students enrolled in higher education. The highly elitist character of a higher education in a country that was taking large strides towards urbanization was subjected to sharp criticism from inside and outside the university.

At that time, advocacy groups regarded university reform as part of a broader transformation of society which also included reforms in agrarian structure, the financial system, the political system, and so forth. In 1964, the Military Coup suffocated social movements which had been active during the early sixties.

In the late seventies, the urban population grew bigger than the rural. In 2010, Brazil had 190.7 million inhabitants, 84% of whom were living in cities and towns.

The higher education system reflected this momentous change in Brazilian society. In 1975, enrollments soared to one million, and in 2012, they numbered over 7 million.

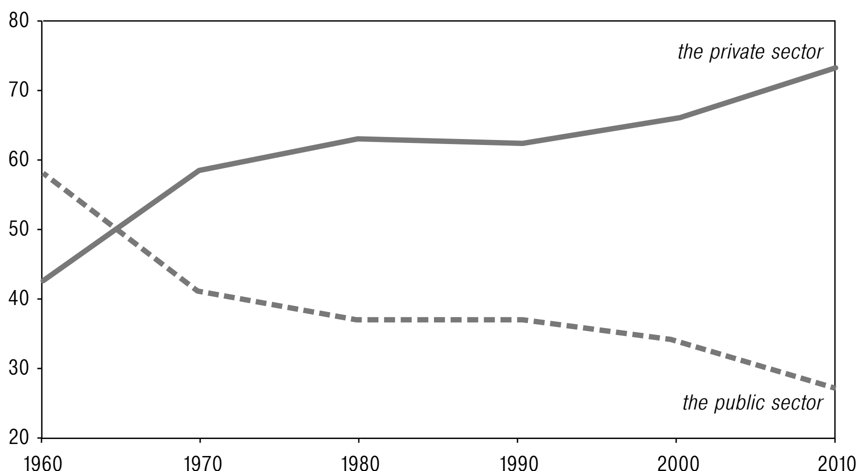
With the steady rise in demand for higher education, the system expanded through sharp internal segmentation. On the one hand, the public sector, which comprised most universities, graduate programs and research activities, became increasingly elitist. On the other hand, the private sector, which grew by opening isolated institutions, offered courses of a much lower academic standard. Young Brazilians from poor families, who had attended public schools and did not have the cultural capital to pass the vestibular exam in public universities, had to pay a private higher education institution in order to get a degree.

When enrollments are compared across the two sectors, an inversion of percentages is found (Fig.1). The decade between 1960–1970 is emblematic of this switch in higher education supply. During this period, the private sector outgrew the public sector in terms of the number of students enrolled. This trend intensified and persists to this day.

Brazilian public education at all levels, including higher education, is free of charge. This renders public universities, which have higher academic standards, extremely competitive. Until the early 2000's, federal universities were highly refractory to the inclusion of poor students—mainly African-Brazilians—coming from public schools[3].

[3] Brazilian census classifies the population as regards race/color in five categories: *branco* (White), *preto* (Black), *pardo* (Brown, or mixed-race), *indígena* (Native) and *amarelo* (Yellow, that is, of Asian origin). We will be using the term African-Brazilians to refer to Blacks and Browns altogether.

Fig. 1. **The number of students enrolled in the private sector and in the public sector**



Source: Expansão da educação superior no Brasil—Gráficos (last accessed, 04/17/2015)

1.3. Race relations in Brazil

When the Portuguese first arrived in what is now Brazil, in 1500, there were around 4.5 million indigenous people living in the territory. Contact with Whites and the exploitation of Natives led to the near extermination of this population. Today there are around one million Natives in Brazil, distributed in almost 200 groups, each with their own culture and language. Most of them live in communities. In the last few years, Native population has been growing as they succeed in regaining their traditional land.

During three centuries, Brazil took in 3.5 to 3.6 million black slaves from Africa. It was the last country in America to abolish slavery, in 1888. Its population is highly mixed racially. In the 2010 census, African-Brazilians (that is, Blacks and Browns) outnumbered the White population.

During the nineteenth century, under the influence of racialist European theories, which assumed a hierarchy of races and foresaw the impossibility of national development due to miscegenation, Brazil put into practice immigration policies aimed at whitening its population [Santos, 2002; Seyferth, 1996].

In the early twentieth century, an important shift in national thinking regarding race took place. Based mainly on the works of Gilberto Freyre, a consensus was created around a national project rooted in a positive view of crossbreeding among its three major races (white, indigenous, and black) [Freyre, 1956]. The celebration of *mestiçagem* (miscegenation) allowed for an optimistic perspective on Brazilian society, seen as unique in its successful racial hybridization [Maggie, 2007].

The notion of racial democracy took on a relevant role as the basis for a model of *Brazilianness* that began to emerge in the thirties. It act-

ed as the cement for Brazil's national identity. Since then, this model of a racially harmonic society has been questioned by organized Black groups, as official statistics have unequivocally demonstrated that African-Brazilians show the worst quality of life indexes and that Brazilian elites are predominantly white.

1.4. Historical context favoring inclusion policies in public universities

In 1985, the military regime ended in Brazil. In the aftermath of re-democratization and the strengthening of civil society, new actors emerged in Brazil's political scene. The 1988 Constitution recognized, for the first time, collective rights such as the right to land by native peoples and maroon populations. Equality was regarded in material as well as in formal terms. Illiterate people conquered the right to vote. Research on income concentration, regional disparities, racial and gender inequalities depicted a rich and highly unequal country.

An important actor in this context was the Unified Black Movement (Movimento Negro Unificado), founded in the 1970s, which brought together different movements around a common struggle for more and better educational opportunities for African-Brazilians. In the III World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance held in 2001 in Durban (South Africa), the Brazilian government took a stance towards the adoption of public policies favoring historically unprivileged groups in Brazil. Since then, debates on affirmative action have gained a nation-wide scope.

Inclusive policies in the form of university racial quotas became a flagship proposal of anti-racist struggles. In spite of increases in higher education coverage, public universities remained predominantly white and middle-class. A good share of gains obtained by struggles for the democratization of Brazilian universities in the last years stemmed from the political pressure from Black movements.

1.5. Affirmative action policies in Brazilian universities

Affirmative action policies are corrective policies for redressing opportunity structures favoring certain groups over others. Debates on the implementation of affirmative action policies in Brazilian universities point to the need for democratizing higher education by increasing representativeness of poor, African-Brazilian and Native populations in Brazilian public institutions.

In a society such as Brazil's, which displays one of the world's highest income concentration rates in the world, educational inequalities lead to fewer opportunities in the labor market, thus reinforcing the vicious cycle of exclusion. African-Brazilians and Natives suffer additional discrimination. The first group accounts for over half of the country's population, while Natives make up less than 1%. Official figures make evident the sharp divide between African-Brazilians and Whites in Brazilian society [Paixão, 2011].

In the early twenty-first century, affirmative action policies came to benefit groups historically under-represented in Brazil's public universities. The first experience of affirmative action policies in Brazil-

ian public universities took place in Rio de Janeiro state universities in 2002. In 2007, 34 public universities across the country had some kind of affirmative action program. In less than a decade, the number of universities adopting inclusion policies grew to over one hundred.

Affirmative action policies, especially those based on racial quotas in elite universities, have been the target of ample criticism. Two manifestos by civil society, *All Have Equal Rights in the Democratic Republic (Todos têm direitos iguais na República Democrática,* 2006*)* and *One Hundred and Thirteen Anti-racist Citizens Against Racial Laws (Cento e treze cidadãos anti-racistas contra as leis raciais,* 2008) culminated in the legal challenging of its constitutionality in the Brazilian Supreme Court [Oliven, 2008].

In 2012, the Court unanimously rejected these claims. In practice, the justices ratified what was already a reality in many public universities. That same year, the Brazilian Congress passed Federal Law 12,711/12, valid for 10 years, setting aside 50% of the admission places in federal higher education establishments for students from public schools, taking into account their social and racial origin according to the demographic profile of the region where each university is located. Affirmative action in federal universities henceforth became a State policy for a period of at least one decade.

This is different from what happened in the United States. There, affirmative action in universities was introduced earlier than in Brazil, in the 1960s, but in 1986 the US Supreme Court ruled that quotes in universities was non constitutional. It recognized, however, that race could be one among several criteria used by universities in their selection processes, as it would enhance diversity in the academic environment and bring benefits to society at large.

2. African-Brazilians and Natives in the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul: Listening to the students

The Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS) is located in Brazil's South Region, which has the country's highest percentage of Whites: 80%. This university ranks among the top universities in Brazil. Leaders from Black movements and Native communities participated in debates among the academic community organized by the university in order to subsidize its decision-making on the implementation of an Affirmative Action Program.

Based on negotiations with representatives from the various departments, the University Council established that, for a period of five years beginning in the academic year of 2008, 30% of the places on all courses would be set aside for students coming from public schools—and half of these, for self-declared African-Brazilians[4]. Moreover, catering to demands by Native groups, 10 new vacancies

[4] Through decision number 134/2007, the UFRGS University Council instituted the Affirmative Action Program based on reserved places in all undergraduate courses for applicants coming from primary and secondary schools in

would be created every year in courses chosen by the communities. This group undergoes a special admission process.

Before the implementation of UFRGS's Affirmative Action Program, only 3.27% of students approved in the entrance exams had self-declared as African-Brazilians (this category includes Blacks and Browns). With the adoption of the racial quotas, this percentage rose to 11.03% (Coordenadoria de Ações Afirmativas da UFRGS, 2013–2014).

The 2012 Report by UFRGS's Affirmative Action Committee compared performance indexes among students enrolled in each course. The average number of credits obtained by all students in each course was the yardstick for comparison. The students were thus divided between those above and below average, the latter group including those who were excluded, dropped out of the course or transferred to another course. The comparison between non-quota and social quota students (i. e., students coming from public schools) did not show any significant correlation. Credits from 30.64% of non-quota students were below average, while for social quota students this figure was 34.72%.

When social and racial quota students (i. e., students coming from public schools who self-declared as African-Brazilians) were compared, the correlation was strong. The performance of over half (52.38%) of those coming from public schools who self-declared as African-Brazilians was below average. This shows that vulnerability among racial quota students is significantly higher than among social quota students (i. e., students coming from public schools that did not self-declare as African-Brazilians) (Coordenadoria de Ações Afirmativas da UFRGS, 2012).

In what follows, we analyze the experience of a group of students who were admitted in 2008 to the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS) through affirmative action policies. This study works with a qualitative approach, and is based on recorded interviews with 10 African-Brazilians. These quota holders were enrolled in eight different courses and had a similar or better performance than the average of those students who entered the same course through the regular process. The performance criterion was the number of credits received during their first three semesters in the university. Students were aged between 20 and 33, and most lived in the metropolitan region of Porto Alegre. They were enrolled in eight courses: Accounting, Law, Civil Engineering, Letters, Geography, Marine Biology, Physical Education, and Veterinary Science. These students were pioneers, and their presence changed the dynamics of the academic community [Bello, 2011].

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the public system, for students coming from public schools self-declaring themselves as Blacks, and for Natives.

UFRGS has a policy of not disclosing individual data on student status whether they are quota-holders or not. The students who participated in this research were approached informally and spoke about their lives before and after they entered the university. Their identity was protected. Besides each statement quoted, we inform of the interviewee's course and gender.

These data were complemented by interviews published in newspapers. In this case, the student was identified by his/her name. News coverage includes African-Brazilians and Native quota-holders.

2.1. Views on UFRGS

Quota students used to see the university as an ivory tower very distant from their daily needs, and as a power-ridden space that reproduced white elites. The classic architecture of old buildings, such as the School of Law and of Medicine and their magnificent marble stairways, fittingly represents the distance between the included and the excluded. Inside the hallways, photos and pictures of alumni and faculties show that they are almost all white, thus reaffirming the notion that the university is a space dominated by a self-reproducing elite.

In the aftermath of studies carried out in the late fifties, there was growing recognition that educational performance is not entirely dependent on individual merit, having also to do with the students' social background. Bourdieu came to see reproduction and legitimation of social inequalities where previously one saw equal opportunity, meritocracy and social justice [Bourdieu, 1970].

In the words of one quota student:

> I never fathomed entering UFRGS. To me, it was totally inaccessible. (...) I thought admission was just too hard. That was something for the super-genius (Geography, female).

At the same time, a professional course in a good university is a highly valued opportunity, a dream difficult to fulfill. When undergoing the entrance exams, many students were sure they were not going to pass. Some are the first generation in their families to attend higher education.

> I didn't think I was going to pass. I thought it was abusive for my mother to pay R$100,00[5]. We paid, I didn't know about the income exemption, we paid on the very last day. (...) I just took the exam and passed. It was a big surprise (Letters, female).

To see one's name on a list of admitted students is a joy that many describe with a certain degree of disbelief, since in these situations it

[5] The interviewee is referring to the exam fee. In 2008, minimum wage was R$380.00.

is common to find out that many schoolmates were not able to overcome the obstacle posed by the minimal score required, especially in the most competitive courses.

> I was very nervous because I didn't think I was going to pass. The list came out on Wednesday, and I went to look on Sunday. I saw people hugging each other on TV. Nobody told me about it. On Sunday, I saw my name there. My mother was so happy! (Veterinary Science, female).

In Rio Grande do Sul state, university admission is followed by various rituals, such as the congregation of successful candidates, and shown on TV and published in newspapers. Another custom is to place a banner with the student's name, institution, and course in front of their homes in order to share the news with neighbors. This appeared in an interview with a quota student:

> My mother made a huge banner announcing that (I) had been admitted at UFRGS, along with a dolphin because I had passed for marine biology. (...) She hung it on her bedroom window, which faces the other buildings. All the neighbors came in to congratulate us, asking how was it and about the course, which no one knew existed. I received many calls, from uncles, from my father (Marine Biology, female).

After the euphoria of admission, there is the classroom reality shock: these students had an image of themselves as exemplary, hardworking and responsible. They stood above their peers' average. But once in the university, they had to face their own handicaps: they had fewer resources, lived farther away, relied on often precarious public transportation, had less time to study, and many were workers. These conditions often contrast with those of their classmates. Moreover, they lack the cultural capital the university requires, such as knowledge of foreign languages, mastery over computers and the written language itself.

> I find it difficult to express myself, convey some information to the class, words falter... It'd be good to have a course to help out with that. I spoke a lot of slang; it took me a while to get used to the classroom language (Physical Education, male).

One complication often noted refers to university bureaucracy. In the schools they attended, relations were closer, and the language more informal. For most of these students, the university had always been a distant and scarcely accessible institution. More than that, it requires social capital in the form of networking. This can be exemplified by the following observation of another student:

> Something I noticed in the beginning of the course is that it was very difficult for me and other classmates. I didn't know I had these benefits, even in terms of my course, senior students didn't care much (Geography, female).

To feel a part of the academic community is therefore a slow, long, and sometimes painful process.

> It was very hard. It seems like another world; people speak a different language. I think I'm a bit dumb. When I talk about it with classmates that had a trajectory similar to mine, they also voice this difficulty. It's difficult for me to speak with the professors (Geography, female).

Research carried out by Social Psychologists call attention to the fact that many of the problems of low performance among students belonging to stigmatized minorities are not just academic. Steele, an African-American scientist who was himself a victim of racial segregation while growing up in the United States, studies the social factors that weight on certain individuals belonging to unprivileged groups, such as Blacks, the poor, women, the elderly, and so forth. According to him, "the sense of having a given social identity arises from having to deal with important identity contingencies, usually threatening or restrictive contingencies like negative stereotypes about your group, group segregations, of one sort or another, discrimination and prejudice, and so on, all because you have a given characteristic" [Steele, 2010]. Therefore, the pressure of being one of the few representatives of a historically subaltern, often stigmatized group may be such that it ends up having a negative impact on their academic performance.

Besides adapting to a new environment, learning about university bureaucracy, and overcoming deficiencies received from public school, African-Brazilian and Native quota students also have to face discrimination. Hostile attitudes come from the hallways, classmates' comments, and certain professors.

2.2. Facing discrimination

Lucíola Belfort, daughter of a French-descendant father and a mother from the Kaingang community, is the first Native student to get a medical degree from UFRGS. In an interview to Zero Hora the most important newspaper of the state, she talked about the offense she faced from both her seniors and professors: "[They] talked about me in front of me, they wanted to know who I was. They thought I looked like a Native, even if I don't really have the phenotype." She claimed to have been insulted in the social network site Orkut[6], as if she were an

[6] Before Facebook, Orkut was the most popular social network among young Brazilians.

impostor: "You are the worse Caucasian, a White girl trying to pass as Native" and "even if you're White you're no good" [Porciúncula, 2015].

This angry tone is also found in the case of black quota students:

> [...] on Orkut there is a lot of racism, unbelievable things such as, "Kill the Blacks. Blacks cannot join UFRGS because they're ugly. Blacks belong to the kitchen." (Letters, male)

These offenses overflow the university walls in graffiti such as one found close to the university that says, "Blacks, only in the university restaurant kitchen; say no to the quotas!"

Discrimination was part of their lives before joining the university. School is regarded as a space where we learn and share not just scholarly content and knowledge, but also values, beliefs, habits and prejudices regarding race, gender, class, and age. Gomes's studies on race relations in Brazilian schools point out that the school years are for most students an important moment for constructing a Black identity, where negative stereotypes and representations on this racial segment and its aesthetic standards are reinforced [Gomes, 2002].

This is shown in the following statement:

> Where I went to school, they would never let me be part of performances [...] All my classmates were in, and they'd never let me. My mother would go there and talk to them (teachers), because I didn't have the clothing, but they would give it to my classmates. My (white) friend was always part of it. They laughed at my hair, said I had kinky hair, and all. All I did was cry, I wouldn't tell my mother, I was embarrassed, I guess. [...] once, a classmate told me: each monkey on its own branch. And the teacher (would say nothing). I didn't say anything, I just cried, I was about 10 years old, so you see how these things really get under your skin (Geography, female)

Children frequently absorb such offenses, alone and embarrassed, unable to speak out. Teachers often do not know how to support them. Taylor [1992] points out, "our identity is partly shaped by recognition or its absence, often by the misrecognition of others". Some authors consider recognition to be a fourth kind of right, along with civil, political and social rights. Examples of non-recognition towards African-Brazilians and Natives in Brazil are not lacking [Schucman, 2014]. This may become manifested as low self-esteem and reduced expectations among youth, who do not hope for a better future.

In a study on racial quotas at UFRGS among Law students, the following question was asked: "Have you felt discriminated against because of the color of your skin? Yes or No". All students who self-declared as White answered in the negative, while 64% of Backs responded positively. According to the author, "There is a clear situa-

tion of hegemony, showing what being White means in Brazilian society: not being a victim of discrimination due to the color of one's skin shows that these individuals are not 'racialized'; they represent themselves rather as a collective" [Baranzeli, 2014].

Students cope with these issues in multiple ways. They may join others who are in a similar situation in order to exchange information and share experiences, or seek support from certain professors. They become autodidacts in order to redress their deficiencies, as was noted by one interviewee:

> During my first year at the university, I used to spend the weekends reading everything I thought I had missed. My mother thought I was ill: "This kid doesn't go out, he's locked in his bedroom the whole time" (Letters, male).

UFRGS gradually tried to adapt to these new students, offering and advertising support services in order to improve the material and academic conditions for the students who need it. For students contemplating these services, one opportunity usually leads to another. Those who are granted some kind of scholarship or position in tutoring, outreach or research, acquire a richer view on the university and its activities. Their relations with the academic community become more symmetrical.

Quota students also realize that, just as society became divided when it came to accepting (or not) affirmative action policies and especially the racial quotas, the university too is not monolithic. Many faculties, staff and students support the admission of under-represented groups into public universities, and acknowledge their skills and hard work. More than that: they wish them to be successful. Most emotional support however comes from family.

2.3. The importance of family and for the family

One aspect that stands out in the quota students' statements is family support, especially from the mother and other female relatives. A survey on university quotas carried out with a sample of the Brazilian population at large found a reverse relation between the level of education and income and the approval of affirmative action policies (Folha de São Paulo). Affluent groups tend to favor universalistic policies. Black women, who are more precariously included in the labor market, are possibly the most enthusiastic supporters of affirmative action policies, which provide opportunities for their children to advance their studies.

In the words of a quota student,

> My family's bedrock is my mother, she is the provider [...] She always says, 'You are all I have. Everything I do is for you' (Geography, female).

It must be noted that in the *Bolsa Família*[7] Program, it is the mother who receives the cash for keeping children in school, since she tends to think more about them than about herself.

Quota students also hope that a professional qualification will provide more opportunities for their children and those around them.

> I'm studying in order to have the things that my mother couldn't give me when I was younger, in order to give them to my children and whoever else is around me. That's why I'm studying (Veterinary Science, female).

Among black families, to study and become qualified in order to find a better position in the job market, is something highly valued.

> My mother encourages (study), she always says that someone who hasn't studied has nothing. Especially if she is black. Many employees prefer to hire a white person that only went to fundamental school than a black with a degree. The more we study, the better are our opportunities for getting a well-paid job. It also shows that black people aren't good for cleaning jobs only. (Letters, female).

According to Lahire [1997] there is a myth about parental omission among poor communities, which for some educators would explain the failure of students coming from the popular classes:

> […] parental omission is a myth. This myth is produced by teachers who ignore the logics of families, and surmise from the students' behavior and performance that their parents do not care about them, and do not interfere. Our studies reveal a deep interpretive injustice when parents' "omission" or "negligence" is invoked. Almost all our research subjects, at whatever school situation, feel that the school is something important, and expect their children to become better off than them [Lahire, 1997].

Families make internal arrangements to enable the dream of getting a university degree. This was the case of Taís Leite, the first African-Brazilian cartographic engineer to graduate from UFRGS. Her husband supported her during her studies. She is currently working in her field of expertise, and will support her husband during his MBA studies [Custódio, 2015a].

One student told a story that showed her mother's wholehearted dedication:

> In the first day of class, it was a geology class, not even geography. My mother came along, and put in her face (to speak with the pro-

[7] Bolsa família is an income transfer program that benefits 11 million families below the poverty line, conditional on maintaining children in school.

> fessor): 'You take good care of my daughter. Good-bye, my daughter, have a good class' (Geography, female).

Family support is reciprocated by the social and symbolic return that having a son or daughter in a good, free, public university may have for the family at large, in terms of information and as an example to others. Quota students encourage their relatives to increase their level of schooling and apply for public universities.

> Now with the quotas, in my father's family [...] several of my cousins have taken on the opportunity for joining the university. So two of my cousins who had given up private college because they couldn't afford it, decided to take the (UFRGS) entrance exams, and this year they passed. One is studying Psychology, and is enjoying the course, and the other went to Nursery School (Law, female).

Denize Leticia Marcolino, the first Native to graduate from UFRGS in 2012, encouraged her mother, who lives in an Indian village, to take a distance-learning pedagogy course.

This encouragement may have an impact beyond the academic sphere, as the following comment by the mother of a graduated quota student shows:

> My daughter makes the entire family proud. I have improved due to her support: from maid, I became a cleaning lady, then a doorwoman, and now I am a guardian [Custódio, 2015a].

2.4. Students' resilience

We have noted some recurrent obstacles in the trajectory of quota students, such as difficulties in accessing the university; the need for adapting to the language and readings required in academia; for conciliating work and study; and discrimination, among others. In these cases, students sought alternatives for dealing with these daily challenges, pointing to a process of resilience [Bello, 2013].

Originally, the term "resilience" comes from physics, and refers to the "property whereby energy stored in a deformed body is restored when the tension that caused the elastic deformation is removed" [Ferreira, 1975].

In psychology, this concept is being revised by Koller and Poletto [2008], since a person cannot absorb a stressful event and return to their previous form. She learns, grows up, develops and matures. Resilience does not mean to return to a previous state, but to overcome or adapt when faced with risk, and to open up possibilities for new paths in life.

Resilience is the capacity to be reborn from adversity with renewed strength and more resources—that is, an active process of re-

sistance, restructuring and growth in response to crisis and challenge [Walsh, 2005].

The new student profile points to young adults who work, are married with children, and pay rent—thus different from the previous profile of adolescent students living with their high/middle class parents who frequently also hold a university degree. For these new students, it is worth overcoming all obstacles in their quest for fulfilling an individual and family dream. A Letter student talked about his family, child and work:

> I'm married with a five month-old son, João, and we live here in Riachuelo (street). I'm looking for an apartment because (this one) was sold. But my financial situation is not that good; it is stable, I manage to pay the bills, buy books. I'm about to finish my undergrad studies, and that's what's important [...] My access to academia was very indirect, it was like I entered through cracks I was finding along the way. (Letters, male).

One of the interviewees who lives with his grandmother in the metropolitan region of Porto Alegre talked about his daily efforts for reconciling work and study, and underscored his determination for fulfilling his goals:

> I work from 8am to 5pm as an assistant accountant in a car dealer. The actual schedule goes until 5:48pm, but they let me out 48 minutes earlier. On Fridays I don't have classes, so I stay until later in order to make up for the rest of the week [...] I'm very resolute, I go after what I want (Accounting, male).

Another student emphasized the courage required to go after one's dreams by circumventing or overcoming obstacles:

> I see myself as a brave, hard working person; I go after what I want. My goals are clear. I'm severe, sometimes crabby, I'm aware of that. I'm very anxious, a bit radical, I like doing things my own way, I'm very perfectionist. Stubborn, I like to establish my goals and go after them. Of course, if I'm wrong, I end up acknowledging it, even if not immediately. But I'm usually sure about what I want (Marine Biology, female).

One element that figures in several statements is a sense of opportunity, and not being intimidated by obstacles:

> My life isn't hard, I just take advantage of what I do have. I took advantage of the quotas, and whatever else comes along my way. I want to maximize the opportunities that my parents gave me (Law, female).

This student's parents have higher education degrees, but still, they were unemployed and had to move to other states in search of work. She has been living with her grandparents or aunt since high school. She admires a friend who divorced her husband during her studies and whose parents live outside of Porto Alegre: "she struggles financially and sometimes gets discouraged, but never gives up".

A study carried out at Campinas State University aimed at subsidizing affirmative action policies in that institution compared students coming from public and private schools, having as a control variable the score received in the entrance exam. Results show higher academic performance among students coming from public schools, which was attributed to these subjects' greater resilience: "Poor students with good training show higher likelihood of academic and social success even on the face of personal and social adversities. Explanatory factors include their special capacity for facing unfavorable situations, a valued skill in the competitive environment of a research university which is not always shared by their middle class peers, who are often spared of adversities by their families" [Marques, 2008].

To be admitted to a federal public university generates expectations and dreams among relatives, since a higher education degree is also regarded as an opportunity for upward social mobility. As Carvalho puts it: "It means to be able to dream with the possibility of being CEO of the National Development Bank, Minister of Finance, Supreme Court Justice" [Carvalho, 2004].

In fact, many dreams do come true. UFRGS students who were admitted through affirmative action and got their degrees often go on studying in specialization or even graduate programs. These students show that being a part of the UFRGS academic community transformed their life expectations.

2.5. On expectations and accomplishments

A university degree expands the horizons of students whose chances had been previously restricted: "My world ended in my neighborhood" (Geography, female).

Scarcity of resources is passed along generations. One interviewee talked about the city in the metropolitan region of Porto Alegre where she lives, which is similar to her grandmother's neighborhood:

> The neighborhood is very poor, the entire city is sort of poor, my street is very strange. There are some large houses like mine, and another four. All the rest looks like a slum, a bunch of poor and ugly little houses. People dump garbage in empty lots, almost everyday the municipal truck has to go there remove it. It looks like a slum. Loud music. When I enter that street I remember when I used to visit my grandmother, who lived in the Vila Maria da Conceição. It was just like that: a gang of kids, lots of dogs, loud music, just like that. The entire neighborhood is like that (Letters, female).

The same student described her relatives:

> […] no one is rich in my family, but everybody works. … Everybody is a worker. College degree, nobody has. My cousin is a nurse, but she didn't go to university, she went to technical school (Letters, female).

To attend UFRGS presents students with new levels of expectations, instead of the often-restricted horizon prevalent in poor neighborhoods.

> I have many plans, to get a degree, I also want to go to grad school, to study mollusks—gastropods. My professor is an expert. I really wish to go to grad school. To get to know other places where there is marine biology. I would go there to see species that haven't been discovered yet […] I wish I could go there, to get my hands dirty (Marine Biology, female).

Denize, mentioned earlier as the first Native student to get a degree from UFRGS, graduated in nursery. She did a specialization course in São Paulo and is currently working in the health clinic that services the Kaingang community in São Sebastião do Caí[8]. In a newspaper photograph, she appears at work without wearing the white coat typical of health professionals. She prefers to look more like the others in the village, and talk to them in their native language, Kaingang.

Lucíola Belfort, the first Native to earn a medical degree from UFRGS, declared that she would like to remain close to Porto Alegre, since she wants to further her studies. As for the future, she says that "If I have to go to the UN to work with indigenous health, so be it. I don't see any obstacle. I just don't see myself in a hospital" [Porciúncula, 2015].

The College of Education hallway displays a photograph of Dorvalino Cardoso, the first Native student to get a Pedagogy degree. He is currently an M.A. student in that same College.

2.6. A new view on the University

There seems to be a change in the way quota students view public university, as they become undergraduates with a more critical perspective on it. Criticism addressed, above all, the lack of flexibility. They claimed that the institution did not take into account the realities of new students who often work and need more time and other arrangements in order to cope with academic requirements. With respect to their faculty, one interviewee who is also a full-time worker said:

[8] São Sebastião do Cai is located within the metropolitan region of Porto Alegre.

> I think they were used to the model of the student who does not work and has plenty of free time. Professors demand a lot of homework, or visits to industries. Those of us who work do not have time to do this, we cannot get time off, it's hard, it's not viable, it's complicated and ends up undermining our professional training (Accounting, male).

Another kind of criticism relates to the distance between the university and its surrounding realities: the study of topics that relate more directly to foreign contexts. One student talked about the pedagogic training she received:

> [...] students here are soft in the head, they dream up a perfect world, or just debate what is wrong. They are always discussing some controversy, and their debates lead to nowhere. I don't speak, I just listen. I don't meddle in, I let them speak, I let them go to Mars if they wish, the day they fall from their cotton candy cloud they'll see what real life is all about (Letters, female).

Some comments refer to the often hostile and discriminatory environment where students who are different and beyond standards are regarded as inferior:

> [...] some people discriminate. They said my friend was dumb, because she has been admitted through the quota system. But a lot of people also support us (Geography, female).

There is also recognition of the backing received from part of the academic community, of the importance of financial support in being able to afford the studies, and research scholarships in order to bolster future academic opportunities.

The statements below were taken from an interview with an alumnus from UFRGS's Social Sciences, who was admitted through the racial quota system[9]. She underscored the importance of informal networks for raising academic expectations:

> [...] I would hear my classmates saying, "I have to get a scholarship because I have to go to grad school, or because I have to get involved in a research group". Then I thought: well, I want that too, I'll go after it, this will make a difference in my Curriculum Vitae. And I did. So, these scholarships made a difference not only because of content, but due to the symbolic value of affirming that I do have a good CV, I have a competitive CV (Social Sciences, female).

[9] The interview was carried out by Ph.D. student Eliane Souza as part of her qualifying examination.

Concerning her part in the university's destiny, there is visible empowering in her involvement in various activities organized by the Education and Social Development Department, as well as in groups such as the Affirmative Action Forum[10]:

> […] there is a Forum and I'll be a part of it. And that's when the issues became clearer to me, I felt encouraged to be part of a movement for reassessing the quota policy. (…) That's when other quota and non-quota students and I, students sensitive to the cause and also non-students, drafted a project for reassessing the quotas, defending the project's continuity, showing what improvements had to be made (Social Sciences, female).

The interviewee views the quota students' contribution to the university as being positive, against the predictions that university standards would suffer with the entrance of ill-prepared students. When her final monograph was recommended for being presented at a university located in another state, as part of a national meeting of university students involved in research, she said

> When I did the presentation I told my story, things that happened to me in the university, the feeling of joy and empowerment involved in graduating with a piece of work of which I am proud. And I speak not just for myself, but for my peers. […] sometimes we grant too much importance for academic knowledge, and academic knowledge comes from diversity—wherever there is diversity, there is enrichment. We cannot keep thinking that diversity is good but only elsewhere, not here at the university. No, there should be diversity here. There needs to be interaction (Social Sciences, female).

3. Final remarks

The implementation of affirmative action policies in Brazil must be contextualized in terms of issues that have gained ground since the early twenty-first century, such as respect for human rights and recognition based on justice and equity. These are based on discourse on the inclusion of discriminated groups found in international documents signed by most countries in the world, Brazil included.

There has been a growing political will by social movements and the three State branches—Judiciary, Legislative and Executive—to face the huge inequalities, both socio-economic and racial, which lay at the root of Brazil's development. Policies for including minorities in Brazilian universities point precisely in that direction. Affirmative action policies lend substance to the ideal of a multiethnic nation. They

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[10] The forum assessed the first four years of affirmative action at UFRGS. It provided a subsidy for introducing changes to the admission process that enhanced the odds for racial quota holders.

play a pedagogic role by helping reconstruct the memory and image of historically silenced and little-recognized groups.

Racial quotas are a social mobility policy furthered by the State, aimed at redressing historical privileges based on notions of white supremacy in Brazil. They provide better access to professional training for a large number of students coming from groups that had been hitherto virtually excluded from elite universities. The profile of the student body in Brazilian universities is changing accordingly: many are now young adults, workers, living in distant neighborhoods, poor, and non-white. The statements analyzed here show these students' achievements, challenges and expectations. In spite of suffering discrimination both inside and outside the university, they have shown resilience and a will to overcome obstacles.

Significant challenges lie ahead for Brazilian universities. These institutions will have to come up with new strategies for welcoming and including these students, revise course curricula, and create spaces for reflecting on and debating the new realities brought by quota students.

By making room for these students, the public university encourages diversity. Ultimately, it is society as a whole that stands to gain with the emergence of a group of professionals and leaders with a worldview that is closer to the realities of most Brazilians.

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