

**Decentralisation and Re-centralisation in
Post-1991 Russian Higher Education:
A Case Study of the Republic of Sakha and
Yakutsk State University.**

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I hereby declare that, except where explicit attribution is made, the work presented in this thesis is entirely my own.

Signed..........
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ABSTRACT

It has been more than ten years since the Russian federal government announced decentralisation as one of the main aims in the reform of the Russian higher education (HE) system. However, to date there has been only limited research on the impact of decentralisation on individual regions and HE institutions (HEIs) in Russia; therefore this thesis sets to examine the ways in which the policy of decentralisation has been formulated and implemented at the federal level and its impact on the geographically largest region of the Russian Federation, the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), especially its oldest and largest HEI, Yakutsk State University. In view of the size of Russia with all its diversity, any meaningful analysis of the post-1991 HE reform should include the examination of the regional and institutional dimensions.

Decentralisation in this thesis is defined as a shift of decision-making authority over key HE areas from the federal to the regional level, as well as the granting of autonomy to individual HEIs. Drawing on documentary analysis, interview data and personal observation, this thesis examines decentralisation in three key HE areas, namely general aspects of governance and management, finance, and academic matters. It investigates the extent to which the case-study region and university have received decision-making authority from the federal level over these matters in the framework of decentralisation, and how the relationships between various levels in the system have changed.

The findings show that immediately after the break-up of the Soviet Union in December 1991, the previously centralised control over key HE areas was transferred to the lower levels, but due to political and economic uncertainty this transfer was *ad hoc* rather than well planned. From 1996, the Russian federal authorities, whilst politically and ideologically promoting decentralisation and university autonomy, started to re-centralise previously transferred powers. By 2003 the federal authorities had almost fully reinstated their central control, leaving the lower levels in the system very limited room for manoeuvre. Thus the thesis concludes that despite the rhetoric of decentralisation over the last decade, centralisation of control at the federal level over all three HE areas under consideration remains dominant in present-day Russian HE. Reasons are offered for the divergence between the rhetoric and its actual implementation.

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GLOSSARY AND ABBREVIATIONS

Cand.Sc.	Candidate of Science research degree (<i>Kandidat Nauk</i>)
CPC	Council of People's Commissariat
CPSU	Communist Party of the Soviet Union
DHES	Department for Higher Education and Science of the Republic of Sakha (1998-2000)
DPT	Department for Personnel Training in the Government of Sakha
D.Sc.	Doctor of Science research degree (<i>Doktor Nauk</i>)
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
<i>Gosplan</i>	State Planning Committee
GRP	Gross Regional Product
HE	Higher Education
HEI	Higher Education Institution
MGE	federal Ministry of General Education (1991-1996)
MOE	federal Ministry of Education (1996-present)
MOF	federal Ministry of Finance
MOL	federal Ministry of Labour
MSPE	Ministry of Science and Professional Education of the Republic of Sakha (2002-present)
MSPM	federal Ministry of State Property Management
MTC	federal Ministry of Tax Collection
<i>Narkompros</i>	Russian acronym for People's Commissariat of Enlightenment (1917-1936)
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
<i>Politburo</i>	Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPSU
PPC	Primary Party Committee
R&D	Research and Development
RCR	Regional Council of Rectors of Sakha HEIs
RMOF	Regional Ministry of Finance in Sakha
RMPM	Regional Ministry of Property Management in Sakha
RSFSR	Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic
RUR	Russian Union of Rectors
Sakha	short name for the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)
SCHE	federal State Committee for Higher Education (1991-1996)
SCHES	State Committee for Higher Education and Science in the Republic of Sakha (1992-1998 and 2000-2002)
UMHE	USSR Ministry of Higher Education (1936-1988)
UNPK	Russian acronym for <i>Uchebno-Nauchno-Proizvodstvennyi Kompleks</i> (Education-Production-Research Complex)
USCPE	USSR State Committee for Public Education (1988-1991)
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
VAT	Value Added Tax
VUZ	Russian acronym for HEI (<i>Vysshee Uchebnoe Zavedenie</i>)
Yakutia	another short name for the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)

CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

The period following the break-up of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR or Soviet Union) in December 1991 has been marked by profound transformation of politics, economy and society of Russia, which has inevitably affected the country's higher education (HE) sector. It has now been more than ten years since decentralisation became one of the principal aims of the federal government of the Russian Federation, but to date there has been limited research on the impact of the decentralisation policy on the HE sector. Most works so far published offer general conclusions claiming that "Russia has moved in the direction of greater decentralization ... in HE policy" (Chapman, 2001:52) or "the state ... granted numerous freedoms to individual universities on matters that prior to the mid-1980s had been the exclusive prerogative of the central government" (Bain, 2002:22; also see Endo, 2003). Whilst this study supports other scholars in their claims that there has been decentralisation and an increase in university autonomy, it maintains that the actual picture has been complex, owing to diverse economic and financial capacities, various political arrangements with the federal centre, and the geographical diversity of Russia's regions¹ (for a map of Russia, see Appendix 1).

Furthermore, as most research on post-1991 Russian HE is largely based on data derived from universities located in central Russia, notably those in Moscow and St. Petersburg, and considering the fact that regional universities and the role of regional authorities in HE development have been studied very little, I am convinced that given a country of the size of Russia with all its diversity, any meaningful analysis of recent reform and change needs to include the regional and institutional dimensions². Thus this study examines the ways in which the decentralisation policy for Russian HE has been

¹ A 'region' of the Russian Federation is the term used in this study to designate three different types of federal entities, namely *respublika* (ethnically defined republic or republic), *oblast* and *kray* (territory), *avtonomnaya oblast* and *avtonomnyi okrug* (autonomous district), which have a different status and degree of self-governing authority (for more details, see Shaw, 1999). The Russian Federation comprises 89 such regions.

² In the last two years, however, two major books appeared, which analyse university autonomy, transformation and entrepreneurialism in various Russian universities; see Bain (2003) and Shattock (2004).

formulated and implemented in the period between 1991 and 2003, its impact on the geographically largest region of the Russian Federation, the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)³, and the oldest and largest university in Sakha, Yakustk State University (YSU). Of particular interest are the implications of the decentralisation policy for HE governance and management, finance, academic matters and quality, and the nature of the relationship between the Russian and Sakha governments and YSU.

The study argues that politically and ideologically the Russian federal authorities promoted HE decentralisation, but have failed to develop a clear reform strategy and are reluctant to transfer decision-making authority to the regional governments and to grant autonomy to individual HE institutions (HEIs). The federal authorities have retained most of their previously held powers in key HE areas, whilst transferring only immediate financial responsibility to the regions and giving HEIs only limited autonomy in running their day-to-day business. Although in the case of Sakha and YSU signs of decentralisation and of an increase in the degree of university autonomy are evident, the centralisation of authority at the federal level in key HE matters remains the sector's characteristic feature.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

This study aims to examine how the decentralisation policy has been formulated at the federal level and implemented in Russian HE in the period between 1991 and 2003. The main objectives are to investigate the impact of the federal policy of decentralisation on one individual region and one individual university, and to explore how the nature of relationships between these three levels has changed in the framework of decentralisation. To that end, the study pursues the following objectives relating to its theoretical framework and empirical analysis:

1. Theoretical framework.

The study aims to look at the concept of *decentralisation* and to deconstruct it into several segments in relation to HE. Since HE as an academic discipline was not studied in the USSR and is not yet well developed in post-Soviet Russian scholarship (Grudzinskii, 2003), examining decentralisation in Russian HE requires decisions on a

³ The Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) is the full official name of the region under consideration. The other names used to denote this region are Sakha and Yakutia, which are used in this study interchangeably.

framework and useful leads are found in the HE literature written mainly by Western European and North American scholars. In its current form, however, the existing literature does not adequately address what I wish to investigate and analyse in this study. Therefore, on the basis of concepts derived from HE literature, a new framework for looking at decentralisation in Russian HE needs to be constructed.

2. Empirical analysis.

Using empirical analysis, the study first aims to briefly analyse the legacy of Soviet HE, which it is argued, continues to affect the post-Soviet Russian HE reform. The federal government's post-1991 HE policy is examined, focusing on three key areas: 1) *governance and management*; 2) *finance*; and 3) *academic matters and quality assurance*. The analysis of how federal policy has in turn affected the regional HE sector and the regional government's reform policy with regard to its HE sector is the next objective of the study. After exploration of the federal and regional reform policies, the study focuses on the institutional level in order to analyse the response of institutional actors to federal and regional policies. The study also aims to re-interpret the supposedly changing relationships between the federal and regional governments and the university in the light of the decentralisation process.

1.3 Theoretical Questions

Based on the broad objectives of the study, a number of theoretical research questions have been formulated, which have guided me in reviewing the literature and theories concerning HE:

- 1) What is decentralisation, and what are its potential rationales in the field of HE?
- 2) In what ways may decentralisation affect the state-university relationship and university autonomy?
- 3) What instruments of regulation may a government employ to alter the state-university relationship and the extent of university autonomy?
- 4) In what ways may instruments of regulation affect internal university governance and management?
- 5) How can the typologies of HE systems and concepts derived from the literature be integrated to provide a framework for exploring decentralisation in Russian HE?

The literature review should help answer empirical questions and locate sources of control and decision-making at YSU within the framework developed for this study. As research questions for the empirical part of the study have arisen from the literature review, they are presented in the final section of Chapter 2.

1.4 Structure of the Thesis, Its Arguments and Some Preliminary Findings

The structure has emerged from the above objectives and research questions and is described in this section. Arguments and some preliminary findings of each chapter are also outlined.

This introductory chapter is followed by Chapter 2, which develops the conceptual framework for the study. The chapter conceptualises the notion of decentralisation and considers its potential rationales. As decentralisation is argued to inevitably change the balance of power between the levels and actors involved, the chapter brings out the main typologies and concepts relating to HE, namely the state-university relationship, governmental instruments of HE regulation, university autonomy, and forms of university governance and management. The review of the literature leads to the construction of a framework for the empirical study of decentralisation in Russian HE.

Chapter 3 considers methodological issues. It starts with the discussion of the research paradigm and justifies the use of elements of historical research and case study approaches. The selection of a case-study region and university is highlighted, together with the methods of data collection. Evidence derived from various sources of data presents problems of validity and generalisability. They are addressed in the final part of the chapter.

Chapter 4 focuses on the HE developments in the Soviet period. The chapter begins with an overview of the main features of Soviet HE, moving on to discussion of the initial reform attempts initiated by the late-Soviet leadership in 1987. It is argued that the attempts to reform the system in the late-Soviet period largely failed because of the legacy of authoritarian regime, the 'top-down' nature of the reform itself, social upheaval in the former Soviet republics, and the conservatism of the HE community. However, it is concluded that rapid change in the wider society had a greater impact on HE than the official policy, and proved to be crucial for the post-1991 reform.

Chapters 5 to 7 examine post-1991 events, focusing on federal, regional and institutional levels. These chapters start with a discussion of the contexts in which policies were formulated and implemented, and use statistical data to provide an overview of recent quantitative and structural changes at each level. Chapters 5 and 6 draw mainly on the analysis of legislation, policy documents, academic writing and articles in the general press, and to a lesser extent on interviews with federal and regional government officials, whilst Chapter 7 largely draws on interviews with institutional actors regarding their response to policies formulated at the upper levels, together with documentary analysis and personal observation.

Chapter 5 deals with the federal level from which the decision-making authority was to be transferred to the regions and HEIs. The chapter analyses the formulation of federal legislation and policy documents with regard to decentralisation, and their implementation at the federation-wide level. The main argument of the chapter is that despite its explicit rhetoric of decentralisation, the federal government has legally retained a great degree of control over HE in all three areas under scrutiny.

Chapter 6 concerns developments at the regional level, and analyses the impact of the federal policies on the HE sector of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia). It explores the legislation and policies of the regional government, and seeks to analyse whether the policies emanating from the two different government levels have been coherent. It is argued that the regional government gained some degree of control over its HEIs immediately after 1991, due to its power to finance HE. In a climate of uncertainty and unclear centre-periphery relationships, this financial capacity allowed the regional government to largely ignore the federal legislation and expand the regional HE system. By 2003, however, most regional powers had been revoked by the federal government.

Chapter 7 looks at developments at the institutional level, and analyses the response of one university, YSU, to the federal and regional HE policies analysed in Chapters 5 and 6. Despite all the problems and challenges of the turbulent decade, the university has significantly expanded and developed, mainly due to the relatively generous financial investment coming from the regional government, as the federal government almost totally withdrew from non-salary and non-stipend funding for most of the 1990s (see,

for example, Verbitskaya, 2002). The impact of decentralisation on university behaviours and decision-making processes, however, has been more limited than changes in institutional size and formal structures would suggest.

Chapter 8 brings the three levels together, and looks at the nature of relationships between the Russian and Sakha governments and YSU as they evolved in the 1990s. The chapter reveals that the relationship between these three levels varied throughout the 1990s, and has been strongly affected by political and economic contexts. The chapter argues that although university autonomy has increased, the university has very limited room for manoeuvre in key HE areas, and since 1991 has become subjected to a second source of control, that of the regional government.

Finally, Chapter 9 presents the main findings and builds links between the empirical findings and the theories concerning HE reviewed in Chapter 2. It looks back at the main objectives of the study in order to assess whether there has been real decentralisation from the federal to the regional level and the university and, if so, to what extent. The study concludes that there has been a divergence between the rhetoric of decentralisation and its actual implementation, and that the initial shift of authority to the lower levels has been followed by a trend to re-centralisation. The shift from centralisation to decentralisation and then back to re-centralisation, however, has not been unique to the HE sector but rather part of general policy swings in public sectors. Thus despite the rhetoric of decentralisation, centralisation remains a dominant trend in the present-day Russian HE sector. Based on the findings of this study, the thesis concludes with a discussion of potential extension to this research.

CHAPTER TWO

DECENTRALISATION AND ITS IMPACT ON HE

2.1 Introduction

The main aim of this chapter is to set up a conceptual framework for the study by theoretically exploring the concept of decentralisation and HE theories relevant to it. First, Section 2.2 provides a definition of decentralisation, along with a review of its potential rationales. Drawing on definitions offered by various theorists, I adopt in this study the approach according to which decentralisation is seen as a shift of decision-making authority from the national/federal to the sub-national/regional and institutional levels. On the basis of this definition, Section 2.3 explores theories of the state-university relationship, as decentralisation is argued to inevitably alter its nature. Although the term ‘the state’ is normally used interchangeably with the term ‘the government’ in HE literature (Salter and Tapper, 1994), I suggest that in countries such as Russia, the term ‘the state’ should clearly refer to two distinct levels of government, federal and regional. Both the federal and regional governments can alter the nature of their relationships with the university by employing various instruments of regulation. The use of various instruments in turn affects the extent of a university’s autonomy and results in different forms of internal organisational behaviours, as discussed in Section 2.4. Finally, these theoretical explorations help pose the research questions and construct the conceptual framework for the empirical part of this study, as explained in Section 2.5.

2.2 The Concept of Decentralisation

2.2.1 Decentralisation: Forms and Dimensions

Decentralisation as a concept is not easy to define, and is conceptually more complex than centralisation. Whilst all authors agree that centralisation means the concentration of decision-making power on a wide range of HE issues at the central or top authority, and leaves only ‘technical’ decisions or tightly-programmed routine implementation to lower levels in the system, the literature on decentralisation is not entirely consistent. Lauglo and McLean (1985:3) define it as “a transfer of control of education from national to local bodies within a public, governmental system”. This definition implies the existence of multiple government levels, but understates the role to be played by HEIs themselves in decentralisation, as, according to authors such as Bray (1999) and

Neave and van Vught (1994), one of the most important outcomes of decentralisation should be the enhanced autonomy of educational institutions in management decision-making, finance and academic affairs.

Decentralisation is also argued to take various forms. Although no universal agreement exists among the theorists, the most frequently mentioned forms are *de-concentration*, *delegation* and *devolution*, each of which varies in the extent of decision-making authority transferred to lower levels (Bray, 1999; Cheema and Rondinelly, 1983; Fiske, 1996; Lauglo, 1995; McGinn and Welsh, 1999). De-concentration is the weakest form of decentralisation through which the central government establishes its own units at the lower levels; these units ultimately represent interests of the central government and perform its functions, and in this sense are parallel to it. In de-concentration the central government retains its control but exercises it in a more decentralised manner. Delegation is another approach to decentralisation, in which the central government temporarily 'lends' its decision-making authority to lower levels. Although, in this form of decentralisation, the lower levels receive broad authority to make and implement decisions without the direct control of a central administrative unit, the latter in practice retains its authority, as it can take its former powers back without resort to legislation (Bray, 1999).

By contrast, devolution is the most extensive form of decentralisation. It is a process through which the central government deliberately relinquishes control over the institutions for which it is responsible. At the limit in this scenario, the central government's role is minimal and all powers are formally held at the lower levels. In this form of decentralisation, the central government is only responsible for setting a broad policy framework, while authority over management, financial and academic matters is transferred to the lower levels, regions and/or institutions. Once devolution has taken place, the role of the central government is largely confined to the collection and exchange of information, and, contrary to delegation, decision-making authority transferred to the lower levels cannot be easily revoked by the centre (Bray, 1999).

Thus the three forms of decentralisation vary in the degree of decision-making authority granted to lower levels. However, most theorists writing on government policies in various HE systems do not distinguish between these different forms of

decentralisation. Similarly, since the federal policy documents do not specify the form of decentralisation that has been pursued in Russian HE, this study also adopts the generic term ‘decentralisation’, but attempts to explore what forms of decentralisation have in practice been pursued by the Russian federal government. This is done in the concluding chapter.

The critical question in decentralisation, and one of great importance to Russia, concerns which levels are best suited to operate the various functions of HE. In this process, Fiszbein (2001) argues, it is important to achieve a reasonable balance of objectives, and it is necessary to create consensus among actors at various levels in support of this balance for decentralisation to work. To achieve such a balance, policy-makers should analyse the goals of decentralisation, the interests which various stakeholders pursue and how the goals could be achieved in ways that take the interests of various stakeholders into account (Fiske, 1996). A large degree of consensus among interested stakeholders is important, but difficult to achieve, as the interests of one stakeholder may be diametrically opposed to those of others. Nevertheless, using all means to develop such a consensus may “provide a climate which facilitates decentralisation without much resistance by those who lose influence in the redistribution of authority” (Lauglo, 1995:7). In Russia, for example, those who lose influence, at least in the short term, are government officials at the federal level. But what motivates those in a position of influence at the centre to transfer decision-making authority to lower levels? The possible rationales for doing so are addressed in the following section.

2.2.2 Rationales for Decentralisation

Central governments follow various rationales for decentralising authority. These rationales respond to different political and social dynamics, and depend on the specific circumstances of particular countries. In an education system, decentralisation is not necessarily driven by specific education policies, but may often be driven by larger public policies, such as the distribution of power in response to the overload of the central authorities, political conflict or economic crisis. In such cases, the decentralisation of control in education is likely to be incidental, and only a small part of a general decentralisation trend. In the field of education, the most common rationales used by governments are efficiency, or management by objectives, and the

cultures of learning (Lauglo, 1995; Weiler, 1990). The two sets of rationales, however, are often intertwined.

Weiler (1990) observes that decentralisation is often used by the central government as a strategy for conflict and crisis management. For example, in Russia regionally based separatist movements in several ethnically-defined republics such as Chechnya and Tatarstan threatened secession if not granted more autonomy. To avoid the disintegration of the Russian Federation in 1992, the federal government had to shift authority in political and economic spheres to the regional governments, and HE became part of this process. Lauglo (1995), however, challenges Weiler's view by arguing that centralist control may also be commonly used as a response to conflict and crisis. Indeed, as I will show in this study, in the late 1990s the Russian federal government started to use centralisation strategies in its response to the increasing power of the regional authorities and the loss of its former centralised control over public policies in general, and the HE sector has also been affected by this shift.

Another rationale for decentralisation often revolves around efficiency issues. Cheema and Rondinelli (1983) emphasise the economic advantage claimed by this rationale, as decentralisation emphasises local conditions and needs, which in turn leads to a better match between demand and supply and thus a more economic utilisation of limited resources. Bray (1984:9) maintains that by "virtue of their location, ..., central planners, ..., are less likely to be sensitive to local needs", and therefore decentralisation should be aimed at providing "greater sensitivity to local needs". This rationale is also referred to as management by objectives (Lauglo, 1995) as in achieving efficiency in a decentralised system, it is important for lower levels to have very clear ideas about what goals are to be reached and how these goals are to be realised. Local objectives should be set within the general objectives set at the higher levels, and the extent of authority at lower levels would depend on the nature of objectives laid down by the higher levels and whether actors at lower levels have a real influence over them. In this respect, this study examines whether there has been an adherence at lower levels to the objectives set at the higher levels, and whether decentralisation has encouraged or resulted in the more efficient utilisation of financial resources at the regional and institutional levels.

The rationale for decentralisation specific to the education system is the culture of learning, which emphasises the nature, context and content of the learning process. In a country as geographically and ethnically diverse as Russia, this rationale has repeatedly been advocated in the course of education reform. Several federal and regional policies have focused their attention on the regional dimension of the learning process: new courses on regional history, new programmes specific to local labour markets, and the teaching and learning of local languages. Weiler (1990:439) points out that varieties among “regions, communities, and language groups in terms of cultural and social frameworks of learning” are recognised and are “generally considered meaningful and valid”. However, the shift to the context and content of culturally specific learning is being currently challenged by the demands of modern labour markets, technology and communication, internationalisation and globalisation that require more generalised and transferable competencies and skills.

Last but not least, it is often argued by commentators on Russian education that the Russian federal government transferred power to lower levels in the HE sector simply because the former wished to rid itself of the funding responsibility and avoid the blame for serious policy problems that they failed to rectify (see, for example, Bain, 1999). However, given the political climate of Russia in the early 1990s, when every aspect of the communist regime was rejected, the federal government may have genuinely believed that reform of HE would only be achieved by the decentralising of power. In this respect, Lauglo (1995:8) asks: “To what extent are such measures authentic practical attempts to cope with a policy problem better, and to what extent are they a means of escaping blame for failure?”. The answer to this question will vary, depending on the particular contexts and interpretations of those involved in decentralisation at various levels.

The empirical part of this study reveals that the decentralisation policy in Russia does not and cannot by itself guarantee effectiveness and efficiency, better resource planning and allocation, more academic participation, higher commitment and initiative, and greater responsiveness to external and local environment. It only provides a window of opportunity, and only sets the scene. The results of such transfer are largely determined by the performance of the key actors at the federal, regional and institutional levels and the nature of state-university relationships.

2.3 State-University Relationships

2.3.1 Relationships between Government Control and University Autonomy

The exploration of established theories of the state-university relationship is pertinent for this study, because it will help me in the empirical part of the study, in the discussion of change in the nature of state-university relationships and the extent of university autonomy in post-1991 Russia. However, exploring the state-university relationship becomes especially complex in the Russian case, as both the federal and regional governments are seen in this study as embodiments of the state.

2.3.1.1 Typologies of State-University Relationships

The majority of HE studies tend to see the state as being monolithic and represented by a single government, national or sub-national, depending on the system under consideration; they use the terms ‘the state’ and ‘the government’ interchangeably (Salter and Tapper, 1994). Goedegebuure *et al.* (1994:9), on the other hand, emphasise that “the nature of the role of the government in authority matters depends, amongst other things, upon whether it is national or regional” and argue that the distinction between national and federal systems is important to take into account when analysing state-university relationships. The most important aspect of the distinction in federal states between federal and regional governments is that “regulations emanating from various levels [of government] may be issued in an uncoordinated and inconsistent fashion, resulting in a danger of excessive bureaucratisation for the institutions” (Goedegebuure *et al.*, 1994:10). However, to date there has been limited research on the relationship between federal and regional governments and their combined impact on HEIs (see, for example, Perellon and Leresche, 1999).

This distinction into federal and regional levels of government, the interactions between them and their effect on universities are central concerns of this study. For countries with a long history of federalism, such as Australia, Canada, Germany, or the USA, the federal authority level may not necessarily be a viable one, as the sub-national entities (Länder, provinces, or states) have an extensive constitutional responsibility for HE within their borders. In the case of the Russian HE system, I argue, the role of federal authorities cannot be underestimated, and it would be wrong to take the regional level as a starting point for analysis of HE decentralisation, because of the short tradition of, and unclear arrangements with, democratic federalism in this country. It is, however, important to explore whether the regional government has become a viable level, and to

analyse the extent to which it acquired any power with regard to regulating regional HEIs in the decentralisation process in the 1990s.

There are numerous typologies used by HE writers to describe the range of state-university relationships. For example, Neave and van Vught (1991) categorise the state as being either *facilitative* or *interventionist* in its relationship with the university, Henkel and Little (1999) describe the relationship as that of *an exchange with the sponsor* or as *sponsorship dependency*, Kogan and Marton (2000) describe the relationship as a continuum between *self-regulating* and *dependent* HE⁴. Van Vught (1989 and 1994) characterises the relationship as either *state control* or *state supervision*. In the state-control model the national/sub-national government employs strict rules and extensive control mechanisms in curricular matters, degree requirements, access conditions, and personnel policy. This type of state-university relationship is characterised by the overwhelming authority of the national/sub-national government⁵. The contrast is that of the state-supervisory or self-regulating model, in which the role of the national/sub-national government is minimal and power distribution is characterised by the strong power of the academic community and internal university management. In other words, whilst the former implies centralisation, the latter is associated with decentralisation (van Vught, 1994).

There is an argument that no pure form of regulation exists, and that all systems are a mix of the above two models (Kogan and Marton, 2000; Maassen and van Vught, 1988). This view is supported by van Haecht's (1996) study of the degree of decentralisation and centralisation in various countries. She categorised countries into two big groups: those with predominantly centralised education systems and those with predominantly decentralised systems⁶. Such a categorisation may appear to be an over-simplification

⁴ In addition, Becher and Kogan (1992), Gornitzka and Maassen (2000), Kogan and Marton (2000) suggest an alternative approach of looking at the state-university relationship, in which the state/government is seen as one of many stakeholders/interest groups, such as industry, business, and civil society, all having a claim to direct the development of HE.

⁵ Although, HE systems in continental Europe have traditionally been argued to be state-controlled (van Vught, 1989), the Soviet HE sector with its strictly centralised control can be considered to have been the most extreme form of the state control model as the university was seen as a governmental instrument for reaching political, economic and social goals and was left to make only 'technical' decisions (see Chapter 4; also see Clark, 1983).

⁶ Van Haecht (1996) further categorised predominantly centralised education systems into (a) highly centralised; (b) centralised with a tendency towards administrative devolution; and (c) centralised with a tendency towards decentralisation.

for not all countries are comparable, and within the same country some entities are not comparable (Bray, 1999; Bray and Thomas, 1995). Nevertheless, the fact that none of the countries considered in van Haecht's study has a 'purely' centralised or 'purely' decentralised system suggests that the state-control and state-supervisory models co-exist in most systems, but with a varying degree of dominance. This implies that, instead of choosing one particular trend, national/sub-national government policy-makers must seek the optimum mix by centralising some aspects of HE and decentralising others to lower levels. According to Newman (1987), the issue is about centralising and decentralising the right elements of HE.

Whilst the federal government in post-1991 Russia may choose the state-supervisory approach in regulating some HE matters and transfer authority to the regional government, the latter in turn, after being granted legitimate power in certain HE matters, may adopt the state-control approach vis-à-vis its respective HEIs. On the one hand, using theories of the state-university relationship as a point of departure, this study suggests that the exercise of HE control at the regional level is perceived by institutional actors as an embodiment of centralised control, since HEIs would still be controlled by the state, albeit by its sub-national level. On the other hand, it is assumed that even if the regional government decides to strictly control its respective HEIs, the transfer of formerly centralised authority from the federal to the regional government may be welcomed by institutional actors as a form of regional rather university autonomy from the centre, which would mean freedom from central control and closer links with the regional government. Thus meanings of decentralisation may vary according to the various perceptions of institutional actors⁷.

Theorists differentiate not only between the degrees of state regulation, but also between various elements of the HE system. In this respect, Becher and Kogan's (1980 and 1992) heuristic requires attention. Basing their analysis on the British system, these authors developed a model with four distinct levels: *the central level*, *the institution*, *basic units* and *the individual academic*. They further divide each level into two *modes*: *the normative* that is concerned with the monitoring and maintenance of values, and *the*

⁷ For this very reason, I provided all interviewees at the institutional level with the definition of decentralisation and university autonomy used in this study (see Appendix 3c).

operational, which refers to the business of carrying out practical tasks at each level. Both modes are conceived as having two aspects: *internal* and *external*. The internal aspect “embodies the features which stem directly from the nature and purpose of the enterprise of HE as a whole”, whereas the external aspect “denotes those which derive from outside sources” (Becher and Kogan, 1992:10). The internal and external aspects embody social, economic, political and professional elements, such as the wishes of individuals and institutions, and wider social, economic, cultural requirements.

Becher and Kogan (1992) further claim that often values and beliefs in the normative mode may dictate and direct what people actually do and how they carry out practical tasks in the operational mode, and that whilst modes and aspects can be theoretically divided, in reality they always overlap and cannot be firmly delineated, because of the complex relationships and interconnections between the levels in the system. Nevertheless, the distinction between two modes and aspects is useful for this study, in examining whether and how norms (reform policies) set at higher levels are translated into operations at lower levels (reform implementation) and in exploring the extent to which change at the institutional level has been externally imposed or internally generated. Furthermore, I will argue that actions in the operational mode may also have an impact on the configuration of normative values. Evidence will be given in this study suggesting that change, introduced directly by the federal/regional level without normative consultation with institutional actors, can alter set norms and beliefs in the normative mode at the level of the institution (see Chapter 7).

As for the levels, Becher and Kogan (1992) admit that their number will depend on the system under analysis. I identified three separate levels for this study: the federal, regional and university levels. This study does not conceptually divide levels within the university, as its main focus is the impact of federal and regional government policies on the institution and its culture as a whole, but nevertheless, recognises that various basic units exist within the university. Initially, Becher and Kogan (1980 and 1992) had some reservations about having university as a separate level, claiming that it was not more than a holding company for independent basic units and the academics in them, but they later accorded a stronger position to the institution, recognising it as a viable level. Clark (1998) also recognises the institution to be an important level, capable of creating its own institutional saga. Regardless of whether regulation over the university

is exercised at the federal or regional level or both, the nature of relationships between them inevitably affects the extent of university autonomy.

2.3.1.2 University Autonomy

University autonomy was traditionally defined as the collective freedom and power “to govern without outside control” (Neave and van Vught, 1994:7) and “to make decisions without the fear they will be overturned at a higher level” (Boone *et al.*, 1991:135). In the current HE context, however, this definition has been revisited to explicitly recognise the role to be played by the government, be it national or sub-national. There is now general agreement and acceptance that the government has a legitimate interest in influencing HE, and the question is not whether it should have authority over HE, but rather, how that authority should be exercised and to what extent. Thus, Kogan and Marton (2000:99) define university autonomy “as decentralised decision authority of institutional leaders in relation to state authorities”.

Theorists on HE analyse university autonomy in various ways. Berdahl (1999) and Berdahl and Millet (1991) distinguish between *substantive* autonomy, or the institutional power to determine its goals and programmes, and *procedural* autonomy, or the institutional power to determine the means by which its goals and programmes are pursued. Neave and van Vught (1991) make a similar distinction between *process control*, or the conditions, resources and means (curriculum balance and the duration of studies) which form the product, and *product control*, or control over the output (the type and level of qualifications of students). These authors argue that whilst governments in some countries have enhanced university autonomy through a withdrawal from process control, they have also increased control over the product through the creation of evaluative processes (see 2.3.2.3). Thus a reduction in process control does not necessarily mean a reduction in product control. On the contrary, these two forms of control are argued to have a hierarchical relationship with one another. In other words,

...greater autonomy [for HEI] in the area of process is conditional on its performance in product being deemed appropriate by government. Autonomy in exercising process control is directly related to fulfilling the norms stipulated in the domain of product control. The former is dependent on the latter and hierarchically subordinated to it. (Neave and van Vught, 1991: 252)

On this issue, Berdahl (1999) and Neave and van Vught (1991) conclude that the division of decision-making authority between the government and HEIs, i.e. the extent

of university autonomy, should be constantly negotiated in the light of the availability of budget resources and institutional performance.

As for the extent of university autonomy, some typologies tend to treat state regulation as a static, homogeneous category on the macro-level. However, recent studies suggest that governmental control over the institution may differ with regard to various HE areas. For example, the national/sub-national government may rigidly control the number of students admitted, whilst giving an institution substantial autonomy with regard to academic matters. For this reason, Braun and Merrien (1999) note that:

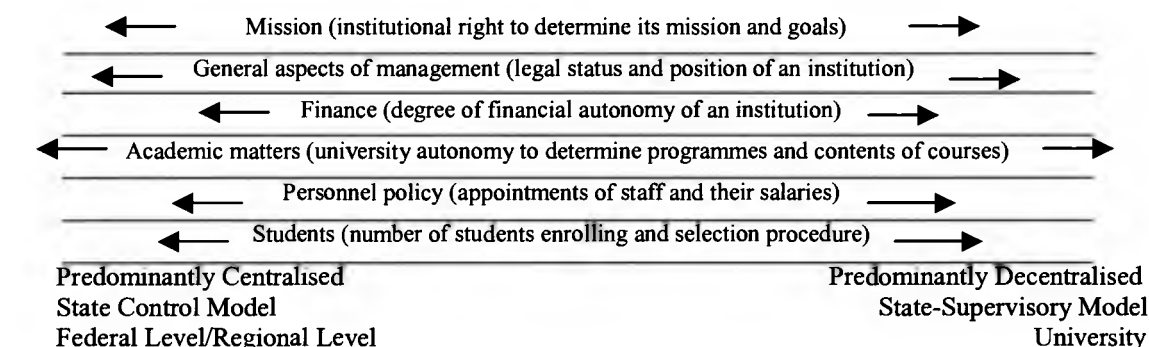
...If we want to understand the adaptive capacities of universities nowadays, broad classifications in terms of governance might be insufficient to grasp the national mix of the universities' governance in a country. We should take into account whether a general trend for decentralisation is applied to all of the different categories of university action or if we find a diversity in the application of the model. If we do not, we may under- or overestimate the institutional autonomy of universities vis-à-vis the state. (p.20)

In this respect, the approaches of Frazer (1997) and McDaniel (1996) merit attention. McDaniel (1996) differentiates between nineteen constituent aspects, grouped into five broad areas of governance, and claims that most HE systems have variations in government influence depending on the particular area. Frazer's (1997:350) approach is similar to that of McDaniel's; he argues that "autonomy should not be used alone but should always be qualified by reference to some attribute of the institution". He distinguishes seven areas, and stresses that the extent of governmental control and university autonomy for each of the seven areas would vary at any one time. Although the seven areas identified by Frazer are covered by McDaniel's approach, a distinctive component introduced by the former writer is that of institutional mission. Their approaches to the extent of university autonomy can be combined, as shown in Figure 2.1 as having six different strands, each representing one HE area.

Figure 2.1 also brings together van Haecht's (1996) and van Vught's (1989 and 1994) typologies, and shows that it is likely that at any given time a system may be in the process of moving towards more decentralisation in relation to one area and remaining static or moving in the opposite direction in another. The starting point on this continuum for each system is different. Some may start from a predominantly centralised or state-control position, as in Russia, and others from a predominantly

decentralised or state-supervisory position, as in Britain. Predominantly decentralised systems would have a substantial degree of university autonomy over most areas, whilst predominantly centralised systems would be to a significant extent dependent on the national/sub-national government over most areas. At the same time, devolution of power along one strand may require a need to regulate more stringently along another strand.

Figure 2.1 HE Areas Across the Continuum of Centralisation/Decentralisation



Note: proposed by the author.

This study differentiates between various HE areas when analysing decentralisation and its impact on university autonomy. The three areas to be examined are governance and management, finance, and academic matters. In addition, HE goals are also analysed. With reference to the discussion above, it can be argued that in the Russian case, federal and regional governments may regulate various HE areas by intervening in either substantive or procedural autonomy. This argument is empirically explored in Chapters 5 to 8. For example, the federal government may regulate curricular matters, whilst the regional government may regulate personnel matters, or indeed they both may regulate the same areas simultaneously and in doing so use various instruments, which would directly affect the extent of university autonomy.

2.3.2 Government Instruments of HE Regulation

Kogan (1998) argues that state-university relationships and the extent of university autonomy can be regulated with the use of instruments of administrative and legal controls, financial controls, evaluative processes, and market mechanisms⁸. These

⁸ There is a number of similar categorisations of government instruments. Van Vught (1989) brings together the following theoretical categorisations: 'coercive, utilitarian, and normative regulation' (Etzioni, 1968), 'regulation by directive *versus* regulation by incentive' (Mitnick, 1980), and 'instruments of information, of treasure, of authority, and of action' (Hood, 1983). Bleiklie (2002) distinguishes between 'authority tools', 'incentive tools', 'capacity tools', 'symbolic tools' and 'learning tools'.

instruments are in constant interplay, and in modern systems each cannot operate alone; thus they are not mutually exclusive, but to determine in what circumstances what instruments and their combinations prove superior, they should be analysed in the light of the complex political, economic and social contexts of an individual country. The review of government instruments of regulation is important for this study, in order to examine whether and how the instruments used by the Russian government have changed, what instruments the regional government in Sakha has deployed in the process of decentralisation, and in what ways these instruments have affected institutional behaviours.

2.3.2.1 Administrative and Legal Controls

The use of instruments of administrative and legal controls is intended to demand, permit, constrain, or restrict certain institutional behaviour, and although such use ranges from mildly restrictive, or positive, to completely restraining, or negative, it implies a compulsory restriction by a government of institutional behaviour (Neave and van Vught, 1994; van Vught, 1989). The most restraining use of instruments of administrative and legal controls characterises the state-university relationship as state control, as through it the government has detailed control over the development of programmes, conditions of appointment and promotion, budgeting and other key institutional matters. The use of these instruments has largely been retained in the countries of Eastern and Central Europe (Kogan, 1998), where governments continue to seek administrative neatness and formal uniformity in both the process and the product of the HE sectors irrespective of the institutional location.

In some countries of Western Europe, on the other hand, the limitations of the highly restrictive use of administrative and legal controls became strongly apparent when systems started to expand significantly and became more diverse and complex. The main problem with the highly restrictive use of these instruments is that it makes system change difficult, for the change has to be equally and systematically spread across the entire system (Neave, 1996). It also greatly reduces institutional capacity to adapt and restricts new initiatives, because HEIs have to “look to the center to recognise and eventually to endorse demands emanating from periphery” (Neave and van Vught, 1994:273). Such limitations are one of the reasons why many governments have engaged in the deregulation of their respective HE systems, and moved from state control to state supervision with the use of mildly restrictive instruments of

administrative and legal controls or other alternative instruments. Henkel and Little (1999), for example, argue that the restrictive use of administrative and legal controls has been overshadowed by financial controls or the strengthening 'power of the purse'.

Nevertheless, the importance of the restrictive use of administrative and legal controls should not be underestimated, since in some systems the initial shift to the use of less restrictive and restraining instruments is being gradually superseded by more centralist policies with the use of this very instrument (for example, Sweden, see Bleiklie, 2002). This study also shows that in Russia the new instruments discussed below have not replaced administrative and legal controls but are additions to them. Furthermore, often the ways in which the alternative instruments have been used by the Russian government bear a strong resemblance to the traditional administrative and legal controls (see Chapters 5 and 8).

2.3.2.2 Financial controls

Financial controls are one of the most powerful instruments for modifying the state-university relationship and influencing institutional behaviours. There are two methods by which governments can directly subsidise HEIs. The first is a restrictive bureaucratic procedure of hypothecated line-by-line budgets with detailed administrative regulation, which is normally found in the systems with the state control model. This form of funding is usually linked to staff numbers, rarely based on student numbers, and not tied to institutional performance. Several studies have shown that this form has been dominant in some countries of Africa and South America, and in most countries of continental Europe (see Neave and van Vught, 1994; Williams, 1999) and can certainly be found in Russia (see Chapter 5). The main limitations of this form of funding are that it does not encourage institutional managers to respond to the external environment, and that it is cumbersome when change is needed as it gives little if any scope for shifting between different expenditure heads (Williams, 1992 and 1999).

By contrast, block grants or lump sum funding provide a greater scope for HEIs to implement their own strategic planning and be sensitive to demands emanating from the external environment, and give freedom of decision-making (Williams, 1999). The scope of freedom, however, depends to a large extent on what proportion of the institutional budget is covered by lump sum funding (Neave and van Vught, 1994). Williams (1999) warns that one of the problems with this form of funding is that since

decisions on the internal allocation of block grants are assumed to be made collegially it may lead to misapplication of funds by self-interested institutional actors. This clearly was one of the concerns behind the reluctance of the Russian federal Ministry of Finance to implement block grants or lump sum funding for HEIs in post-1991 Russia (see Chapter 5).

Whilst the two methods of government funding to HEIs reflect the idea of HE as a public service, the HE expansion and massification have proved traditional methods of funding to be inappropriate and led governments in many countries to “interpret their relationships with universities as that of customer and contractors” (Williams, 1999:159) and introduce market mechanisms in the funding of academic programmes and research (see 2.3.2.4). Furthermore, governments more and more give the legal right to HEIs to generate their own income and use it according to their internally defined priorities and requirements (Middleton, 2000; Williams, 1999). Last but not least, government funding in many countries is also increasingly being determined by assessment of institutional performance and the outcome of evaluative processes.

2.3.2.3 Evaluative Processes

The assessment of institutional performance originally came to existence in Western Europe with the rise of the Evaluative State, referred to as the Audit Society⁹. In a rapidly expanding HE sector and a competitive market, governments in many countries have justified the use of this instrument politically in relation to value for money, marketisation, consumer empowerment, enhancing productivity, maintaining and improving academic standards (Morley, 2002). The use of this instrument makes universities more accountable to the state and to other actors with direct interest in the work of HE. At the same time, this instrument cannot avoid being interpreted as evidence of a lack of trust between governments and universities, as governments impose new mechanisms to monitor how universities run their business (Bargh *et al.*, 1996; Henkel, 2000).

⁹ Universities were incidental to the Evaluative State/Audit Society, as it originally rose with the attempts to modernise the public sectors of western industrialised societies, known as New Public Management, aimed at decentralisation and the substitution of more direct means of control by greater autonomy (Power, 1997).

Although Neave (1998) and Neave and van Vught (1994) argue that the point of location of a unit responsible for assessing institutional performance is important, as where the unit is located and to whom it is answerable determines its credibility, Harman's (1998) study reveals that at the system level the formal responsibility for evaluative processes across the countries is usually placed in the hands of a unit set up by the government. His study further shows that the range of methodologies¹⁰ used at the system level is limited, and that whilst there are many similarities between different countries, most adopt evaluative approaches taking into account their own needs and policy objectives. For example, as Tomusk (1998 and 2000) concludes, the Russian federal government introduced evaluative processes in 1996 as a purely bureaucratic measure in order to secure centralised control, ensure the uniformity of academic provision, and slow down the expansion of the private HE sector.

In this regard, the HE theorists stress that evaluative processes can indeed be perceived by institutional actors as regulatory devices, which foster resentments and anxiety and lead to inefficiency, since measuring the quality of academic output is in itself ambiguous and open to bias; but these processes can also lead to organisational reform within HEIs by providing strong managerial imperatives and encouraging greater communication among academics on teaching and curriculum matters and a stronger link between research activity and institutional capacity (Dill, 1998; Morley, 2002). Thus evaluative processes are influencing not only the state-university relationship but also institutional cultures and academic identities. The empirical part of the present study examines what effects, positive and/or negative, the evaluative processes introduced by the Russian government have had on the institutional culture of the case-study university.

As for the impact of evaluative processes on the centralisation-decentralisation continuum (see Figure 2.1), Kogan and Hanney (2000:32) conclude that evaluative processes led the hitherto decentralised British HE system to centralisation¹¹ and

¹⁰ Evaluative methodologies across different HE systems include institutional self-evaluation, peer review involving external members, the use of statistical information and performance indicators, meetings with and surveys of students, graduates and employers, development of tests to assess students' performance, and observation of teaching sessions (Harman, 1998; Morley, 2002)

¹¹ It should be noted that centralisation in the British HE system means something completely different from the form of centralisation dominant in the former Soviet Union (Kogan, 1999).

stronger state regulation, as under the new arrangements “academic judgements [were] to be incorporated into a rigorously administered public evaluative regime”. This was, they contend, because the starting point for the British system was rather different from that of other systems, as it enjoyed a great degree of autonomy and was largely free from external bureaucratic control. As for the impact of this instrument on predominantly centralised systems, Bleiklie (2002) and Kogan (1999) argue that the shift from process to product control through the evaluative processes in countries of continental Europe does not necessarily reduce the formal power of the state or lead to greater university autonomy. Instead, it can give governments more power to steer a wider array of institutional affairs, albeit in a more decentralised manner than before. In the Russian case, as this study will show, the federal government continues to control both process and product through *priori* as well as *posteriori* evaluation (see Chapters 5 to 8). Finally, not only do governments in many countries increasingly tie the allocation of state monies to the outcomes of evaluative processes, but they also emphasise the use of market mechanisms as an instrument of state regulation.

2.3.2.4 Market Mechanisms

Multiple and interrelated markets exist in HE¹². Shattock (2003) distinguishes between two types of HE markets: the state-managed market, or what he terms the *artificial* market, and the private sector market, or the *non-directed commercial*¹³ market. As this study largely concerns government regulation, the state-managed market, i.e. various types of market mechanisms used by governments to steer HE, is considered.

The rationale behind the market as an instrument is embedded in a desire for economic efficiency or value for money and the belief that facilitating quasi-markets will provide HEIs with incentives to enhance academic productivity, improve the quality of teaching and research, and stimulate innovations in academic programmes and research, and in services of benefit to the larger society (Bargh *et al.*, 1996; Dill, 1997; Kogan and Hanney, 2000; Williams, 1996). Governments develop explicit policies to create and

¹² Clark (1979) distinguishes three types of the real market in HE: the consumer market, the labour market and the institutional market. Examples of the consumer market in HE are tuition fees and choice of HEIs by students. Examples of the labour market are the employment of academic and administrative staff. Examples of the institutional market are relations among HEIs that are set largely by the nature of the consumer and labour markets and the positions which institutions take up from their interactions with those markets. In this market, the prestige of an institution becomes the main commodity of exchange that guides not only students but also institutions.

¹³ Examples of the non-directed commercial market are tuition fees, competition for research funding from industry and commerce, the exploitation of research, short courses for industry and other bodies, the exploitation of university facilities for commercial purposes, the sale of goods and services, and fund-raising (Shattock, 2003).

facilitate quasi-markets in the allocation of funds and/or students. In turn, the market values and practices encouraged by governments result in the growth of competitiveness within and among HEIs.

As for the state-managed market in research, governments increasingly channel research funding through competition for grants from research councils or other government agencies (Berdahl, 1999; Dill, 1998; Shattock, 2003). Under this arrangement, research grants are not centrally coordinated, but decentralised among a number of research councils and agencies with differentiated public missions. Governments facilitate rigorous competition among individuals for peer-reviewed grants and in such cases the accumulation of research funds does not become a product of the overall measurement of institutional performance¹⁴. In post-1991 Russia the former centralised funding of research has been superseded by competition for research grants (see Chapter 6). Such an arrangement, Dill (1998) argues, is valid and reliable.

As for academic programmes, the reallocation of government funding for teaching from institutions to students also reflects a desire to stimulate market-like behaviour in HE (Williams, 1996). Using this new form of funding, instead of subsidising inputs governments effectively shift to buying the outputs by channelling money via the students in the form of a government grant, government-subsidised loan, income-contingent loan, or graduate tax¹⁵. Such a funding system encourages HEIs to compete for students by improving the quality of academic programmes. It is argued that in Russia a similar market mechanism, which is currently being introduced as an experimental scheme, is aimed not only to facilitate competition and enhance quality, but also to further limit government expenditure on HE (Shamaev, 2003; see Chapter 7).

¹⁴ An example of the measurement of institutional performance, however, can be found in Britain, where the evaluative process, the Research Assessment Exercise, directly affects the amount of institutional research funding. Because this arrangement has “to do with recruiting and retaining research active staff in competition with other universities”, it can be seen as promoting competition in the labour and institutional markets, encouraged by the evaluative processes, introduced by governments, rather than as a market mechanism *per se* (Shattock, 2003:47).

¹⁵ It is in effect a student voucher, which permits students to purchase academic programmes at reduced prices and is believed to encourage them to be more careful in choosing academic programmes. In a number of countries, such as Britain, formula funding for undergraduate students makes competition among HEIs fierce, because “a strong application field not only ensures that an institution meets its fee income target but also protects a university from the possibility of a ‘clawback’ of funds, and provides a platform for bidding to a funding council for additional ‘funded’ student places” (Shattock, 2003:47).

The new environmental forces affecting HEIs, which partly result from the instruments of government regulation, namely changing patterns of finance, pressures for public accountability, and increased competition, have caused a renewed interest in questions of internal decision-making within the university. Furthermore, the ways in which the instruments are used and institutional responses to external changes result in a range of organisational forms which can be “structured in terms of organisational and power structures” (Kogan, 1999:263). They are considered in the next section.

2.4 The University

2.4.1 Forms of University Governance and Management

Whilst the concepts of governance and management are different, in practice the distinction is not clear cut and the two inevitably overlap (Bargh *et al.*, 1996). This may be one of the reasons why some HE theorists do not draw any distinction between the two concepts. Nevertheless, the concept of governance is argued to be broader than that of management and refers to the ways in which HE systems and institutions are organised, how they relate to the government, how their goals are set, and how authority is distributed and exercised (Becher and Kogan, 1992; Harman, 1992). Examples of governance are the government’s normative setting of directions and general policies to be pursued operationally at the institutional level, and its monitoring of the system’s progress. By contrast, management is argued to be about institutional behaviour in the operational mode, and refers to the effective implementation of institutional goals set within broader government policies through systematic planning and the effective use of resources. In other words, as Tricker (1984:7) claims “if management is about running the business, governance is about seeing that it is run properly”.

Bargh *et al.* (1996) argue that the nature of the state-university relationships and government instruments for HE regulation discussed above shapes patterns of university governance and management. There have been numerous theoretical approaches, which attempt to locate sources of authority and decision-making inside the university, and although the forms of university governance and management discussed here are in no way exhaustive, the most frequently mentioned ones are bureaucratic, collegial, political

and entrepreneurial perspectives¹⁶. These long-established forms bring out different aspects of the university and can be conceptually delineated. There is no intention to discuss each form in detail, but to summarise the traditional attributes of each in this section, and revisit them in the light of recent HE changes in 2.4.2.

Bureaucracy in HE was traditionally identified by formal hierarchy and authority relations, written governing rules and regulations, prescribed functions, position-based leadership and decision-making at the top institutional level (Kogan and Marton, 2000; Miller, 1995). Bureaucracy can be argued to work well in stable and predominantly centralised state-controlled HE systems, but it makes a university resistant to change. Collegiality, on the other hand, was traditionally associated with the state-supervisory model and assumed the authority of professional expertise, academic autonomy and self-regulation, consensual decision-making, ‘first among equals’- based leadership, and weak institutional authority (Bargh *et al.*, 1996; Middlehurst, 1993). Organisational change, in this form, was assumed to be organically introduced after a process of reasoned discussion among institutional actors grouped in professional networks (Miller, 1995). Baldrige (1971) suggested looking at university decision-making from the political perspective. The emphasis from this perspective was on the role of power, the presence of multiple interest groups and coalitions, and university leaders taking the role of statesmen in negotiating and accommodating competing and often contradictory views and values (Baldrige *et al.*, 1978; Conrad, 1978; Handy, 1993).

Some authors suggest looking at how these forms operate in universities in sequence, so that the political form, emphasising diverse interests, power and negotiation, is followed by a collegial stage where policies are legitimated, and then by a bureaucratic stage where policies are implemented (Lockwood and Davies, 1985; Miller, 1995).

¹⁶ Some theorists also refer to a “garbage can model”, based on “organised anarchy” (Cohen and March, 1974; Cohen *et al.*, 1972). This model is not included here because it is somewhat dated, used to describe institutional governance in the 1960s and 1970s (Miller, 1995) and a “romantic view of academic government” (Kogan, 1999:265) that did not shed a light on how decisions in HEIs were reached. It can be argued that with the reduction in public resources and increased managerial control this model gave way to the political form of governance. Others refer to a “corporate enterprise” model (Henkel, 1997; McNay, 1995), but its key elements (institutional integration, effective decision making, strategic planning, accountability, strong institutional management) have a strong resemblance to the elements of the “entrepreneurial university” model (Clark, 1998), discussed in this chapter. For other typologies, see Bargh *et al.* (1996), Braun and Merrien (1999), Henkel (2000) and Sporn (1999).

Indeed, it might be true that universities may make certain decisions according to this sequence, but it may not apply in all situations. The apparent differences and tensions between these forms are made implicit in the entrepreneurial perspective. Its focus is on institutional change, adaptation, flexibility, and the constant interaction of a university with its external environment. Clark (1998) and Peterson (1995) have a similar approach as to how a university can transform itself by means of entrepreneurial action; they identify several broad features which determine the success of an innovative and adaptive university, such as a strengthened steering core, redirected external relationships, a diversified funding base, reorganised academic processes or a stimulated academic heartland, and the renewal of university culture.

The various forms of governance and management can be found to co-exist in most institutional settings, but with different balances among them. Bargh *et al.* (1996:34) argue that the balances among the forms largely depend on institutional history and culture, and emphasise that “it is necessary to look for elements of all perspectives ... if we are to construct a comprehensive view of governance within specific organizational settings”. Therefore Table 2.1 summarises the key elements of the forms of university governance and management.

Table 2.1 Summary of Key Elements of University Governance and Management

Element	Bureaucracy	Collegiality	Political Perspective	Entrepreneurial Perspective
Dominant value	Rationality (Weber, 1947)	Academic autonomy, Liberty	Interest accommodation	Survival and expansion
Key word	Regulation	Consensus	Conflict and power	External environment (Market)
Role of central authorities	Regulatory	Permissive	Facilitative	Supportive
Organisation culture (Handy, 1993)	Role	Person	Power	Task
Management style	Formal	Consensual	Negotiation	Incentive
Decision arenas	Hierarchy	Networks	Interest groups/ Coalitions	Project teams
Environmental ‘fit’	Stability	Evolution	Crisis	Adaptability
Change	Rigidity to change	Organic innovation	Unpredictability	Tactical flexibility
Referents	Regulatory bodies and rules	“Invisible college”	Policy makers	Clients and sponsors
Perception of leaders	Office	“First among equals”	Academic statesman	Entrepreneur
Basis for evaluation	Audit of procedures	Peer assessment	Power	Satisfaction of consumer demands
Executive authority	The Committee	Community of scholars	Coalitions	The chief executive

Note: developed by the author. The idea for the summary table is adapted from McNay, 1995.

Table 2.1 shows that the different forms and their elements address a separate set of problems, and that, if taken separately, the forms do not provide a comprehensive picture of the increasing complexity of a university as an organisation in terms of administrative structures, authority systems, tasks and functions performed, and internal processes, but nevertheless shed a light on its nature and dynamics (Becher and Kogan, 1992; McNay, 1995). Because of this increasing complexity, the forms more and more overlap with one another, and therefore the traditional interpretation, that only one form is in operation at any given time, has been challenged as being insufficient and needs revisiting.

2.4.2 Forms Revisited

The old interpretations of bureaucracy and collegiality discussed above tended to perceive universities as static organisations, and assumed that goals in HE could be easily identified and agreed, and once these were agreed academics would subscribe and identify with them. However, modern universities have very ambiguous and unclear goals (Barnett, 1990), which often produce conflict and competition rather than agreement. In addition, the lack of well-defined boundaries in HE, the contested nature of academic processes, the development of new knowledge and external demands (Clark, 1983) make it impossible for a university to function as a 'pure' bureaucracy or 'pure' collegiality. Therefore Kogan (1999) calls the traditional depiction of universities as bureaucracies and collegialities an oversimplification, which does not recognise their increased internal complexity and incoherence.

In the modern context, universities in various countries have strengthened their non-academic expertise in order to better respond to external demands. These in turn have led to internal changes, such as bureaucratic expansion and the emergence of managerialism. Such changes have led scholars to redefine traditional views on collegiality and bureaucracy. Middlehurst (1993), for example, suggests re-interpreting collegiality in a modern university as the sharing of information, ideas and tasks. However, this interpretation is criticised by Kogan (1999) as being too simple, since it neglects the issue of authority. Clark (2001), Henkel (2000) and Kogan and Hanney (2000), on the other hand, discern the reinvention of collegiality in a modern university in the joint participation of academics and managers/administrators in decision-

making¹⁷, i.e. as a hybrid of collegiality and bureaucracy. In this interpretation, collegiality becomes bureaucratized and is no longer perceived to be free of bureaucracy; within institutional decision-making, most decisions made by collegia have to be legitimated and translated into systems and procedures by managers/administrators (Kogan, 1999).

This re-interpretation is reminiscent of the political perspective, advocated by Baldrige (1971) in the 1970s, as it assumes the existence of several stages of internal decision-making: collegiality (interest articulation), a hybrid of collegiality and bureaucracy (legislative stage), bureaucracy (policy formation). However, in some HEIs there can still be found examples of critical decisions being made in hierarchical and even authoritarian ways; in these cases, differences and tensions in collegia can be subsumed by leadership intervention to achieve institutional control and coordination through subordination. Indeed, as Miller (1995) argues,

...some senior managers assume that it is sufficient for them to search for solutions and that, once presented, the rest of the academic staff will see the reasonableness, indeed inevitability, of the action proposed and will concur with them. (p. 98)

A few examples of this assumption are found in the case-study university, where the university senior managers make decisions without prior consultation with the academic staff and try to ensure that they are translated into practices at lower levels (see Chapters 7 and 8).

Some recent works advocate looking at collegiality against the backdrop of the entrepreneurial perspective, brought about by external changes in the way public services are organised, financed, managed and delivered (Clark, 2001). The entrepreneurial perspective clearly integrates universities with the wider public policy reforms that cannot be ignored or underestimated even by the institutions which prefer the more traditional forms of governance and management. In this interpretation,

¹⁷ In the 1980s and 1990s, opponents of the shift of balance between academic and administrative powers and tasks argued that academic organisations had intrinsic values and qualities incompatible with managerial values and systems. They further argued that the shift to the bureaucratic form of governance and management would inevitably distort and harm academic ventures and impose greater uniformity and coherence. Supporters of the shift in turn argued that the introduction and enhancement of non-academic administration would make institutional decision-making more effective. Hence, there was a tension between bureaucracy asking for accountability, and collegiality preoccupied with the protection of autonomy, and theorists seemed to view this tension as a 'zero-sum game' (Bargh *et al.*, 1996).

collegiality can no longer be seen as a defensive ideology against change, but in its new form should be geared towards it. Furthermore, the traditional depiction of the entrepreneurial university itself as being responsive, innovative and adaptive has been recently redefined as the ability of university to respond to change and adapt to the external environment in business-like behaviour, with either the profit or the loss that such activity entails (Davies, 2001; Jones, 2003). Thus, stronger commercial and financial awareness becomes one of the important characteristics of the entrepreneurial university, as opposed to a merely responsive and adaptive university.

The entrepreneurial university poses a danger to the hybrid of collegiality and bureaucracy, because it can produce fragmentation and breakaway. Institutional coherence may dissolve as basic units offer their own programmes, and go their own way, and individuals within the basic units increasingly respond to market opportunities or become sellers of services and lose attachment to the institution (Clark, 2001; McNay, 1999). In this respect, Williams (2003) asks what the future holds for the entrepreneurial university, and whether it will be short-lived or durable. Clark (2001) observes that the entrepreneurial university will become more prominent in the future, because

... [it] maintains continuity with the past and present... provides new foundations for the rebuilding of internal collegiality and external autonomy. It finds ways to integrate its many disparate parts around the assertion of a distinctive character. (Clark, 2001:23)

These re-interpretations of university governance and management suggest that the forms are no longer mutually exclusive. In other words, the elements of collegial and bureaucratic decision-making manifesting the features of the political form may often co-exist with one another and yet be perfectly accommodated within the frames of the entrepreneurial university.

The review of the existing literature has helped develop a conceptual framework for the empirical part of the study and pose research questions. The conceptual framework and research questions illuminate the key variables highlighted in this chapter and their relationships, and integrate various attributes of decentralisation as well as centralisation.

2.5 Empirical Questions and Conceptual Framework

The following research questions relating to the empirical part of the study have arisen from the above theoretical discussion:

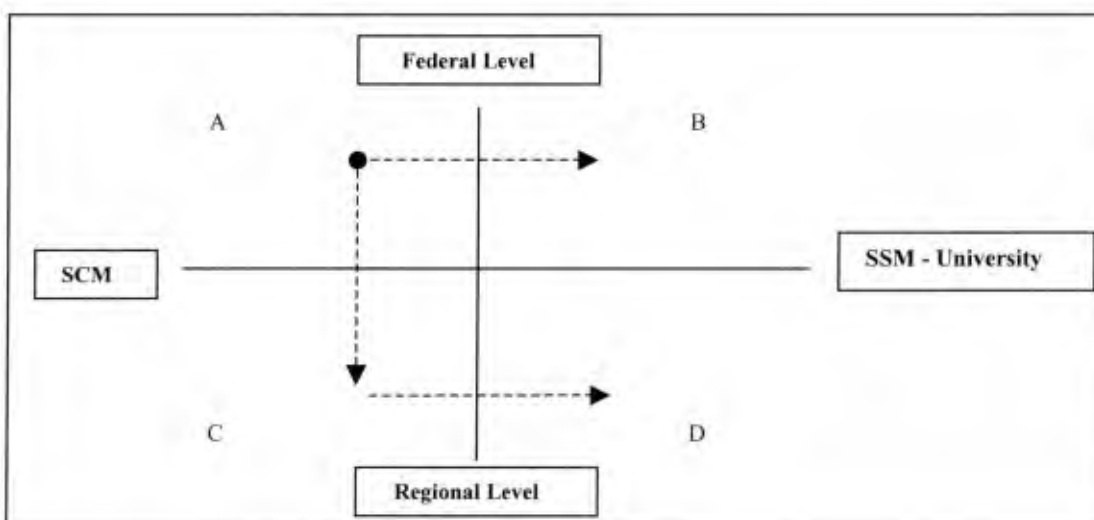
- 1) What were the external contexts and internal aspects that drove the policy of decentralisation in Russian HE after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991? What were the rationales behind this policy?
- 2) How was the decentralisation policy formulated and implemented at the federation-wide level?
- 3) What power has the regional government in Sakha acquired in the framework of decentralisation, and how has it exercised its power in regulating regional HEIs?
- 4) How have various instruments of regulation used by federal and regional governments since 1991 affected the extent of autonomy and decision-making at Yakutsk State University (YSU)?
- 5) What changes have occurred in governance, management and finance within the case-study university and has decentralisation introduced real choice in learning and flexibility in academic matters?
- 6) Has the relationship between the federal and Sakha governments and YSU changed since 1991, and if so, why?
- 7) Has there been a shift from the state-control model towards the state-supervisory model in HE areas under consideration?

The findings of the study should help locate the sources of control and decision-making at the case-study university over the period from 1991 to 2003 within the conceptual framework developed in Figure 2.2 below. The framework consists of two continua. The vertical continuum represents decentralisation from the federal to the regional level. The need for analysing both levels of government has been discussed in 2.3.1.1. Although, as noted above, political decentralisation from the federal to the regional level may be welcomed by institutional actors as a form of regional autonomy, this study sees such a political transfer as a continuation of centralised control, albeit exercised at the sub-national level. The horizontal continuum represents the shift from the state-control model (SCM) of federal and regional government regulation to the state-supervisory model (SSM) or university self-regulation. The two continua form four quadrants, each representing a different balance of power and source of control.

The starting point for Russian HEIs is Quadrant A, characterised by the dominance of the centralised federal control in regulating most institutional matters (Clark, 1983; see Chapter 4). Within the policy of decentralisation, the federal government, using various instruments of regulation reviewed in 2.3, is assumed to transfer authority to universities, thus shifting it toward Quadrant B, characterised by university self-regulation and autonomy in various institutional matters. The federal level is also assumed to decentralise its decision-making authority to the regional level, and, depending on the area over which the regional government receives legitimate power to regulate HE, it also uses various government instruments to modify its relationship with universities, and may adopt either the state-control model, as in Quadrant C, or transfer some of its decision-making power to universities, as in Quadrant D.

The framework is not linear, and interactions between the three levels and therefore shifts in the balance of power are assumed to take place constantly. Thus, at any given time and depending on the particular HE area, a university may find itself in more than one quadrant, each having a different source of control and giving the university a different extent of decision-making, which can be represented as a mix of forms of internal governance and management discussed in 2.4.

Figure 2.2 Conceptual Framework for the Empirical Study



Notes: I) drawn by the author. II) — denotes a starting point for control over a university.

Although the framework does not include contexts as a separate variable, it should be remembered that the success of decentralisation depends more on various factors than on the fact of decentralisation itself. The contextual factors encompass the historical

context, the political and economic climate of the country and the university culture. Other important factors include political rationales and motives for change, the commitment of governmental actors to HE policy, resource capabilities, and universities' readiness to respond and adapt to change.

The chapters that follow make an attempt to answer the empirical questions and explore the main themes discussed in this chapter, through the lens of a non-positivist interpretive research paradigm¹⁸.

¹⁸ The research paradigm, as defined by Guba and Lincoln (1994:105), is “the basic belief system or worldview that guides the investigator, not only in choices of method but in ontologically and epistemologically fundamental ways”.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The present chapter starts with a discussion in Section 3.2 of ontological and epistemological dimensions in social science research; these have influenced my choice of the non-positivist interpretive research paradigm through the lens of which the decentralisation policy in Russian HE is examined. The chosen paradigm has led to the use of two research approaches, discussed in Section 3.3: historical research and case study. Although the entire work could be seen as case study approach only, in this section I justify the theoretical division between these two approaches, but admit that in the process of investigation this division has to some extent become blurred. The historical research and case study approaches have guided the methods of data collection, presented in Section 3.4. The main methods are the scrutiny of documents, interviews and observation, and although the study is non-positivist interpretive and uses qualitative techniques, it does not exclude the use of quantitative (statistical) data. Section 3.5 considers the problems encountered during the data collection, and discusses techniques used for ensuring validity and ethical issues. Finally, Section 3.6 summarises the methodological issues considered in this chapter.

3.2 Research Paradigm

Cohen *et al.* (2000:3) emphasise that the choice of methods for research should not be regarded as “a simply technical exercise”, but rather be based on *ontological* and *epistemological* assumptions (also see Burrell and Morgan, 1979, Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995). The epistemological assumptions are concerned with the relationships between the researcher and the researched object and with the nature, norms, acquisition and transmission of knowledge; they stem directly from the ontological assumptions (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995). These are concerned with the nature of reality and the essence of the social phenomena being examined (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Different answers to ontological and epistemological questions directly affect the construction of the methodological framework of research, and have given rise to and underpinned two distinct paradigms in social science research: the *normative*, which stems from positivism and implies objectivity, and the *interpretive*,

which stems from anti-positivism and implies subjectivity (Cohen *et al.*, 1994 and 2000; Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Lincoln and Guba, 2000).

On the ontological level, normative researchers tend to assume the existence of an unambiguous apprehendable reality that can be directly addressed, examined and understood. On the epistemological level, they believe that the researcher and the researched are independent entities and, therefore, the researcher is capable of studying the researched phenomenon or object without influencing or being influenced by it, i.e. to be entirely value-free. Such researchers look for underlying regularities in the relationships of individuals to each other and their environment, mainly by imposing external forms and structures, as in experimental research, in order to test formulated theories or hypotheses (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). In other words, they try to minimise contextual influences by standardising the procedures of data collection, thus enhancing reliability.

By contrast, interpretive researchers recognise that everything has its unique context, and tend to seek contextual interpretations of the social world. On the ontological level, they assume that social reality can be apprehended only in a relative form, i.e. in multiple, intangible mental constructions that depend for their form and content on the individuals' experiences and can be altered. On the level of epistemology, proponents of the interpretive paradigm believe that the researcher and the researched phenomenon or object are interconnected, and that the values and beliefs of the researcher inevitably affect the inquiry (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). The researcher, therefore, is perceived as part of the research process.

Thus whilst the normative paradigm is concerned with development of a universal theory explaining social and human behaviour, the interpretive paradigm recognises a great variety of contexts and the complexity of the social world and human behaviour. Due to these differences, the two paradigms have traditionally opposed and competed with one another, as the former became increasingly associated with quantitative methods, whereas the latter became increasingly identified with qualitative methods¹⁹.

¹⁹ Guba and Lincoln (1994) argue that, although the terms 'quantitative' and 'qualitative' are quite commonly used in reference to paradigms, their usage should be reserved for the description of types of

Researchers using quantitative methods have questioned the objectivity and neutrality of the qualitative methodology, and criticised the low level of internal validity and generalisability of findings deriving from it. Researchers using qualitative methods, on the other hand, have criticised the simplistic and superficial nature of the quantitative methodology.

However, Hammersley (1992) and Lincoln and Guba (2000) have challenged the traditional divide between the methodologies as two distinct and opposed approaches to the study of social world, and argued that in post-modern social research they are beginning to complement and inform one another. Although these theorists argue that the two methodologies do not belong within separate research paradigms (also see Scott, 1995), they do not deny that differences exist. The normative paradigm is distinguished from the interpretive paradigm by its ontological and epistemological dimensions, i.e. fundamental differences in addressing the important questions regarding the nature and essence of social reality and knowledge, and not by the type of evidence used. These paradigms, therefore, are ‘interbreeding’ only on the level of methods employed rather than philosophical assumptions (Lincoln and Guba, 2000). In other words, the two sets of methodologies do not belong within separate research paradigms, and their mix can successfully be accommodated within the same inquiry.

Although the divide between the two research methodologies is being deconstructed, non-positivist interpretive researchers continue to rely strongly on qualitative methods (Cohen *et al.*, 2000). This, Lincoln and Guba (1985:199) suggest, is not because interpretive researchers are anti-quantitative or the methods within each paradigm are exclusive of one another, but rather because “qualitative methods come more easily to hand when the instrument is a human being”, since these are similar to normal human activities, such as looking, listening, speaking and reading. Therefore interpretive researchers tend toward such methods as interviews, observation and document analysis. At the end of the day, the choice of methods strongly depends on the researcher’s beliefs regarding knowledge and its transmission, and the nature of

methods only. This study adopts this usage of the term ‘qualitative’, as the research paradigm adopted for this study combines both qualitative and quantitative data, rather than saying that qualitative paradigm adopted includes quantitative data.

research. As Bryman (1988) argues, it also has a great deal to do with their suitability for answering particular research questions.

As noted, this study adopts a non-positivist interpretive paradigm. This is so for four reasons. First, explicit hypotheses regarding the decentralisation policy are not yet well defined, but this study attempts to understand what has recently happened and is happening in Russian HE. To this end, the theoretical themes and framework elicited and constructed in Chapter 2 help explain the recent situation. In this connection, Agar (1986) emphasises that explicit hypotheses are inappropriate in researching problems concerning what is happening in one particular setting. Secondly, it is not possible to examine the decentralisation policy without consideration of a range of contextual factors, mentioned in Chapter 2, over which I do not have control. Thirdly, since the actual participants in the decentralisation process are assumed to give meanings to their actions and behaviours, the examination of their attitudes, experiences, constructions and interpretations becomes crucial. Last but not least, as I come from the same geographical area and have studied and worked in the sector under examination, I cannot fully avoid subjectivity and, therefore, to a certain extent my values are bound to influence this study. The research paradigm adopted has guided the choice of two research approaches: historical research and case study.

3.3 Research Strategy

3.3.1 Historical Research

The nature of this study, the research questions, and the chosen research paradigm led me to include an examination of the historical context and for doing so to use the elements of historical research. Although my focus on contemporary events as opposed to the Soviet past is far greater, by drawing a line between historical research and a case study approach I wish to stress the importance of the historical context in facilitating a new understanding of contemporary phenomena and events²⁰. Furthermore, the structure of the study clearly distinguishes between two separate

²⁰ This does not mean, however, that the line between historical research and a case study approach is clear, as these approaches and the methods of data collection related to them often overlap. Although Yin (1994) defines historical research as the examination of the 'dead' past, when no participants in events being examined are alive to report on the events, Cohen *et al.* (2000) argue that one of the sources of data for historical research can be accounts of participants who have had a direct physical relationship with the events being reconstructed. These arguments suggest that historical research and case studies overlap.

periods in the history of Russian HE: its Soviet past, and contemporary developments. Whilst the Soviet context is examined by using only historical documents and written records, which according to Yin (1994) are distinctive methods of historical research, the examination of the post-Soviet period includes systematic interviewing of participants in actual events, so for that period a case study approach is believed to be the most pertinent strategy.

The historical context helps reveal that some problems apparent in contemporary Russian HE may be traced back to characteristic features of the Soviet system. An examination of the late Soviet period, which was decisive in the initiation of the first HE reform effort, can also help explain how and why particular policies and practices have developed in post-Soviet Russian HE. The historical context also enables me to use former practices to evaluate recent and present experiences, and consequently, enables the reader to assess current trends from a historical standpoint.

The examination of Russian HE in the Soviet period was completed before the initial fieldwork in Russia; this is another reason for the distinction between the historical research and case study approach. However, the use of a historical approach was not limited merely to the data on the Soviet period, since the examination of the contemporary Russian HE sector also included the use of this method, along with other data-gathering techniques characteristic of the case study approach. This is where historical research elements become a part of the case study approach.

3.3.2 Case Study Approach

Researchers have offered various definitions of the case study that appear to directly reflect the focus and topics of their inquiries. There is no universal agreement as to what constitutes a case study and what should be its object or unit of analysis. Stake (1994:236), for example, contends that the object of a case study should be “a functioning specific One”, such as a person or a classroom, rather than general, such as a programme or policy. Others argue that the object of a case study can be almost anything as long as the object or case is clearly defined and delimited (Robson, 1993; Yin, 1994). However, defining and delimiting the object of a case study may be difficult, because every case study strategy in non-positivist interpretive research, “involves an empirical investigation of a contemporary phenomenon within its real life

context” (Robson, 1993:146), in which “the boundaries between phenomenon and real life context are not always evident” (Yin, 1994:13).

This study employs the case study approach for several reasons. First, its focus is a contemporary phenomenon over which this author does not have control. Secondly, the combination of ‘why’, ‘how’ and ‘what’ research questions posed in this study points to the use of the case study approach (Yin, 1994). Thirdly, this approach enables this study to encompass multiple sources of data collection and specific approaches to data analysis.

My study of the decentralisation policy falls somewhere between what Stake (1994) terms the intrinsic and instrumental kinds of case study. It is intrinsic because it is undertaken not in the belief that this case represents other cases or illustrates particular traits or problems, but mainly because I have a primary interest in understanding this particular case. The policy of decentralisation has been a concern in different HE systems, since it is bound to affect government-university relationships over areas of governance and management, finance, and academic matters. Thus in all its particularity the analysis of decentralisation in one of the formerly centralised countries can be of interest. This study is to some extent instrumental, because this case can provide an insight into the issue of HE reform and refine the existing HE typologies and theories, reviewed in Chapter 2, relating these to a new and different context. Thus, since I am pursuing several interests, this study is not entirely either intrinsic or instrumental.

The decentralisation policy is analysed by focusing on one particular country and system, the Russian Federation and its HE sector, and relates to three levels, represented by three main operational units: the *federal* level, represented by the federal government, the *regional* level, represented by the regional government of Sakha, and the *institutional* level, represented by Yakutsk State University (YSU). The choice of three levels of analysis has logically emerged from the nature of the phenomena under examination, and units were chosen in order to limit the boundaries of the case study. It can further be argued that the nature of the phenomena itself prevents me from looking at the Russian sector of HE globally (which would have been unrealistic because of time and resource constraints).

The system and units of analysis are chosen for both scholarly and personal reasons. One of the main reasons for choosing Russia, and within it the Republic of Sakha, is my knowledge of the Russian and Sakha languages. The knowledge of both languages becomes particularly important when analysing the relevant written documents. I also know the Russian HE sector, and within it Sakha HE sector, well as I was born and raised there. YSU is included, because it is the oldest and largest university in the region and was the only HE provider in Sakha in the Soviet era, and thus centrally controlled for most of its history. Another important reason was easy access to the actors at the institutional level, as I was a member of YSU, both as a student and a member of management staff, before embarking on a Ph.D. programme in Britain.

In this regard, doing research about an institution in which one was immediately involved raises some methodological issues. When I left the university it was easy for me not to feel strongly that I was part of the university under examination (perhaps, because I was now studying in a different institution overseas), but I had to psychologically distance myself from it when I started conducting my fieldwork and writing up the research. As it was important to reduce the researcher's bias for the sake of the overall validity of this study, I have tried to analyse the recent events at the university from a perspective other than that of my immediate personal experience, and to be as objective as any non-participant researcher doing this type of research. However, it would be wrong to say that my own experiences of studying and working at YSU did not shape my interpretations. They became part of the evidence, with other data. I tried to explain the impact of decentralisation on this particular university in a critical, academic manner, rather than in the celebratory way which may be found in narratives written by actual participants (see, for example, Maksimova and Fedotov, 1999).

On the other hand, having direct experience as a member of the university provided me with some advantages. First, I had important access to many institutional actors and various events that other non-participant researchers might never obtain. Secondly, I witnessed first-hand some events described in this study which other non-participant researchers would have known only through documents and interviews. Despite these apparent advantages, however, a concern remained over how to use my subjective perspective derived from personal experiences and to incorporate it as part of my



research strategy. Douglas's (1976) argument gave me great hope, as he contends that researchers who have direct experience as participants can overcome the problem of bias and gain important insights from a perspective that non-participants may never achieve. I am confident that I was able to detach myself from the university under scrutiny and provide the most unbiased picture possible.

To summarise, this study originated primarily from my intrinsic interest in the issue of decentralisation in one particular HE system, and had the aim of better understanding this case through examination of the three levels and their units. Consequently, the data for this study has derived from a variety of sources, reflecting the functioning of the defined levels and units.

3.4 Methods of Data Collection

3.4.1 Documentary Sources

The contemporary phenomena under scrutiny, and their historical context, cannot be adequately investigated without giving significant attention to the use of documentary sources. Therefore, primary and secondary documentary sources have become one of the main sources of data for the study.

For the examination of the historical context, the primary sources have included official documents of the late Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) and its Supreme Soviet relating to the reform of Soviet HE, and materials of Soviet HE curricula. The secondary sources have included a range of academic and general books, articles in academic journals and general press reports on various aspects of Soviet HE and late Soviet HE reform. As for the post-Soviet period, the primary sources encompassed federal and regional legislation concerning various aspects of Russian and Sakha HE, various federal and regional ministerial decrees, regulations and bylaws, and official reports. At the institutional level, the university Charter, the rector's annual and university financial reports, academic planning documents and minutes of various meetings have been examined. The secondary sources have included scholarly writing in journals and books, and various policy reports. Articles in the public press have also proved valuable. In addition, this set of data has been combined with the use of quantitative data, which have embraced a range of statistics concerning post-1991 structural changes in Russian HE.

The use of documentary sources as one of the methods of data collection has posed certain challenges. These refer to the availability and credibility of documentary data. Whilst there was no major problem in obtaining primary documentary sources for either level of analysis, the inadequate number of secondary sources written by both Russian and Western scholars has proved to be one of the major difficulties. For the pre-1985 Soviet period HE, there has been a range of significant studies published in the West, but they mainly deal with general education, with only brief references to HE. As for academic writing on the period after 1985, there has been a shortage of longer works, and much of the writing has appeared in the form of articles in journals and occasional book chapters. Nevertheless, these sources have been very helpful in understanding various aspects of the reform process.

The majority of works recently published in Russia appear to be polemical rather than academic in nature. Many authors seem to be more concerned with influencing the policy in Russian HE than with treating the study of HE as an academic discipline, and conclude simply that a sharp increase in state funding is necessary. Nevertheless, they have allowed important insights into the issues of Russian HE; and to compensate for the shortage of secondary data, I thoroughly scrutinised various primary sources from federal, regional and institutional levels.

Another challenge was assessing the credibility of documents, i.e. “the accuracy and worth of the data contained therein” (Cohen *et al.*, 1994:52). Hodder (1994) and Yin (1994) advise against treating secondary sources, however official, as firm evidence of what they report. Bearing this in mind, I have principally consulted the secondary sources on Soviet HE published in the West. Although I may be too generous to Western authors, their works appear to be generally neutral in character, in contrast to the writings of the Soviet authors, heavily influenced by the communist ideology of the time and concern for the preservation of the status quo.

To establish the credibility of documentary sources relating to late Soviet and Russian HE, I have had to evaluate the relationship of the author to the events discussed, whether he/she was an expert in the field, what his/her intents were, and what his/her style of language was. For example, whilst policy reports for international agencies such

as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the World Bank provided valuable material for this study, it was always remembered that they would inevitably reflect the policy goals of the agencies concerned. By taking such issues into consideration and cross-examining a range of primary and secondary documentary sources, both Russian and Western, I have been able to minimise the problem of bias. Problems of this kind closely relate to the issue of validity discussed later in this chapter. Validity has further been ensured by the use of interviews, the second main source of data.

3.4.2 The Interviews

The interview as a means of data collection has become “a universal mode of systematic inquiry” (Holstein and Gulbriun, 1995:1). In qualitative interviewing, respondents are perceived as meaning-makers, enabling the researcher to understand the meaning of respondents’ experiences and derive interpretations. As noted, the aim of this research is to understand and document the phenomena from the participants’ perspective; therefore interviews become one of the most valuable methods of data collection.

Given the topic of this study, the respondents selected were members of the political/bureaucratic elite involved in various aspects of HE policy at the federal and regional levels, and members of the professional/academic elite at the institutional level²¹. The former were officials at the federal Ministry of Education (MOE), the regional Ministry of Science and Professional Education (MSPE) and the Administration of the Sakha President, and the latter were top and middle-level managers at YSU. Most institutional managers interviewed were also acting as academics.

In total, thirty-three people were interviewed (see Table 3.1). The main interviews were conducted between September 1999 and February 2000, and in July and August 2001, and a number of follow-up interviews were conducted in October 2002, December 2003

²¹ The term ‘elite’ is intimately related to abstract notions of power and privilege, generally in connection with certain identifiable individuals or groups of individuals. There are various typologies of elites found in the literature. They are normally grouped into sector categories, such as business, economic, political and community elites (Keller, 1963). Recently, some authors have included in elite categories representatives of various occupations, such as academics, lawyers, media leaders, etc. (Lerner, *et al.*, 1996). This study distinguishes three categories of elites, with certain geographic boundaries: national and regional political and institutional/academic elites. Academic elites are often referred to as intellectual elites in the Russian Federation.

and January 2004. Two respondents at the regional level and several at the institutional level were interviewed more than once, but each respondent's interviews are counted as one, regardless of the total number of occasions on which the respondent was interviewed.

Table 3.1 **Number of Interviews at Each Level**

Federal Level/Government	Regional Level/Government	Institutional Level
4	5	24

Officials at the federal level were contacted after locating them mainly through the Internet or by telephone via their secretaries. Two officials were directly approached at two different conferences. In general, arranging an interview with those contacted via their secretaries required a considerable time, and because of their busy schedules and time constraints a number of officials refused to be interviewed. Locating, contacting and gaining access to officials at the regional level was relatively easy because of their smaller numbers and my prior acquaintance with an informal contact working in the regional government, who was also interviewed for this study. All potential respondents at the federal and regional levels were sent a formal letter, along with a brief description of the aims of the study and topics to be covered. An accompanying letter from the academic supervisor and/or the main sponsor of this study was also very helpful in gaining access to respondents. As for the institutional level, I had known most of the interviewees prior to conducting this research; therefore locating, contacting and arranging an interview with them did not present any difficulty.

Prior to the interview it was considered essential to send an interview schedule to all those who agreed to be interviewed. As this study concerns three different levels in the system, three interview schedules were individually prepared and designed for each level, to reflect its specific position in relation to decentralisation (see Appendix 3). In addition, where relevant the interview schedules covered the same ground. This increased the comparability of responses, and allowed for the triangulation and cross-examination of accounts and interpretations, not only within a particular level but across all levels (see 3.5.1). Sending the list of topics and questions beforehand was particularly helpful, as this allowed the interviewees to grasp the scope of the study,

gain an idea of issues to be discussed, and speak directly to the areas of interest²². This advantage was very pertinent, due to the frequent constraints when interviewing elites and the very low probability of a second interview with the respondents in the federal and regional governments. Another advantage of sending the interview schedules in advance was the fact that many respondents prepared some printed material for me, or in some instances directed me to other potential respondents.

Semi-structured interviews with individual respondents were chosen for this study. This type of interview was given preference because it gave me a degree of flexibility once *in situ* in terms of structure and procedures, whilst the sequence of questions varied depending on the interview situation, thus offering me the opportunity to expand on what the interviewee saw as a priority. The general topics and research questions for the study were translated into more specific open-ended questions. Open-ended questions were chosen because they allowed for depth and enabled critical but anticipated issues to be raised (Silverman, 2000). Asking open-ended questions also allowed me to probe in case I wished to gain more data or clarify details. As for the respondents, open-ended questions enabled them to demonstrate their distinctive way of looking at the researched phenomena, thus allowing me to make a more accurate assessment of what the respondents really thought and believed.

Although it is argued elsewhere that power in an interview situation normally resides with the interviewer (see, for example, Kvale, 1996; Scheurich, 1995), this is not always the case, especially when interviewing elites, where a reverse asymmetry of power can take place (see, for example, Lee, 1993; Odendahl and Shaw, 2002). Such personal characteristics of this interviewer as being much younger than most of his interviewees, and his status as a research student as opposed to the high social status of his respondents, might threaten the direction of and control over an interview, thus affecting its overall success. In this respect, thorough preparation before an interview proved to be crucial. I had to ensure that I had sufficient knowledge about the issues to be covered, and to position myself as 'an informed conversation partner' (Kvale, 1996). It should also be mentioned that interviewing one of the top federal MOE officials at a fairly early stage, and later mentioning his name to other respondents, helped me to be taken seriously. I

²² This does not mean, however, that all interviewees consulted the list of topics and questions prior to the interview.

did not follow any standardised strategy in interview situations, but rather tried to adopt a flexible approach depending on the particular interview situation and the personality of the respondent.

The main purpose of the interviews was to gain information on the phenomena under investigation and to validate data obtained from other sources. The interviews were conducted in Russian. Their duration varied, from about half an hour to over three hours. All but two people allowed me to tape the interviews. In addition, hand notes were also taken at all interview sessions. When the interviews were not tape-recorded, hand-written notes were made, and reviewed and extended immediately after the session. All interviews were transcribed and then sent to the interviewees for cross-checking and correcting possible factual errors, clarifying some points, or adding further information. Interview transcripts were not fully translated into English, except for the excerpts to be used in the actual narrative as direct quotations, chosen to reflect the main themes discussed in Chapter 2 and illuminate and relate to the general text. All interviews were coded, to avoid the identification of the interviewees (see Appendix 4).

Along with the documentary sources and interviews, the third method of data collection for this study was observation. Although observation was not as systematic as other methods of data collection, it has provided valuable information and strengthened the claim to validity.

3.4.3 Observation

Cohen *et al.* (2000) argue that observation is more a generic term that describes a methodological approach rather than one specific method of data collection, since every research activity involves some sort of observational technique. For example, observing the physical setting or behaviour of participants during an interview can provide a great deal of information about the institution or phenomenon being studied. Indeed, physical settings and interviewees' behaviour were observed throughout the fieldwork, but I was particularly interested in observing specifically the interactions between the actors and the internal dynamics of decision-making at the institutional level. Through such observations, new data could be gained, unattainable through the other methods (Cohen *et al.*, 2000).

To this end, meetings of various university decision-making bodies were attended. Altogether, five meetings were observed after gaining permission to do so from the actors concerned. Observation of these meetings shed an important light on the phenomena being studied, helped see the actual practice of internal decision-making, and enabled discoveries concerning what the actors might not have talked about or disclosed in an interview situation.

The observation did not have any specific agenda of issues. It was more important for me to see what was taking place at a particular event before selecting data that might be relevant to the topic or significant in supplementing data derived from other methods used in this study. In the actual setting, I took the role of a (former) participant-as-observer of a 'natural' institutional environment²³. This role was taken because, as noted in 3.2.2, I was a former member of the group observed, and perceived by the participants sharing the same values and part of their social life. However, I was simultaneously perceived by the group as an outside observer because of my current status.

Taking the role of participant-as-observer may threaten the validity of research, because the participants may alter their behaviour or react in a different way knowing that they are being observed (Cohen *et al.*, 2000; Yin, 1994). I am confident, though, that being known to the participants as 'one of theirs', although that I no longer belonged to the group, helped me a great deal. The participants did not consider me to be a threat, and did not change their behaviour or interactions, believing perhaps that I was attached to the institution and strongly identified with the group. Indeed, the participants may have thought that my knowledge of the group and the institution would make me accentuate the positive, and would exercise a subjective influence on subsequent interpretations.

These difficulties mainly relate to the problems of bias encountered by every researcher when collecting and analysing qualitative data, problems briefly mentioned in this chapter. They relate to the validity and ethics of research, and merit further attention.

²³ Other observational roles that researcher may take are the 'complete participant' (taking on a complete membership role), the 'observer-as-participant' (taking on a role between being a complete participant and a complete observer), and the 'complete observer' (complete detachment) (Cohen *et al.*, 2000).

3.5 Problems Related to Methods

3.5.1 Validity

The problems of validity in social science research, and especially the issue of the legitimacy of interpretive inquiry, have become the subject of a heated debate (see Cohen *et al.*, 2000; Eisner and Peshkin, 1990; Hammersley, 1992; Maxwell, 1992; Sommer and Sommer, 1986). This is so because the existing criteria for validity have been formulated and advocated by positivist normative researchers, who have maintained that techniques that produce numerical data represent the most reliable, repeatable and generalisable methods and findings, thus enabling them to achieve maximum validity²⁴ (Altheide and Johnson, 1994). Based on this argument, as noted earlier in this chapter, positivists have strongly criticised proponents of the interpretive paradigm for the lack of ‘standard’ means of ensuring validity (Maxwell, 1992). Interpretive researchers have responded to these criticisms by demonstrating that the positivist criteria for validity are themselves fundamentally flawed (see Fielding and Fielding, 1986), or by attempting to develop their own qualitative notions of validity (see Guba and Lincoln, 1989, Hammersley, 1992).

Fielding and Fielding (1986), for example, argue that positivist researchers themselves resort to interpretation when analysing ‘hard’ data. Achieving validity, therefore, may be equally problematic for positivist researchers as for interpretive researchers, as:

...ultimately all methods of data collection are analyzed ‘qualitatively’, in so far as the act of analysis is an interpretation, and therefore of necessity a selective rendering, of the ‘sense’ of the available data. Whether the data collected are quantifiable or qualitative, the issue of the warrant for their inferences must be confronted. (Fielding and Fielding, 1986:12)

Other theorists argue for the replacement of the positivist notion of validity in interpretive research by the notions of *authenticity* (Guba and Lincoln, 1989), *understanding* (Maxwell, 1992), and *confidence in results* (Hammersley, 1992). These notions refer to the ability of a piece of research to report a situation through the eyes of participants. Interpretive researchers see themselves as part of the social reality being researched, about which they cannot be entirely objective. As a consequence, they perceive other people’s narrative accounts as being as valid as their own. Interpretivists

²⁴ The existing criteria for validity, for example, include concurrent, predictive, convergent, criterion-related, internal and external validity (See, for example, Gorard, 2001; Lawrence, 2000).

tend to present representations of social reality rather than reproductions of it (Hammersley, 1992). In this sense, it is argued that validity in interpretive research is attached to a quality of accounts, not to data or methods (Guba and Lincoln, 1989; Hammersley, 1992).

Cohen *et al.* (2000:105) emphasise that it is impossible for an inquiry to be entirely valid, for it is impossible to eliminate threats to validity, but every measure should be taken to “minimize invalidity and maximize validity”. It is not my intention in this chapter to discuss all kinds of validity²⁵. Rather, two main kinds are highlighted. This is so because the problems that have arisen with validity in this study have mainly related to internal validity and generalisability.

3.5.1.1 Internal Validity

Denzin and Lincoln (1994:100) define internal validity as “the degree to which findings correctly map the phenomenon in question”. In other words, researchers concerned with internal validity aim to demonstrate that the interpretation of “a particular event, issue or set of data which a piece of research provides can actually be sustained by the data” (Cohen *et al.*, 2000:107). To reduce the likelihood of misinterpretation and maximise internal validity, interpretive researchers normally employ multiple methods and sources of data to investigate the same phenomenon. This procedure has become commonly referred to as *triangulation* (Denzin, 1988).

As noted, the combination of three qualitative methods of data collection has been used in this study and supplemented by quantitative data. First, the information gathered through the analysis of various documentary sources has been compared with the information gathered through the interviews, to assess the extent to which the outcomes of documentary analysis have corresponded with those of interviews. The interviews also helped verify and assess some of the conclusions argued in this study, especially as regards the impact of decentralisation at the institutional level. Secondly, the information gathered from the analysis of interviews has been cross-checked with the data gathered through observation. Relating the information from interviews with the actual practice of decision-making at the university helped maximise internal validity.

²⁵ For review of different kinds of validity in interpretive inquiry, see Denzin and Lincoln, 2000 and Maxwell, 1992.

In addition, the study utilised combined levels of triangulation insofar as information from the same method of data collection was derived from federal, regional, and institutional levels, as in interviews. Interviewing respondents at more than one level contributed to the emergence of a meaningful picture, as it involved the analysis of interactions of individuals and groups within one level and also that of relationships between the levels across the political, legal and institutional dimensions (Smith, 1975). The range of documents was also diversified, to include scholarly, policy-related and popular writing by both Russian and Western authors. The conclusions and findings of various secondary documentary sources were compared. Thus, to minimise bias, this study has used both 'between methods' and 'within methods' kinds of triangulation. Last but not least, the thorough training programme in research methods provided for Doctoral candidates by the institution where this study was undertaken increased my awareness of the possible problems and was also essential to maximising validity.

3.5.1.2 Generalisability

Generalisability is another concern for interpretive researchers, especially when they are using a case study approach. It is defined as "the degree to which the results can be generalised to the wider population, cases or situations" (Cohen *et al.*, 2000:109). Most researchers argue that a case study should have a wide resonance, although each research object or phenomenon has its own unique contexts, settings and relationships (Denzin, 1989; Mason, 1996; Yin, 1994). They regard explanations that are particular to limited empirical parameters as less valuable than case studies typifying other cases, leading to generalisations to other populations, or building theories. Others take the contrary approach and emphasise the value of a particular case; not all case study research is undertaken with the aim of generalisation, and researchers may have a special interest in the subject or phenomenon they want to investigate (Simons, 1980; Stake, 1994). Generalisability is not seen as a pressing issue by the proponents of the latter perspective, but at the same time they do not entirely ignore or neglect it.

As this research is in some respects an intrinsic case study, its generalisability is recognised as problematic and somewhat limited. It is difficult to assess the extent to which the experience of one institution within one region of the Russian Federation can be representative of those in other regions, or indeed in other systems undergoing a similar process of decentralisation. As Webber (2000) argues, in the Soviet system, one could rely on the fact that direct control over all sectors of education, exercised by

central authorities across all regions of the country, ensured a great degree of commonality. In the 1990s, as the Russian system has shifted to decentralised responsibility, with more power devolved to the regions and more autonomy granted to HEIs, thus making the system more diverse than ever had been the case in the Soviet era, it is extremely difficult to talk of the Russian HE sector as a single identifiable entity. The difficulty is made greater by the size of Russia and by broad regional diversity. It should be noted, though, that if the federal government resumes centralised control over HE, generalisability across the entire HE system may present less of a challenge in the future.

In addressing the problem of generalisability, this study adopts Stake's (1994) approach and argues that the purpose of the study is not to represent the world, but to represent the particular case with its own issues, contexts, and interpretations²⁶. In other words, it aims to provide 'thick description'. By developing a detailed narrative, I hope to enable readers to understand the reported interpretations, and to draw implications for their own and other cases from the description of an individual case. Furthermore, by drawing on the experience of the participants in this particular case, readers can refine their expectations and actions.

As the author, I have compensated for my lack of direct experience of studying the impact of the decentralisation policy on other Russian regions and HEIs not only through close analysis of documentary sources, but also through informal conversations with university leaders and academics during my trips to Russia and at a number of conferences and seminars in Russia and abroad. However, one of my concerns was whether to include information gathered from informal conversations in the actual narrative. This dilemma leads to the consideration of ethical issues faced by me at different stages of the study.

3.5.2 Ethical Considerations

Ethical dilemmas stem from various sources of tension. The greatest tension in social research is attempting to strike a balance between the researcher's commitment to

²⁶ Stake (1994:245) argues that "if a single case or a few cases are poor representations of a population of cases and poor grounds for advancing grand generalization, a single case as a negative example can establish limits to grand generalization".

seeking the truth and minimising the possible negative effects of research on those who participate in it (Cohen *et al.*, 2000). Specific ethical problems and dilemmas are embedded in the chosen research paradigm, and directly relate to the kinds of problems being investigated and research techniques being used (Lincoln and Guba, 2000; Hitchcock and Hughes, 1989). This implies that ethical difficulties may arise at any stage of the research process. In this study, the ethical difficulties were addressed in a number of ways.

All interviewees in this study were guaranteed confidentiality. It should be noted that I came across several respondents who made it clear that their values did not necessarily reflect those of their institutions after I promised that their identities would not be revealed. Although all participants received a unique code (see Appendix 4), given the nature of this study, their organisational and institutional affiliations had to be disclosed, and all respondents were informed of this. These affiliations were disclosed because it was imperative to provide a reader with the clear idea of the organisational level and position from which the discourse was articulated. Such a disclosure may make it possible to identify respondents at all three levels, but especially at the regional and institutional levels, where the HE community is relatively small. Inside the federal MOE, the regional MSPE and YSU, most people know one another and their perspectives on certain issues quoted in the actual narrative may be suggestive of their identities. For this reason, all federal and regional government officials and top university managers were coded without reference to the specific area of governance and management which they are responsible for. As regards the middle-level university managers, they were coded without specifying their discipline or specialism, but only the broader field of knowledge which their academic units belong to. Although I have exercised great caution and minimised the risk of identification, a very limited degree of risk still exists that some respondents may be recognised.

Another ethical dilemma, and a methodological concern as well, derives not only from the involvement of this researcher in the research process, but from his involvement as a former participant at YSU. In this connection, one of the main concerns for me was whether to include information given to me as a participant in private conversations, when I was working at the case-study university rather than as a researcher. The decision was made to base the analysis on information given to me in both roles, but

without reproducing or quoting private conversations in which I was involved as a participant.

Similarly, there was a dilemma over the use of some information that if included in the narrative in one form or another would contribute to validity. This dilemma was pertinent when I was involved in informal conversations as a researcher, or when the respondent offered some information after the interview session was formally over and the tape recorder was switched off. In the former instance, information from informal conversations was used if it was substantial in supporting or dismissing some arguments, but not directly reproduced or quoted. This information was sometimes vital, in that it might be impossible to gain similar information from elsewhere. In the latter instance, a full account was reconstructed immediately after the interview and later included in the transcript for the respondent to check. If the information was substantial, it was included in the narrative only with the respondent's consent.

Although observation is considered to be the least obtrusive of all data-gathering techniques (Adler and Adler, 1994), some relevant ethical issues were also taken into account. As noted, before observing events at the university informed consent was gained from the university rector or top and middle-level institutional managers. In all the meetings, the participants knew that they were being observed and, therefore, their privacy was not invaded, nor did I intentionally present myself as a member of the group. However, where relevant some observational information is included in the narrative from the time when I was a participant, studying and working at the case study university.

3.6 Summary

This chapter has considered the research paradigm used for examining decentralisation, and discussed the methods of data collection and analysis and some of the main problems and difficulties related to the research process. Because of the ontological and epistemological standpoints and the nature of the problem being examined, the study adopted a non-positivist interpretive research paradigm, which led to the use of two research approaches: historical research and case study. In turn these approaches guided the use of methods of data collection: documentary sources, interviews, and observation. Although the study is interpretative and the techniques used are qualitative,

it does not exclude the use of quantitative data. The last section of the chapter discussed techniques for ensuring validity, and considered some ethical issues.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANTECEDENTS

4.1 Introduction

The main aim of this chapter is to provide an overview of Soviet HE²⁷, which will serve as a historical background against which post-1991 changes in Russian HE can be compared and assessed. The importance of this overview lies in the fact that even in present-day Russian HE, as will be shown later in the study, key Soviet organisational and structural features highlighted in this chapter remain largely intact. First, Sections 4.2 to 4.4 provide a brief account of characteristic features of the Soviet HE system, relating to its mission, governance, finance and curricular matters, and discuss its successes and failures. Then, Section 4.5 examines the major HE reform initiated by the late Soviet leadership in 1986 within the framework of wider societal *perestroika* (reconstruction), and looks at attempts at its implementation. It is argued that the efforts at reforming HE largely failed because of the traditional 'top-down' nature of the reform, the conservatism of the system, and emerging political, economic and social uncertainty in the Soviet Union. However, it is concluded in Section 4.6 that by the time of the USSR's disintegration in December 1991, revolutionary changes taking place in the wider society had a greater impact than the official reform agenda imposed on the HE system.

4.2 The Mission of Soviet HEIs

The mission of HEIs in the USSR was to produce manpower for the country's centrally planned economy and help the regime in its attempts to create 'a new Soviet man'. The aims of HE were thus both economic and political, and went hand in hand throughout the Soviet period. Due to this dual mission, two distinctive features were evident in this system. The first was rigid bureaucratic control of the direction of HE development exercised by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), the only party allowed to exist in the USSR, and by state bodies. The other feature was the extreme politicisation and ideologisation of virtually all university affairs. The notion that HE was essentially a means of personal development, worth acquiring for its own sake,

²⁷ For discussions of the pre-Soviet HE system, see Jarausch, 1983; Kassow, 1989; Popovych and Levin-Stankevich, 1992.

played very little part in official Soviet thinking. The aims of Soviet HE thus were:

1. *To train highly qualified specialists²⁸ educated in the spirit of Marxism-Leninism, well informed of the latest progress in science and technology at home and abroad and well trained in the practical aspects of production, capable of using modern technology, and of developing the technology of the future;*
2. *To carry out research that would contribute to building communism;*
3. *To disseminate scientific and political knowledge among the masses of the population.* (Vestnik Vysshei Shkoly, 1961:6)

The above aims indicate that the Soviet HE system was expected to serve as a crucial factor conditioning the social, economic, scientific and industrial progress of the state. As a result, from its outset the system was developed and moulded to support the existing regime in every way possible. The combination of these diverse and at times contradictory expectations and aims resulted in frequently modified policies and regulations.

It is not the intention of this chapter to examine every pre-1985 reform in detail. One of the reasons for not doing so is that, as Kauffman (1994:151) argues, the reforms in Soviet HE “typically reflected administrative rewording of policy statements rather than substantive differences in the structure of learning”. The pre-1985 Soviet HE reforms have been described as mere ‘cosmetic changes’ or ‘policy repetitions’ rather than policy reforms, because they usually shifted back and forth between the same themes, such as concerns for academic excellence primarily in ideological disciplines and science, an emphasis on vocationalism and mechanisms of control operated either directly by the central level itself or through central-level agencies functioning at lower levels (see, for example, Matthews, 1982 and Szekely, 1986). Thus the same policies were often presented in different configurations and shapes, as shown in Appendix 5, which provides a historical survey of major events in Soviet HE in the period between 1917 and 1985.

It is more pertinent for this study to look at those organisational and structural features of the Soviet HE system which stemmed directly from the mission and aims which Soviet HEIs were assigned to fulfil. The main features to be discussed are centralised

²⁸ In the USSR and Russia, the term ‘specialist’ denotes a qualified person with a HE degree in any field of study.

administration and organisation, unitary state funding, and standardised training and curriculum.

4.3 Key Features of Soviet HE

4.3.1 Centralised Administration and Organisation

Although the administration of HE was centralised, organisationally it was complex and uncertain, because the CPSU's central bureaucracy dominated Soviet society and exercised control not alone but through the wide network of formal Party organisations as well as through various government bodies at every level. This section starts with a presentation of the main actors in Soviet HE at the levels identified for this study.

4.3.1.1 Central Level

HE policies were discussed at the CPSU²⁹ congresses and at meetings of its Central Committee. Legislation was promulgated by the USSR Supreme Soviet³⁰ and Council of Ministers. Although the Party and state organs of power were formally separated, the CPSU bureaucracy ultimately controlled and supervised all government bodies, including the USSR Ministry of HE (UMHE) and other sources of power (Kuebart, 1988). The UMHE was set up in 1936³¹. Throughout its existence (until 1988), it exercised overall control over all universities and some narrowly specialised institutes, in every aspect of institutional affairs. However, the UMHE was not the only government body with direct responsibility for HE, as control over the majority of narrowly specialised institutes was shared with 21 other central ministries belonging to different branches of the economy, generally referred to as 'branch ministries' (Matthews, 1982). The dualism of control was driven by both by the expansion of HE, which required considerable capital expenditure, and the system of job assignment (*raspredelenie*) of graduates, which was to be in accord with the manpower planning

²⁹ The CPSU was organised hierarchically, with the General Secretary at the top and a Politburo (Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPSU) – the functional equivalent of the Cabinet in a Western democracy.

³⁰ Soviets (*Sovety*), the supposedly representative bodies, operated at various levels, the USSR Supreme Soviet being at the top of the hierarchy. At the local level soviets performed many practical functions but were subordinate to the top party official in their locality.

³¹ UMHE replaced the All-Union Committee for Higher Technical Education, specially created in 1932 to control a growing number of specialised technical institutes, and undertook the responsibilities of *Narkompros* (The People's Commissariat of Enlightenment) for controlling other types of HEIs (universities and other specialised institutes). *Narkompros* was created in 1917, and ceased to exist when two other government bodies were created along with UMHE: Ministry of General Education and State Committee for Vocational-Technical Education (Zajda, 1991).

developed by branch ministries. This dualism created a diffused system of centralised control.

4.3.1.2 Sub-National and Local Levels

Some authors noted that administration of the Soviet HE system was indeed decentralised (see, for example, Report, 1959). At first sight, the powers may seem to have been devolved to the fifteen republics comprising the USSR³², as each had its own Ministry of HE, the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR)³³ being the only exception, and to the Departments of Education and Science within local CPSU committees. In practice, however, these bodies were extensions of the UMHE as they were created in the 1950s to become the UMHE's instruments for strengthening its interests at sub-national and local levels and acquiring more effective means of exercising substantial control, otherwise impossible in a country the size of the USSR. The UMHE itself drew up standardised regulations for their organisation and work. Senior officials in these bodies were appointed or subject to approval by the UMHE and, therefore, ultimately bound to the central authorities and loyal to the existing order.

In 1972, local Councils of Rectors in 82 large cities were established (Zajda, 1980). The creation of Councils was presented as a move towards democratisation in Soviet HE. However, the fact that they were set up by and functioned under the auspices of the UMHE, and thus of the CPSU, and included Party and state officials and *Gosplan* (State Planning Committee) suggests that their real mission was to assist the UMHE in strengthening and intensifying central control over HEIs. By establishing such bodies the UMHE retained firm control over HEIs by effectively establishing its own branches at sub-national and local levels. These bodies directed the internal affairs of individual HEIs across the entire country in accordance with central policies.

³² I). After the Bolsheviks took power in 1917 and set up the central government, the first (1918) Constitution related to one single republic the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR). In subsequent years, other territories were joined to the RSFSR, and the country became known as the USSR in 1922, when the Bolsheviks established control in Ukraine, Belorussia and the Transcaucasus (consisting of Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan, which became separate republics within the USSR in 1936). Between 1925 and 1929, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tadzhikistan were admitted to the USSR, and Kazakhstan and Kirgiziya, formerly autonomous republics within the RSFSR, became Union republics. In 1940, Moldavia (formerly part of the Ukraine), Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were also joined to the USSR and became Union republics. Thus the USSR consisted of 15 Union Republics, the RSFSR being one of them. II). The RSFSR also consisted of various regional entities, such as autonomous republics, *krais* and *oblasts* (territories), and autonomous district (*avtonomnyi okrug*).

³³ Unlike all other Union republics, the RSFSR did not have a separate Ministry for HE, and all HEIs and local Departments of Education and Science located in the RSFSR were directly subordinate to and controlled by the UMHE.

4.3.1.3 Institutional Level

Soviet HEIs functioned and were internally organised under the terms of a uniform Statute for all HEIs, originally enacted by the central authorities in 1921 and revised numerous times over the Soviet period (Matthews, 1982). The changes to the statute, however, introduced very few changes in internal administrative and academic organisation. In post-1991 Russia the federal government continues to develop a uniform statute that regulates various institutional affairs, and according to which all Russian HEIs are organised (see Chapters 5 and 8).

The internal organisation of the two main types of HEIs, universities and narrowly specialised institutes, was similar, and drew on the Humboldtian model from Germany and on the state-controlled Napoleonic university tradition from France. All Soviet HEIs comprised faculties, each composed of several small 'chairs' (*kafedra*) (see Chapter 7). The rector was nominated, appointed and dismissed by the UMHE, and all his acts fell within the ministerial purview. He was assisted by vice-rectors (*prorektory*), most of whom had also to be approved by the UMHE. Deans of faculties and heads of 'chairs' were chosen by the rector and Senate, usually on a non-alternative basis, from among the professors of the faculty, and were also subject to approval by the UMHE. The CPSU Central Committee's extension at the institutional level was the Primary Party Committee (PPC), based in every HEI. The PPC members acted as a liaison between HEI and regional and local Party committee. They were very influential within HEIs and primarily responsible for intensifying the Party's role in virtually all institutional affairs.

The constant growth of the state machinery at every level in the system was accompanied by the increasing power and strengthening control of Party and state bodies at the expense of university autonomy and academic freedom. Soviet HEIs and academics had to operate within the framework of detailed legislation and numerous oppressive resolutions, decrees and directives, which regulated all internal and external institutional affairs. Thus, the degree of university autonomy was inversely proportionate to the volume of the USSR legislation defining it, the phenomenon termed 'Jadot's Law' by Neave and van Vught (1994). Furthermore, the Soviet HE system was characterised by funding solely provided by the central government.

4.3.2 Unitary State Funding

Funding for Soviet HEIs came solely from a single source, the central state budget, and was based on line-by-line itemised budgeting, whilst education was provided free of charge (Muckle, 2001). The expenditure estimate for all HEIs was calculated by the Union republics' ministries of HE or branch ministries concerned and submitted for the consideration of the UMHE or other USSR branch ministries. Since the funds were provided by the single state budget, there was a basic equality of HE provision throughout the country.

Due to the unavailability of financial data relating to Soviet HE, it is difficult to review the financing of HEIs over the period under consideration. Nevertheless, as Table 4.1 shows, there was an annual increase in HE expenditure in real terms, and a stable funding situation at between 0.7% and 0.8% of national income was apparent. However, as a proportion of the total state budget, there was a drop in HE funding from 1.47% in 1965 to 0.97% in 1986 (Lane, 1992:299).

Table 4.1 National Income and Expenditure for Soviet HE, 1940-1985*

	1940	1950	1960	1965	1970	1975	1980	1985
National Income Produced (bln. Roubles)	33.1	54.3	145.0	193.5	289.0	363.3	462.2	577.7
Expenditure for HE from the state budget (bln. roubles)	0.3	0.7	1.1	1.5	2.2	3.0	3.7	4.1
Percentage of National Income Spent on HE	0.8	1.3	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.7

Note: * - expenditure does not include capital investment;
Source: Barrows, L.C. (1990: 83-84).

The decline in HE funding can be explained by the overall slowdown of the economy, which was itself attributed to the inadequate system of HE as well as to ever increasing appropriations for defence policies during the Cold War. HE funding was based on the 'residual principle' (*ostatochnyi printsip*) whereby the funds would not be released until the needs of military-industrial complex had been met (Merkuriev, 1991). By 1985 total allocations were insufficient to maintain the basic assets of the HE system, because of physical deterioration and obsolescence. At a time when the physical plant and equipment of HEIs required urgent modernisation, the reduced government funding represented a serious problem, which led to new funding proposals, contained in the post-1985 Soviet reform (see 4.5.3.2).

4.3.3 Standardised Training and Curricula

The training of individuals in Soviet HE was targeted at specific branches of the economy and produced specialists who rarely left their field, and had problems shifting their profession if the need arose. Since HEIs were owned and managed by different central branch ministries in a vertical fashion, each HEI was separate from the others, despite their geographic proximity, in terms of relations with the labour market and sharing facilities. Such a structure facilitated diseconomies of scale, rigidity, and resulted in a lack of incentives.

Academic programmes lasted from four to six years, depending on the specialism (*spetsial'nost'*). All revisions to curricula were made by central ministerial order. This resulted in uniformity of course content for each specialism across the entire country. In 1953, for instance, students were trained in 900 specialisms, later reduced to 274 by turning many specialisms into sub-specialisms (*spetsializatsiya*) (Matthews, 1982). However, in 1979 the total number of specialisms was again increased to 449³⁴ (Matthews, 1982) due to the demands of continuous industrialisation, which required experts in new fields, particularly in technology, energy systems, engineering and aviation. As a consequence, specialisms in pure and applied sciences increased at the expense of the humanities and social sciences.

Soviet students had a very heavy workload. In average they had between four and five thousand classroom hours per year, or 28 to 36 hours per week, and 70 to 80 mainly face-to-face oral tests and examinations throughout their university career (Matthews, 1982). The curriculum stressed the acquisition of facts rather than their application, and attendance at all classes was obligatory. Regardless of the specialism pursued by students, one of the central elements of the Soviet curriculum was teaching of ideological courses designed to impart qualities and attitudes useful to the Party and state (Muckle, 2001). At the end of their university studies, students had to sit state examinations and submit a diploma project. Only after successful defence of this were they awarded a Diploma of HE (*Diplom o Vysshem Obrazovanii*) with a qualification of 'specialist' (*spetsialist*) in a particular specialism.

³⁴ For a detailed list of all specialisms see, for example, Ailes and Rushing (1982).

4.4 Successes and Failures

The Soviet HE system was highly developed and diverse in terms of numbers of HEIs and students. This was perceived to be a great success, as the system was presumed to be successful, insofar as it produced large numbers of graduates. The system was mainly characterised by quantitative changes, which were proclaimed to conceal serious problems. By 1986, however, despite efforts to gloss over the critical qualitative situation, these problems had become extremely apparent.

First, although the economy was planned and, in theory at least, there was no mismatch in the labour market, the system produced a great number of specialists who were not needed, and who had to take up positions below their qualification levels (Avis, 1990). Secondly, although the output of Soviet HEIs was much admired and revered worldwide, achievements in sciences were at the expense of liberal and humanistic education, most elements of which were harnessed to Marxist-Leninist ideology. Thirdly, centralised decision-making and unitary state funding greatly restrained institutional initiative and self-reliance, and fostered a culture of compliance.

It should be emphasised, however, that the pre-1985 picture provided in this chapter scarcely reflects the genuine achievements of Soviet HE; despite adverse political and financial restraints, many HEIs were educating the country's professional and intellectual elites and developing high-calibre research. These successes should not be underestimated or omitted in a comprehensive study of the past Soviet system. At the same time, the overall inefficiency of the 'socialist' model of HE and the considerable intellectual damage caused by the authoritarian regime have been widely recognised, and numerous examples of its political, ideological and personal abuses can be found in the academic literature (see, for example, Fitzpatrick, 1979; Matthews, 1982; Rezaev, 1996).

4.5 Soviet HE under *Perestroika*

4.5.1 The 1980s Revolution

After Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in 1985 as General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, he immediately decided to initiate dramatic reform from above, which introduced a new vocabulary in the life of Soviet society: *perestroika* (reconstruction), *uskorenie* (acceleration), *plyuralizm* (pluralism), *demokratizatsiya*

(democratisation) and *glasnost* (openness). The main driving force behind this reform was the perceived economic decline and deepening stagnation of the country, caused by bureaucratic over-regulation and centralised economic planning. The goal of reform was not only economic, but was also the liberalising of Soviet society, liberating the initiative of individuals (McLean and Voskresenskaya, 1992). Thus, under the new leadership, the emphasis moved from command to cooperation, from collectives to individuals, from national to private property, from centralisation to autonomy, from closeness to openness and the acceptance of market forces.

However, these radical changes envisaged by Gorbachev's ambitious reforms were still conceived as a means to advance communism, though with a democratic and humane image (White, 1990). It can be argued that although the reform proposals appeared to be revolutionary for an authoritarian country, Gorbachev's strategy was simultaneously evolutionary, as it did not envisage a break, but the preservation of Marxist-Leninist principles of the relationships between the state and society, and emphasised the maintenance of the central role of the CPSU. For instance, whilst openness and pluralism were supported, other attempts promoted the search for true Leninist socialism.

The main underlying ideas of the reforms caused an explosion of debate in the USSR, and were taken up not only by those in power at different levels but by the general public. Gorbachev's initial ideas were extended far beyond his original intentions, and over time his own initially bold proposals became increasingly cautious and ambivalent. In sum, the reform expanded beyond his control. The 1980s Soviet revolution began from above, but developed into a radical and chaotic series of events that ultimately threatened the central authorities that had initiated it and led to the disintegration of the USSR. This revolution affected every aspect of Soviet society, including HE.

4.5.2 Development of the Reform Agenda

Although reform in HE was only a small segment of the wider *perestroika* movement, it was seen by Gorbachev as a powerful tool for reforming Soviet society. In June 1986,

following the 1984 pre-*perestroika* general school reform³⁵, the CPSU Central Committee published the first draft of an HE reform proposal for public discussion (*Uchitel'skaya Gazeta*, 1986). It was not formulated by practitioners or those at the grass-roots level, but was initiated at the top, and presented traditional Soviet plans designed ultimately to introduce little change in the structure of the sector. The central authorities tied HE reform to the problems and inefficiencies of the system, discussed earlier in this chapter. It was clear that the system had to be improved and reformed, but with the purpose of better serving the Soviet economy and society in line with Gorbachev's policies.

The public discussion in the press that followed the publication of the first draft was carefully controlled by the CPSU, and mainly involved the HE community rather than the general public (Avis, 1990; Dobson, 1987; Kerr, 1988). Officially, though, it was reported by the new HE minister, Gennadii Yagodin, who in 1985 replaced Vyacheslav Elyutin, who had held the office for thirty years, that the reform proposal had been supported by millions of Soviet citizens (Avis, 1990). Although it would have been unrealistic to expect a serious challenge to the reform proposal at the initial stage of *perestroika* in 1986 on the part of the groups most affected, such discussions permitted the regime to gather indirectly a sampling of concerned opinion about the changes.

Given the forceful language used in the reform proposal, and its explicitly stated major goals, it was not surprising that most materials that had appeared between the publication of the draft and the final versions strongly supported the reform agenda (see, for example, Artem'ev, 1986). This also suggests that at the beginning of *perestroika* the CPSU directed the discussion and determined how much could be discussed. However, the fact that there was an official interest in popular opinions before the enactment of HE reform reveals that the CPSU leadership was also beginning to realise that in the new circumstances it could no longer dictate absolute compliance and not allow, to some degree, citizens at the lower levels to speak out. After nine months of

³⁵ For details of the 1984 general school reform, see, for example, Muckle, 1990 and 2001; Sutherland, 1999; Webber, 2000.

discussions, the final version of the proposal³⁶ was enacted as an official reform policy and appeared in March 1987 without having undergone substantial revision.

4.5.3 Reform Intentions and Implementation

As noted, the underlying aims of the HE reform were to strengthen the link between HE and the economy and to improve the functioning of the Soviet economy through the restructuring of HE. To that end, the following measures were envisaged:

1. *Integrating education, production and science;*
2. *Improving the quality of specialists' training;*
3. *Preparing specialists in new disciplines to meet modern demand;*
4. *Educating ideologically mature and socially active specialists;*
5. *Improving research in HEIs for scientific and technological progress;*
6. *Improving the quality of academic staff;*
7. *Strengthening the role of HEIs in continuing education;*
8. *Technological refitting of HE;*
9. *Improving administration of HE.* (Pravda, 1987:1-3)

For the purpose of this study, the nine measures proposed in the reform policy document are collapsed into three segments, focusing on those aspects of reform which were to affect HE governance and administration, funding, and academic matters.

4.5.3.1 Governance and Administration

One of the main changes called for improved governance and administration of the system at the central level, as the sharing of control over HE between various central branch ministries presented a centralised but disorganised and fragmented system of coordination and communication, which was loose at best, and in many cases, non-existent (Kerr, 1988). There were numerous cases of multiplied bureaucracy, great inefficiency, and overlapping responsibilities that hindered efficient planning and policy implementation and created barriers preventing HEIs from cooperating with one another. The reform proposal aimed to change this situation by replacing fragmented control with more single central direction. Thus, control over specialised HEIs was to be taken out of the hands of individual ministries and centrally exercised by the UMHE. At the sub-national and local levels, nothing fundamentally new was proposed. It was only suggested that new HE centres must be set up on the basis of existing local Councils of Rectors.

³⁶ For the full Russian text of the 1987 reform proposal, see *Pravda*, 1987. For comparison of the 1986 first draft and the 1987 final version of the reform proposal, see Avis, 1990.

As for the institutional level, the main intention of reform was to enhance the rights of individual HEIs in personnel policy, academic and research matters. The reform policy also called for decentralisation by eliminating detailed central regulation of institutional affairs and reduction in 'red tape', which would ultimately lead to university autonomy. Simultaneously, however, the policy emphasised strengthening the role of the UMHE in various aspects of institutional affairs and explicitly stated that the UMHE rights were to be broadened in areas of HE planning and specialists' training. Thus, contradictory measures were envisaged; whilst some appeared to favour decentralisation and university autonomy, others accorded more power to the central level.

Rectors of HEIs welcomed the proposal of supervision by a single central ministry, as clearly they did not enjoy the confusion and over-bureaucratisation stemming from multiple sources of control. One rector of a pedagogical institute from the Ukraine, for instance, noted that on most matters he would receive four directives – one each from the USSR and Ukrainian Ministries of HE, and one each from the USSR and Ukrainian Ministries of General Education (Besbaev, 1986). This was true of many other HEIs. However, the sharing of control was never eliminated, because of strong resistance on the part of branch ministries, which constituted powerful interest groups within Party and state institutions (Kerr, 1992). Thus, branch ministries continued to jealously guard and control individual HEIs.

The only change that took place in HE governance and administration at the central level was the establishment in 1988 of the USSR State Committee for Public Education³⁷ (USCPE). The creation of a single body responsible for all levels of education was not on the reform agenda, but as the reformers failed to take control out of the hands of branch ministries, this reorganisation appears to have been reached as a compromise. It was the Party leadership, which pushed for the creation of a single body responsible for all levels of education, blaming the slow progress of reform on the lack of central co-ordination (Ligachyov, 1988). Yagodin, who subsequently became a

³⁷ The USSR State Committee for Public Education replaced the existing UMHE, the USSR Ministry of General Education and the USSR State Committee for Vocational and Technical Education (Zajda, 1991).

chairman of the USCPE, had a strong position within the Party and central government, which made this limited reorganisation possible.

At the institutional level, some notable change took place in the area of personnel policy, as HEIs received the power to democratically elect rectors, deans of faculties and heads of 'chairs'. In 1988, for instance, 139 out of 898 rectors of Soviet HEIs, or 15%, were democratically elected to their positions (Peregudov, 1988). However, Soviet academics had always elected institutional administrators, albeit nominally and on a non-alternative basis; therefore, this shift was not as painful as other internal changes envisaged. By contrast, the plan for granting power to HEIs in academic and research matters never took hold. This can be explained by externally imposed restraints, as central control was not reduced (Peregudov, 1988), and by the traditional conservative culture inside HEIs; many institutional administrators and academics, being accustomed to a particular set of bureaucratic rules and procedures, continued to wait for directives from above or resisted change.

4.5.3.2 Funding Patterns

The reform programme envisaged the introduction of market-type elements in HE-industry relationships by directly involving enterprises in financing HEIs. Enterprises were expected to bid for HE graduates and partially reimburse the cost of their training. Another scheme was to admit in the framework of special-purpose training (*tselevaya podgotovka*) students for whom a future employer was ensured. Under this scheme, which was eventually to encompass half of all HE enrolments, enterprises were expected to sponsor students and cover the full cost of training for the entire period of their study. In return, HEIs were to offer students individually-tailored programmes to meet the future employers' specific requirements and be granted a degree of freedom in using the 'earned' resources. Although these measures can be argued to have been driven by diminishing state funds and aimed at substantially reducing the burden on the central state budget by introducing multiple sources of funding, ultimately they were expected to lead to greater efficiency and responsiveness of the HE system to the labour market, more relevant courses, and an improved quality of teaching.

However, the new approach to HE funding, as Balzer (1992) concludes, proved to be a disaster. From the very beginning, employers were reluctant to bid for graduates or commit resources for special-purpose training, and as the transition to a market

economy became more apparent enterprises themselves started to experience severe financial shortages; increasingly, they opted out or withdrew from the partial reimbursement of the cost and from special-purpose training by refusing to employ graduates or sponsor students whom they had already agreed to accept. The policy itself was criticised by many in the system on the grounds that it was commercialising HE. HEIs, on the other hand, were unable to deliver the individually-tailored curricula promised to sponsored students, simply because the existing structures were too rigid and inflexible to absorb change or allow variations. Furthermore, the abuse of the policy by those close to the government officials and enterprises was evident. Avis (1996), for instance, notes that many of the sponsored places in fact went to children of wealthy parents who paid an arrangement fee to the notional sponsor.

4.5.3.3 Academic matters

Academic matters were also high on the reform agenda. Increased vocationalism and research and development (R&D) became the cornerstones of the new reform. To this end, various educational centres and Education-Research-Production Complexes (UNPK or *Uchebno-Nauchno-Proizvodstvennyi Kompleks*) were to be set up in enterprises, enabling students to work on their curriculum in workplaces and expanding links between HE and industry. In the traditional Soviet style, a strong emphasis was also put on improving the ways of teaching Marxist-Leninist ideological disciplines, although with an emphasis on avoiding “dogmatism and academic theorising” (Pravda, 1987:2). Academics were expected to master new teaching methods and make the content of their courses and curricula more relevant to the needs of students and employers. Furthermore, all HEIs were to be subjected to quality assurance and accreditation procedures, whilst academics were expected to be internally evaluated by students and institutional administrators. Ultimately, these measures were expected to raise the quality of teaching and research.

At the implementation stage of reform, it became clear that the difficulties of changing the ways in which HEIs and enterprises would interact were much greater than originally anticipated. Although many educational centres and UNPKs were established in enterprises to strengthen the link between HEIs and industry (Peregudov, 1988), such activities were a pressing priority neither for enterprises nor HEIs. As most enterprises were monopolies controlled by central branch ministries, they had no incentive to change. Academics, on the other hand, did not wish to participate in R&D with industry

to the extent required by the reform, mainly because of their heavy teaching load (Avis, 1990). Students were also unenthusiastic about the increased vocationalism, and were not motivated to participate in the much needed economic revival. Some initiatives, moreover, were blocked by research institutes functioning under the Soviet Academy of Sciences and branch ministries³⁸, as they insisted on safeguarding the monopoly of their own research efforts in a particular field (Avis, 1990).

At the end of the 1980s there were also few signs that genuine improvements were taking place in other academic matters. Whilst the reform policy emphasised that HEIs must turn from a passive to an active stance, teaching methods and curricula largely remained the same, and the entire system continued to function in a traditional way, in which subject matter was completely pre-determined for both teacher and student. This may have been the case because whilst expanding the rights of HEIs in academic matters the reform also made it explicit that the responsibility of HEIs and individual academics should be strengthened to a degree, which they had never been accustomed to before. In this situation most academics favoured traditionalism, even at a time when it was shed or at least disguised in other parts of society (Balzer, 1992). Also, as noted above, the reform document itself, while suggesting liberalisation, also reaffirmed the need for political and bureaucratic control and emphasised the improvement of ideological teaching; thus it appeared to offer a kind of compromise for both traditionalists and radicals. In addition, the lack of time for experimentation and inadequate facilities also contributed to the continuation of old practice.

The most pressing problem was upgrading the quality of academic staff through regular internal evaluation. This policy was strongly resisted by academics. For instance, between September 1987 and June 1988, of the 400,000 academic staff in HEIs around the USSR, only 6,500 academics, or less than 2%, were evaluated (Peregudov, 1988). At the same time a new system of academic appointments was introduced, and competition replaced the old system of internal reappointments and promotion of academic staff. Academics' response to this policy was also hostile. In short, these internal reforms relied largely for their success on the human factor, but they were not

³⁸ HEIs were not considered administratively part of the system of science and R&D, but were in the sphere of public education. Nevertheless, some basic and applied research was conducted in the best universities.

accompanied by the restructuring of the minds and attitudes of academic staff, who found the psychological adjustment imposed on them by the central authorities painful and difficult.

There are no data as to how many HEIs were evaluated and accredited, but some were closed down or amalgamated, and others were warned or faced repeat visits from quality inspectors (Peregudov, 1988). In efforts to improve quality and academic standards, HEIs were also encouraged to exclude less able students. Between 1985 and 1988, overall enrolments in Soviet HEIs fell from about 5.2 million to 4.9 million (Balzer, 1992:175-176). This fall, however, can be attributed not only to the deliberate policy of central authorities, but also to the high rate of dropouts following the fall in the prestige of HE (Sutherland, 1999). In 1989/90 the number of enrolments recovered, because of the release from the military of over 300,000 men who had been conscripted after beginning their HE; the majority of these returned to full-time study (Balzer, 1992).

Although the central authorities can be argued not to have given sufficient time for the 1987 HE reform programme to bring about results, its outcome was officially recognised to be a failure. This judgement perhaps indicates the naïve belief that reforms could be achieved quickly and with little effort. At the February 1988 CPSU Plenum the CPSU Central Committee Secretary, Yegor Ligachyov, strongly criticised the slow pace of the above reforms and the ways in which they were implemented, saying that the HE reform was at a standstill:

Up to this moment, progress has been limited to changes of small importance. There is a discernible gap between the present state of ... HE and the atmosphere of dynamism that is increasingly enveloping the country. The people sense this and are sounding the alarm. The population has become convinced that the HE reform is bogged down in numerous problems. (Ligachyov, 1988:1)

He further blamed the ministries directly responsible for HE reform for their lack of genuine interest. The ministries were said to be trying to address new issues and challenges by using old bureaucratic methods and frequently demonstrating organisational inefficiency (Ligachyov, 1988). There were also many instances when administrators would report that changes had been made or measures had been taken when nothing had really changed (Grekova and Myshkis, 1988).

In the meantime, Soviet society was witnessing a further liberalisation of social life, and the scene by mid-1988 was quite different from that which had existed a short time before. Academics had the opportunity to openly criticise state policy without the fear of sanctions that had previously hung over the profession (Webber, 2000). Many surveys were also conducted. One survey, for instance, asked both academics and students in HEIs to indicate their feelings about the reform. About 95% of respondents approved of the idea of reform, but only 16% of academics and 24% of students approved of the ways in which changes were being implemented (Ovsyannikov *et al.*, 1989). Other surveys produced similar results, and revealed that Soviet HE was in need of radical change (see, for example, Avis, 1990).

4.5.4 Radical Change?

Since the HE system was in deeper crisis than initially thought by the reformers and the 1987 reform was perceived to have failed, the decision was made to convene the first All-Union Congress of Educationalists in December 1988 to determine the future direction of Soviet HE reform. The significance of this congress lies in the fact that for the very first time the problems of HEIs were openly discussed within the academic community, and for the very first time the principles of HE development were largely developed at the grass-roots level. Although Jones (1991) notes that nearly half of the congress participants were against radical change, the following underlying principles were determined at the congress:

- *Student-centred education;*
- *Democratisation;*
- *Decentralisation;*
- *Emphasis on the humanities;*
- *De-ideologisation (removing promoting one ideological viewpoint to the exclusion of others.)* (Dneprov, 1988)

Whilst the new principles explicitly emphasised the individual as at the centre of the HE reform and presented a great departure from the rhetoric of the communist regime, in which the individual was completely ignored, individual identity and initiative were suppressed and conformity was encouraged (Eklof, 1993), they did not explicitly concern the economic and internal organisational and structural aspects of HE. At the same time it was clear that the realisation of these principles, which implied a substantial increase in institutional activities, was impossible if the areas of activity of

HEIs were not expanded, and if the patterns and mechanisms of funding were not altered.

It is difficult to assess the extent of change in the aftermath of the 1988 All-Union Congress of Educationalists and the impact of the principles adopted by it on the entire HE system in any meaningful way. It is recognised, however, that the adoption of new principles brought about few concrete results³⁹, partly because of increasing political instability and of the conservatism of the system, thus leaving as many radicals and traditionalists dissatisfied as happy (Vestnik Vysshei Shkoly, 1989). The ideological courses were illustrative of the preservation of the old attitudes and style of working. In theory, de-ideologisation marked the end of formal communist indoctrination and upbringing, as old ideological courses were to be replaced with courses in philosophy and the social and political history of the 20th Century (Avis, 1996). In practice, social science teaching changed little; the ‘chairs’ of Marxism-Leninism were simply renamed as ‘chairs’ of Political Science and Modern History, and the old ideological content continued to be taught under new course titles by the same academic staff (see, for example, Hemesath, 1992 and 1993; Tomusk, 2000).

However, further revolutionary changes taking place in Soviet political and social life proved more significant for the HE system, and brought about developments not initially envisaged by the reformers. It was an unprecedented development when representatives from the academic community, elected to the 1989 USSR Congress of People’s Deputies⁴⁰, the first democratically elected Soviet Parliament, later formed a formal faction of academic deputies to lobby for the interests of HE and emerged as a strong political group. Furthermore, the first non-formal organisations and groups, such as the Association of HE Teachers and Association of Engineering Institutes, appeared, whilst old Councils of Rectors became more vocal (Kerr, 1992). As these non-formal groups and organisations were beginning to evolve as influential forces for the central

³⁹ One of the results was that in February 1991, Moscow State University became the first university to be declared officially autonomous and independent of state control, and received full administrative and financial autonomy (Zajda, 1991).

⁴⁰ In 1989, the ‘decorative’ USSR Supreme Soviet was discredited, in its place a new system of representative organs was created, and the principle of competitive democratic elections accepted. In a sharp break with the Soviet past, the 1989 Congress of People’s Deputies was an entirely new body, which was not in permanent session, but instead it elected the body bearing the previous name, the Supreme Soviet, but very different from its namesake. .

authorities to deal with, there was a great hope that the voices of the academic community would at last be heard by central policy and decision makers. Thus, although the Soviet HE system had not become the facilitator of the national economic revival as the reformers had hoped, its problems were at least openly discussed.

4.5.5 Soviet Society and HE in Turmoil

The *perestroika* movement, linked with pluralism, openness and promises of decentralisation, had important repercussions in all fifteen Union republics, as the real diversity of views within the ruling Party was allowed to come more clearly into the open air than before and a revival of national cultures and identities, which eventually worked against the unity of the USSR, was encouraged. In 1989 the Soviet leadership was confronted with serious outbursts of unrest in the Baltic republics, followed by all the other Union republics, which declared their sovereignty between September 1989 and October 1990.

The RSFSR declared its sovereignty in June 1990. A new Russian Parliament, also called the Congress of People's Deputies, was established in 1990, and a year later Boris Yeltsin was elected the first Russian President by popular vote. This put him in a strong position to resist members of the Soviet elite, particularly Gorbachev, who was elected the Soviet President in March 1990 not by the general public but by the members of the USSR Congress of People's Deputies⁴¹ (Brown, 2001). These events had important implications for the formerly almighty bodies such as the CPSU and the Soviet government. Gorbachev's attempts to halt the destabilisation of the unitary system by signing a Union Treaty with as many Union republics as possible failed because of an attempted *coup d'état* in August, 1991 and the 1980s revolution ended in the collapse that split the USSR into fifteen separate states in December 1991 (Lane, 1992).

The developments in the HE system in the last years of the Soviet Union were strongly affected by this political uncertainty. The Soviet authorities were increasingly diverted away from HE in their wider battles with political groups in the Union republics, and

⁴¹ The fear was that if there had been popular elections Gorbachev would not win, as the popularity of Yeltsin, who would have also run for the Presidency had there been popular elections, grew much stronger at the time.

HE reform was no longer at the top of Soviet political agenda. Furthermore, as the disintegration of the USSR drew closer, economic and social uncertainty and turmoil became extremely manifest in the everyday lives of Soviet citizens, characterised by severe inflation, food shortages, high levels of crime, alcoholism, deteriorating living conditions, and ethnic conflicts. Under these circumstances, the interest initially expressed by non-formal organisations and groups and the general public in the HE reform policy significantly diminished.

Although after the *coup d'état* the USCPE was retained as one of only four remaining USSR central ministries that claimed some residual all-Union influence over HE, its power and position were considerably undermined by the recent political developments (Avis, 1992). Russia established its own Ministry of Science, HE and Technological Policy (MSHETP) along with the Ministry of General Education (MGE) even before the disintegration of the USSR (Balzer, 1994), but since it took several months to set up new ministries, a power vacuum in HE was effectively created. Thus immediately prior to the dissolution of the Soviet Union HE developments in Russia and in other Union republics became more sporadic and fragmented and largely depended upon the initiatives and efforts of individual institutional administrators.

4.6 Summary

The HEIs in the Soviet Union pursued two main goals: the professional training of specialists, and the formation of ideologically committed and politically reliable individuals. These aims led to organisational structures that emphasised centralisation in all institutional affairs. This centralisation can be argued to have been necessary for mobilising the nation to match the capitalist world in modern production as fast as possible, but it deprived HEIs of any autonomy and greatly restrained initiative and self-reliance, resulting in rigidity of administration, unitary state funding, the uniformity of course content, and a culture of compliance. The achievement of quantitative targets became the dominant criterion of success, but deep-seated problems in HE and society at large, caused by centralised planning and control, and the need to tackle these problems became increasingly evident in the mid-1980s.

The reform of HE initiated by Gorbachev's leadership in 1986 within the wider *perestroika* movement failed to radically change the foundations of the system. There

are many interconnected reasons for its failure. First, the official reform was developed and formulated by the central authorities and, therefore, followed a conservative ‘top-down’ approach with the use of traditional instruments of administrative and legal controls. Secondly, whilst promoting change, the reform policy also exhibited a recurring pattern, as traditional Soviet concerns and ideas re-emerged (for example, vocationalism and a strong ideological imperative). Thus the proposals were perceived by many in the system as similar in intent to those in the past that had failed. Whilst everybody agreed that change was essential, old habits largely remained throughout the system, because the majority of administrators and academics were gripped by a deep conservatism and scepticism.

In the meantime, as developments in the wider society were moving with revolutionary speed, it became apparent that HE reform could not be imposed and implemented as initially envisaged by the reformers, and, for the first time, the central authorities sought to directly involve the HE community in the direction of reform. These reform efforts also did not fully materialise, this time because of the political, economic and social turmoil that enveloped the entire country and led to the disintegration of the Soviet Union into fifteen separate states. However, changes of another nature, not initially envisaged by the reform, became apparent, and although by the end of 1991 the Soviet HE sector remained largely the same as it had been prior to 1985, i.e. geared towards supplying a highly-centralised economy, its problems were at least openly discussed.

CHAPTER FIVE

HE REFORM AT THE FEDERAL LEVEL

5.1 Introduction

Chapters 5 to 7 examine HE policies in post-1991 Russia at the federal, regional, and institutional levels. Chapter 8 then analyses the relationships between the levels, as they have evolved since 1991, focusing on the units of the study, namely the federal government of Russia, the regional government of Sakha, and Yakutsk State University (YSU).

The aim of the present chapter is to analyse the decentralisation policy and process at the federal level. First, Section 5.2 describes the wider contexts of post-1991 Russia. Then, drawing on statistical data, Section 5.3 provides an overview of post-1991 HE developments and shows that despite the country's economic decline and political uncertainty, the HE sector has not only survived but started to grow and expand. Whether the sector's growth and expansion has been a result of normative thinking and deliberate federal policies in the framework of decentralisation is the main concern of Section 5.4. It focuses on the examination of the normative goals set for the system by the main HE actors at the federal level and the decentralisation policy at its normative stage. This discussion leads to Section 5.5, which explores the actual process of decentralisation at the federation-wide level in the three areas identified for this study: governance and management, finance, and academic matters. Finally, Section 5.6 argues that the initial shift to decentralisation in all three areas has been followed by a recent reversal of the process.

5.2 Contexts

5.2.1 Economic and Political Uncertainty

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, the transition from a centrally planned to a market economy imposed major changes on the Russian economy. The collapse of the centralised system was accompanied by a significant decline in industrial output, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and other major economic indicators. A series of dramatic reforms, such as the liberalisation of consumer prices, pushed through by Yeltsin in 1992 and defended on the grounds that desperate times required desperate measures (Gaidar, 1997; Yeltsin, 1994), ended in jeopardy as the resulting inflationary

pressure led to enormous budget deficits and further exacerbated an economic downturn. Although there was some growth in private sector enterprises, it was not sufficient to fuel lasting progress.

Opponents of Yeltsin's economic programme at the Russian Congress of People's Deputies⁴² attempted to impeach him in March 1993. After failing to secure enough votes, they called for a referendum on Yeltsin and his reforms; 58% of the voters supported Yeltsin and 53% expressed confidence in his reforms (Dunlop, 2001:55). Boosted by this success, Yeltsin decided to disband the Congress of People's Deputies. The subsequent struggle between the executive and legislature for political power ended in October 1993 in an armed conflict. Yeltsin prevailed, largely through the support of the military, which arrested the opposing Parliament members. On December 12, 1993 members of a new Russian Parliament, the State Duma, were elected⁴³. On the same day, the new Russian Constitution was ratified; in it, the presidential and executive powers were significantly increased (Constitution, 1993).

Between 1993 and 1996, further reforms failed to improve the economic and social situation, but had serious negative consequences: industrial output and GDP continued to decline rapidly, unemployment rose, corruption and crime levels increased dramatically with organised crime becoming a serious obstacle to economic recovery, and the living standards of most Russians plummeted, with one third of the population falling below the poverty line. The public sectors, such as education and health care, were hit the hardest by the crisis, as budget receipts failed to cover spiralling government expenditure. Despite these problems, Yeltsin, bolstered by vigorous campaigning and fear of a Communist resurgence, won the second presidential elections in July 1996 against a Communist opponent.

Yeltsin's first action after re-election was to reshuffle the Cabinet to include new ministers. Their reform plans, however, went awry and in March 1998 Yeltsin dismissed his entire government. Following the August 1998 financial crisis, Yeltsin

⁴² The Russian Congress of People's Deputies (elected in 1990) should not be confused with the USSR Congress of People's Deputies (elected in 1989) that passed out of existence with the collapse of the Soviet Union.

⁴³ The State Duma is the directly elected lower house of the Parliament. The members of the upper house, the Federation Council, are appointed by the legislative and executive branches of each region.

dismissed three Prime Ministers and governments, and in August 1999 appointed Vladimir Putin as the new Prime Minister. Having failed to stop the economic downturn, in December 1999 Yeltsin had to resign, and left Putin as an acting President. In March 2000 he was elected President of Russia.

Since 2000, economic indicators have started to show glimpses of recovery. GDP has started to grow, with annual growth rate of 4-9%. An effective monetary policy has led to slower inflation. In short, the key issues for Russia have started to change from short-term remedies to long-term measures. These successes, however, have been accompanied by the re-establishment of stronger federal power and the assertion of the federal government vis-à-vis regions. To better understand the developments in the case-study region and university, it is necessary to look at the dynamics of the centre-periphery relationships since 1991.

5.2.2 Ambiguous Centre-Periphery Relationships

Between 1990 and 1992, the ethnically defined republics⁴⁴ within the Russian Federation were in opposition to the central government of the USSR, as in seeking to weaken Gorbachev's power Yeltsin encouraged political elites within the republics to take as much sovereignty as they could hold on to (Sakwa, 1993). The process became known as the 'Parade of Sovereignties', in which all 21 republics adopted Declarations of Sovereignty (Kahn, 2001). After the dissolution of the USSR, however, their target became Yeltsin – a new embodiment of the 'centre'; and although unlike the Union republics the majority of Russia's republics did not desire complete independence from the Russian Federation, they demanded more autonomy in political and economic spheres.

In a climate of uncertainty they adopted their own constitutions, developed symbols of statehood, elected their own presidents, emphasised the supremacy of the republics over federal laws, and demanded language rights and exclusive ownership over economic resources in their territories (Shaw, 1999). In short, immediately after the dissolution of the USSR the political processes which had taken place at the Russian federal level in

⁴⁴ Out of 89 regions of Russia 21 are ethnically defined republics, which are 'homelands' of non-Russian minorities (Shaw, 1999; also see Appendix 1). In Soviet times, they had status of autonomous republics (*avtonomye respubliki*) within the RSFSR.

attempts to undermine the Soviet leadership were repeated in the republics. Much of this was also in reaction to the political chaos and economic decline discussed in 5.2.2. At a time when there was neither a strong vertical power nor a political organisation which could assume the role of a leading party, the elites in the republics emerged as powerful political forces which could determine the balance of power with the federal centre.

As the federal centre was weak, a solution to the likely disintegration of the Russian Federation was found in a Federation Treaty between the federal centre and republics in 1992. This treaty officially recognised the sovereignty of the republics, acknowledged their right to self-determination and prohibited federal intrusion into republic affairs, but left many important issues, such as budget relations, taxation and ownership of natural resources, unresolved (Kahn, 2001). In addition to the Federation Treaty, the republics which were rich in natural resources, such as Bashkortostan and Sakha, received substantial economic privileges in exchange for their signatures (Balzer and Vinokurova, 1996; also see Chapter 6). However, the Federation Treaty weakened economic links (Sakwa, 1993) and failed to provide political stability, being seriously undermined by the deadlock between the federal executive and legislature noted above, and the refusal of two republics, Chechnya and Tatarstan, to sign it.

With the ratification of the Constitution in 1993, the federal centre made an attempt to reform the Russian federal structure. All 89 regions were to be treated as 'equal' with no special exceptions and privileges granted to any of them, the sovereignty of the republics was to be no longer recognised, and they were to be granted only those powers not claimed by the federal centre. The rights of all regions, irrespective of their status, were to be made subject to the laws and decisions of the federal authorities (Constitution, 1993). The republics, of course, wished to retain the exclusive powers granted to them by the 1992 Federation Treaty, and insisted on the treaty-based federation rather than a constitution-based one (Sakwa, 1993). The precedent had already been set in 1992, and it developed a mindset which favoured the autonomy of the republics. The republics had also learned that they could ignore the federal centre, like Chechnya and Tatarstan, or reach special arrangements, like Bashkortostan and Sakha.

In search of a compromise with the elites in the republics and having realised that any serious attempt to abolish ethnically defined republics would provoke massive resistance, Yeltsin began a process of signing separate bilateral treaties, this time not only with republics but also with other types of regions: *oblasts*, *krais* and *okrugs*⁴⁵. Within bilateral treaties which established general principles, specific five-year agreements for relationships in various spheres, including education, were signed. However, the legal status of the bilateral treaties was unclear, as, unlike the 1993 Constitution, they were only executive-driven documents, which were never ratified by the federal or regional legislatures (Kahn, 2001). Brown (2001:372) argues that such contradictions “worked against having a unified legal space” across the Russian Federation.

Yeltsin learned to live with Russia’s ambiguous and confused political arrangements, and the years of his leadership were characterised by permanent bargaining with regional political elites. His attempts to restructure centre-periphery relationships proved weak and unsuccessful, and power became highly fragmented between the federal and regional governments. In short, Russia was becoming ungovernable.

It was his successor, Putin, who substantially restructured the ambiguous centre-periphery relationships. Immediately following his inauguration he issued several decrees suspending constitutions and regional laws that did not conform to the federal framework. By a further decree, Putin divided the entire Russian territory into seven federal super-districts, each encompassing several regions, and introduced into the regions enforcers responsible for maintaining the supremacy of the federal law. He also put forward proposals allowing him to dismiss regional leaders if they failed to bring regional legislation in line with federal laws (Tretyakov, 2000). Given that a significant proportion of regional legislation did not correspond to federal laws, regional leaders had reason to feel vulnerable and insecure in their posts. In short, Putin called for a ‘Dictatorship of Federal Law’ and restored a strong federal government in his first year.

⁴⁵ Apart from 21 ethnically defined republics, there are 51 *oblasts* and 6 *krais* (territories), 10 autonomous *okrugs* and 1 autonomous *oblast* (autonomous districts) (Shaw, 1999; also see Appendix 1).

However, the future of centre-periphery relationships depends largely on what balance can be struck between the federal obligations to promote and protect democratic principles and regional autonomy, and to restore a 'unified legal space' throughout the country. It is within these contexts that HE reform was taking place in the Russian Federation between 1991 and 2003.

5.3 HE Survival and Expansion

It is an achievement in itself that despite the political and economic problems discussed in 5.2, Russian HE has survived. The evidence in Table 5.1 shows that it actually started to grow significantly and expand in terms of numbers of HEIs, students and academics.

Table 5.1 The Russian HE System between 1990-2002

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Total Number of HEIs	514	519	535	626	710	762	817	880	914	939	965	1008	1039
State HEIs	514	519	535	548	553	569	573	578	580	590	607	621	655
Students, 000	2825	2763	2638	2543	2534	2655	2802	3047	3347	3728	4271	4797	5229
- Full-time	1648	1668	1658	1624	1629	1700	1777	1902	2040	2213	2442	2657	2862
- Part-Time	1177	1095	980	919	906	955	1025	1145	1307	1515	1829	2140	2367
Admissions, 000	584	566	521	544	568	629	674	748	832	946	1140	1263	130
Graduations, 000	401	407	425	444	407	395	415	436	471	515	579	649	753
Students Per 10.000 Population	190	186	178	171	172	179	190	208	229	256	294	332	364
Full-Time Academics, 000	219.7	224.1	227.7	239.8	233.5	240.2	243	247.5	249.6	255.9	265.2	N/A	291.8
Private HEIs	-	-	-	78	157	193	244	302	334	349	358	387	384
Students, 000	-	-	-	69.9	110.5	135.5	162.5	201.8	250.7	344.9	470.6	629.5	718.8

Notes: I). Data as of the beginning of each academic year; II). numbers of state and private HEIs do not include branches; III). numbers of students, admissions and graduations in state HEIs include fee-paying students and are rounded by the author; IV). MOE uses 'number of students per 10,000 population' indicator as a measure of access to HE in the regions of Russia; V). (-) – not applicable.

Source: compiled by the author. HEIs and students: SCS,2003:396-397; admissions: SCS,2001(Vol.2):216-217 (for 1990-2000) and SCS,2003:279 (for 2001 and 2002); graduations: SCS,2001(Vol.2):220-221 (for 1990-2000) and SCS,2003:283 (for 2001 and 2002); full-time academics: CMSE,2002 (for 1990, 1993-2000), Bolotin and Berezovskii, 1998 (for 1991 and 1992) and SCS,2003:193 (for 2002).

Table 5.1 shows that the number of state HEIs in Russia increased from 514 in 1990 to 655 in 2002. This growth can mainly be attributed to the sub-division of HEIs, upgrading the status of pre-HE institutions, such as vocational-technical and secondary specialised educational institutions (see Appendix 2), and the creation of new HEIs on

the initiative of regional and municipal authorities. There is also evidence of impressive growth in the private HE sector since 1993. However, the size of HEIs and the number of students in the private sector are much smaller than in the case of state HEIs. In 2002/03, 384 private HEIs enrolled 719,000 students, whilst over 5 million were enrolled in state HEIs.

Table 5.1 further shows that despite the increase in the number of state HEIs since 1990, numbers of students did not increase commensurately. In fact, from 1990 to 1994 their numbers declined. The decline in total enrolments can be attributed to the decline of numbers in part-time programmes, the diminishing prestige of HE and the political and economic turmoil following the disintegration of the USSR (Dneprov, 1993; Kniazev, 2002). From the mid-1990s, however, growing unemployment and social insecurity generated a massive demand for HE, and Russians started to perceive it as the best route to paid work in the new economic conditions (Tomusk, 2003). The emerging market also drove a demand for new academic programmes, such as in law, economics and management, for which HEIs increasingly charged fees. The number of fee-paying students in state HEIs was only 228,000 in 1995/96 (Tul'skii, 2001), or 9%, but reached over 2.3 million in 2002/03, or 44% of the total (SCS, 2003:366). The number of students per 10,000 of the population also increased, and reached 364 in 2002/03 compared to 190 in 1990/91. Similar to overall enrolments, the number of graduates fell until 1995, but after that the increase surpassed the 1990 level. As for academics, the state HE system employed 292,000 academics in 2002/03, or 33% more than in 1990/91.

The overall picture presents a very healthy impression of the Russian HE sector, and does not on the surface correspond with the problems which I will identify in this study. How was the federal government able to expand and develop the state HE sector to such a considerable degree, despite the severe financial difficulties? Was this expansion a deliberate policy of the federal government within the decentralisation policy, or was it driven solely by attempts of the state HEIs to survive the turbulent decade? The sections that follow attempt to answer these questions.

5.4 Decentralisation as a Reform Agenda

5.4.1 Setting National Goals

A country's political, economic and social context frames what people need from a HE system. Consequently, major changes in the context normally force countries to reconsider and debate the goals for their HE systems. The HE system, according to such authors as Becher and Kogan (1992:50), is assumed to have "common values, or at least agreements on the range of values to be tolerated", and thus common goals.

As discussed in 4.5.5, the initial shift in the national HE goals from utilitarian to cultural values occurred at the 1988 All-Union Congress of Educationalists, where the HE community emphasised student-centred education, democratisation, decentralisation and the development of the humanities and social sciences. The main principles agreed at the time continued to underline national goals to a greater or lesser extent throughout the 1990s, and thus they were not entirely new (Government of Russia, 1992 and 1993). These goals were pushed at the federal level by a group of reformers, many of whom were intellectuals and academics, and by members of the Russian Union of Rectors (RUR) who, in reaction against the Communist system, wished to separate HE from the needs of industry and economy and restore university autonomy, academic freedom, the disinterested search for truth, and the elitism of Russian HEIs and integrate research and teaching as part of the reform movement.

Since the second half of the 1990s, however, the federal goals have increasingly shifted to orienting HEIs towards contributing to economic growth. For example, the 1997 reform programme, which was greatly opposed by the HE community and later turned down, allotted a significant place to the relationship between HE and the economy (see 5.4.2). This shift has been partly driven by the emergent players, including private HEIs, employers, various businesses and Western funding agencies (Tomusk, 2001). Equally instrumental in undermining the initial cultural goals was the massive demand for HE and insufficient state funding. The former eliminated the hopes of becoming an elitist HE system, whilst the latter pushed HEIs to offer educational services for fees, a policy initially opposed by the state HEIs. Furthermore, as various Russian policy documents explicitly stated the desire to westernise, the national goals had to be brought in line with trends in HE in the industrialised world, characterised by massification,

contribution to the economy, socially embedded universities and demands for accountability and efficiency (Clark, 1998).

In short, in the last decade the national goals of Russian HE presented an interplay of various unfocused goals that would satisfy both radical reformers and conservatives. Although the task of the central authorities is “to ensure that common goals are met” (Becher and Kogan, 1992:50), in the 1990s the Russian federal policy-makers were unable to state clearly their common goals for HE policy (Kerr, 1998). National goal-setting in Russia presented an ideal vision of various HE actors rather than coherent, feasible, and clear goals that could direct the reform of HE. There was no agreement among various HE actors at the federal level on the norms that would make the system function in a coherent way and establish goals at various levels of the system.

5.4.2 Development of Federal Policy

The transition to a market economy called into question the nature and method of HE provision made under the centrally planned economy. Although the old HE system was highly diverse and developed, its main features, notably the rigidity of administration, unitary state funding, the narrowness of academic programmes and the uniformity of course content, as discussed in Chapter 4, were clearly not conducive to massive economic, political and social changes and unsuitable for a market economy. Therefore the Russian Federation had to fundamentally shift the direction of HE provision. In order to ensure the cohesive survival and development of the HE sector, a detailed reform programme had to be developed, and as this section will reveal it has presented a great challenge for the federal authorities. Although the chapter mentions secondary and pre-HE sectors, it does not intend to draw direct conclusions regarding the reform process in secondary schools and pre-HE institutions, even though similar issues and problems recur and apply to these sectors. The chapter, however, draws inferences from general education policy reform which are applicable to the HE sector.

The federal policies of direct concern for HE were first formulated within the Law on Education enacted in July 1992 (Law, 1992), the main principles of which largely drew on the ideas elaborated during the 1988 all-Union Congress of Educationalists (see 4.5.5). Pushed through by the radical reformers at the federal Ministry of General Education (MGE), the 1992 Law was adopted only after a year since its first publication

(Dneprov, 2000). Although one year can be argued to be a very short period of time for formulating and adopting such an important piece of legislation, the MGE reformers had a number of reasons why it was crucial to adopt this legislation within the shortest time possible.

First, as noted in 5.2, in the early 1990s there was a strong sense of uncertainty in the whole country over the political leadership, the direction in which the wider economic reforms were going, and the future of Russia itself. This uncertainty opened up opportunities which the radical reformers wished to use as quickly as possible by pushing through educational reforms, especially since after the disintegration of the USSR the level of political and societal interest evident in the late 1980s quickly declined, giving the reformers a strong degree of influence on the direction of reform (Webber, 2000). Second, there was a strong feeling among the reformers that the disintegration of the highly developed mechanisms for governing the whole education system would lead to the fragmentation and even destruction of Russian education if educational institutions were not immediately provided with a uniform legal framework and some direction for their future (see, for example, Bolotov, 1994). Last but not least, the strong centrifugal tendencies evident in Russia's ethnically defined republics that were to inevitably affect the education system (see 5.2.1) had to be offset as quickly as possible before they started to impede federal attempts at educational reform.

Thus the 1992 Law set out the principles of the federal policy for the whole education system and emphasised the critical role to be played by it in the development of Russian society and the nation (Article 2), defined the powers and functions of the federal, regional and institutional levels (Articles 28-30, 32), introduced the notion of state standards (Article 7), set up regulations for quality assurance (Articles 33, 38), outlined funding patterns, and provided a framework for entrepreneurial activities (Articles 41-47). However, the principles of this law had the danger of becoming merely rhetorical statements as they only provided a general framework, whilst specific measures for implementing HE reform in conjunction with the reform of other sectors of education were to be developed within the framework of a federal programme.

In March 1993 the federal government announced a competition for the development of such a programme, and in 1994 various federal ministries, including MGE, State

Committee for HE (SCHE) and Ministry of Finance (MOF) worked out the final version of the programme, which was based on the policies stipulated in the 1992 Law. The priority measures set out by the programme were: 1) to differentiate institutions by content and duration of study according to the different interests of individuals and the needs of society; 2) to adapt curricula and training to respond to individual needs and regional labour market requirements; 3) to integrate Russian education in the world education system; 4) to diversify sources of funding; and 5) to increase university autonomy whilst putting in place quality assurance procedures (RIHE, 1993). These measures pointed to the shift of control from the federal to lower levels. At this stage it is sufficient to list the priority measures, as the actual reform implementation with regard to HE is discussed in 5.5.

Although the proposed reform programme was approved by the federal government, it was never adopted by the State Duma and therefore its legal status was unclear. First, the programme was not adopted by the State Duma, because the federal budget could not release sufficient financial resources to support the reform envisaged by the programme (Uchitel'skaya Gazeta, 1995). Second, continuing political and economic turmoil increasingly moved the sphere of education from immediate federal priorities (Webber, 2000). Third, the struggle between MGE and SCHE for overall control of educational reform prevented them from reaching a consensus and formulating a coherent and workable programme, as each body wished to see its own interests dominate the reform agenda. Tired of waiting for the execution of the federal programme by the State Duma, the regional authorities took the initiative; by 1995, 73 out of 89 regions had formulated their own programmes for development of different sectors of education (OECD, 1998; Webber, 2000; for Sakha, see Chapter 6).

Since the 1992 Law largely concerned secondary education, and the legal status of the 1994 federal reform programme remained unclear, SCHE pushed through the adoption of separate legislation that would entirely concern the HE sector in the hope that separate legislation would make the federal government address the HE crisis. The draft of the Law on HE was worked out with the assistance of the Council of Europe

(Fischer-Appelt, 1996) and enacted by the State Duma in July 1996. In January of that year, the 1992 Law on Education was also revised⁴⁶.

The 1996 Law elaborated on the provisions that had already been formalised in the 1992 Law, further clarified specificities for HE governance and management (Articles 8-15), divided responsibilities between various levels of government (Articles 24-25), formally recognised university autonomy within boundaries set up by the federal legislative framework (Article 3), and enhanced institutional freedoms in generating and allocating financial resources (Articles 28-32). In addition, the federal government committed itself to allocating not less than 3% of the federal expenditure to HE, financing not less than 170 students per 10,000 of the population, exempting HEIs from taxation, and continuing to provide students in state HEIs with stipends and other financial assistance (Article 2). However, the subsequent years proved that the enactment of legislation was one thing, whereas its implementation was a completely different matter. Indeed, many provisions of the 1992 and 1996 Laws, especially those relating to the system's finance, were never realised. Both laws were riddled with technical difficulties and internal and external contradictions. Since they were enacted in a legislative vacuum, when other important legislation was not yet developed, but when introduced was to inevitably affect the workings of the HE sector, both laws underwent numerous revisions and amendments.

The revision of the 1992 Law and the enactment of the 1996 Law prompted the federal authorities to formulate a new programme for educational reform. In September 1997, the now unified MGE and SCHE, merged to form a single Ministry of Education (MOE), presented two completely different visions for educational reform, developed by two different groups within the ministry. This fact suggests that even the actors within the federal ministry were not subordinated to a common purpose, and that when cohesion was most needed unity of purpose within the ministry was lacking. The first programme was formulated under the leadership of the Minister of Education and former SCHE Chairman, Evgenii Kinelyov, and despite severe financial and economic problems envisaged a strong financial commitment on the part of the federal

⁴⁶ This study mainly draws on the revised version of the 1992 Law, but despite the revision that took place in January 1996, I refer to it as 'the 1992 Law'. However, whenever it is necessary I refer to it as the 'revised 1992 Law'. The 1996 Law on HE is referred to as 'the 1996 Law'.

government (TACIS, 2000a). Yet the programme failed to specify concrete goals and measures for reform implementation. The second programme was developed under the leadership of the first deputy Minister of Education, Aleksandr Tihonov, and envisaged a fall in state funding for HE through a sharp reduction in numbers of state-funded HEIs and students, mergers of HEIs, the integration of research institutes into universities, state financing of HEIs using competitive market mechanisms, and the introduction of a student loan scheme (Programme, 1997).

Unsurprisingly, Tihonov's programme was approved by the federal government. However, since the HE community were not consulted at the developmental stage of the new reform agenda, the official publication of this programme gave rise to heated debate, and spurred academics and students from more than forty regions to protest against the federal government (Ivanyushchenkova, 1998; Kamyshev, 1998). One of the main reasons why the programme was strongly opposed by the HE community was that most academics continued to perceive HE as a public service and believed that Tihonov's marketisation proposals would wreck Russia's reputation as a world leader in HE; provided with sufficient state funding, Russian HE would remain the best even if fundamental changes were not made. To a large degree, the HE community proved themselves to be unready for dramatic change in the system and continued to hope that good old days when everything was funded by the state would return.

In January 1998, the State Duma had no option but to turn down Tihonov's programme, because of the strong resistance of the HE community. Although in March 1998 Tihonov replaced Kinelyov as Minister of Education, after a short period he was dismissed, to be replaced by Vladimir Filippov (Uchitel'skaya Gazeta, 1998a and 1998b). Although these changes coincided with the sacking by Yeltsin of two governments in 1998 (see 5.2.1), the perceived fiasco of the educational reforms attempted under Kinelyov's ministerial leadership and the unpopularity of Tihonov with the educational community may have also played a part in making them useful scapegoats.

In the summer of that year, the RUR convened its congress and proposed the development of a National Doctrine (*Doktrina*) of Education that would become an underlying core framework or body of principles for all future legislation and reform

programmes (RUR, 1998a). The proposal was driven by the increasing conflicts among the interests and visions of various stakeholders, which resulted in contradictions in the direction of educational reform. The rectors argued that it was crucial to finally achieve a normative agreement by all interested parties on the future development of reform (RUR, 1998b). In trying to rehabilitate themselves after having approved Tihonov's programme without prior consultations with the HE community, the federal government and MOE supported the rectors' proposal and encouraged various groups to engage in public debates. Subsequently, during 1999 and 2000 extensive discussions on the Doctrine took place in the educational and general press (see, for example, Bunyakina, 1999; Dneprov, 2000).

For the purpose of this study, only the statements of the Doctrine that apply to HE are discussed. The Doctrine stated that HE should be at the top of the Russian political agenda, and set out national goals which emphasised the role to be played by HE through manpower training in sustainable economic development (Doctrine, 2000). The federal government once again promised to provide sufficient funding for HEIs, increase academic salaries and student stipends, and widen participation in HE by admitting half of all graduates from secondary education and pre-HE sectors on a free basis by 2025. The state financing of the whole education system was to reach not less than 6% of GDP by 2003, not less than 8% by 2010, and not less than 10% by 2025. The outcome of these policies, it was stated, would be a democratic and diversified HE system, an individual approach to teaching and learning, and a high quality of HE provision (Doctrine, 2000).

The Doctrine, however, turned into a set of declarative policy statements with a myriad of unfocused and idealised goals, which in the words of one commentator strongly resembled an 'inventory book' (Dneprov, 2000). Even though the federal financial commitments stipulated in the 1992 and 1996 Laws had never been fulfilled (see 5.5.2), the federal government once again gave unrealistic financial promises. For example, in the OECD countries which are characterised by the most stable macroeconomic environments the average spending on education lies between 5-7% of GDP (OECD, 1998:148). Furthermore, the Doctrine lacked the most essential element, i.e. implementation strategies bridging ambitious goals and outcomes. In short, the Doctrine

contained populist rhetoric and promises that were used as an election manifesto by Putin in an attempt to win votes in the presidential elections.

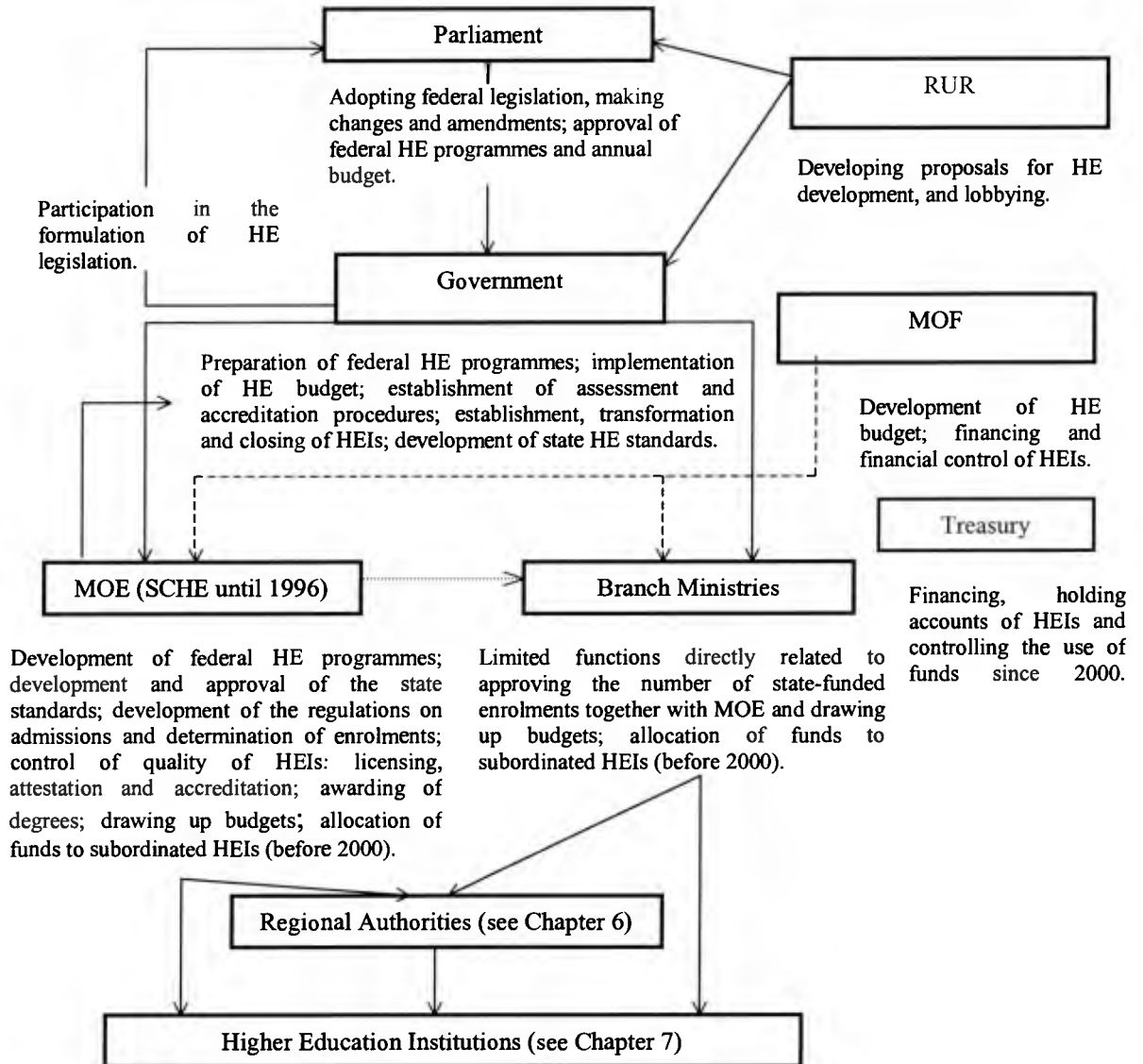
After Putin was elected President, all promises of better financing were removed from the final draft of the Doctrine, which was secretly approved by the federal government in October 2000 and did not at all resemble the draft published for public discussion (Mel'nikov, 2000; Smolin, 2002). The Doctrine, publicly discussed with such a fanfare, was never adopted by the State Duma and fell into oblivion. Although, since 1999 HE expenditure has been gradually increasing, the increase has been accompanied by stricter federal control (see 5.5.2).

In 2001 the federal MOE started a series of 'top-down' dramatic reforms in the framework of another programme, entitled 'Modernisation of Russian Education' (Conception, 2001). The main measures of modernisation that apply to HE envisage completely new admission procedures and new market-type mechanisms for state financing, and strongly resemble Tihonov's 1997 programme. If fully implemented, these measures will introduce fundamental changes to the workings of the state HE sector and go beyond the superficial changes and quasi-reforms that, I argue, have so far been taking place in the case study university. Since the new measures are being currently implemented as experimental schemes and have not embraced the entire HE system, any comprehensive analysis is impossible. However, as YSU is one of the pilot universities, attention will be paid to the short-term effects of the most recent reforms on YSU in Chapter 7.

As is evident from the discussion above, the Russian federal authorities lacked a common vision of what the HE sector should become in the 'new' Russia, and failed to formulate a clear strategy agreed on by the majority for its reform. Although there was no federal reform programme until 2001, the 1992 and 1996 Laws provided Russia's regions and HEIs with some sense of direction. It is doubtful whether the Russian HE system would have survived in a relatively coherent way had the 1992 and 1996 Laws not been enacted. The policies pursued and implemented within their framework were generically termed as decentralisation of decision-making authority from the federal to the lower levels.

Before moving onto discussion of the actual process of implementation of the federal policies, Figure 5.1 shows the interactions of the main federal HE actors and provides a summary of their main functions.

Figure 5.1 Post-1991 HE Governance and Management at the Federal Level



Notes: I). Until 1993, SCHE was a department within the MSHETP, created in 1991 (see 4.5.5). When in 1996 SCHE and MGE were merged into a single ministry, its name was Ministry of General and Professional Education, but in 2000 it was renamed Ministry of Education (MOE). To avoid confusion, this study refers to SCHE when discussion covers the pre-1996 period and MOE when discussion covers the post-1996 period; II). (----->) - before 2000 the federal funds were transferred to HEIs through SCHE/MOE and branch ministries, but since 2000 the funds are transferred to HEIs through the federal Treasury. III). (.....>) - the federal MOE provides an overall regulation of the HE sector and branch ministries should conform to the federal MOE framework (see Chapter 6).

Source: developed by the author from Law, 1996; Lugachyov *et al.*, 1997; Popov, 1998.

5.5 Implementation of Federal Policy

In post-1991 Russia, decentralisation first started in the secondary education sector⁴⁷. Although this brought about some positive change, the emergent problems relating to the transfer of 87% of school funding from the federal to regional level by 1994 (Rogovskii, 1995) overshadowed all other developments. According to the MOE report, only 22 out of 89 regions were self-sufficient, and therefore able to finance their regional secondary education sectors, while the remaining 67 had very limited financial capabilities (Bolotov, 1997). It is not surprising, then, that the shift in funding responsibility was welcomed only by comparatively well-off resources-rich regions, and “with misgivings by regions suffering in the transition to the ‘market’” (Webber, 2000:69). The differences in regional financial capabilities led to horizontal imbalances, or great regional variations in educational spending, that began to undermine the coherence of the sector.

Against the backdrop of these obvious problems over secondary school decentralisation, the initial striving of rectors for decentralisation and autonomy had somewhat diminished by the mid-1990s. Even though HE funding, in theory at least, remained a federal responsibility until 1995, in practice it was increasingly becoming the responsibility of the regions as rectors turned to their regional governments to offset the deficits in federal funding. In the regions where the governments were incapable of assuming the responsibility of at least partially replacing the federal government’s HE funding, institutions had to survive on their own. When in 1995 the federal government announced its intention to formally transfer HE funding to the regional level, the president of RUR, Viktor Sadovnichii, noted that only a few Russian universities were developing well on the regional budgets, and expressed concern that the formal transfer of HE funding to the regions would inevitably cause fragmentation of the HE sector and ultimately lead to its disintegration (Sadovnichii, 1996).

Nonetheless, every commentator on Russian HE argued that decentralisation has been largely driven by the incapacity of the federal government to finance the HE sector.

⁴⁷ For more detailed account of post-1991 reforms in the secondary education sector, see for example, Sutherland, 1995 and 1999; Webber, 2000.

Indeed, the evidence for this argument was provided by most of my interviewees, one of whom recalled:

The ministry's [SCHE] stance toward decentralisation was that the federal government did not have sufficient resources to sustain the entire HE system and this led it to grant some real power to regional governments. Thus, the federal ministry's position was – we do not have the resources, but we will devolve some powers to regions and institutions. (my emphasis) (Fedl-4)

The above interview excerpt implies that the federal government chose to evade the problem of HE funding by decentralising responsibility to lower levels. However, other rationales have also been used in the decentralisation discourse. Although at first these seem to directly correspond to issues of efficiency and sensitivity to individual and local needs, they intertwine with the lack of financial resources:

With the disappearance of central planning, it proved impossible to develop personnel policy from the centre as it can no longer be determined by Moscow, how many engineers, say, the Republic of Sakha needs. There is also... no centralised job assignment of graduates, so regions have to see to the training of their own manpower and universities need to be more responsive to individual and regional needs and demands. In this respect, the federal government's policy of transferring HEIs to the regions was logical and economically justified. (my emphasis) (Fedl-2)

The above interview excerpts are consistent with the argument of Bray and Borevskaya (2001:347), who state that decentralisation in most 'transitional' countries was launched "partly [as] a response to calls for flexibility, ..., but also [as] a mechanism for 'passing the buck'". The section that follows examines whether and how the decentralisation policy has been implemented by the federal government and MOE, and focuses on the three HE areas identified for this study.

5.5.1 General Aspects of Governance and Management

5.5.1.1 Continuity of Soviet Structure of Governance

As argued in Chapter 4, the sharing of HE control between various branch ministries made governance of HE ill-defined and operationally ineffective. In 1993, for example, 222 out of 548 state HEIs were under the jurisdiction of SCHE, whilst the rest were subordinated to 21 other branch ministries (Lugachov *et al.*, 1997:153). In 1993 the federal government, convinced by SCHE Chairman, Kinelyov, announced its intention to discontinue the practice of sharing control by taking the responsibility for HEIs out of the hands of individual ministries and transferring it to SCHE. This, the government officials contended, would link HEIs together and make it possible to treat various

issues across all HEIs on their merits. SCHE, as a unique government body, having the responsibility for the entire HE sector, was also to receive a higher status within the federal government.

However, the rectors of HEIs subordinated to branch ministries, who had supported such a transfer in the late 1980s (see 4.5.3.1), were now reluctant to be under the jurisdiction of a unique HE authority, as in a climate of ever-declining resources they feared that they would not be able to secure adequate funding for their institutions in competition with a greater number of HEIs. Similarly, the branch ministries largely opposed the transfer of their HEIs to SCHE. One of the reasons for this opposition may be the perception that if a precedent for subordinated HEIs being transferred to SCHE was set, then it was highly likely that the federal Ministry of Science and Technological Policy or Russian Academy of Sciences would wish to assume control over research institutes belonging to branch ministries⁴⁸.

As the political and economic situation continued to worsen and HE was no longer seen as a priority, and more importantly because of the strong opposition of the HEIs and branch ministries, SCHE stopped vigorously insisting on discontinuing the sharing of control. Instead, as he had failed to take control over the whole HE sector, Kinelyov's attention switched to secondary and pre-HE institutions, and in 1996 SCHE and MGE were merged into a single ministry, MOE. With the enactment of the 1996 Law, MOE assumed the responsibility for developing the overall policy for all HEIs. In 2002, 329 out of 655 state HEIs were under the direct supervision of MOE, whilst the remaining HEIs were directly subordinated to 25 other federal branch ministries (*Uchitel'skaya Gazeta*, 2004:5).

Even though 25 branch ministries control almost a half of all state HEIs, their responsibilities considerably diminished after MOE started to exercise a substantial degree of control over their HEIs with regard to developing standards and to setting up

⁴⁸ Similar to the HE sector, there was a duality of control over research institutes as some were under the jurisdiction of either the Russian Academy of Sciences or various branch ministries. The Ministry of Science and Technological Policy, established in 1993, was responsible for some of the research institutes, but since the mid-1990s has assumed the responsibility for formulating an overall policy for the entire research sector, similar to MOE assuming the responsibility for formulating an overall policy for the entire HE sector.

and carrying out quality assurance procedures (see 5.5.3). This function is now exclusively performed by MOE. At the same time, branch ministries, which often express their dissatisfaction with the quality of training of HE graduates, can be argued to be best placed to engage in developing and controlling standards in line with industry norms. In short, the current role of branch ministries and their relationships with MOE remain confusing and need reassessing. However, an interviewee in MOE, Fedl-1, commented that *'there is no intention on the part of either MOE or government to transfer all HEIs to the jurisdiction of a single body, as many branch ministries are securing and providing relatively sufficient funding for their institutions'*. Thus the Soviet system of multiple subordination still persists.

5.5.1.2 Managing Expansion

In 1993 the federal government adopted a uniform Statute for all HEIs, which defined different types of Russian HEIs (Government of Russia, 1993). Besides the traditional types of HEIs, the 'university' and the 'specialised institute', two new types, the 'academy' and the 'college' (between 1993 and 1996) came into existence (see Appendix 6). Among all these, a small number of pre-1992 universities, referred to in Russia as 'classical universities', have historically been considered the most prestigious offering a wide range of programmes and conducting research. In the last decade, however, the number of universities increased considerably and, in 2002, 312 out of 655 state HEIs had the status of a university and enrolled over a half of all HE enrolments (SCS, 2003:152). This increase was due to the trend of defining specialised institutes as universities after SCHE accorded universities a special role and promised them priority financing (Balzer, 1994; Prokopchuk, 1994). Although many former institutes currently call themselves universities, this does not necessarily reflect their real quality, as great differences in their academic and real status can be hidden under identical titles (Lugachov *et al.*, 1997).

The majority of new academies and institutes were also created by either renaming former institutes as academies or upgrading pre-HE institutions to the status of institutes. In 2002, there were 179 academies and 145 institutes (SCS, 2003:152). According to their status, academies and institutes should offer academic programmes in one specific field, but many offer various programmes that are in demand, such as economics and law, on a fee-paying basis (Kitaev, 2004). Thus in practice no real differences exist between universities, particularly post-1992 ones, academies and

institutes, and even Russian academics admit that the differences in titles are merely verbal distinctions rather than organisational or legal ones (TACIS, 2000a). Most changes in titles and status took place between 1992 and 1996 when the process of licensing that confers the title and status of HEIs, was treated casually as the responsibility of the regional authorities (see 5.5.3). Even though this function is currently performed by the federal MOE, no clear formal criteria still exist for conferring institutional titles and status.

To offset the federal budget deficits, most state HEIs were forced to establish semi-private structures which depended on tuition fees, in the form of institutional branches in various regions of Russia. These were also established, as Tomusk (2003) argues, with the purpose of exploiting existing institutions for a maximum profit. Nevertheless, given the uneven spatial distribution of HE opportunities, such structures can be argued to be useful, as they help to move institutions closer to students. In 1996, one-third of all HEIs were located in the central and north-western parts of the country, whilst the rapid expansion in the second half of the 1990s occurred in those parts of the country which had relatively little HE provision, notably the Russian Far East and Siberia (OECD, 1998).

As many branches employed secondary school teachers, lacked adequate facilities and operated simply as 'diploma mills', MOE became increasingly concerned about their quality, and in 1998 it took the control of creating branches out of the hands of individual HEIs and required branches to apply for licenses separately from, and with the same criteria as, their parent institutions (TACIS, 2000a). Consumers also became increasingly aware of the low quality of teaching provided by the branches (Kitaev, 2004). In 2001/2002, there were total of over 1500 branches of state and private HEIs, of which 880 were created by HEIs belonging to MOE (MOE, 2001a:35; Vuzovskie Vesti, 2002:3). In 2003, because of overriding concern about the quality and rapid growth of the HE sector, MOE took drastic measures; it halted the establishment of new branches altogether and increased control over the existing ones (Gevorkyan, 2003a; Sairamova, 2003). Thus HE expansion in Russia was driven by HEIs in order to survive the financial crisis rather than by deliberate federal government policy.

5.5.2 Finance

Despite numerous federal government promises of priority financing for HE, the financial situation has remained one of the most difficult obstacles to reform. Although the federal government guaranteed to allocate not less than 3% of the federal budget expenditure for HE, in reality between 1992 and 1999 only about 2% of the annual budget expenditure was allocated (Galanov, 1997:138; Law, 1996; MOE, 2001a:43). Table 5.2 shows the real decline in HE expenditure between 1992 and 1999; HE funding as a percentage of GDP declined at an annual rate of about 20%, reaching its lowest level in 1998.

Table 5.2 Federal Budget HE Expenditure as Percentage of GDP, 1992-1999

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
HE as % of GDP	1.21	0.76	0.87	0.52	0.48	0.59	0.40	0.52
GDP (1992=100) corrected for inflation	100	91.3	79.7	76.4	72.8	73.4	69.7	--
HE (1992=100) corrected for inflation	100	61.2	60.3	39.7	34.9	43.3	27.9	39.7

Source: EBRD, 1998 (for 1992-1998); MOE, 2001a:43 (for 1999).

Between 1993 and 1999 the differences between the actual budgetary funding asked for, approved and received were immense, as only 'protected budget items', i.e. academic salaries and student stipends, could be guaranteed. Although according to the 1992 and 1996 Laws Russian HEIs were to receive the federal funds in the form of block grants and were to enjoy total financial independence with regard to the internal allocation of these funds, in reality they benefited from this autonomy only in theory, as they were not allowed to reallocate the funds received for the 'protected budget items'. Even this 'protection' was imperfect, with only about 70% of the 'protected budget items' being paid in 1994/95 (OECD, 1999; see also RUR, 1996) and these were often paid very late (MOE, 2001a). In this period, virtually no federal funds were transferred for maintenance expenses, repairs and other important items; HEIs accumulated huge debts for heating and electricity and were often under the threat of being cut off from heating and electricity supplies if the debts were not cleared (Kodin, 1996; RUR, 1996; Verbitskaya, 2002). Such severe budget constraints affected not only HE but other public sectors, too, and were caused by wider economic problems, noted in 5.2.1.

Nevertheless, the federal government was able to increase the number of state-funded students from 163 per 10,000 of the population in 1995/96 (Magistr, 1999) to 192 students per 10,000 in 2001/02 (MOE, 2002) and fulfilled its commitment stipulated in the 1996 Law that it would support no less than 170 students per 10,000 of the

population from the federal budget. It managed to increase the number of students by reducing per capita costs through nil investment and very low academic salaries. Salary levels for academic staff were to be kept at the level of at least twice the average salary in the industrial sector (Law, 1992), but the federal government failed to fulfil this commitment. The failure of the State Duma to regularly adjust the minimum wage level to keep pace with inflation, the reluctance of the federal government to increase salaries in public sectors to substantial levels and low additional payments for ranks and research degrees kept official salaries in HEIs below the cost of living throughout the period (Lugachov *et al.*, 1997; Smolentseva, 2003; Uchitel'skaya Gazeta, 2002). At present, most HEIs are forced to provide additional salaries or bonuses to academic staff from their non-budgetary revenues, but this to a great extent depends on the capability of HEIs to attract fee-paying students and generate income from entrepreneurial activities. In some instances, as Kniazev (2002) notes, additional income may surpass the official state salary.

At the very early stage of post-Soviet reform rectors of state HEIs opposed the idea of charging tuition fees from individuals, and only agreed to continue to admit only up to 10% of students on special-purpose training contracts with enterprises (see 4.5.3.2). However, the abuse of the special-purpose training scheme by well-connected parents, diminishing state funding, competition from the new private HE providers and the growing demand for HE forced the rectors of state HEIs to lobby the federal government to allow the admission of more fee-paying students, and allow state HEIs to charge fees from individuals as well as enterprises. Since the federal authorities were desperate to further reduce the burden on the federal budget, in the revision of the 1992 Law in January 1996 they agreed with the rectors' proposal and allowed the admission of up to 25% of students above the quota of state-funded students in the most popular specialisms⁴⁹. One interviewee at the federal level commented:

We allowed to admit only up to 25% of students on top of the state quotas, as we were concerned that without such a limit, the commercialisation of HE would be inevitable, especially in popular specialisms. In reality, though, the situation got out of control. The demand even for fee-paying places, in state HEIs was very high, but because of the official limit, state HEIs could not admit all the applicants. Since the demand was high, a great number of private pseudo-HEIs teaching pseudo-law and pseudo-economics have appeared. They ... simply sell

⁴⁹ The 25% cap on the admission of fee-paying students was introduced in the following specialisms: law, economics, management, and public administration (Article 41, Revised Law, 1992).

diplomas as the quality of their teaching is questionable, but the state cannot control them strictly. (Fedl-4)

According to another interviewee, however, MOE could not in practice enforce this limit; because of the worsening financial situation most HEIs ignored it and admitted more than 25% of students on a fee-paying basis. He said:

The truth is that many HEIs would not have survived had MOE insisted on strictly enforcing the 25% limit, and even if it had attempted to do so, it would have turned into a mere formality of issuing orders and directives, as MOE could not in practice oversee every single institution. (Fedl-1)

The above interview excerpt is consistent with Tomusk's (2001) observation that, caught between political and economic realities, MOE had no other option but to tolerate the violation of the legislation, especially since rectors of Russian state HEIs were quick to remind MOE of the unmet funding commitment.

After much deliberation, the next policy move of the federal government and the State Duma in June 2002 was to lift the proportion on fee-paying students to up to 50%, and allow the admission of three times more fee-paying students than before in the most popular specialisms. Although it can be argued that by increasing this level the federal government was trying to further limit its HE expenditure, there were other reasons. First, the move was also an attempt by the federal government and rectors of state HEIs to halt the further development of the private HE sector, and thus to improve the financial situation of state HEIs. One interviewee, for example, said, that *'the result of the previous cap for state HEIs was that they lost potential non-budget revenues and additional salaries for staff, but by increasing the cap we [MOE] made more fee-paying students go to state rather than private HEIs'* (Fedl-4). Second, the rapid growth of private HEIs intensified concerns about their quality, which is perceived to be worse than that of state HEIs, and by having admitted more fee-paying students in the state sector the federal government might have been showing genuine interest in students receiving better quality HE. Third, the fact that many state HEIs persistently violated or found various loopholes in the federal legislation might have been partly responsible for the increase.

The financial crisis also drove the federal authorities to allow HEIs to engage in entrepreneurial activities and generate income from various sources. As a result the

share of 'earned' income in institutional budgets, including tuition fees, increased significantly. In 1998, state HEIs generated 56% of their revenues from non-budget sources (EBRD, 1998). Despite the increase in the level of federal funding since 1999, which now includes some appropriations for equipment, electricity, repairs and capital expenditure (Verbitskaya, 2002), most state HEIs continue to generate more funds from sources other than the federal budget (MOE, 2002). However, parallel to the increase in federal HE funding, the federal government strengthened its control over regions and HEIs.

According to the new Budget Code, enacted in 1999 and put into effect in the middle of 2000, block grants to HEIs, which existed at least in theory, have been abolished, the carry-over from the previous fiscal year, allowed by the 1992 and 1996 Laws, has been discontinued, and all federal budget funds are transferred to HEIs, item-by-item according to pre-determined amounts, not through MOE and branch ministries as prior to 2000, but through the federal Treasury and its regional branches (Code, 1999). In this regard, an interviewee at the MOE, Fedl-4, commented:

The MOE has little room for manoeuvre in the decision-making process on financial matters. In the conflicts between our ministry and the MOF on how [federal] budget funds should be allocated and spent, the latter holds the strongest position. Although the Law on HE states that HEIs are free to manage their own budgets, MOF never in practice recognised this autonomy.

An interviewee, Fedl-3, said that MOE is trying to insist on the reintroduction of block-grants, but pointed to MOF's unwillingness to allow the change from easily controllable itemised allocations. Furthermore, all funds are now to be held in the Treasury's single account visible to and controlled by MOF, and not in various bank accounts as was the case before 2000.

The return to stricter financial control has been driven by the paramount and all-consuming desire of the federal authorities to tackle the problem of the non-transparency of federal budget allocations to regions and HEIs. In the 1990s the federal funds for public sectors were first transferred to the regions in the form of lump sum payments, but there was no assurance that funds earmarked for a particular sector would be spent on that sector by the regions (Zajda, 2003). Similarly, there was no guarantee that the federal funds received by HEIs for 'protected budget items' would be spent on those items by institutional managers (Fedl-3).

Two interviewees at the MOE (Fedl-2 and Fedl-4) also said that since the government is returning to the HE sector by increasing its share of funding it should also exercise a stricter control than previously, and that the old system of control was re-introduced as there was no any other effective way to control the use of the federal funds by regions and HEIs. The re-introduction of central control, necessary as it may be, clearly does not provide an effective lever for internal institutional reform. However, since 2002, the federal government has been introducing a new mechanism for financing state HEIs as an experimental scheme within the programme for the modernisation of Russian education. It currently embraces only six HEIs, YSU being one of them, and a more detailed discussion of this new mechanism is provided in Chapter 7.

Not only does MOF control the use of federal budget funds, but it has also penetrated the domain of self-generated revenues by introducing detailed regulations and pre-audit approval of expenditures to be made from institutional accounts held in the Treasury. Such a strict control was introduced because in the 1990s institutional record keeping had not always evolved to reflect substantial amounts of 'earned' income. HEIs often felt that they had no obligation to share their financial records with the government authorities (Taratuta, 2003). Thus, since the enactment of the 1999 Budget Code, the trend toward decentralisation and university autonomy in financial matters has been largely reversed.

The incentive to generate income has been hindered not only by the 1999 Budget Code, but also by the Tax Code, introduced in 2000. The 1992 and 1996 Laws offered HEIs a real stimulus to engage in entrepreneurial activities and offset budget deficits by exempting them from paying most taxes, especially value added tax (VAT) and income tax, if their 'earned' income was reinvested in the educational process. These advantages have been removed by the new Tax Code. It is paradoxical that whilst state HEIs generate non-budget funds to match the shortfalls in state funding, they now have to pay income tax at 24% and VAT at 20%⁵⁰ (Code, 2001a). The president of RUR, Sadovnichii (2002), wonders how the funds generated by HEIs can be considered as profit if the state covers less than 50% of required expenditures. It is clear that the

⁵⁰ VAT is not paid on the revenues from educational services.

reintroduction of taxes greatly reduces institutions' self-generated revenues, and HEIs may lose 7 to 9 billion roubles per year (Smolin, 2002).

It should be emphasised that these changes have resulted not from specific HE policy, but rather from wider budgetary and tax reforms led by MOF and the Ministry of Tax Collection (MTC), which in the words of one interviewee (Fedl-2), *'have had an unintended effect of practically destroying institutional financial autonomy'*. However, I argue later in this study that HE was one of the main sectors to be subjected to budgetary and tax reforms because through tightening their control MOF and MTC intended to abolish well-publicised HE corruption and the 'shadow' economy, discussed in Chapter 8; although the effects of these reforms on state HEIs were called outrageous by Putin, they fitted perfectly his 'Dictatorship of Federal Law' policy (Bulgakova, 2002). When in 2003 the State Duma Education and Science Committee and RUR initiated the amendment of the Tax Code with regard to the re-introduction of special tax provisions for HEIs, they were supported only by a minority of the State Duma deputies (Zadornov, 2003). Currently, Russian HEIs are still subject to heavy federal taxation.

On the one hand, the government encouraged decentralisation and the financial autonomy of HEIs, but on the other, with the relative improvement of the financial situation, it seriously hindered further developments by imposing tight control over HEIs. Whilst MOE continues in theory to emphasise university autonomy, other ministries, namely MOF and MTC, in practice restrain institutional financial independence. In the same fashion, the State Duma gave HEIs opportunities to generate non-budget funds by admitting more fee-paying students and engaging in entrepreneurial activities, but later effectively eliminated these opportunities with other legislation. After the chaos left by Yeltsin's leadership, re-centralisation in financial matters may be justifiable, but these shifts were also the direct result of the availability of federal budget resources and the lack of normative agreement between various federal bodies.

The 1992 and 1996 Laws still recognise institutional financial autonomy and exempt HEIs from paying taxes, but in Russia, the budget and tax codes are considered to supersede laws which deal only with one specific sector, and are put into immediate

effect even if in contradiction with other laws (Uchitel'skaya Gazeta, 2003a). This has been confirmed by the MOE interviewee, Fedl-4, who said that '*in practice codes and not sectoral laws (otraslevye zakony) are used, and since the legislation on education has existed for over ten years, it is likely to be brought in line with recently enacted budget and tax codes and not the other way around*'. The approach taken when federal laws are in conflict appears to depend on whether a particular ministry holds a stronger position in the decision-making process in a specific issue: in educational issues, MOE holds the strongest position, but in issues of educational finance it has to obey the decisions of MOF and MTC. The fact that the policies between various federal bodies are not compatible is apparent not only in the area of HE finance, but also in academic matters.

5.5.3 Academic Matters and Quality

This section discusses three main reform measures relating to academic matters, namely the introduction of a two-tiered degree structure (Bachelor and Master), the implementation of quality assurance procedures, and the development of state standards for HE. Whilst the first two were to mark a sharp break with the Soviet past with the aim of westernisation insisted on by international donor agencies, the third perpetuated the Soviet university tradition, in which the content of academic programmes and details of curricula were determined by the centre. Although regions and HEIs received some decision-making authority, I argue that through the introduction of evaluative processes and state standards the federal MOE was able to retain most of its previous powers in academic matters.

5.5.3.1 Changing the Degree Structure

The introduction of a two-tiered degree structure was already under discussion in the RSFSR in the spring of 1991, and in March 1992 SCHE promulgated a decree introducing the new structure throughout the Russian HE system (Avis, 1996). It was planned that by 1995 the old five-year structure, leading to a specialist's diploma, would be abolished and entirely replaced by Bachelor's and Master's programmes. Although the new structure was not entirely rejected by the HE community, there were arguments that it should not entirely replace the old structure. The rectors argued that the two-tiered degree structure was neither optimal nor globally accepted, and that its automatic copying would destroy Russian HE, which was renowned in the world for its fundamental character (*fundamental'nost'*) (Sadovnichii, 1996). Such arguments led to

the federal authorities' decision to implement the new structure alongside the traditional five-year diploma programmes.

SCHE decided that Bachelor's programmes, lasting not less than four years and offering instruction in a broad area, were to be introduced initially on a voluntary basis by universities and academies with adequate resources and staff. In 1992/93 only 52 out of 535 HEIs introduced Bachelor's programmes in one or more specialisms (Avis, 1996). This figure suggests that from the very beginning the new structure was not very popular with HEIs, and although the implementation was to be voluntary, in fact even those HEIs which opened the new Bachelor's programmes were forced to do so through administrative and financial pressures emanating from SCHE (personal communication with a vice-rector of a HEI in Saint Petersburg, 17 April 2000; also see Sadovnichii, 1996). This shows how far the federal authorities were prepared to go to please the international donor agencies by ensuring that the 'voluntary' implementation of policies was achieved through old bureaucratic means. However, because of the political and economic problems discussed in 5.2, federal control over and enforcement of the implementation was largely loosened or lost, and by 1995 only one-fifth of Russian HEIs were offering a small number of Bachelor's programmes (Avis, 1996).

Master's programmes were to last no less than two years and to be narrow and more research-orientated. Initially, they were to be introduced exclusively by the decision of SCHE. It was envisaged that only 20% of graduates with Bachelor's degrees would proceed to Master's programmes, and this would subsequently allow a 20% reduction in the time which the average student spent in the system and thus cut costs (Tomusk, 1998). However, this reduction did not happen, mainly because the Bachelor's degree was not included in the Employment Code as equivalent to a HE degree (Code, 2001b), resulting in employers' reluctance to employ graduates with this degree and making the majority of graduates continue their education in either Master's or diploma programmes.

The new and traditional degree structures ran in parallel before 1996. In that year, however, the situation of the degree structure, in the words of the MOE official (Fedl-3), became extremely confusing, because the lack of agreement between MOE and the Ministry of Labour (MOL) on the recognition of the Bachelor's degree, which had

resulted in low employment opportunities for its holders, forced MOE to allow them to continue on not only Master's but also diploma programmes (see 6.5.3). There are no complete statistics for the number of Bachelor's degree graduates employed, but it is reported to be insignificant (Popova, 2003) as most proceeded to diploma programmes. According to the MOE data, in 1999, 87% of all graduates received a specialist's diploma, 11-12% - a Bachelor's degree and less than 2% - a Master's degree (Uchitel'skaya Gazeta, 2003b:9). Many HEIs which had introduced the new degree structure, later returned to traditional degree programmes (Matrosov, 2003).

As was the case with federal funding arrangements, the contradictions within the federal legislation and policies pursued by MOE and MOL, became apparent in the area of academic matters. Whilst MOE promoted the new degree structure, MOL rejected it. Only in 2002 MOE took some definite steps and proposed to introduce amendments to the Employment Code to recognise the Bachelor's degree as equivalent to HE (Filippov, 2002), but as of 2003 the contradiction was not resolved, and although graduates with Bachelor's degrees find some employment, their choice remains limited.

Since shortly before Russia joined the Bologna process⁵¹ in October 2003, according to which the two-tiered degree structure should encompass the entire Russian HE system by 2010 (Anisimova, 2003), debates regarding the adoption of this model have intensified, but a general consensus is still lacking. Opinions range from the view that Russia should entirely adopt the new structure to the views that joining the Europeanisation process would endanger the long traditions of Russian HE or, even that Europe should adopt the five-year Russian structure (see, for example, Kasevich, 2003; Sadovnichii, 2002; Sidorovich, 2003). In Russia, the Bologna process has so far been discussed mainly in terms of the length of undergraduate and postgraduate study and of safeguarding the fundamental character of Russian HE, but not in terms of changes in curricular matters and quality assurance, the structures of which have altered very little since the Soviet period.

⁵¹ The aims of the Bologna process are to make HE systems across European countries comparable and compatible, to take mutual advantage of their cultural diversity and different traditions in research and teaching, to promote co-operation in quality assurance, to adopt a system of easily readable and comparable degrees, to promote mobility, and to make qualifications mutually recognised (Bologna Declaration, 1999).

5.5.3.2 Curriculum and Quality Assurance

The content of academic programmes and details of curricula, as discussed in Chapter 4, were always under central control in the Soviet era, and it was not surprising that in post-Soviet Russia the 1992 Law and 1993 Constitution also accorded a substantial role to the federal authorities in determining the form and content of HE provision through the development and introduction of state standards (*gosudarstvennyye standarty*). Since all ethnically-defined republics were claiming some form of autonomy and old Soviet curricula were unsuitable, the federal authorities feared that such processes would lead to large differences in the content and quality of HE, not only between regions, but also between HEIs. As explained by interviewees, the state standards were developed and introduced in order '*to ensure the unity of educational space of the Russian Federation, quality of HE, and objective evaluation of activities of HEIs*' (Fed1-1) and were '*to serve to create a common denominator for all HEIs irrespective of their location and consequently a certain degree of comparability between academic programmes and at least a notional equivalence among qualifications received in each of the 89 regions*' (Fed1-2).

In 1993 SCHE organised a competition, inviting academics to participate in developing the first state standards. About 90 working groups were set up, mainly in central Russian HEIs, bringing together 5,000 academics, who between 1993 and 1996 formulated 600 standards for specialisms offered in Russian HEIs (Kouptsov and Tatur, 2001:42). Although the responsibility for developing, updating and approving the state standards resides with the federal government, for the first time there was wide participation of academics in the development of the standards and curricula; this participation facilitated a greater sense of 'ownership', albeit collective rather than individual, within the Russian HE community.

The state standards consist of three separate documents. The first specifies *general requirements* for HE in terms of the duration of studies and the maximum workload for students. The second lists all fields of study and specialisms to be offered by HEIs. The old Soviet list was reduced from over 400 specialisms (see 4.3.3) to about 90 broader fields of study, with many specialisms which were further broken down into sub-specialisms. The third states *requirements for the minimum content and level of training* of graduates, and provides a detailed list of disciplines, along with topics to be taught in

each specialism and the time allocated for each discipline. With the introduction of these standards in 1996, the fundamentals of the old Soviet curricular structure have been preserved.

One of the main challenges, according to one interviewee, was finding a balance in the state standards, as *'whilst emphasising unity of federal educational space, the ministry also had to take into account the decentralisation trend, thus regional/institutional variations'* (Fedl-2). This concern appears to have been the rationale for dividing the state standards into two components: federal and regional/institutional. The federal component occupies 80% of the state standards and is mandatory for all HEIs already accredited or wishing to be accredited, whilst the regional/institutional component occupies 20%, and is the prerogative of a HEI, deciding by itself or in consultation with the regional authorities (see Chapters 6 and 7).

Directly related to the state standards was the introduction of quality assurance procedures. They were first stipulated in the 1992 Law, but not introduced at the federal level until 1996. The main aim of the quality assurance procedures *'is to protect the interests of students and ensure the quality of HE provision by holding HEIs accountable in meeting the requirements of the state standards'* (Fedl-1). Tomusk (2000), on the other hand, argues that quality assurance became meaningful in Russia only when the federal ministry had lost control over a large part of the HE system in the first half of the 1990s, and was implemented primarily for the purposes of tightening the grip over the further expansion of private HEIs (Tomusk, 2000).

Quality assurance in Russia is a complex process consisting of three separate procedures: licensing, attestation and accreditation (Article 33, Law, 1992; Article 10, Law, 1996). Every new HEI and specialism should first be 'assessed' in terms of its available facilities (physical plant, equipment and study material), financial resources, and number and qualifications of academic staff. HEIs receive a license only after meeting the minimum requirements, developed by MOE. This license allows them to start the educational process. Attestation is a procedure by which an attestation commission, appointed by MOE, ensures that the content and quality of training of graduates in a particular specialism meets the state standards. It takes place once every five years, and for a specialism to be attested at least half of the graduates should

successfully pass the final examinations. Accreditation, based on the outcomes of the attestation procedure, is the official recognition by the federal government of the fact that the content and quality of training of graduates in a particular specialism meets the state standards. Only after receiving a certificate of state accreditation, valid for five years, are HEIs allowed to issue state-endorsed degrees in accredited specialisms.

Although by the 1992 and 1996 Laws quality assurance procedures were to be carried out by a State Attestation Agency, independent of MOE, this has never been established. Since it took several years to develop methodologies and mechanisms for federal quality assurance, the licensing function initially fell into the purview of the regional authorities, but in 1996 it was revoked by MOE. One reason for not creating an independent quality assurance agency, according to one source, was the lack of funds at the federal level (Gevorkyan, 2003b). However, in the words of one of the top MOE officials, the reason was not the lack of funds, but rather a deliberate policy of MOE, as a *'quality assurance agency cannot function independently of the HE system governing body'* (Fedl-3). The same interviewee continued that an independent agency is unlikely to be created in the future, and that the provision made in the 1992 and 1996 Laws should be amended (Fedl-3).

The current quality assurance procedures are confusing and controversial. As each procedure (licensing and attestation) takes place at a different time, the certificates issued for the period of five years often do not correspond with one another. Data requested separately for each procedure always duplicate one another, making the 'red tape' at the institutional level tedious (D-7(SS)*). Furthermore, due to the time constraints and insufficient number of assessors, attestation commissions often have to rely on self-evaluation data, prepared by HEIs, and limit their mission to a formal visit to a HEI and a brief review of paperwork without an in-depth evaluation of the quality of teaching (Shadrikov *et al.*, 2001:31). These limits allow many HEIs to distort the true picture and provide unreliable and untrue information in institutional self-evaluation papers (Filippov, 2002; Gevorkyan, 2003b). This practice, however, originates from the Soviet era during which, "the institutions never accepted the reports to the Ministries and visiting commissions as ... relating to their real functioning, [as] the external agencies had to be provided with the 'right answers' that could be very different from reality" (Tomusk, 1997:174). Last but not least, the current practices have been

discredited by cases of politically powerful and well-connected rectors having “their own channels to negotiate accreditation decisions even if the formal requirements are not met” (Tomusk, 2000:178; also see Dneprov, 2003; Molodtsova, 2003).

In 2000, MOE slightly modified the procedures, so that after their very first accreditation, HEIs are subject to an integrated assessment (*kompleksnaya otsenka*), which combines all three procedures in one exercise (Polokhov *et al.*, 2002). However, neither the essence nor the content has been altered. In the light of the Bologna process, the issue of quality assurance is gaining prominence, but it is fair to say that in Russia it is increasingly seen as an instrument for penalising weak HEIs and academic units and closing them down. MOE already announced that it would be stricter and act as the ‘quality police’ (*politsiya kachestva*) (Rudenko, 2002).

Thus it is evident from the discussion above that in all three HE areas, the period between 1991 and 2003 witnessed contradictory developments. Initial decentralisation and loss of control on the part of the federal authorities have been followed by a recent reversal of the process.

5.6 Summary and Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the post-1991 reform measures formulated and implemented by the federal authorities. When societal and political interest were lacking in the aftermath of the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the 1992 Law on Education and 1996 Law on HE were enacted, defining general principles of state policy, which despite being contradictory provided Russian HEIs with some sense of direction and granted them some autonomy. However, the federal authorities failed to formulate and adopt a stage-by-stage reform and decentralisation programme, agreed on by the majority in the system, because of the paramount controversy over HE funding and of political game-playing between various government bodies and the Parliament.

The discussion in this chapter has revealed that many features of Soviet HE regulation, which the reform set out to break with, largely remained intact. Despite the rhetoric of decentralisation, the federal authorities retained a great deal of power in all three HE areas under consideration; nonetheless, in practice political and economic uncertainty in the early 1990s led to confusion about who was responsible for what and resulted in the

federal authorities' losing or loosening control. The main outcome of this period has been an almost unregulated expansion of HE through commercialisation and the widespread violation of federal legislation by HEIs. Although the survival and expansion of the system are perceived as achievements in themselves, they fail to mitigate the overall dismal picture of largely failed attempts at HE reform.

From the mid-1990s onwards the decentralisation process has been largely reversed, particularly in academic and financial matters, in accord with federal determination to re-establish strong central state power. It can be argued such a power is indeed necessary for reducing the political and economic chaos, corruption and the abuse of legislation, but there is a danger that measures undertaken by the federal authorities may endanger even the modest successes of post-1991 Russian HE. The chapter that follows discusses whether and how the federal developments have affected the HE sector of one of Russia's regions.

CHAPTER SIX

HE REFORM AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL

6.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to examine the HE policies in a specific regional HE sector, that of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia). The chapter starts with a description of the nature of the region, in Section 6.2. Within this contextual background, Section 6.3 presents the major structural changes that have taken place in Sakha HE since 1991, and shows that the sector has significantly expanded. Whether this has been a result of deliberate regional policies is explored in Section 6.4 by looking at the HE goals set by the regional authorities and at the normative development of the regional policy. This discussion leads to the analysis in Section 6.5 of the actual process of regional policy implementation, as well as the impact of the federal policies discussed in Chapter 5 on Sakha HEIs in three areas: governance and management, finance, and academic matters. Section 6.6 concludes this chapter by arguing that development patterns at the regional level have been similar to those at the federal level, but in Sakha, contrary to most Russian HEIs, HE expansion has been driven by the deliberate action of the regional government, which exercised a considerable degree of control over regional HE through its ‘power of the purse’.

6.2 The Nature of the Region

The Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) is situated in the north-eastern part of the Russian Federation and is the largest region of the country, occupying one-fifth of its territory (see Appendix 1). It is administratively divided into 33 constituent districts, and has a population of about one million people, with more than a quarter living in the city of Yakutsk, the capital of the republic.

In tune with the times, as discussed in 5.2, the republic declared its sovereignty within the Russian Federation in September 1990, and renamed the Yakut Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic first as the ‘Yakut-Sakha Soviet Socialist Republic’, then as the ‘Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)’⁵² (Declaration, 1990; Reid, 2002). Under Soviet rule,

⁵² ‘Sakha’ is the name which the Yakuts call themselves, whilst ‘Yakut’ is the Russian designation for the Sakha. Although the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) is better known under its old name, Yakutia, the name Sakha is now being increasingly used. Both names are used in this study interchangeably.

Yakutia was a supplier of raw materials to the centre and did not benefit from its abundant natural resources. However, shortly before and immediately after the disintegration of the USSR, the political elites in Yakutsk began to demand new powers from the centre, and wished to move towards more autonomy in political and economic spheres. The main reason behind these demands was that Sakha produced 90% of Russia's diamonds and 40% of Russia's gold, and was one of the few regions that put more into the federal budget than it received from it (Balzer and Vinokurova, 1996).

The federal centre feared that if the Russian Federation were to break apart in the same way as the USSR, Sakha, in theory at least, was one of the places where this might start to happen. Fearing such disintegration, Yeltsin agreed to negotiate and to reach compromise with the Sakha leadership. After winning considerable economic privileges and tax concessions, the republic signed the 1992 Federation Treaty. For the first time in its history, Yakutsk now controlled 25% of its diamond and 30% of its gold profits, and gained the right to deal directly with foreign bidders like De Beers without interference from Moscow (Balzer and Vinokurova, 1996). It also won permission to retain federal taxes and pay for federal programmes directly on its territory, rather than through Moscow (Reid, 2002). This allowed the Sakha government, independently of the federal authorities, to invest in public sectors, including HE.

In September 1992, before the ratification of the federal Constitution, boosted by these victories concerning economic and tax benefits, the regional Parliament enacted a regional Constitution, declaring that Sakha had the right to leave the Russian Federation, that it could form its own army, that its natural resources belonged to the Sakha population, that regional legislation took precedence over the federal legislation, and that Sakha had joint official state language status with Russian (Constitution, 1992). All these changes were driven by Mikhail Nikolaev, who was elected the first Sakha President in December 1991 thanks to his platform of 'sovereignty' within Russia, national revival and mild economic reform. He was re-elected for a second term in office in 1996. His autocratic style of leadership, however, suppressed the fragile political opposition and the democratic movement, and discontinued public criticism of his leadership (Reid, 2002).

After Putin came to power in March 2000 and acquired the right to dismiss regional leaders (see 5.2.2), Sakha was forced to bring many clauses of its regional constitution and other laws in accord with the federal framework. In December 2001 Moscow prevented Nikolaev from seeking third term in office, and used all its political resources to have its favoured candidate, Vyacheslav Shtyrov, elected as the new Sakha President. The declaration of sovereignty of Sakha is no longer recognised by the federal centre (Antonov and Neustroeva, 2003). Although Sakha has been able to retain most of its economic benefits, with various disputes with Moscow being resolved by back-room negotiation rather than in the courts (Reid, 2002), a very large proportion of regionally collected taxes now goes to the federal budget (Ambros'ev, 2002). It is within this context that the Sakha HE reform has been implemented since 1991.

6.3 Post-1991 HE Developments

Similar to the federation-wide development patterns, the Sakha HE sector has grown considerably since 1990 in terms of numbers of HEIs, students and academics. Table 6.1 shows this expansion.

Table 6.1 The Sakha State HE System between 1990-2002

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
State HEIs in Russia	514	519	535	548	553	569	573	578	580	590	607	621	655
State HEIs in Sakha	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	4	5	8	9	15*
Students (Total)	8000	8100	8100	8700	9700	10800	11700	12600	14800	15700	20800	25300	36200**
Admissions	1873	1964	2006	2411	2543	3011	3063	2951	3645	4248	6059	7422	10338
Graduations	1226	1314	1182	1136	1129	1216	1461	1597	1777	1977	2270	2457	3761
Students per 10,000 population	72	74	76	82	94	105	115	126	141	161	214	260	369
Full-time Academics	700	683	727	N/A	N/A	900	N/A	N/A	1337	1277	1600	1830	2100

Notes: I).Data as of the beginning of each academic year; II).numbers of students, admissions and graduations include fee-paying students; III).*-it is most likely that this number includes branches of regional HEIs as independent from their founding institutions, as another source indicates that the number of state HEIs increased from 2 in 1990/91 to 9 in 2002/03 (SCSRS,2003:65). This has also been confirmed by the regional government official, Regl-3; IV). ** - this number appears to include students studying in HEIs in other parts of Russia through the Sakha government-funded training programme (see 6.5.1); V). N/A – not available.

Source: compiled by the author. State HEIs in Russia: SCS,2003:397; state HEIs in Sakha: SCS,2003:156-157 (for 1990, 2001 and 2002), CMSE, 2002 (for 1991 and 1992); Nogovitsyn, 2000:25-27 (for 1993-2000); students: SCS,2001(Vol.2):214-215 (for 1990-2000) and SCS,2003:289 (for 2001 and 2002); admissions: SCS,2001(Vol.2):218-219 (for 1990-2000) and SCS,2003:293 (for 2001 and 2002); graduations: SCS,2001(Vol.2):222-223 (for 1990-2000) and SCS,2003:299 (for 2001 and 2002); students per 10,000: SCS,2001(Vol.2):225 (for 1990-2000) and SCSRS,2003:65 (for 2001 and 2002); full-time academics: SCS,2003:195 (for 1990, 1995, 2000 and 2002), SCSRS,1994:18 (for 1991), SCSRS,1996:103 (for 1992), Informika, 2002 (for 1998 and 1999); SCSRS, 2003:67 (for 2001).

Until 1993 the Sakha HE sector comprised only two institutions: Yakutsk State University (YSU), founded in 1956, and the Agricultural Institute, founded in 1985. Since the regions acquired the right to initiate the establishment of their own HEIs by the 1992 Law on Education, the Sakha government has established seven new HEIs and a number of branches of the two old regional HEIs. In parallel, the development of a network of branches of private and state HEIs located outside the republic is evident in Sakha. In 2000 there were 22 branches of other state and private HEIs operating on the territory of Sakha, but they enrolled only about a thousand students (Nogovitsyn, 2000).

Table 6.1 further shows that there was a significant growth in the numbers of total enrolments in state HEIs. Between 1990 and 2002 their numbers increased four-fold. One of the notable contrasts between HE development at the federal and regional levels is that whilst at the federation-wide level the numbers of enrolments and admissions declined between 1990 and 1994 (see Table 5.1), in Sakha their numbers grew constantly. During that period, only one-fourth of Russia's regions experienced an increase in regional enrolments, whilst the cities where the concentration of HEIs was the highest suffered a dramatic fall in HE admissions with Moscow (-23.2%) and St. Petersburg (-19.2%) being hit the hardest, but by 1998 they recovered their pre-1985 levels of enrolment (Bain, 2003).

The increase in Sakha can be attributed to a number of factors. First, the economic and financial difficulties of the majority of the Sakha population made a large number of applicants choose local HEIs, as the cost of travelling to and living in central cities grew sharply. Second, social problems, such as high crime rates in metropolitan cities, made parents reluctant to let their children study in HEIs outside the region. Third, the introduction of tuition fees also contributed to the growth in overall enrolment numbers. Last but not least, a greater regional government commitment to financing more places in HEIs and in particular to financial support for students, encouraged more students to enter local HEIs, whilst 'sovereignty' revived a sense of patriotism in the region. In contrast to constant growth in enrolments and admissions, the number of graduations declined until 1994, because of high dropouts among part-time students before starting to grow again.

Table 6.1 also shows that although there was a significant increase in enrolments in state HEIs, student numbers per 10,000 of the population remained less than the federation average (see Table 5.1). In 1998, for example, Sakha was in the 58th position among Russia's 89 regions in terms of the number of students per 10,000 of the population; in 2001 it moved up to the 48th position, and in 2002 surpassed the federation average, reaching 369 students per 10,000 of the population against 364 students per 10,000 in Russia as a whole (SCS, 2001:225; SCS, 2003:397). However, statistical sources for the number of students in 2002/03 appear to include students from Sakha studying in HEIs outside the republic through the special Sakha government-funded training programme (see 6.5.1.1). It is also evident from Table 6.1 that the number of full-time academics in state HEIs tripled between 1990 and 2002, but did not keep pace with the rate of enrolment growth, resulting in a slight deterioration in the staff/student ratio.

The evidence above suggests that development patterns at the federal and regional levels were similar. It can be argued, however, that whilst at the federation-wide level, the expansion of the state HE sector was largely driven by institutional attempts to survive financial austerity and economic problems (Shattock, 2004), in Sakha HE massification and expansion was a deliberate government policy, albeit implemented in chaotic fashion.

6.4 Decentralisation Policy at the Regional Level

6.4.1 Setting Regional Goals

After declaring the republic's sovereignty in 1990, the regional government realised that the development of human resources was the only way to upgrade the regional economic position from a supplier of raw materials into a region which was industrially productive. In 1992, a presidential decree declared that HE was a priority area in the policies of the regional government (DHES, 2001:4). In this decree it was made explicit that regional HEIs should play a major role in contributing to regional economic growth and manpower training. For example, in the early 1990s engineering and polytechnic education were favoured. Although the main motive for developing regional HE in Sakha was utilitarian, it was also strengthened by the political and cultural impetus associated with the revival of local identities, cultures, and languages. Thus individual development and HEIs as centres of learning and culture were also present on the

regional HE agenda, but were somewhat over-shadowed by the utilitarian goal, and were secondary to manpower training.

This primary commitment toward the contribution of HEIs to economic growth and manpower training was driven by a number of contextual factors. First, having received substantial economic powers the Sakha government now had to manage its own natural resources and, as a consequence, to see to the training of manpower for the regional industrial and technological sectors, especially after the collapse of the central planning system. Second, whilst the Sakha remained pre-eminent in the poorer agricultural sector, the industrial and technological sectors were traditionally dominated by the Slavic newcomer population. Social and economic concerns after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, however, led to some migration of the Slavic population from the republic⁵³. They were neither rapidly replaced, as previously, nor staffed by the two local HEIs, which did not train specialists for industrial and technological sectors. Thus the Sakha authorities became concerned that if they called for complete independence from Russia, like Chechnya and Tatarstan, the Slavic population, concentrated mainly in the western and southern industrialised districts of Sakha, would leave in far greater numbers, and thus harm the regional economy. At the same time, the regional leaders realised that a new manpower training system had to be developed to train specialists from the local population and meet the demands of future industrial and technological regeneration.

6.4.2 Development of Regional Policy

The 'Parade of Sovereignties' in the early 1990s opened up not only new opportunities but also new forms of responsibility, and encouraged regional authorities to emerge as dynamic alternatives to the federal control in education. Since a coherent programme for the reform of various sectors of education at the federation-wide level was lacking, and due to the pre-occupation of the federal authorities with the more pressing issues of political and economic chaos at the centre, many regions considered that regional educational institutions could not be left to their own devices. However, since every region has pursued its own agenda in a national policy vacuum, decentralisation and regionalism in Russia have been fragmentary rather than unifying forces. As Kerr

⁵³ As in many areas of Siberia, most Slavs came to Yakutia as temporary workers to make a "long rouble" and then return to their homelands. However, in the early 1990s the system of material benefits and better pay for hardship conditions in the region collapsed, causing the newcomer population to leave the region.

(1998) argues, the lack of a single federal programme and the inadequacy of federal funding resulted in extremely diverse policies in the regions, as budgetary disparities among them created an increasingly confusing and chaotic landscape. The programmes for reform of various sectors of education developed by the regions varied highly in their goals and objectives, intentions, mechanisms of implementation and time frames. Whilst some programmes were presented as a mere list of desired outcomes, others were carefully worked out and publicly discussed (Webber, 2000).

As for the Republic of Sakha, this chapter will reveal that the first Sakha President, Nikolaev, was closely involved in regional HE affairs. Many changes were initiated personally by him, and in the 1990s he issued over eighty decrees regulating various affairs of the regional HEIs (DHES, 2001; Nogovitsyn, 2000). In January 1992, for the first time in Sakha a separate government body directly responsible for HE, the Ministry of Science and Professional Education (MSPE)⁵⁴, was set up. MSPE provides the overall regulation for all HEIs, and is also responsible for several research institutes and pre-HE institutions. Its main normative and operational functions include formulating policies for all regional HEIs, allocating regional funds to HEIs directly subordinated to it, and participating in the licensing and attestation of HEIs together with the federal MOE. Until 1996, it was also responsible for licensing regional HEIs independently of the federal SCHE.

Following federation-wide practice, however, several recently established regional HEIs came under the jurisdiction of other branch ministries, the Ministry of General Education and the Ministry of Culture. These ministries are primarily responsible for allocating funds to their subordinated HEIs. One of the innovations was the establishment of the new Department for Personnel Training (DPT) under the President of Sakha in 1992 (DHES, 2001:6), created with the aim of financing the training of specialists for the needs of the regional economy in HEIs outside the republic (see 6.5.1.1). The regional government's role in HE also extends to the Ministry of Finance (RMOF) which develops regional HE budget and finances Sakha HEIs.

⁵⁴ When it was established MSPE was called the State Committee for HE and Science (SCHES). In 1998, SCHES was briefly renamed the Department of HE and Science (DHES), but returned its original name in 2001. In 2002, it was given its current name of MSPE. To avoid confusion, the current name of MSPE is used throughout the thesis.

Before the Republic of Sakha adopted its own HE reform programme in December 1995, the Sakha Parliament had promulgated its own educational legislation, referred to as the regional law, in June of that year (Law, 1995). This became possible after the federal authorities allowed the regions to enact their own laws and decrees, but within the federally-set legal boundaries. However, the regional law made no reference to the federal authorities and their role in regulating the whole education system in Sakha, apart from a brief mention of the federal component of the state standards (Article 7). A further examination of the text of the regional law reveals that it is identical to the 1992 Law, except for substituting the term 'federal' with the notion 'regional' in the regional law. Furthermore, in the regional law the Sakha authorities accorded themselves exactly the same powers and responsibilities as the federal authorities in the 1992 Law (Article 28, Law 1992; Articles 30-31, Law, 1995).

Indeed, reading the regional law on education makes one wonder whether it is the legislation of a completely independent state, not part of a federation. In this respect, it should be noted that the same contradictions were evident in other regions which promulgated their own educational legislation. Van den Berg (1994) points out that in the educational law of the Republic of Tatarstan, no reference was made to the federal authorities, and the legislation appeared to be very similar to the 1992 Law. Such contradictions and ambiguities have stemmed from the unclear dividing line in the 1992 Law between the responsibilities of federal and regional authorities for many aspects of education (see Chapter 8), which are indicative not only of the uncertainty and confusion of Russia in the 1990s, but also typify the political power struggle between the federal centre and regions.

The fact that the regions simply duplicated the 1992 Law on Education, and assumed exactly the same responsibilities as the federal level, could make one think that it would provide the whole HE sector with some degree of coherence across various regions. However, since the financial provisions of the 1992 Law were not implemented by the federal government, and given that most regions had no capacity to even partially replace the federal centre in financing HEIs, the uniformity of educational legislation across regions could not in practice ensure the equal implementation of the provisions of the 1992 Law or the coherence of regional policies. Thus the lack of mechanisms for implementation and the impotence of most regional governments to finance various

sectors of education turned their regional legislation into a mere façade or simply a decorative attribute of ‘sovereignty’ and ‘regional autonomy’, as despite the constant decline in federal funding, for the great majority of Russian HEIs this remained the main source of revenue, at least in the first half of the 1990s.

The government of the Republic of Sakha was one of the few exceptions in the Russian Federation, in being financially capable of supporting its HE and other public sectors. In December 1995 the Sakha regional government adopted a programme for HE development for the period 1995-2000. The overall cost of the programme was estimated at 782 billion roubles, out of which 720 billion roubles was spent on improving the infrastructure of HEIs (new buildings, accommodation for staff and students, sports facilities, laboratories and equipment), whilst the remainder was directed toward increasing student numbers and expanding existing HEIs (Government of Sakha, 1996). It was believed that a better infrastructure would improve the quality of HE, allow more student places, and help achieve the ultimate goals of qualified manpower training and economic growth for the region. Whilst a better infrastructure is desirable, smart buildings do not necessarily engender high quality teaching and good courses. Nevertheless, the clear aim of the programme and the concentration of regional funds primarily on one pressing area of HE development are notable. The outcome of the programme is an impressive improvement in the infrastructure of Sakha HEIs, particularly that of YSU, which has one of the best physical plants in the country (Report, 2001).

The programme, however, was not universally accepted. When I worked at YSU, I often heard academics saying that instead of investing regional money in the infrastructure, the Sakha President and government should ensure that academic salaries were paid on time, and, even better, raise these salaries. However, as time passed and as many academics began to enjoy better working conditions, whilst some also moved to new flats or houses, they seemed to be increasingly convinced that the narrow focus of the programme on infrastructure development was at the time a forward-looking policy (IM-2*, H-8(L)*). The efforts of the Sakha authorities were also noticed by the federal MOE, as in July 2000 the federal ministry held a meeting of its supreme decision-making body, Collegium (*Kollegiya*), in Yakutsk, where MOE officials praised the Sakha authorities for providing substantial support to HEIs and developing policies for

regional HE (Collegium, 2000). This praise heightened the profile of Sakha HE at the federation-wide level, and gave a new impetus for further development.

During 1999 and 2000, when the National Doctrine of Education was being publicly discussed in Russia, MSPE outlined its vision for the future of Sakha HE for the period 2001-2006, referred to as the 2001 regional programme (Government of Sakha, 1999 and 2001). Although the new programme was not widely discussed in the regional press, and consultation with the HE community was limited, the fact that some institutional managers and academics were co-opted to take part in its formulation suggests that it reflected the views of the wider HE community. Since the 2001 regional programme was based on the draft of the Doctrine (see 5.4.2), it presented, like that document, a myriad of unfocused goals, mainly concerned with achieving high quality teaching and learning comparable with the 'world HE standard'. However, it is not clear what is meant by the 'world HE standard' as "not only do systems differ from one country to another, but those systems themselves are constantly being revised and changed" (OECD, 1999:62).

During discussion of both the 2001 regional programme and the Doctrine at a regional conference in Yakutsk at the end of 1999, I witnessed a great degree of apathy and lack of interest on the part of the academic community. Since the Sakha President and many senior federal and regional government officials attended the conference, it could have become an arena for the academic community to openly express their views and concerns. However, virtually without discussion, all participants unanimously voted for both documents. Interestingly, I later discovered in the course of conducting interviews for this study that in reality many institutional managers and academics did not entirely support either of the documents, but yet voted for their adoption.

As for the Doctrine, a federal policy document, it can be argued that the academic community in Sakha were disillusioned by the experience of previous federal promises, as there had been numerous laws, decrees and decisions, which promised a lot, but indeed delivered very little. The Doctrine was perceived by them as yet another unrealisable declarative document, which, regardless of whether academics voted for or against it, would not change the situation in HE. As for the regional programme, academics voted for it as it promised yet more regional funds, more student places,

further expansion of the system, and further improvement of the infrastructure - all things which had been promised before and delivered.

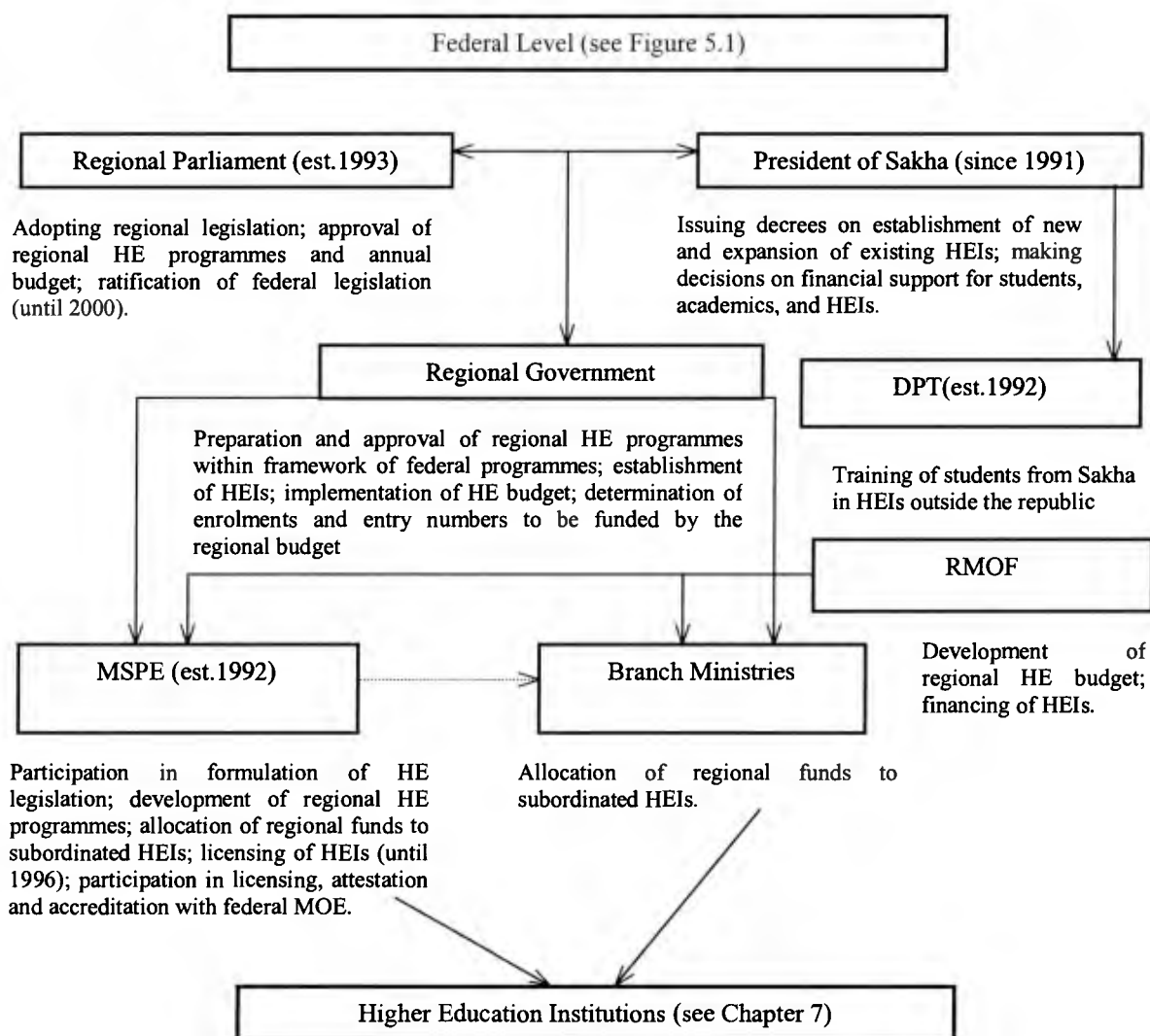
The main criticism of the 2001 regional programme, expressed by many interviewees, was once again that it was more concerned with the further quantitative expansion of Sakha HE than with more important issues of HE quality, the retraining of academics, improvement of governance and management structures and practices, or development of regional/institutional components of the state standards (for example, D-2(L)*; H-2(L)*). The programme envisaged introducing some form of HE to each of the 33 constituent districts of the republic, considerably increasing the number of students by admitting 60% of secondary school leavers into HEIs, and further development of the infrastructure. Boosted by praise of the pre-2000 regional HE policies by the federal MOE officials, the Sakha President, Nikolaev, started to single-handedly introduce measures envisaged by the 2001 regional programme even before it was formally approved by the regional government and legalised by the regional Parliament (see 6.5.1.2). However, with the change in the regional leadership in December 2001, further realisation of the programme appeared unlikely.

Since 2001, the Sakha regional budget has shrunk considerably because of the transfer of most regional taxes to the centre, making it no longer possible for Sakha to invest in HE as well as other public sectors at the same level as previously. The top priorities of the new Sakha leadership have also shifted, to emphasise economic development through major reforms in industrial and mining sectors. In February 2002, at a meeting with the HE community, the new Sakha President, Shtyrov, made it explicit that from now on the regional HEIs should work at improving quality and efficiency, be more aggressive in exploring external opportunities, and stop hoping that the regional government would release more funds for their future expansion (Yakutsk Vechernii, 2002).

Figure 6.1 shows interactions and provides a brief summary of functions of the main actors at the regional level in Sakha. Not included in Figure 6.1 is the Regional Council of Rectors (RCR) of Sakha HEIs, founded in 1998 (Sivtsev, 2000), as it does not in practice function (Regl-5), and the detailed list of all Regional Councils of Rectors

found on the website of the Russian Union of Rectors (RUR), does not contain any data on Sakha RCR.

Figure 6.1 Post-1991 HE Governance and Management at the Regional Level



Notes: I). All regional HE legislation and policies should be based on the federal legal framework;
 II). (---->) - The regional MSPE provides an overall regulation for the regional HE sector, and the regional branch ministries should conform to the regional MSPE framework.
 Source: developed by the author from Law (1992); Law (1995); various decrees of the Sakha President and government (DHES, 2000).

The next section examines how the regional policies for manpower training and the expansion of Sakha HE through the creation of new structures and institutions and the provision of regional funding were implemented. It also analyses the impact of federal reforms in academic matters, discussed in Chapter 5, on Sakha HEIs.

6.5 Implementation of Federal and Regional Policies

The establishment of the regional MSPE in January 1992 sought to introduce a new tier and structure for the governance, organisation and management of regional HE (DHES, 2001:3), and was to constitute a real break with the centralised control that previously characterised the sector. In the absence of a clear federal vision for HE development in the early 1990s, the Sakha authorities started to expand existing HEIs and to adjust traditional manpower training patterns to new regional demands, creating new structures and institutions with a specific commitment to meeting regional needs. The Sakha case reveals that the regional HE policies were hurriedly implemented in a ‘top-down’ manner without prior consultation with the HE community, and despite the adoption of several policy documents and the enactment of numerous presidential and governmental decrees, the introduction of a regional HE agenda into the federal system did not have a strong regional planning framework. The developments were largely driven by the Sakha President, Nikolaev, and did not bring together regional stakeholders to co-govern and co-manage Sakha HE.

6.5.1 HE Governance and Management

6.5.1.1 Training Manpower outside Sakha

As noted in 6.4.2, in June 1992 the Sakha President established the Department for Personnel Training (DPT), a unique structure not found in any other region of Russia (Muchin, 1999). The rationale for establishing such a structure was “to train and develop manpower for the regional economy” (DHES, 2001:6) by selecting and sending students to HEIs offering academic programmes which were not available in HEIs in Sakha, but were necessary in the emerging market conditions and for regional economic regeneration. The number of students to be trained in HEIs outside the region is determined by DPT on the basis of manpower needs provided by various regional branch ministries and agreements between DPT and HEIs participating in the scheme. In 1999/2000, over 4,000 Sakha students were studying outside the republic through the DPT-funded scheme (Muchin, 2000:100).

The Sakha government commits itself to fully funding the costs of students’ training, including tuition and accommodation fees, stipends, and travel expenses. In return, in their first year all students sign contracts with DPT and branch ministries stating that after their graduation they will return to the republic for at least three years and thus

contribute to the regional economy. However, there is currently an overriding concern about this scheme, as the number of students preferring to remain in central Russian cities after their graduation is constantly increasing. This state of affairs reflects the interplay of several different but interrelated factors.

First, large metropolitan cities offer HE graduates more opportunities both professionally and personally, and ambitious young people from the provinces have always striven for life in cities such as Moscow and Saint Petersburg, where living standards are higher than in provincial areas. Many students also work part-time during their studies, and may be offered a full-time post by the time of graduation. Second, although students theoretically commit themselves to returning to Sakha or, otherwise, reimbursing the regional government for the funds that have been paid for their HE, there are no legal mechanisms for forcing them to do so, as these would be seen as limiting citizens' freedom and right to choose where they want to live and work. Third, the growth in the number of work places in Sakha has not kept pace with the increase in the number of HE graduates, and thus not all graduates returning to Sakha can find posts. An oversupply of specialists with HE in Sakha and Russia in general forces many graduates to take up work not related to their specialisms or below their qualification levels, or to be unemployed (DFERS, 2004; Polunin, 2003).

The approach taken by DPT to this problem can be said to have been negligent as despite their promises they have never monitored the career paths of graduates. The regional branch ministries, which signed contracts with students guaranteeing future employment after their return to Sakha, often told them that there were none of the promised vacancies (Khaltanova, 2003). The data provided by the ministries on the needs of the labour market also appeared to be unreliable. For example, one of the interviewees said that when providing data to DPT, *'branch ministries often exaggerate the numbers needed for their sectors of regional economy, so that they can have more places in central HEIs to increase the chances of entering HE for their children or other family members'* (Regl-5).

Due to these problems, the scheme has long been criticised, but the Sakha government has mainly presented it as a success story, focusing on simple statistics, such as the numbers of HEIs involved in the scheme, numbers of students and numbers of graduates

(see, for example, Muchin, 1999 and 2000). No in-depth study of the effectiveness of this scheme and the contribution of the graduates to the regional economy has been conducted. Neither has there been a statistical analysis of the number of graduates entering the regional labour market, the employers of graduates or the proportion of graduates employed according to their specialisms. In this regard, the interviewee Regl-3 commented:

The DPT scheme as presently operating has outlived its usefulness. For the republic, it has been a considerable waste of funds, as many students do not return to Sakha. I do recognise that studying outside the republic is an important experience in itself, ..., but no government can bear such a burden if a great number of students do not come back after their graduation. We cannot force graduates to return, but should create incentives for them to return and work here, such as better salaries, living conditions and further professional development ... or work out other mechanisms.

With the new regional leadership and the reduction of the regional budget, however, the future of DPT is unclear. The current Sakha President, Shtyrov, proposed closing it down, but as a result of pressure emanating from the students, parents, DPT senior officers, and former Sakha President, it was decided that DPT should continue its activities, albeit on a smaller scale, and develop a new measure to prevent graduates from remaining in central Russian cities (Khaltanova, 2003).

Since June 2003, students are asked to sign a second contract in their final year at a HEI, this time not only with DPT and regional branch ministries, but also with their prospective employers in Sakha. The regional government has set up a committee for assigning posts in public sectors to graduates of the scheme, and at its monthly meetings officials from branch ministries report on the number of new specialists employed by their sectors (Khaltanova, 2003). The proposed measure, however, strongly resembles the job assignments for graduates that existed in the centralised system, and in market conditions is unlikely to work. Furthermore, in the current context of the oversupply of HE graduates, this measure may lead to serious social problems, notably the unemployment of the less educated and a hierarchy of salaries unrelated to the level of education, as the opportunity for employers to hire over-qualified applicants at low salaries puts those with pre-HE qualifications in an unfavourable competitive situation. Thus, instead of introducing a new mechanism through, for example, providing student loans, the Sakha government decided to improve the effectiveness of the scheme in an

old bureaucratic fashion. Whether this measure will have its desired effect remains to be seen.

6.5.1.2 Expanding the HE Sector

After the establishment of DPT, the regional government established its first regional HEI, the Higher School of Music, in 1993 (DHES, 2001:80). Although the new out-of-city site of this institution was initially intended as a residential complex for government officials and their families, following public criticism directed at the regional government it was decided that the site should be used for a different enterprise. Subsequently, a new HEI was opened. The regional government provided substantial resources for the first institution established solely by the region; its establishment fitted perfectly the ideology of ‘sovereignty’, which also sought to create a ‘cultured’ and ‘civilised’ local population

After the establishment of the Higher School of Music, no new HEI was established until 1998. Instead, regional efforts and funds were directed toward the establishment of new structures within YSU (see Chapter 7). To meet the needs of the industrial sector, the Sakha government established two branches of YSU in two industrial cities: the coal-mining city of Neryungri in 1992, and the diamond-mining city of Mirny in 1994. The policy of creating branches in predominantly Slavic areas of the region was implemented in a ‘top-down’ manner by the regional government, and its rationale has been discussed in 6.4.1.

The greatest HE development in Sakha took place in the late 1990s and early 2000s. The regional expansion policies were similar to those in other regions, i.e. opening new HEIs by upgrading the status of existing pre-HE institutions, and opening branches and representative offices of HEIs within existing pre-HE institutions, including secondary schools. The rationales revolved around training manpower, widening access and, ultimately, regional economic growth. One of the innovations, however, became the establishment by the Sakha authorities of entirely new HEIs outside the region, geared towards regional needs and exclusively for students from Sakha.

In 1998 the Sakha President issued a decree on the establishment of a new Yakut International University in Moscow (DHES, 2001:45). The university was established in co-operation with and in the premises of the Moscow Institute of Economics,

Statistics and Information Science in order “to train high-calibre specialists in economics and finance and offer HE of an international standard” (DHES, 2001:45). In March 2000 the Sakha President issued a decree establishing a second university outside the republic, the Yakut University of High Technologies in St. Petersburg (DHES, 2001:58). The university was established a month later in co-operation with a number of HEIs in St. Petersburg: the State Electrotechnical University, the University of Technology and Design, and the Academy for Engineering and Economics (Torgovkin, 2000).

The fact that no funding was assigned for these two new universities in the regional budgets for the relevant years suggests that their establishment was an unplanned move hurriedly pushed through by the Sakha President and a group of interested parties, and although the decrees stated these universities to be non-state institutions, the RMOF was instructed to provide funds from the regional budget for their organisation (DHES, 2001:45, 58; Regl-3). It should be emphasised, however, that it has become common in Russia for state agencies, HEIs or enterprises to establish non-state HEIs, as federal legislation allows this⁵⁵. For non-state HEIs, such an alliance is necessary in symbolic terms to gain stability and social acceptance as well as for bringing real, palpable assets (Suspitsin, 2003). In practice, though, the status of such institutions is unclear. It is also highly likely that involvement of politically influential founders in HEIs helps avoid problems in licensing and accreditation, even if HEIs do not meet the federal requirements, especially since, as noted in Chapter 5, it is an open secret that corrupt practices are now used in federal quality assurance procedures by officials and politically powerful rectors (see, for example, Dneprov, 2003; Tomusk, 2000).

The rationale behind the creation, according to Regl-3, of these two universities outside the republic ‘*should be read between the lines*’, as it appears to have been an outcome of political negotiation and manipulation (corruption?), involving the regional government officials in Sakha and municipal government officials and academics in

⁵⁵ It was reported that almost half of all non-state HEIs were established by state and private co-founders, a quarter solely by state agencies and state-run enterprises, and a quarter by private individuals (Suspitsin, 2003)

Moscow and St. Petersburg⁵⁶, apparently for the purposes of political dividends for the Sakha President and personal enrichment for academics and officials in Moscow and St.Petersburg (IM-5; D-2(L)*). Despite such claims, however, another rationale might have been at play. As noted, creating a 'cultured' and 'civilised' local population was one of the regional government's goals, and establishing new universities in Moscow and St.Petersburg may have been seen by the regional authorities as providing the students from Sakha with necessary cultural as well as educational experience. Thus the motives may have been very mixed.

In the territory of Sakha, new HEIs were also created. In 1999, the regional government founded the Institute of Physical Education in one of the rural districts by upgrading the physical education college (DHES, 2001:121). The establishment of this institution was criticised *post-facto* on the grounds that changing the status of an institution from college to institute does not automatically upgrade its quality (see, for example, Filippov, 1999). In 2000, two new HEIs were established, the Institute of Culture and Arts and the Institute of Civil Engineering (DHES, 2001:26-27), by upgrading existing pre-HE institutions, and as was the case with other new HEIs, their funding came solely from the regional budget. No financial resources for these new institutes were planned in the HE budgets for the relevant years, and the RMOF was instructed to allocate funds from other expenditure categories, mainly the regional investment and reserve funds.

What is striking in this expansion is the haste which characterised the decision-making and implementation. All HEIs were established in the same year as the decrees were issued, often with less than six months available to develop academic programmes and curricula, recruit academics, and find premises before undergoing federal licensing procedure. For example, the Yakut Institute of Civil Engineering started admitting students in July 2000 only two months after the decree on its establishment was issued (DHES, 2001:26). The same was true of all other new HEIs.

It is notable that the republic, which for a long time had had a very low concentration of HEIs, tried to develop its HE sector, but these hurriedly-reached decisions and their

⁵⁶ In this respect, the TACIS (2000:130) report indicates that Russian academics, especially those in social sciences, tend to participate in the higher spheres of political life much more than their colleagues in Western countries and that it is not easy to assess their motivation.

rushed implementation, suggesting a frenzy of competition with other regions, point strongly to the lack of a carefully planned regional expansion agenda. Whilst regional funding for the two oldest regional HEIs was not given in the amounts specified in the budgets, the Sakha President pushed through the establishment of new HEIs, dispersing regional funds across the ever-expanding sector. Developing such a wide network of HEIs with limited resources in a republic with a small population can be argued to be a luxury. Meanwhile, political debate about the unplanned expansion was ephemeral, as the authoritative style of the first Sakha President produced a weak and obedient government and easily manipulated HE leadership, without force and authority to oppose his policies.

One of the exceptions to this lack of debate arose from the decision to open a Pedagogical University in Yakutsk in 1999. The idea was not openly opposed by YSU senior managers, but strongly opposed by a group of middle-level managers and academics at YSU, in an open letter to the major regional newspaper (Golikov *et al.*, 1999; also see Filippov, 1999). This opposition was one of the reasons why the creation of this new institution took much longer than that of other HEIs. First, the opponents argued that the academic and research potential of the existing teacher-training colleges, on the basis of which the new university was to be opened, was inadequate for providing a university-level education. Second, they claimed that it was unnecessary to open a second university, but rather to develop academic programmes at YSU, which traditionally trained teachers for all sectors of education. Third, it was stressed that opening a second university was an inefficient use of resources which would lead to unnecessary duplication of many academic programmes offered by YSU and diseconomies of scale. Fourth, it was emphasised that a lack of academics with research degrees in a newly established university would lead to a migration of academics from YSU.

Indeed, new HEIs in Sakha suffered from a lack of high-calibre academic staff, the unnecessary duplication of academic programmes, which led to diseconomies of scale, the use of plant which was not purpose-built, and the lack of equipment. However, also important was the realisation by YSU members of the fact that the regional government was now trying to penetrate the core of the regional flagship HEI. By opposing the establishment of a second university, they tried to safeguard the status of YSU as the

only university in the republic, and its near-monopoly in the regional HE market as the only institution training teachers and lecturers in a wide range of disciplines. It appears that as long as the regional authorities did not establish new HEIs with the status of a university within the republic, the YSU managers and academics did not rise against them, as there was no real threat to the very status of their institution, which is traditionally higher in the hierarchy than that of an academy or institute, and, consequently, to their prestige as university academics. Despite the open opposition, the Sakha President decreed in February 2001 the establishment of a new pedagogical HEI, but its initially intended status as a university was reduced to that of an academy.

It is clear that the first Sakha President regarded the development of HE as an overall positive influence, which could help boost and transform the image of the republic. Although the Sakha HE policies were praised by the highest federal MOE officials, a lack of long-term planning and continuity is apparent in the recent Sakha government's decree of August 2003 closing down the Yakut International University in Moscow, the Yakut University of High Technologies in St.Petersburg and the Pedagogical Academy in Yakutsk because of the lack of regional budget funds (Shadrina, 2003). The regional government has ordered MSPE to start a process merging the Pedagogical Academy with YSU. In the end, it was the students who paid the price for the rushed decisions and unplanned policies of the regional authorities. However, as of the end of 2004, these HEIs continued to function.

The implications of the HE expansion for institutional actors can be assessed overall as negative. In the words of one interviewee, a wide network of new regional HEIs *'did not create regional co-operation, but rather an unhealthy competition, mutual antagonism and envy among some institutions'* (IM-5). In the absence of any professional management experience and management training programme, it would be important for managers from different regional HEIs to work together in achieving common goals, for example, by engaging in capacity and network building, sharing facilities, removing the duplication of academic programmes, or learning best management/entrepreneurial practices from one another. However, personal interests and ambitions seem to have prevailed. For example, it was reported to me that almost every new regional HEI has a top or middle-level manager and/or academic who once worked at YSU, and who is now seen by some of his/her former colleagues as a

'double-crosser' (personal communication with an academic at YSU, 22 August 2001). The consequence of such personal attitudes has been a lack of interaction, communication and co-operation among Sakha HEIs, and the inactivity of the Regional Council of Rectors. The regional funding also created a situation of strong dependency of rectors on the regional political leadership, making them to maintain the status quo vis-à-vis the regional government.

6.5.2 Finance

The almost complete withdrawal of the federal government from non-salary and non-stipend funding led to shifts in funding sources in Sakha HE, which have shifted to comprise four streams. The first stream is the state allocation from the federal government, which before 1992, was the only source. These funds used to be strictly based on the number of authorised academic posts calculated through the staff/student ratio⁵⁷, whereas now they are allocated on the basis of various criteria, as determined by MOE, including the number of academics per student, the number of academics per support staff, the expected number of students, and executed expenditures from previous years (Lugachov *et al.*, 1997). The second funding stream is the allocation from the regional budget, which is also tied to the above criteria as determined by the Sakha government and agreed upon with the federal MOE. The third stream is research funding that HEIs receive on a competitive basis from the federal and regional governments' research councils. Most HEIs also try to diversify their funding from the fourth stream, which includes all other sources: tuition fees, contract research with industry and enterprises, entrepreneurial activities, additional educational services, gifts and donations. The ability of HEIs to generate revenues from the last two streams is heavily influenced by their institutional contexts, histories and cultures.

The only HEIs in Sakha which receive some of their total recurrent income from the federal stream are the two oldest HEIs, YSU and the Agricultural Academy, whilst state funding for new HEIs comes completely from the regional government. In the 1990s, the federal and regional parliaments severely reduced HE funding and approved much less than HEIs had asked for. Table 6.2 shows that even the severely reduced funding that was approved was not given to Sakha HEIs in the amounts specified, the only

⁵⁷ In the Soviet era, the staff/student ratio was fixed for each type of HEI: 1/10 for universities, and 1/12 or 1/14 for narrowly-specialised institutes depending on the specialism (Nozhko *et al.*, 1968:168).

exceptions being the 1999 federal funding and 1995 regional funding, when allocations represented 100% of the approved budgets. The lowest federal and regional funding was given in 1998; both the federal and the regional budgets were affected by the financial crisis in August of that year.

Regional capital investments are not included in the financial data from the regional government in Table 6.2, as they are independent of the current HE funding formula. The level of capital investment for each HEI varied according to their size and academic orientation, and the regional government priorities for newly-established institutions. However, the main beneficiary was YSU. For example, a new science building for YSU, completed in 1997, cost the regional budget over 25 million US dollars (various decrees, DHES, 2001).

Table 6.2 Federal and Regional Budget Funding for Sakha HE, 1993-2001

Thousand Roubles

	1993			1994			1995			1996		
	Approv	Given	%	Approv	Given	%	Approv	Given	%	Approv	Given	%
Total	9918.4	9814.2	98.9	72961.2	60422.7	82.8	114432.4	88058.4	77	193713.6	160562	82.9
Federal budget	936.9	935	99.8	17200	13760	80	48059.7	19684	41.3	66500	66000	99.2
Regional budget	8981.5	8877.2	98.8	55761.2	46662.7	83.7	66372.7	68194.4	102.7	127213.6	94562	74.3

	1997			1998			1999			2001		
	Approv	Given	%	Approv	Given	%	Approv	Given	%	Approv	Given	%
Total	262400	240901.9	91.8	263640.6	190568.2	72.3	340078	294912	86.7	N/A	N/A	
Federal Budget	71800	58286.6	81.2	75940.6	50251.7	66.2	98585.9	98585.9	100	209000	191000	
Regional Budget	190600	182615.3	95.8	187700	140316.5	74.8	241492.1	196326.1	81.3	N/A	N/A	

Notes: I). 'Approv' – the amount actually approved by the federal and regional Parliaments; 'Given' – the amount finally received by HEIs. '%' – percentage of the approved amount given; II). N/A – not available.

Source: Nogovitsyn, 2000: 30 (for 1993-1999); Data provided by Regl-3 at MSPE (for 2001).

The share of state funding from both federal and regional funding streams has been unstable, and has exhibited considerable annual fluctuations. According to Nogovitsyn (2000:30), the Sakha government HE allocation accounted for 60% to 90% of the total state funding between 1993 and 1999, making the regional government the largest single source of state funding for the sector. Although the actual allocated federal amount increased from 99 million roubles in 1999 to over 190 million roubles in 2001, an interviewee, Regl-3, reported that it represented only 30% of the total share of state HE funding in that year. Considering the number of new HEIs established and solely funded by the Sakha authorities, it may seem natural that the regional funding share remains higher than that of federal funding. However, even for the two oldest HEIs,

funded by both governments, the pattern of funding has shifted from being ‘completely’ financed by the federal government in 1990 to being ‘primarily’ financed by the regional government since 1992.

Although total enrolments are higher in the two oldest HEIs than in newly-established ones, the fact that the Sakha government has to cover the difference between the federal and the regional costs of training one student, and also to finance extra student places, has made the share of regional budget funding for the former more substantial than the federal share. In 1998, for instance, federal per capita expenditure for a full-time student in Russia was 14,000 roubles, whilst at YSU and the Agricultural Academy it was 28,000 roubles (DHES, 1999:12; see Table 6.3). However, even with the participation of the Sakha government in financing HE by covering the difference in per capita cost and spending 3.12 times more per student than national average (DHES, 1999:12), inflation-indexed expenditure for training a full-time student in the two oldest HEIs declined from an index value of 100 in 1990 to 61,9 in 1998 (see Table 6.3). Thus the increase in the number of state-funded full-time students in the two oldest HEIs was achieved largely through a reduction in per capita cost.

Table 6.3 Per Capita Funding in the Two Oldest Sakha HEIs, 1990-1998

	1990	1995	1996	1997	1998
Number of full-time students	5262	6215	7119	7637	7612
Expenditure per student in current prices, thousand roubles	3478	10522	21187	24918	28061
Expenditure per student in constant prices (1990), thousand roubles	3478	1866	2683	2723	2154
Expenditure per student in % (1990)	100	51,7	78,0	78,3	61,9

Source: DHES, 1999:12.

Due to the limited availability of financial data on funding from the third and fourth streams in Sakha HE, it is difficult to review the financing of both old and new HEIs over the period under consideration. As regards revenue from the third funding stream, it could be argued that since all HEIs in Sakha see their primary goal as teaching and manpower training, they do not generate significant revenue from engaging in research. As for funding from the fourth stream, as explained in Chapter 5 until 2000 HEIs rarely reported to the governments, either federal or regional, on their income ‘earned’ from tuition fees, additional educational services, contract research and entrepreneurial activities. However, an interviewee from the regional government claimed that the income from the third and fourth streams constituted up to 11% of the total in

1999/2000 at each Sakha HEI (Regl-2). An interviewee at YSU, IM-4, stressed that even with the relatively generous funding coming from the Sakha government, the level of resources available at YSU have fallen so substantially in terms of inflation-adjusted roubles that income derived from the fourth stream has been mainly used for survival, such as covering the cost of electricity and heating. However, I also saw evidence of lavish offices for YSU senior managers, recently refurbished with the use of income derived from the fourth funding stream.

Regarding governments' research funding for the oldest HEIs, this stream represents a new shift from formerly centralised allocation to competing for research funds. Several research funding councils, called Russian research funds⁵⁸, have been set up during the last decade. The funding councils allocate funds to individual academics or teams of academics who submit their proposals through their universities. Furthermore, various government ministries administer research grant programmes on priority areas. Although there are some grants available at the regional level, these are on a largely national basis.

Among Sakha HEIs, YSU has the largest share of revenue from research grants, but, compared to other Russian universities of its size, the amount and share of its revenue from research grants is insignificant. For example, in 1998 Kazan State University in the Republic of Tatarstan, generated over 5 million roubles from federal government research grants, or about 6% of its total recurrent income (Kniazev, 2002:113), whilst in the same year YSU generated a little over a million roubles, or less than 0.7% of its recurrent income from that source. On the one hand, this figure reflects the adherence of YSU to its core mission, which defines research as secondary to teaching (see Chapter 7), but on the other, it may also represent the disadvantaged position of YSU in competing for research funds with more research-oriented universities. It is reported elsewhere that federal grants are often allocated in a non-transparent way on the basis of the reputation of the HEI, with traditionally research-oriented universities benefiting most, thus increasing the gap between the central Russian and other regional universities (OECD, 1999).

⁵⁸ The Russian Fund for Fundamental Research and the Russian Fund for Technological Development were set up in 1992. In 1994, the State Fund for Research in Humanities and the Federal Fund for Support of Small R&D Businesses were established (OECD, 1999).

As for the fourth funding stream, tuition and fees now constitute 9%-10% of the total at each Sakha HEI, whilst contract research with various industries and enterprises now constitutes 0.3% at YSU and less at all other institutions. As there is a reduced demand from the industrial sector for research, research activities almost entirely depend on federal, and to a lesser extent regional, government funding. At the same time, several interviewees at the institutional level commented that regional HEIs have not been active enough in exploiting new opportunities for engaging in research collaboration with regional industry, and have not used the autonomy granted to them in generating revenues from contract research (IM-7, H-3(SS)*; see also Yakutsk Vechernii, 2002).

Despite the increased regional commitment to develop HE through financing more student places and investing in infrastructure and new HEIs, academic salaries have been low relative to salaries in industrial sectors, and although the regional government has bolstered salaries for academics, the nominal rise in the official state remuneration is only marginal and wiped out by the inflation. Some academics in state HEIs can earn two or three times their official salary by participating in competitive research projects and consultancy, but such activity is not common (IM-9; Regl-4). The great majority of academics in state HEIs survive by holding multiple jobs. New HEIs and branches of out-of-region HEIs have developed by hiring staff at part-time rates.

In concluding this section, it should be emphasised that all Sakha HEIs appear to have had difficulties in coming to terms with the possibility or necessity of generating income from alternative sources and making organisational and cultural shifts from over-dependence upon the regional government funding to institutional self-reliance (see Chapter 7 for YSU). HE finance in Sakha has been dominated by the protection of the regional government's policy since 1992 and the interventionist federal financial regulations since 2000, as described in 5.5.2. As noted in Chapter 5, however, the federal government has been implementing a new funding mechanism for YSU since 2001; its short-term effects are discussed in Chapter 7. The following section analyses the impact of federal policies on academic matters and quality.

6.5.3 Academic Matters and Quality

Since the federal authorities have retained extensive power in academic matters, the regional MSPE in this domain only acts as an extension of the federal MOE. Therefore this section discusses the extent to which the Sakha HEIs have in practice adopted the federal policy of a two-tiered degree structure, and presents the experience of regional and institutional actors in implementing the state standards and responding to the federal quality assurance procedures.

6.5.3.1 Introducing a Two-Tiered Degree Structure

In the Republic of Sakha, as in other regions of Russia, the general public have not supported the introduction of the two-tiered degree structure, largely due to the lack of agreement among various HE stakeholders and the resistance of the HE community to this policy. Unlike some Russian HEIs, Sakha HEIs were never instructed by the federal SCHE to open Bachelor's and Master's programmes, but in the early 1990s YSU voluntarily introduced Bachelor's programmes, albeit on a limited scale, as a necessary response to declining admissions in unpopular specialisms (see Chapter 7). The new Sakha HEIs have also been unwilling to introduce Bachelor's programmes on a large scale, preferring to offer traditional five-year diploma programmes (Regl-3).

There is a number of reasons why new degrees were unpopular and not introduced on a large scale in Sakha. In addition to the reasons already identified in 5.5.3, the Bachelor's degree was often presented as a low-level pre-HE qualification by institutional managers and academics (H-4(S)*; Regl-3), making this degree appear undesirable to the public. Almost officially, Russian secondary specialised education was equalised in value to two years of the Bachelor's degree, and this was reflected in the fact that graduates of specialised secondary educational institutions could apply to enter the third year of HE diploma programme in comparable specialisms in some HEIs, which was impossible before 1992⁵⁹ (for details of the Russian system of education see Appendix 2). Thus, the value of the Bachelor's degree was effectively and intentionally degraded to the level of Russian pre-HE qualifications.

⁵⁹ Graduates of secondary specialised education receive a diploma of pre-higher education after 2-3 years, and these programmes had never before been recognised as constituting an initial stage of HE programmes. Before 1992, graduates of secondary specialised education institutions could only apply to enter the first year of a HE programme in competition with other applicants.

Two other reasons were provided by an interviewee at the regional ministry, who recalled that Bachelor's programmes could not be introduced in every HEI because:

In the early 1990s, when the [federal] SCHE issued its decree on a new degree structure, there were no state standards developed for the new Bachelor's programmes, and therefore HEIs were not prepared psychologically to entirely replace diploma programmes with something completely unknown, as they had no idea what the requirements for the Bachelor's degree should be as opposed to five-year diploma programmes... Later, however, and most importantly when the standards were developed, HEIs did not wish to introduce such programmes without adequate federal funding... Instead, they [HEIs] were preoccupied with their survival rather than experimenting with innovations. (Regl-2)

The main obstacle, however, is great resistance stemming from the academic community rather than a lack of state standards or funding. In this regard, several interviewees at the institutional level recognised that the HE community was partly to blame for the policy being largely rejected by the public, because academics in Sakha and throughout Russia have succeeded in safeguarding the old degree structure (D-2(L)*, H-4(S)*; IM-5). Academics in Russia have always held the traditional post-graduate research degrees in high esteem, and recognising and accepting the new degree structure would threaten this symbolic capital. It would also threaten tangible assets, since entirely replacing the old five-year programmes with shorter Bachelor's programmes would mean the loss of government funding and remuneration for academics as a result of the reduction in their teaching load.

According to the initial reform proposal, the Bachelor's degree was to be recognised as equivalent to a traditional HE specialist's diploma, and the Master's degree as equivalent to the Candidate of Science (Cand.Sc.). This would have also meant that the Russian degree of Doctor of Science (D.Sc.) was equal to the Anglo-American Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.). However, holders of Cand. Sc. did not wish to degrade their degree to Master's level, but rather wished to be elevated to Ph.D., whilst doctors did not want their degree to be perceived as equal to Ph.D (D-4(SS)*). The main argument of the HE community was that Russian diploma programmes took five years to complete, whilst Bachelor's degree programmes normally took less than four years. It was argued that merely on this ground the Bachelor's degree could not be perceived to be equal to a Russian HE diploma, and as a logical consequence, Master's and Ph.D. degrees could not be equal to Russian post-graduate research degrees. On the other hand, the main characteristics of the Soviet system, discussed in Chapter 4, make one

question the value of diplomas and research degrees awarded in Soviet times, especially those in social sciences (Chapter 4; also see Matthews, 1982).

In 1996, however, as noted in 5.5.3, due to the pressures emanating from the HE community and the small chance of employment for graduates with Bachelor's degrees, who were left with non-recognised state-awarded degrees, MOE allowed them to continue their study in diploma programmes. Figure 6.2 outlines the intended degree structure and its actual implementation in Sakha HEIs. Although the three courses are presented as separate, they often overlap, as students on Bachelor's, Master's and Diploma programmes often attend the same compulsory classes. In the words of one institutional manager, *'the new degree structure as being introduced since 1996 with three theoretically separate, but largely overlapping elements, made university academic process and curriculum policy extremely confusing'* (H-4(S)*; also Fedl-3).

It is evident from Figure 6.2 that Bachelor's and Master's programmes are implemented as minus or plus one year of the traditional diploma programmes. Furthermore, comparison of the state standards for the Bachelor's degree and diploma programmes in various specialisms reveals that there is a very little variation between the two in both content and time allotted⁶⁰. Considering these facts, even the limited introduction of the new degrees does not seem to be very meaningful. As for traditional Russian research degrees, they have been left intact, and no institution in Sakha, or, indeed in Russia, has formally introduced a Ph.D. course as a type of post-graduate study. The universally accepted view appears to be that a Cand.Sc. is recognised as an equivalent of a Ph.D., but when candidates call themselves doctors, the value of old Russian doctors becomes undermined.

Figure 6.2 Implementation of a New Degree structure in Sakha HEIs

Intended Structure	Actual Practice 1	Actual Practice 2	Actual Practice 3
		Bachelor (4 Years)	Bachelor (4 years)
Bachelor = old Diploma	Diploma (5 years)	Diploma (+1 year)	
Master = old Candidate of Science			Master (+2 years)
Ph.D. = old Doctor of Science	Candidate of Science (informally accepted as equal to Ph.D.)		
	Doctor of Science		

Source: modified by the author from Tomusk, 1995.

⁶⁰ The state standards for Bachelor's and diploma programmes are available at www.edu.ru.

Thus in Sakha the attempted federal reform of the traditional degree structure has largely failed, and there is evidence that with the change in names and length of degrees, no fundamental change in practice has taken place (see Chapter 7).

6.5.3.2 Impact of Standards and Quality Assurance on HEIs

The regional/institutional component, occupying 20% of the state standards, was to cover a whole range of economic, cultural, ethnic, and environmental studies of the region where the manpower is being trained (Bolotov, 1997). According to an interviewee, Regl-1, the regional MSPE *'does not take part in the development and introduction of the regional component of the state standards, as it is seen as the responsibility of institutions rather than the regional HE authorities'*. To date, however, the extent of its introduction has been limited mainly to courses on regional history. Although the regional/institutional component is one of very few areas over which the federal MOE has not issued any detailed guidelines and regulations, ironically, some actors at the regional level and YSU wish to have federal and/or regional control, suggesting that uniform regulations should be issued on this matter by the federal MOE, or that the regional MSPE should set up a unit responsible for the development and implementation of the regional/institutional component (Regl-2; H-5(SS)*); also see Filippov, 1999). Such views indicate strongly that Sakha academics are accustomed to state control in purely academic matters.

The main reason why the regional/institutional component is not implemented is the fact that whilst implementation of the 80% of the federal component is mandatory for all HEIs accredited or planning to be accredited by the federal MOE, the regional/institutional component is entirely left to the discretion of individual HEIs, and whilst the federal component plays a major role in the evaluation of HE quality, the other component does not affect MOE's decision on accreditation. The regional MSPE, in the meantime, is only authorised to oversee the fulfilment by HEIs of federal input requirements, specified in the licenses and accreditation certificates, and has not received any power over the actual procedures of licensing and attestation, within which it could formulate its own policies and requirements for HEIs to develop and implement the regional/institutional component.

Concentrating the licensing responsibility at the federal level appears to have affected the Sakha HE authorities, who wished to have more independence in opening new HEIs or their branches. For example, one of the interviewees recalled:

Between 1992 and 1996 the regional ministry received the responsibility for licensing, but since 1996, we only oversee that the input requirements for licensing and accreditation issued by the federal ministry, are followed by HEIs... It was much easier to establish a new HEI or programme when we had the right to license, but now the situation is rather different. (Regl-1)

Another interviewee commented that *'in order to open a small branch of a HEI in remote area of the republic, all licensing papers must now be sent to the federal ministry, and this creates an obstacle for normal functioning of institutions as it often takes a long time before a license is issued'* (Regl-2). Thus whilst the federal government emphasises that the regions should train their own manpower, simultaneously it wishes to exercise a strict control over the creation and licensing of HEIs – a technical function which regional authorities can perform equally well.

However, the violation of the 1996 Law persists, as most Sakha HEIs and their academic units start programmes before a license is issued. For instance, an MSPE officer, Regl-3, said that *'even though YSU branches, created in 2000, did not have a license, they were already offering academic programmes'*. A Russian HE researcher in a personal communication with the author also noted that most Russian HEIs and academic units start offering academic programmes before a license is received, because HEIs are often caught between two contradicting federal policies on licensing: on the one hand, they are not allowed to teach before being licensed, but on the other, they cannot be licensed unless they have found suitable premises, purchased books and teaching materials, recruited academic and support staff (Personal communication, 4 April 2004). To do all this HEIs need income.

According to the 1996 Law, state accreditation is voluntary, but the fact that only state-endorsed degrees are recognised by employers makes HEIs apply for state as opposed to professional accreditation. State accreditation is perceived by the regional actors to be the same as quality assurance, and both concepts are used by them interchangeably (for example, Regl-1; Regl-2). There is no institutionalised procedure at the regional level to monitor the quality of regional HEIs, to improve it, or even to inform the public about the quality of HE provided or not provided by particular HEIs.

Recently the federal government proposed to set up arms of the federal MOE in the form of the state agencies for quality control in every region, and to facilitate the creation of internal quality control mechanisms in every HEI (Anisimova, 2003; Rudenko, 2002). This policy, according to the language and initial measures already employed by the federal MOE, points to the use of direct administrative measures, through which MOE has strengthened its role in penalising and sanctioning HEIs and their branches by withdrawing their license and accreditation and closing them down (Rudenko, 2002; Ryabtsev, 2005). This, it can be argued, will bind regional HE authorities and HEIs ever more tightly to the status quo *vis-à-vis* the federal authorities.

6.6 Summary and Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the regional HE policies and the impact of the post-1991 federal policies on Sakha HE. In a climate of uncertainty at the federal level and having received substantial economic benefits in the framework of ‘sovereignty’ of the early 1990s, the first Sakha President, Nikolaev, and his government saw the development of regional manpower training for the sake of economic regeneration as a top political priority, which was to be achieved through development of HE infrastructure and expansion. However, whilst the HE infrastructure development had a clear agenda, the expansion was largely achieved in a *laissez-faire* manner without a long-term planning framework, resulting in a wide network of HEIs and the overproduction of HE graduates in a republic with a small population, the duplication of academic programmes, and diseconomies of scale.

A relatively generous regional funding made Sakha HEIs, old and new, rely heavily on the regional government, and maintain the status quo *vis-à-vis* the regional authorities. Recently, however, wider federal policies have made the regional budget shrink and led to regional decisions to close down a number of recently established HEIs. The new Sakha President, Shtyrov, said that the regional HEIs should stop hoping for more regional funds, improve their quality, effectiveness and efficiency and be more aggressive in exploring external opportunities.

As for the impact of the decentralisation policy on Sakha HE, it can overall be assessed as limited, since whilst promoting decentralisation the federal MOE retained a great

degree of power in all three areas central to this thesis. The licensing responsibility was revoked by the federal MOE in 1996, leaving the regional MSPE to act merely as an extension of the federal ministry, without real power to implement changes. Furthermore, being accustomed to traditional central control in purely academic matters, the Sakha HEIs make little use of the 20% of the regional/institutional component. As for the federal policy of a two-tiered degree structure, its implementation has so far been limited to unpopular specialisms and remains confusing.

The chapter concludes that the regional authorities in Sakha have not received real power with regard to the control of HE apart from the immediate responsibility for HE funding. Even regional funding has recently become subject to the federal government's control. Thus there is a clear evidence of HE developments in Sakha reflecting wider policy swings, as along with the recent trend to re-centralisation in political and economic spheres, the regional government also started to emphasise the re-centralisation of HE control at the federal level as one of the ways of governing and managing the regional HE sector. Whether and how these swings in policies have affected the oldest and largest university in Sakha is discussed in Chapter 7.

CHAPTER SEVEN

REFORM AT THE INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL

7.1 Introduction

The aims of this chapter are to examine the responses of institutional actors at Yakutsk State University (YSU), the oldest and largest university in Sakha, to the post-1991 federal and regional policies discussed in Chapters 5 and 6, and to assess the extent to which institutional change has been driven by external forces, such as the federal and/or regional governments, or internally generated. The chapter starts with an overview of the university's history and then presents a summary of post-1991 institutional developments in Section 7.2. Each subsequent section discusses the actual process of institutional change and presents a qualitative analysis of interview results concerning respondents' perceptions and views of change in four institutional areas:

- 1) Mission and goals, in Section 7.3;
- 2) Governance and management, in Section 7.4;
- 3) Finance, in Section 7.5;
- 4) Academic matters and quality, in Section 7.6.

Section 7.7 concludes this chapter by arguing that depending on the institutional area, change has originated at different levels and with mixed results in the actual implementation. Whilst in implementing change in some areas the university has responded to federal and/or regional policies, simultaneously or in other areas change has been generated internally in response to the changing external environment.

7.2 Overview of the University

7.2.1 History of the University

YSU was established in 1956 on the basis of the first Sakha HEI, Yakutsk Teachers' Training Institute, founded in 1934. When the institute was established, there were only two departments, twelve academics, and 57 students, but by the time of its reorganisation into a university it comprised four faculties and fifteen 'chairs' (*kafedras*), employed over a hundred academic staff and enrolled 1,200 students (Tomskii, 1994; Zaharova, 2003). It was upgraded to university status by the decision of the USSR Council of Ministers as a move towards the geographical diversity of universities, as in the mid-1950s the Soviet leaders became particularly concerned with the concentration of universities in the large cities of central Russia, and proposed

relocations to allow more students to be trained near their future place of work (Matthews, 1982). The creation of the university was also tied to industrial expansion, which required a greater number of specialists for public as well as industrial sectors (Tomskii, 1994).

Until 1985 the university was the only HE provider⁶¹ in the republic and “became the centre for education, culture and science” (Filippov, 1999:2). Now, YSU is the oldest and by far the largest HEI in the Sakha HE sector, and one of the largest classical universities in the Russian Far East and Siberia. Since its establishment YSU has graduated over 49,000 specialists in different fields (Akimov, 2004). Although the university has always played an important role in the life of the republic, in February 1993, by decree of the Sakha President, it was awarded the status of a flagship HEI in Sakha (DHES, 2001:6). Such a status has entitled it to additional resources from the regional government and made its role in the republic even greater.

7.2.2 University Academic Structure

In 1991, YSU was a medium-sized university with ten faculties. Table 7.1 shows that since 1991 it has experienced major internal changes in its academic structure, which made the university more complex from the organisational point of view. At present, the university comprises six institutes and eleven faculties on the main campus in Yakutsk, two branches in the cities of Mirny and Neryungri, and five branches in rural districts of the republic⁶². The majority of new institutes and faculties were created by reorganising and upgrading old academic units: some ‘chairs’ were combined or split from old structures to form new faculties, and faculties were either transformed into institutes or divided into separate faculties. Since all HEIs in Russia are traditionally structured around small ‘chairs’, the increase in the number of academic units has also led to an increase in the number of ‘chairs’. There are currently over 130 ‘chairs’ in the university, almost half of which have been established after 1992 (Akimov, 2004; Alekseev, 2001).

Besides academic units, the university now houses 16 research units, four museums, the Centre for New Information Technologies, the Centre for Distance Education, and the

⁶¹ In 1985, the YSU Faculty of Agriculture was reorganised as an independent institute.

⁶² This study was conducted only on the main YSU campus in Yakutsk.

Science Park. Several of these new units came into existence in the 1990s either as a response of institutional actors to the changing external environment or as a result of federal and regional government policies.

Table 7.1 Post-1991 Academic Structure at YSU

Academic Units in 1991	Academic Units Reorganised in the 1990s	Newly Established Academic Units and Academic Units Established on the Basis of 'Chairs'
Faculty of Education ----->*	Institute of Education** (1995) and Institute of Physical Education and Sport (1999)	Institute of Economics (1995) – established first as a Faculty of Economics in 1993 on the basis of the 'Chair' of Political Economy.
Faculty of Medicine ----->	Institute of Medicine (1993)	Faculty of Sakha Language and Culture (1992) – established on the basis of the 'Chair' of Sakha Language.
Faculty of Physics ----->	Institute of Physics (2000)	
Faculty of Mathematics ----->	Institute of Mathematics and Information Science (1999)	Faculty of Foundation Studies (1998) – established on the basis of the Department for Preparatory Courses.
Faculty of Geology		
Faculty of Biology and Geography		Faculty of Psychology (2002) – established on the basis of the 'Chair' of Psychology.
Faculty of Construction Engineering		Faculty of Mining (2002) – established on the basis of the 'Chair' of Mining.
Faculty of History and Law --->	Faculty of History (2000) and Faculty of Law(2000)	
Faculty of Linguistics		Branch in Neryungri (1992)
Faculty of Foreign Languages		Branch in Mirny (1994) 5 branches in rural districts of Sakha (2000)

Notes: I). *-----> - denotes reorganisation or transformation of old academics units into new ones.

II). ****Bold type** – denotes currently existing academic units.

Source: developed by the author from Alekseev, 2000 and 2001; Maximova and Fedotov, 1999; Spiridonov, 2003.

7.2.3 Students and Academics

The total enrolments at YSU more than doubled from 9,000 in 1992 to about 19,000 in 2003 (not including post-graduate students), out of which about 12,000 students study on a full-time basis (Akimov, 2004; Alekseev, 2001). This increase can be explained by the same factors that led to the growth in overall enrolments at the federal and regional levels. First, the university substantially diversified its academic portfolio and broadened the scope of specialisms offered from 32 in 1992 to 61 in 2001 (Alekseev, 2001). Second, enrolment growth also came from fee-paying students. In 1999, for example, out of 7,800 full-time students, 1,100 were studying on a fee-paying basis (DHES, 1999). Third, the establishment of new academic units at YSU by the decision

of the Sakha authorities was also accompanied by the creation of additional regionally funded student places.

YSU experienced a two-fold increase in the number of academics, from 620 in 1991 to over 1,300 in 2003 (Akimov, 2004; SCS, 1994:18). As is the case all over Russia, the age profile at YSU reflects an ageing academic force. In 2002, the average age of an academic at YSU was 55, but the rector, Professor Anatolii Alekseev, hoped that over 300 young people, studying in research degree programmes, would remain to work at the university (Spiridonov, 2002). There was also a big increase in the number of staff with Cand.Sc. and D.Sc. degrees. The number of doctors at YSU increased six-fold from 18 in 1990 to 120 in 2003, whilst the number of candidates increased from 297 in 1990 to 490 in 2003 (Akimov, 2004; Nogovitsyn, 2000:30).

A number of reasons for this sharp increase should be highlighted. First, due to the notable decline in research activities and funding⁶³ elsewhere, many researchers from research institutes migrated to YSU to take up teaching posts. Second, YSU established a number of examination councils for research degrees, making it easier for staff to receive Cand.Sc. and D.Sc. degrees without leaving for the central cities. However, some commentators also claim that in Russia it has recently become far easier to acquire a research degree, especially that of Cand.Sc. and that the quality of dissertations submitted has fallen considerably (Dyomina, 2003; Smolentseva, 2003).

Against the backdrop of severe financial conditions, such a rapid transformation of YSU in terms of the development of academic structures, the broadening of the scope of specialisms offered, and the growth in the numbers of students and academics looks very impressive. It is important to ask in what ways YSU was able to adapt to changing conditions and develop in such a dramatic way. Was this development an outcome of internal strategies adopted by YSU in meeting the challenges of the last decade, or was it mainly driven by policies of the federal and regional governments? The subsequent sections attempt to answer these questions as they relate to various institutional areas. The following issues are of particular importance:

⁶³ The overall number of researchers in Russian research institutes declined from 804,000 in 1992 to 420,000 in 1999 as the federal government spending fell from 0.50% of Gross National Product (GNP) in 1992 to 0.26% of GNP in 1999 (Smolentseva, 2003:399).

- Has the university's mission changed? If so, did the change help the university to find its direction and develop particular strategies with regard to its development?
- Have governance and management structures and processes changed in line with academic reorganisation, and if so, in what way? What is the implication of a greater number of academic units for university governance and management?
- What changes have occurred in patterns of finance? Have they altered the university's culture and behaviour?
- How have reforms in academic matters, such as the state standards and quality assurance, affected management and academic work at the university?

7.3 University Mission and Goals

7.3.1 Have the University Goals Changed?

Although the federal government emphasised decentralisation and university autonomy, in 1993 they developed and approved a uniform federal Statute to be used by all HEIs as a basis for drawing up their institutional charters (Government of Russia, 1993). Their main mission and goals were set externally and outlined in the 1993 statute as follows:

- *Meeting the demands of individuals for intellectual, cultural and moral development;*
- *Strengthening basic and applied research;*
- *Retraining specialists;*
- *Preserving the moral and cultural values of society;*
- *Creating and disseminating knowledge among the population.*

It is impossible to deny the importance of any of these goals for the process of reform, but with insufficient state funding it was clear that YSU would not be able to pursue them all simultaneously. At the same time, they were general enough for YSU to seek its comparative advantage and build on its strengths by defining priorities within the federally set framework rather than trying to do everything. However, the text of the 1993 Charter of YSU, slightly amended in 1996, lists exactly the same goals in precisely the same order as prescribed by the federal government (Charter, 1996). Since the university charter has to be approved by the federal MOE, YSU follows the federal statute in every little detail (IM-2*). The charter also reflects the regional mission assigned to the university by a decree of the Sakha President, which as noted in 6.4.1, stressed the utilitarian goal of HE as the training of qualified manpower (DHES,

2001:6-7). Thus, the goals were assigned 'top-down' by both the federal and regional governments rather than defined by the university itself.

Clearly, YSU has to respond to federal and regional governments' demands, but the university charter and other planning documents do not provide evidence that these goals were translated into specific institutional strategies: specific objectives and measures for achieving them were not defined, criteria for the evaluation of outcomes were not established, deadlines were not set, and no financial analysis of costs was made. At the same time, careful discussion and development of the strategic plan was crucial, especially at a time when the university faced many pressures and challenges. However, since the university managers had previously expected to follow the rulings of a central authority, immediately after having received some independence in running university affairs they seemed to be frustrated by the lack of experience at all levels of internal management (IM-7).

Another reason is that when the federal government relaxed its control in the early 1990s the power vacuum in governing the university was largely occupied by the Sakha President and his government, as they initiated most changes throughout the 1990s, especially with regard to internal academic organisation (see Chapter 8). Thus, immediately after 1991, YSU became subjected to a new source of external control, that of the regional government, which through its relatively generous funding shaped priorities and new developments for the university. In a climate of uncertainty and changing external conditions, such control offered YSU managers and academics a degree of stability.

Since YSU continues to hold the dominant position in Sakha by attracting the best students and academics in the region and the best funding compared to other regional HEIs (Spiridonov, 2003), even with no clear self-defined corporate mission in place the university managers may indeed feel very secure about the future of their university. Nevertheless, as the new regional HEIs and branches of out-of-region HEIs are becoming more aggressive in the regional HE market, more strategic planning and the definition of a clear institutional mission appear to be necessary if YSU wants to compete with other HEIs, increase its profile and strengthen its prestige at the federation-wide level.

Whether YSU has pursued a broad base of activity in the operational mode as suggested by its charter is examined in the following section, which considers the views of institutional actors on the university's mission and goals.

7.3.2 Institutional Views of the Mission and Goals

First of all, the interview results suggest that the role of the university as primarily a manpower training institution is still very strongly supported among actors at YSU. The most important university mission as defined by most interviewees (for example, H-5(SS)*, D-4(SS)*, D-6(S)*, IM-2*) was perceived to be manpower training. One of the deans of faculty made it very clear that:

Our main and primary activity is training highly-qualified specialists. Furthermore, we are a HEI and, therefore, teaching comes first...we are not a research institution. (D-4(SS))*

Whether the university mission should change in response to new pressures and wider societal transformations appeared not to be considered at all by the interviewees holding the above view; one of the academic managers commented:

The mission of the university is very straightforward. It is training manpower with HE for the regional economy. (H-5(SS))*

Second, several interviewees (for example, D-2(L)*, H-7(S)*, IM-9) did not dismiss manpower training for the regional economy as one of the most important goals, but expressed the view that the university's role should be greater than this and the scope of its mission should be broader. For example, one of the middle-level managers thought that *'the university should change its role and no longer be seen as merely a place for training specialists'* (H-7(S)*), and according to one of the institutional managers, it should *'become a consolidating force in the region, combining culture, education and research'* (IM-7). It should be stressed that most interviewees emphasised the key role of the university in the region. Although regionalism as a state policy started only in the 1990s, YSU has always been a truly regional institution, giving priority to the needs of the region and training specialists for it. University students have always come from the republic itself, and have always been active in the local community. However, the regionalism of the 1990s made the loyalty of academics and students to the republic even stronger.

Third, a few interviewees (for example, D-2(L)*, D-3(S)*) considered that the university mission should take into account global trends and processes. A dean, D-2(L)*, emphasised the importance of developing personalities, and said:

I think that the most important mission of the university today should be developing the creative minds of students, so that they feel part of global processes. The university should help students broaden their horizons, think creatively and express their ideas openly. Only if it does so will students feel close to the wider world around them. (D-2(L))*

In this respect, a dean, D-3(S)*, also stressed that *'the university is not just a conveyor for training specialists'* and continued that *'what people in the government and within the university do not seem to realise is that the university should have a special spirit and some kind of unique atmosphere'*.

An interesting view was given by an institutional manager, IM-5, who said:

We seem to be very proud of our natural resources, but the abundance of natural resources in the republic and its vast territory are obstacles to change... For the country as a whole, and particularly for Sakha, it is vital to 'catch' the last carriage of the 'civilisation train'. Otherwise, we will turn into an ethnography site for foreign tourism... To avoid this we need to develop our university system to a significant degree, and realise that the university mission should not be limited to the micro-objective of training specialists, but should encompass much more than that. (IM-5)

The number of interviewees holding such a view was, however, insignificant compared to the number with the 'manpower training' view. Considering the continuity of the long-standing manpower training tradition in Soviet HE and the explicit regional utilitarian role to be played by Sakha HEIs, it is not surprising that only a small number of university managers saw the university as having a wider mission.

The interviewees were then asked, on the basis of their views on the university's mission and goals, if they thought the university was fulfilling its mission. Their views varied greatly, from *'yes, the university is fully fulfilling its mission and goals'* (D-4(SS)*) to *'the university is not fulfilling its goals at all'* (H-2(L)*). A clear pattern in interviewees' views was evident. The majority, who considered the mission to be utilitarian, tended to express confidence that the university was successful in performing its functions and fulfilling its goals, often presenting recent quantitative changes as evidence of mission fulfilment, high quality, and achievement (for example, D-4(SS)*, D-6(S), IM-3).

By contrast, those interviewees who expressed a view that the institutional mission should be broader and more cultural, expressed more pessimistic views, such as that *'universities neither in Yakutia nor in Russia have fulfilled or are fulfilling their mission and goals'* (IM-5) and that the *'declaration of various goals and their realisation are completely different matters'* (D-2(L)*). Several interviewees also commented that the reason why the university sees its role primarily in utilitarian terms is that the former political goal of creating a new type of Soviet man and inculcating communist ideology in students was not replaced with any new ideology, since in the transition period societal moral values and beliefs either have been lost or are in a state of flux (D-3(S)*, IM-5).

The interview excerpts suggest that most interviewees strongly believe that the primary goal of the university is manpower training - the goal explicitly assigned to the university by the regional government. It is interesting to note that none of the interviewees mentioned the federal goals, listed in 7.3.1, as being part of the actual university mission. When the interviewees mentioned 'individual intellectual and cultural development', they tended to see this federally-set goal as something they should ideally be pursuing. One interviewee, for example, commented:

Clearly, manpower training is important, but ideas such as inculcating civic values in our students and spreading civilised values are now being underestimated and overlooked in the rush to develop manpower for a modern economy. (D-3(S)*)

Thus manpower training through teaching was to a large extent a goal shared by YSU managers and academics, on which they based their response to change and reform.

It is not surprising that managers and academics at YSU subscribe strongly to the goal of manpower training through teaching. Teaching and research have traditionally been separated, and this separation continues to this day. In the Soviet era, only a small number of universities, located in central Russia, conducted research. To conclude this section, Table 7.2 provides a summary of the federal and regional governments' intentions with regard to missions and goals, and normative and operational responses at YSU.

Table 7.2 Summary of Federal and Regional Governments' Intended Goals and YSU's Normative and Operational Responses

Intentions of Federal and Regional Governments	Normative Institutional Responses	Operational Institutional Responses
Broad and unfocused goals related to individual development, research, moral and cultural values of society, etc. were emphasised by the federal government in the 1993 uniform statute. HEIs were to draft their institutional charters on the basis of this statute.	The 1993 university charter, based on the 1993 statute, showed the strong adherence of the university to the federally assigned goals.	The university in practice does not see federally-set goals as a priority. None of the interviewees mentioned federal goals as being pursued by the university. Some saw federal goals as an ideal and something the university should strive for. The declarative nature of the federal goals was also criticised by the institutional actors.
HEIs were to become more responsive to regional needs and better serve their regions. The Sakha President saw the university's mission primarily as the training of manpower.	The regional mission of manpower training was included in the 1993 university charter along with the federally set goals.	Most interviewees showed strong adherence to the regionally assigned goal, rather than the federal goals. As the regional orientation of the university has always been strong, manpower training for the regional economy has guided the university's operation.
Specific institutional missions and goals and strategic plans were to be defined by the university.	Neither specific goals nor strategic plan were defined and developed internally. The 1993 university charter and other university documents merely reflected goals assigned by the federal and regional governments.	In practice, a strong involvement of the regional authorities in shaping priorities for the university. One goal was prioritised, not by the university itself but by the Sakha President – manpower training for the regional economy through teaching. This became the widely shared common university culture.

Source: developed by the author from data used in this study.

7.4 Internal Governance and Management

7.4.1 Change in Formal Structures

The main decision-making body for the university is the Senate, members of which, except for the rector and vice-rectors, are elected by secret ballot by staff and students for a fixed term of five years. In 2000/01, out of a total of 58 members, eight were from outside the university, representing the regional government, industry and business, whilst the remainder were directors of institutes and deans of faculties, several heads of 'chairs' and administrative units. The Senate is responsible for making decisions in four institutional areas: internal university structure, academic and research affairs, personnel and professorships, and some financial matters. Table 7.3 provides a more detailed description of the functions assigned to the Senate by the university charter in each of the four areas.

Table 7.3 Four Areas of Responsibility of the YSU Senate

University Structure	Academic and Research Affairs
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approves university management structure; 2. Approves structure of academic units; 3. Puts forward proposals for opening new academic programmes (specialisms) to the regional and federal HE authorities; 4. Sets up various university committees. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Determines specialisms to be offered by the university; 2. Approves university research plans; 3. Approves topics for Cand.Sc. and D.Sc. dissertations.
Personnel and Professorships	Financial Matters
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Elects deans of faculties and heads of 'chairs'; 2. Considers nominations for professorship. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Puts forward proposals on the level of student stipends to the regional government; 2. Considers extra pay for the rector.

Source: developed by the author from Charter, 1996 and 2002.

By the 1992 and 1996 Laws, the university is completely independent in determining its internal management structure, setting up university committees and establishing or reorganising academic units, except for university branches. Although the university is independent in proposing the establishment of new academic programmes (specialisms), the final decision legally rests with the federal MOE, which, through the process of licensing, decides whether a new academic programme can be opened (see 5.5.3). In financial matters, the Senate may only put forward a proposal on the level of student stipends to the regional government, which, after having considered its capacity to supplement federally set stipends, makes the final decision. Thus in some matters the Senate only has a recommending power.

The 1993 federal statute left it to the university to decide how responsibilities were to be divided between the Senate and the rector. The rector is elected for a five-year period by secret ballot at the university conference of staff and students, and needs to have at least 50% of votes to be elected. According to the YSU charter, the rector is very powerful in the day-to-day running of the university, particularly in personnel and most financial matters (Charter, 1996 and 2002). He has the authority to appoint and dismiss all vice-rectors, a chief accountant, and directors of branches, institutes, and affiliated research units. Until 2002, academic appointments were the prerogative of the rector, but they are now the responsibility of academic units. In financial matters, the rector decides and approves the internal allocation of funds and makes decisions on the level of staff remuneration. The areas of responsibility assigned exclusively to the rector are not considered at the Senate, but in university committees chaired by the rector.

The Academic-Administrative Committee meets once a week to discuss academic and student matters, the reports of various academic and administrative units, and matters raised by the members of the committee. Its members are the vice-rectors, directors of institutes, deans of faculties and heads of non-academic units. The next structure is the Management Committee, which operates as a Monday-morning meeting. It is the main planning and internal resource allocation body, comprising vice-rectors, a chief accountant, and the heads of finance and planning offices. This committee does not have academic representation, its meetings take place behind closed doors, and the process of decision-making is traditionally non-transparent (H-3(SS)*). Other university committees include the Methodological and Curriculum, Research Planning, Extracurricular Activities, and Publishing Committees. They report directly to the rector, and all their major activities should be approved by the Senate (IM-2*).

Every large academic unit, i.e. institute and faculty, has its own academic board. These deal mainly with the immediate academic, personnel and student matters of the unit, and since 1998 make decisions on the internal allocation of income 'earned' by the unit (see 7.4.2). Decisions and reports of the Senate and central university committees are disseminated among academics through these academic boards. Compared to faculties and institutes, 'chairs' have limited powers relating primarily to curricular matters, and do not have the responsibility for decision-making in financial matters. Most decisions of the institutes, faculties and 'chairs' have to be approved at the central university level (see 7.4.2).

After 1991, new pressures and challenges and greater autonomy in organising internal management structures allowed the appointment of more senior officers. The diversification of university finance prompted creating the post of a vice-rector for economic affairs, filled by a professional manager responsible for ensuring financial stability and success. He is also directly responsible for the recently established office for non-budget funds, which plans the internal allocation of 'earned' income retained at the central university level and authorises the expenditure of income 'earned' by the academic units. The revival of part-time and professional retraining courses and the development of information technologies led to the establishment of the post of a vice-rector for part-time and distance education. Distance education in Russia is embryonic, but is perceived as one of the most important areas for development, especially in such

regions as the Republic of Sakha because of the vast territory and the remoteness of towns from the regional capital. As YSU was experiencing an extensive development of its infrastructure in the last decade, the post of a vice-rector on construction became necessary. The post was filled by a professional manager with experience in managing construction sites, whose main responsibility is acting as a liaison between the regional government, construction companies, and university management.

In addition, due to the broadening of the academic portfolio and the introduction of federal quality assurance procedures, the former single post of a vice-rector for academic affairs was divided into two separate posts: a vice-rector for academic affairs in the humanities and social sciences, and a vice-rector for academic affairs in sciences. These two posts are filled by academic managers. A new post, for a vice-rector for extra-curricular activities, has recently been established to co-ordinate the activities of the Students' Union and various societies. Other posts for vice-rectors, such as a first vice-rector, responsible for general issues and external relations, a vice-rector for research, and a vice-rector for services, have always existed and still continue to exist. Thus, the number of top university managers (rector and vice-rectors) increased from five in 1991/92 to ten in 2002/03.

It is clear that the formal governance and management structures at YSU have developed considerably, and the number of top managers has increased. The next section looks at whether and how the actual processes of internal decision-making have changed in line with the changes in formal structures.

7.4.2 Institutional Views of Actual Processes

The interview results suggest that YSU is still very much a hierarchical organisation, with formal roles and procedures, bureaucratic authority relations and chains of command. All middle-level managers interviewed said that greater autonomy for the university as a whole has not translated into increased autonomy for individual academic units. One of the deans commented:

Compared to the pre-1991 situation, I do not think that there is any increase in the decision-making power of academic units. All our decisions are to be considered and approved by the central university administration. We do not have much room for manoeuvre. For example, we can now hire staff by the decision of the head of the academic unit, but before we hire the person his or

her nomination should be approved by the rector. It may sound like a pure formality, but the fact that the nomination should be approved by the rector makes us think that he may actually veto our decision if he wishes to. (D-7(SS))*

The creation of new layers of authority and new academic units, in the form of institutes, has contributed to a longer chain of command. Decision-making is said to take longer than before (IM-5). If previously all 'chairs' were directly subordinate to faculties and faculties to the central university administration, now many 'chairs' are subordinate to faculties, which are in turn subordinate to institutes, and only then to the university. Most decisions on academic and research matters have to go through all the levels of this hierarchical structure:

First, the 'chair' presents its academic and research plans to the faculty and then to the institute, if the faculty is a structure of the institute, and only then to the Academic-Administrative Committee and Senate. In this process there is also constant communication with vice-rectors for academic affairs, and the curriculum and research planning committees. (D-3(S))*

One of the interviewees also said that there is a great degree of control by the university upper levels of the day-to-day business of the 'chairs':

There are too many layers of authority in the university. We always have to report back to the upper levels -faculty, institute, and university- on our academic activities. We are left with making only technical decisions. We cannot develop our own strategy, as everyday there are more forms to fill in, more paperwork to be done and handed in, more proposals to be put forward for various committees, etc. ... This leaves us very little time for anything else. ... We are under constant control. (H-3(SS))*

Although all middle-level managers interviewed said that they did not have much decision-making authority, only one interviewee expressed the view that academic units, namely institutes, should have more powers:

We as an institute would like to have greater autonomy than faculties in running our own affairs. We do not want to separate from the university, but would like to have status of a 'legal person' within the university and, perhaps, have our own bank account. There should be more internal decentralisation, where the rector delegates some of his powers to the lower levels. (D-7(SS))*

Most interviewees, however, did not question the hierarchical decision-making at the university, because they perceived it as a traditional and orderly structure, which '*stems from the nature of a university as organisation*' (D-3(S)*; D-4(SS)*). Moreover, the interviewees at the central university level seemed to fear that if the institutes were granted more powers, the faculties would also demand similar powers or wish to

upgrade their current status (IM-7). They also expressed the view that granting greater decision-making authority to individual academic units would further hamper institutional cohesion, as even now:

decisions made at the central university level often either fail at the level of academic units, especially at the 'chair' level, or are implemented in ways not envisaged by the university. In such a situation there is a need for strong control on the part of the rector's office, but such control does not always work. We do not have a direct communication line with academics at lower levels and therefore have many difficulties. Yes, in this process there are many difficulties. (IM-1)

These difficulties in communication largely stem from the traditional organisation of the university into a large number of small-sized 'chairs', usually with fewer than ten members organised around a sub-discipline rather than a discipline, which according to Clark (1983) limits and fragments the adaptive and decision-making capacity of an institution. However, there is a strongly held belief among most interviewees that every new academic programme should be based on the establishment of a new 'chair'. For example one of the deans commented:

The opening of any new academic programme inevitably leads to the establishment of a new 'chair'. It is a natural process, if you like, and the rector is also aware of it, but because of the new expenditure incurred, he does not want us to start a 'chair' with only three or four people, but at least ten. But we cannot open a 'chair' with ten people from the very beginning. It needs time. The rector proposes to open a new programme on the basis of an already existing 'chair', but how can, say, a 'chair' of classical Russian literature or a 'chair' of foreign literature encompass linguistics in advertising and world cultural studies? It will be a conglomeration. It will be something awful... If we want to open new programmes, we have to start new 'chairs'. It is very obvious. (D-2(L))*

Not only does the creation of many small 'chairs' create a longer chain of command and communication difficulties between the university centre and academics, it also prevents academics from co-operating with their colleagues from other 'chairs', leads to unnecessary duplication and does not encourage economies of scale. However, any attempt to merge small 'chairs' into larger ones inevitably leads to great resistance on the part of academics (IM-1).

The granting of autonomy to the university has not resulted in greater participation of 'genuine' academics in university governance and management, but on the contrary, because of the preservation of the 'chair' structure and the creation of new layers of authority it has further alienated them from the central university administration.

According to most interviewees, academics identify first and foremost with their 'chairs' and their interests are limited to the immediate affairs of their academic units, whilst decisions made at the university level do not really concern them. The interests of 'genuine' academics at the university level are represented by directors of institutes and deans of faculties who act as statesmen or mediators between the two levels: on the one hand, they defend the interests of their academic units, but on the other, they need to subscribe to wider university policies.

Although this process of articulating and accommodating interests has been admitted to be difficult and painful, according to all interviewees there has never been an open conflict. For example, a dean commented:

We are only a small part of a unified whole, but the latter has its own rules and laws, and to a large extent we have to submit to it. ... If we start to resist, and if the interests of a part go against interests of a whole, there will be considerable disharmony. For this reason, we have to think twice before going against the rector. (D-2(L))*

Another dean further claimed:

... In many respects we are conformists since conformity was the basis of our society. We consciously try to avoid conflicts. Perhaps, it is an instinct of survival, or desire not to complicate our lives...I cannot remember any open conflict between the faculty and university. As a rule, if there is a conflict, at least it is not in the open. (D-7(SS))*

One of the other views was that 'there is no open division of opinion, because the central management intentionally does not discuss tricky issues with the lower levels' (H-3(SS)*). It was also reported that to avoid conflict the central decision-making process at Monday-morning meetings is largely non-transparent, especially in financial matters such as the allocation of 'earned' income. A dean recalled:

Our faculty now retains 50% of 'earned' income and can use it as it sees fit, but there have been several cases when the university infringed our domain and used our money without letting us know... They never inform us, even after they use our money. We find it out ourselves... We are aware that sometimes the university may not have enough resources to cover central costs, but at least they could consult with us or inform us before using our faculty funds. It is very painful. Of course, after finding out I go to the rector and we talk and in the end we reach some sort of compromise, but it would be far better if there were a clear and transparent mechanism. (D-2(L))*

Thus, in the words of all interviewees, there is no open division of opinion between the rector and middle-level managers. This suggests that to a large extent the middle-level managers and academics accept the rector's style of leadership.

Although the leadership at the university appears to be strongly hierarchical, with change mainly originating at the central university level (IM-1; IM-7; D-5(S)), there is a more subtle balance of initiation of change and decision-making at the level of academic units, on the one hand, and the rector, on the other. According to the interview data, the initiative to establish some 'chairs' and academic programmes came from below, whilst ideas for new management structures mainly originated at the rector's office (D-4(SS)*, H-2(L)*, H-3(SS)*). Most interviewees also mentioned the Sakha President, Nikolaev, as the person who drove real change at the university, and that most new academic structures and programmes, initiated by the Sakha President, were approved by the Senate upon the rector's recommendation (H-2(L)*; D-5(S)). Thus the rector seems to be initiating and/or mediating the regional authorities' demands and control, but he also seems to recognise the potential for change coming from new initiatives proposed from below and sometimes supports those initiatives.

Individuals and academic units are free to initiate change, but in a clearly hierarchical environment. There are also more subtle power relationships, as whether *'there is support from the university central administration also depends to a great extent on the personal characteristics of a head of academic unit and his/her relationship with the central university administration'* (D-6(S)). In this respect, the professoriate still holds a strong position within the university. Senior managers are still vulnerable to the historically established hierarchy of full professors over managers, but in general academic opposition and tensions are subsumed, or academics prefer to preserve the status quo vis-à-vis the central university level (D-5(S)).

It is clear that despite considerable development in the formal structures of governance and management advances in actual decision-making practices at YSU have been much less revolutionary. The actual processes remained most intractable to change and not transparent. To conclude this section, Table 7.4 provides a summary of federal normative policy intentions with regard to internal governance and management, and their operational implications for YSU.

Table 7.4 Summary of Federal Policy Intentions and Their Implications for Internal Governance and Management at YSU

Federal Normative Policy Intentions	Operational Implications for the University
Greater autonomy to HEIs in internal decision-making was to be granted, and HEIs were to be independent in defining internal governance and management structures (Law, 1992 and 1996).	Autonomy in determining internal governance and management structures was granted. YSU established 5 more posts for vice-rectors and a number of administrative units as a result of the broadening academic portfolio or in response to the changing environment. The initiative for new administrative posts and units originated at the rector's office level.
HEIs were to be independent in defining functions of governance and management structures (Law, 1992 and 1996).	YSU is free to define functions and powers of governance and management structures, but within the boundaries set by federal regulations, such as the 1993 statute.
HEIs were to decide on division of powers between the rector and Senate (Statute, 1993).	Although the Senate is considered to be the main decision-making body, YSU is clearly a rector-led institution with a hierarchical structure. The rector exerts greater influence and leadership than academics in the general direction of YSU and even in specific matters. However, subtle power relationships are also evident.
HEIs were to be independent in defining their internal academic structure (Law, 1992 and 1996).	Regional government intervention in internal academic organisation is evident. Most new academic units and programmes were established at the initiative of the Sakha President. These innovations were supported by the Senate upon the rector's recommendation. However, initiatives also originated from below in establishing some new 'chairs' and academic programmes, but in a clearly hierarchical environment, and were sometimes supported by the rector. The final decision on opening new academic programmes, however, depends on the federal MOE.
Internal decision-making processes were to be altered. Institutional effectiveness and efficiency were emphasised.	The actual decision-making processes have changed very little. A greater degree of autonomy for the university as a whole has not translated into greater autonomy of academic units or greater participation of 'genuine' academics in university governance and management. Hierarchical decision-making is perceived to be an orderly structure and historical university tradition. New units and layers of authority led to a longer chain of command, communication and decision-making. The preservation of the 'chair' structure also hampers change and communication within and between the internal university levels.

Source: developed by the author from data used in this study.

7.5 Finance

7.5.1 Changing Patterns of Finance at the University

As noted in 6.5.2, since 1992 YSU receives its state funding from the two sources: the federal and regional governments. In 2000, the main funding source for YSU was the regional budget, which constituted 60% of the total university revenue. The second largest stream was federal government funding, which represented 30% of the total. The 'earned' income from all other sources constituted 10% of the total. Although compared to other Russian universities the income from tuition fees, educational services and entrepreneurial activities, appeared to be not very substantial, constituting 9% of the

total, in real terms it represented over 24 million roubles (YSU, 2000). For example, Kazan State University's income from the same source constituted 33.1% or about 33 million roubles, but it generated far more than YSU from research grants and contracts (Kniazhev, 2002:113). Income from research grants and contract research at YSU constituted only 0.7% and 0.3% of the total respectively. Other sources, such as sponsorship and endowments, were not at all developed and did not make any impact on the YSU budget at the end of 2000 (YSU,2000).

Table 7.5 shows the sources of income in 2000 and predicts possible organisational behaviours within YSU. Given that the share of federal and regional funding in the university total budget is the largest, and is allocated by the procedure of line-by-line budgets with no institutional power to reallocate these funds, organisational behaviours within YSU remain largely bureaucratic. Clearly, line-by-line itemised budgeting does not encourage more effective and efficient financial management within the university; a method of control based on a post-audit system, could encourage greater accountability and a greater sense of responsibility for financial management, and affect institutional behaviours. This argument is reinforced by the institutional views of the actual decision-making processes, examined in 7.4.2.

Nevertheless, there is also evidence of entrepreneurial and collegial behaviours, but their extent is limited for three reasons. First, since YSU sees its main activity as the training of qualified manpower, it has not been active in seeking research grants. Second, the generation of non-budget funds has also been curtailed by the lack of entrepreneurial skills and management experience. Third, in some instances the readiness and intentions to 'earn' income have been frustrated by the federal legal constraints introduced by the 1999 Budget and 2000 Tax Codes.

Table 7.5 Income Sources at YSU in 2000 and Their Impact on Organisational Behaviours

Source of Income	%	Funding Methods	Organisational Behaviours
Federal Government	30%	Line-by-line itemised budgeting	Bureaucratic
Regional Government	60%	Line-by-line itemised budgeting	Bureaucratic
Fees from private sources	9%	Tuition fees and sales of educational services; some entrepreneurial activities.	Entrepreneurial
Research Funds	0.7%	Research grants	Collegial
Contract Research	0.3%	Contracting	Entrepreneurial

Note: The idea for this table is adapted from Williams, 1984.
Source: YSU (2000).

Before 1998, there was a single accounting system for both state and non-state funds at YSU. The central university management retained 100% of the income generated by academic units at the central university level and made all final operational decisions. As a result, academic units had little incentive to 'earn' income and had to go through a lengthy bureaucratic process if they wished to use non-budget funds. The situation changed in 1998, when the heads of academic units expressed their dissatisfaction and asked for greater incentives to generate non-budget funds. Endeavours to seek funds from alternative sources were given managerial support by creating a separate accounting system for non-budget funds. The pattern of the allocation of 'earned' income also changed: 50% is now retained by the academic units, whilst the remainder is retained at the central university level to cover central costs.

Far the largest proportion of total non-budget funds comes from tuition fees. Although the university is completely independent in setting the level of tuition fees, it is reluctant to charge high prices, and sets them on the basis of what the market can bear, i.e. much lower than the real per capita cost. However, the tuition fee policy is unclear and inequitable in its intent. Until 2002, the university admitted two different categories of fee-paying students. In the first category were those admitted above the state quota and who study in the same class as state-funded students. For the fee-paying students in this category, tuition fees are reduced with each subsequent year of study. The rationale behind this is that since most fee-paying students come from low-income rural families, many of them drop out because of the inability to pay after the first year (H-8(L)*). The university's aim was to earn some income at least, rather than lose it all. However, students with high academic achievement in this category may transfer to state-funded places if they become available.

In the second category were those who were admitted in 'commercial' groups (*kommercheskie gruppy*). Students for 'commercial' groups were recruited when neither federal nor regional government funding was secured for a newly opened programme, but the university managers were confident that such a programme would be in demand even if provided solely on a fee-paying basis. The entrance procedures to 'commercial' groups were simplified, but students in these groups cannot transfer to state-funded places and the level of tuition fees for them is increased every year. Thus, with

'commercial' groups, the university has established a parallel for-profit academic structure.

Although the above system still operates for students admitted before 2002, in the summer of that year YSU became one of the six pilot universities in Russia for implementing a new federal funding mechanism whereby federal funds 'follow a student' in the form of a Personal Financial Voucher (*gosudarstvennoe imennoe finansovoe obyazatel'stvo*), referred to as an HE voucher. As the results achieved in the Standard State Examination, being introduced experimentally since 2001 (see 7.6), directly affect the amount of the federal funds given by the HE voucher, it is expected that in wishing to attract applicants with the best results, and consequently, the largest proportion of federal funds, the HEIs are given an incentive to improve the quality of their services.

Five categories of HE vouchers have been determined. In 2003/04, for example, the federal government paid 12,500 roubles for the 1st category voucher, 7,200 roubles for the 2nd category, and 700 roubles for the 5th category (Grozovskii, 2004). Students with the 1st and 2nd category vouchers do not pay fees, whilst those with lower but satisfactory results, who would not have to pay any fees if they were enrolled by the procedure of traditional entrance examinations, have to cover the difference between the amount provided by the voucher and the cost of university tuition out of their own pockets. Although the introduction of a new funding scheme is quite defensible, many observers contend that by introducing it, the federal government simply wishes to further limit its HE expenditure (see, for example, Nagornaya, 2003; Shamaev, 2004).

Despite the fact that, according to some interviewees (for example, D-7(SS)*; H-4(S)*), most managers and academics at YSU had had reservations about the federal experiment, they went ahead with it. A culture of conformity and compliance of middle-level managers with the top university management, noted by interviewees, D-2(L)* and D-7(SS)*, may explain this. The top university managers, on the other hand, had to obey the decision of the regional government '*because of fear of being overridden by bullying*' (H-2(L)*) as it was the Sakha government officials who approached the federal MOE to include YSU as one of the pilot universities (Shamaev, 2003).

It is not yet clear whether this scheme will be fully implemented in Russia, as at the federation-wide level it is severely criticised and opposed by the academic community, parents and students. Partly for this reason, the number of HEIs participating in the experimental scheme has not increased since 2002. The federal MOE officials recently admitted that this hurriedly-developed experimental scheme has largely failed, and had an overall negative effect on the six pilot universities (Sergeev, 2005). The following section examines the views of institutional actors on the changes in funding patterns discussed above.

7.5.2 Institutional Views of University Finance

Despite the relatively generous funding for university activities from the regional government, all interviewees considered the financial situation to be the most difficult problem which the university had to face in the reform process. It is clear that without the commitment of the Sakha government YSU might not have expanded in the ways it did. An interviewee, IM-4, for example, commented:

The major problem in the change process has certainly been insufficient funding...I do not know how we would have survived without the additional funding that we have received from the regional government... But despite generous regional funding relative to many other HEIs in Russia, we have experienced exactly the same financial problems as other universities, as state expenditure in real terms declined significantly. (IM-1)

One interesting view was given by an institutional manager, IM-5, who said that '*the regional government was handing over money without receiving anything in return*'. If it is clear that those students who pay for their tuition demand quality HE, the regional government's demand, as the university mission suggests, should be for more highly-qualified specialists to fill gaps in the regional economy. However, the irony is that '*the regional government hands over the money for training specialists... the university trains specialists, but these specialists do not go to rural districts of Yakutia where they are most needed*' (D-2(L)*).

As a response to the above comment, another institutional manager, IM-1, said that it was not the responsibility of the university to assign students to jobs but that '*the [regional] government should create adequate conditions in rural areas*'. At present, the university trains manpower mainly for the city of Yakutsk, where most graduates prefer to remain, but which already has an oversupply of specialists with HE. At the

same time, schools and hospitals, particularly in remote districts of Sakha, lack qualified staff. The regional government has proposed the reconstruction of the formal assignment of posts to graduates whose studies were funded by the federal and regional budgets, but whether this measure will work under current conditions remains to be seen. Since federal and regional funding has been covered extensively in Chapters 5 and 6, this section largely focuses on institutional views of university non-budget funds (in 2001) and the new federal funding mechanism.

The university has been exploring external opportunities and seeking non-budget funds, and although many interviewees mentioned the lack of entrepreneurial skills, shortage of management experience, and national legal constraints as the main reasons curtailing the diversification of the university funding base (for example, D-1(L)*, IM-7), the lack of initiative on the part of the institutional actors has also contributed to the limited extent of entrepreneurial behaviours at the institutional level. A number of interviewees (D-4(SS)*, IM-2, IM-6) pointed out that in the 1990s university academics were too preoccupied with mere survival to think about exploring external opportunities or introducing innovations. Several interviewees said that the lack of sufficient state funding hampered initiative for internal change (for example, D-5(S), IM-1), expressing, in the words of a dean, D-5(S), a *'wait for the good old times'* attitude with regard to the funding given to the university in the past.

Other interviewees, however, were more realistic about such prospects, and were thinking and acting in order to cope with current realities and to shape the university policies to deal with the on-going instability of state funding. A top university manager, IM-4, was confident that the university should expand its non-budget funds in the future through *'pursuing such activities as retraining courses, contract research from companies, and sponsorship from local industries and other sources'*, because *'there will never be a return to the old practice when everything was paid for out of the public purse'*. An interviewee, IM-8, also emphasised that the share of non-budget funds in the total university budget should be increased by, for example, increasing the volume of retraining courses from less than 5% (in 2000) to 20-25% of total non-budget funds.

Despite the comment of D-2(L)*, who recalled that the university central management sometimes went ahead and used the non-budget funds retained by the academic units

without prior consultation, the devolved structure of allocation of 'earned' income and the separate accounting for non-budget funds, set up in 1998, were perceived to be the most positive developments, and especially welcomed by interviewees in academic units (for example, D-1(L)*, D-4(SS)*, D-7(SS)*). A dean of faculty recalled:

This internal policy [retaining 50% of extra-budgetary funds by the academic unit] was a response of the rector to the pressures of academic units. ... It definitely gave us incentives and encouraged us to use these funds more efficiently by defining our own priorities...As we do not have to seek the rector's approval to use our share, it also became far easier for us from the decision-making point of view, as well as giving more time for the central university managers to concentrate on other more pressing issues. (D-4(SS))*

The above interview excerpt suggests that this policy was also a reaction of the central university management to the growing size of the institution which may have made it no longer possible for them to make all final operational decisions for individual academic units.

Clearly, some academic units have been more successful than others in attracting non-budget funds. According to IM-2*, *'the ability of academic units to earn income largely depended on the discipline'*. This claim has been confirmed by the university rector, who said that the Institute of Economics and Finance and the Faculties of Foreign Languages and Law have been the most popular, and therefore the most successful in 'earning' income from tuition fees, whilst the Faculties of Biology and Linguistics have generated virtually no external funds (Spiridonov, 2002). At the same time, financially sustainable academic units are not necessarily the best in terms of quality of teaching, but quite the contrary, whilst the units which struggle most financially are the best in terms of experienced academic staff (IM-1; also see Spiridonov, 2002). The competition for non-budget funds *'has turned academic units into 'rich' and 'poor' ones and to some extent has led to the fragmentation of the university'* (D-5(S)).

Some academic units did not rely merely on tuition fees, but responded to other external opportunities. Several interviewees (H-2(L)*, D-7(SS)*, IM-1) commented that the success of an academic unit in doing so depended to a great extent on its head. For example, an interviewee, IM-1, claimed:

Some heads of academic units [institutes, faculties, 'chairs'] are genuinely interested in generating more income for their units and the university, and have many ideas, and in such units academics are much more innovative too, whereas

in units where heads are not concerned with generating income academics tend to be very passive in exploring external opportunities. (IM-1)

For example, the 'Chair' of English at the Faculty of Foreign Languages entered into an agreement with the regional Ministry of General Education to retrain teachers of English. The same faculty won a generous grant from the TEMPUS programme, which allowed it to train staff and students in partner HEIs and purchase state-of-the-art equipment and teaching material. The Institute of Finance and Economics organised short-term courses for economics teachers from secondary schools and pre-HE institutions and provided consultancy services for industry and business. Interestingly, the interviewees from these units expressed the view that *'non-budget funds opened up opportunities for the development of their academic units'* (D-1(L)*), and were not for mere survival.

In the meantime, compared to the relative success of some academic units, new non-academic units (the Science Park, the research units, and the Centre for New Information Technologies) have not proved particularly successful in attracting external funds (IM-1, IM-4). Overall, generating external funds has not been the priority for YSU as a whole, but has largely depended on individual initiatives. Nevertheless, it is recognised that such an activity has potential (IM-1). Against the backdrop of the post-2000 federal budgetary and tax policies, however, there are unlikely to be many intentions and innovations with regard to expanding the university's funding base and increasing the share of 'earned' income unless the federal constraints are removed.

Since the enactment of the 1999 Budget and 2000 Tax Codes (see 5.5.2), the university has little or no incentive to attract alternative sources of income, because all revenues attracted are subject to pre-audit control by the Sakha branch of the federal Treasury and the federal MOF. The reintroduction of taxes and state control over the internal use of 'earned' income have been criticised as negatively affecting the university's activities by all institutional actors interviewed after 2001 (for example, IM-4, IM-8). Clearly, these disincentives cannot be removed in one region alone, but require the efforts of the entire Russian academic community and the will of the federal government to enhance institutional financial autonomy. Furthermore, as carrying over a surplus to the next fiscal year is no longer allowed, YSU *'tries hard to utilise the assigned budget or, otherwise, we receive reduced funds next year'* (IM-8). Since the bulk of federal and

regional funding tends to come near the end of the fiscal year, the university tries to spend all funds within a very limited time rather than managing them efficiently.

As noted, since 2002 students have been admitted to YSU within the framework of the new federal funding scheme. It is difficult to assess the short-term impact of the HE voucher system on YSU, mainly because of the lack of comprehensive and transparent data. However, even patchy data show a considerable increase in the number of fee-paying students since the start of the experiment and reduction in federal funding. For example, in 2003/04 out of 2900 students admitted, only 25% did not have to pay any fees, whilst 75% had to cover the difference between the amount provided by the HE voucher and the university tuition fee (Government of Sakha, 2004).

Since many students admitted within the framework of this experiment are unable to pay fees every semester, its immediate effect on YSU has been an increase in the rate of dropouts (Yakimenko, 2005). Shamaev (2003:3) stresses that in 2002/03, out of 239 students admitted to the Institute of Physics, 64 dropped out or were expelled after the first semester, mainly because of the inability to pay, and that out of 175 that remained 112 had to pay fees, but since over 75% of those paying fees came from low-income families, they were also in danger of being expelled. The same trend was said to be evident in other institutes and faculties of YSU (D-2(L)*; IM-5; also see Yakimenko, 2005). Realising the severity of this problem, the Sakha government released 8 million roubles in 2002/03 and 14 million roubles in 2003/04 to allow students with lower-category vouchers to continue their study by covering the difference for them out of the regional budget, on the condition that they would be assigned a post by the regional government after their graduation (Government of Sakha, 2004).

Many interviewees pointed out that the details of the new funding mechanism, particularly the categories and amounts of the vouchers, should be re-considered and actual implementation should be improved, as in the first two years of the experiment there was a great deal of confusion (for example, D-5(S); IM-2). In 2002, the federal MOE and MOF had only six months to work out the details of the new mechanism and could not reach final decisions on the actual introduction of the scheme until after applicants had already been offered a place. In the words of a dean, D-5(S), the whole atmosphere at the university in the summer of 2002 was extremely tense and unclear,

'as even after their admission, applicants did not know whether they would have to pay or study according to the old funding mechanism, whilst the university managers could not give them clear answers because they themselves were confused and waiting for final directives from the federal MOE'.

After the federal MOE was criticised for trying to reduce its HE funding and the number of state-funded students, it ruled that all six universities participating in the experiment should admit the 50% of applicants with the best scores on a non-fee-paying basis, even if the amounts given by their vouchers were not enough to cover the university tuition fee. This measure was explained to me as follows:

For example, if the university admitted all 25% of those with 1st and 2nd category vouchers on a free basis, it was ordered to admit another 25% of those with the 3rd category vouchers without charging them the difference. The university was clearly to lose much money. Even the 1st category voucher could not cover the real cost of training a student at the university. If we set the price at 18,000 roubles a year, but an average amount given by the HE voucher for 50% of those with the best scores, say, was 7,000 roubles, we still had to teach them free of charge. This is what the ministry [MOE] wanted us to do. (IM-5)

The response of the university was to increase the university fee for the remaining 50% to match the shortfall. Thus, the entire goal of this experiment has been discredited, as the students, who were to pay lower fees than in the previous 'above the state quota' practice, ended up paying the same as previously or even more (H-2(L)). In 2003/04, the federal MOE decided not to force the pilot universities to vigorously apply their ruling.

It is not surprising that the federal government is trying to encourage market-like behaviour in HE and place the financial burden on the students and their parents, but the lack of wide discussions with the academic community and the public at large and the non-transparency of the experiment's interim outcomes promote great suspicion and antagonism. As Shamaev (2003) stresses, despite several street protests in Yakutsk and the lack of wide debates regarding the experiment in Sakha, the regional government and YSU went ahead with the experiment. Within YSU, academics were reported to be *'either indifferent or too scared to openly oppose the university managers, since their opposition would be suppressed'* (H-2(L)*). To conclude this section, Table 7.6 provides a summary of normative federal and/or regional policies with regard to finance and their implications for YSU in the operational mode.

Table 7.6 Summary of Changing Patterns of Finance at YSU

Normative Policy Intentions (Laws, 1992 and 1996)	Actual Implementation and Post-2000 Policies and Developments	Implications for YSU in the Operational Mode
State funding was to shift from line-by-line budgeting to block grants.	1). It did not happen. The federal and regional funds to YSU were directed only for payroll and stipends until 1999. Although the share of federal HE funding has increased since 1999, the 1999 Budget Code stated that all federal funds to HEIs should be allocated line-by-line.	Since YSU was not allowed to reallocate federal and regional funds, the policy resulted in bureaucratic behaviours within the university and inflexibility in governance and management. Since academic salaries were very low, most academics had to take two or three part-time jobs.
	2). Since 2002, the federal MOE has been introducing a voucher system in funding HEIs, according to which the amount of federal funding depends on the results of the Standard State Examination (see 7.6). The more students with the best scores admitted-the greater is federal funding.	Led to reduction of federal funding at YSU, and increases in the numbers of fee-paying students and the rate of dropouts. The Sakha government released regional funds to assist those in need of financial help to cover the difference between the amount given by the voucher and the university tuition fee.
HEIs were to be allowed a carry-over from the previous fiscal year.	It was allowed until 2000, but the 1999 Budget Code discontinued the practice. Now all funds at the end of the fiscal year should be returned to the federal Treasury.	Until 2000, the surplus at YSU did not affect funding for the next fiscal year. Currently, since a large share of federal and regional funds reaches YSU near the end of the year, it tries to absorb them as quickly as possible rather than managing them efficiently.
HEIs were to be exempt from taxation.	YSU was exempt from most taxes in case its 'earned' income was reinvested in educational process until 2001. The 2000 Tax Code reintroduced most taxes.	There was an incentive to generate non-budget funds until 2001. Currently, innovations and intentions are affected by the reintroduction of taxes: 24% income tax and 20% VAT.
HE funding was to be decentralised to the regional authorities. The university funding base was to diversify.	Relative to many regions of Russia, the Sakha government supported YSU to a considerable extent, but the continuation of regional funding on the same level is doubtful due to the shift in centre-periphery relationship and recent federal policies. The new Sakha leaders may not necessarily see HE as a priority.	Although the YSU funding base has diversified, the regional government has remained the main funding source since 1992. Reliance of YSU on the regional funds, and the lack of experience and skills have hampered the development of entrepreneurial behaviours. Success in 'earning' income has largely depended on the discipline and on the heads of academic units.
HEIs were to be allowed to charge fees.	In 1996 – 25% of fee-paying students above the state quota. It was increased to 50% in 2002 (The cap was removed in 2004).	YSU admitted up to 25% of students above the state quota in most popular specialisms, but also created for-profit academic structures.
HEIs were to be independent in determining pricing policy and allocating 'earned' income.	Pricing is determined by YSU. No external intervention in allocation of 'earned' income until 2000; the funds were kept in commercial banks. The YSU central level retained 100% of 'earned' income and made all final decisions until 1998. Since 1998, 50% is retained by academic units, whilst 50% remains at the university level. Use of non-budget funds are now controlled by the Treasury. All funds are kept in the accounts at the Treasury	Since the enactment of the 1999 Budget Code, the process of internal use of 'earned' income has become bureaucratized and affects university decision-making. Further diversification of funding base and increase of the share of non-budget funds in the total university budget are unlikely unless national constraints, introduced by the 1999 Budget and 2000 Tax Codes, are removed.

Source: developed by the author from data used in this study.

7.6 Academic Matters and Quality

7.6.1 Impact of Reforms on Academic Matters

For reasons discussed in Chapters 5 and 6, YSU has been reluctant to introduce a two-tiered degree structure extensively. In 1993/94 only one faculty opened its first Bachelor's programme, in response to declining admissions, but it reintroduced the traditional diploma programme when the number of applicants increased. Although currently some programmes at YSU are based on the two-tiered structure, their number is insignificant. They are mainly offered on a part-time basis for those already possessing an HE diploma. Since academic programmes continue to be geared toward training specialists in narrow fields targeted at specific sectors of the economy, and since the 'chair' structure restrains any multi-disciplinary approach to teaching and learning, many HE graduates return to the university to acquire a shorter second degree, that of Bachelor, in a different specialism on a part-time basis in order to advance their career prospects and increase their employability in the changing labour market⁶⁴.

Meanwhile, YSU makes a very little use of the 20% of the regional/institutional component of the state standards within which it could start introducing multi-disciplinary courses (Filippov, 1999). According to most interviewees, one of the main reasons for not introducing this component in the university curriculum is that the federal component alone is very demanding. The old ideological courses have been replaced by courses not related to the student's chosen specialism. For example, a student of linguistics now has to study such compulsory disciplines as law, economics, mathematics and natural sciences⁶⁵ (MOE, 2000). As a result, compared to the old Soviet curriculum (see 4.3.3), the reduction in student workload is extremely limited, as on average full-time students have 27 compulsory classroom hours per week, excluding mandatory physical education classes (MOE, 2000).

⁶⁴ Since such students already possess an HE diploma as their first degree, after they receive the second degree of Bachelor they are more employable than those whose first degrees are not the traditional HE diplomas.

⁶⁵ According to the state standards, the academic programme in each specialism is divided into four cycles. For example, for a five-year diploma programme in Linguistics the first cycle is disciplines of the humanities and social sciences, such as philosophy, history, sociology, occupying 1800 hours of a five-year curriculum. The second cycle is mathematics and natural sciences which totals 400 hours. The third cycle is the general disciplines of a specialism, totalling 6400 hours, and the fourth cycle is the disciplines of a chosen sub-specialism, totaling 886 hours. In total, a linguistics student has 9,936 hours of classroom work and independent study over a five-year period. In addition, a linguistics student has to do 756 hours of practical training and 408 hours of compulsory physical education classes (MOE, 2000).

In addition, although one of the main aims of the reforms was to create a student-centred HE with individual approaches to teaching and learning and the development of active skills, the state standards continue to focus on the learning of masses of factual material, and although the updated versions of the standards pay more attention to students' active skills⁶⁶, the detailed requirements for topics to be covered and hours allocated for each discipline do not suggest that a shift toward flexible market-oriented and competence-based learning has been promoted by the federal authorities. As a result, there are hardly any elective courses, and a traditional way of lecturing dominates, in which the student is seen as a passive 'recipient' of information rather than an independent learner (H-5(SS)*; also see Bukur and Eklof, 1999; Smolentseva, 2003).

All individual academic curricula at YSU are based on the state standards, and must be approved by the university methodological and curriculum committee as they serve as a basis for the federal quality assurance procedures. The pressures of state accreditation do not allow much variation, and make most academics at YSU follow 80% of the federal component (the content, topics and teaching hours) in their individual curricula with little or no change. Another reason for doing so is that since most academics hold multiple jobs, they '*do not have time to be creative*' (Regl-2). This is one of the reasons why even the limited freedom granted to academics in designing their curricula by introducing a regional/institutional component of 20% is not used.

Russian academics cannot be expected to change their practice overnight, even in a rapidly changing social order. Change is slow and difficult. It is well documented that in many Russian HEIs, the old courses were taught under the new course titles, or that even after the break-up of the USSR old Soviet curricula continued to be used (see, for example, Hemesath, 1992 and 1993; Tomusk, 2000). My first-hand experience at YSU supports this argument. In 1990/91 I was required to attend classes on the history of the

⁶⁶ One of the main criticisms of the state standards introduced between 1994 and 1996, was that they listed outcomes for specialisms in unmeasurable terms. For example, the state standards for linguistics, introduced in 1995, stipulated that 'a specialist [in linguistics] must realise the personal and social value of his/her profession... possess a scientific and humanistic world outlook and know the principles of the development of nature and society...' (SCHE, 1995). In 2000, MOE made some attempts to express student outcomes in terms of skills. For example, the state standards for linguistics, updated in 2000, state that 'a specialist [in linguistics] must be able to speak the language in its literary form and be aware of its dialects... know the history of a language...' (MOE, 2000).

CPSU, whilst the entire communist order in the country was starting to lose its credibility. In 1992/93 I attended a compulsory course on political economy, which solely focused on centrally planned economies at a time when a market-based economy was emerging in the country. Thus, even when the new curricula were not yet developed by the federal authorities, academics continued to use the outdated curricula, because having being accustomed to seventy years of the communist regime, during which neither critical thinking nor individual initiative was encouraged, they did not know of any other system or ways of doing things. When the new standards started to be introduced in 1994, most academics at YSU saw them as detailed ‘blueprints’ for developing their curricula and courses. Thus there is an evidence of continuity of the Soviet practice in curricular matters.

As already noted, the federal component of the state standards is the basis for federal quality assurance. In 1998, the attestation procedure at YSU included detailed inspection of university academic plans and curricula, physical plant and facilities, and library holdings (IM-1). In short, the attestation commission perceived YSU to be providing a quality HE as long as it met the input requirements of the federal MOE. It can be argued that the ways in which the federal MOE conducts quality assurance procedures, with ‘sticks’ but no ‘carrots’, conditions the preservation of the old bureaucratic ways in which YSU responds to this external exercise; alternatively, it comes up with its own tactics to play the game because of the restrictive nature of federal regulation (for more details, see 7.4.2.).

One of the most recent reforms, which is said to bring Russian HE closer to its foreign counterparts, is the implementation of a completely new university admission procedure (Filippov, 2002). This scheme is currently being implemented at YSU as an experiment by the federal MOE within the programme for the modernisation of Russian education. According to this procedure, admissions to HEIs are decided on the basis of the results of the Standard State Examination (*Edinyi Gosudarstvennyi Ekzamen*), which combines both secondary school final and university entrance examinations and replaces the traditional practice of oral entrance examinations at a specific HEI with written national tests. The new admission scheme is designed to improve access to HE, as applicants are allowed to send their examination results to as many HEIs as they wish, to create a

system of objective evaluation of standards achieved by secondary school leavers, and to eliminate corrupt practices in HEIs (Filippov, 2002; also see Smolentseva, 2002).

Whilst many regions and HEIs opposed this scheme, the Sakha government volunteered its regional HEIs to take part in it. The federal MOE decree for the first year of the experiment, issued in January 2001, stated that various interested parties had been consulted in the pilot regions and that they had expressed their support (MOE, 2001b). However, in one of the consultation meetings in Sakha, most participants (teachers and academics) were reported to be against the implementation of this experiment (Shamaev, 2003). Nevertheless, the experimental scheme was launched in the summer of 2001 and YSU was instructed to admit students on the basis of the results of the new standard examination. The following section looks at institutional responses in the operational mode to the recent reform in university admissions and to other federal policies discussed in this section.

7.6.2 Institutional Responses to Reforms in Academic Matters

First of all, concerning the two-tiered degree structure, interviewees held the view that it was not fully appreciated. One university manager said that the university community itself '*contributed to scepticism on the two-tiered structure among the population, as even within the university most managers and academics have not made a real effort to understand this new model*' (D-3(S)*). A dean of the faculty which established the first Bachelor's programme at YSU recalled:

In the early 1990s, the situation in our faculty was catastrophic... In 1992 we had the capacity to admit 125 students, but received only eighty applications. The following year, we reduced the number of places to eighty, but received only sixty applications. There was no competition and we had to admit everyone. But for sixty people we could not have four different narrow specialisms; therefore we started to offer a Bachelor's programme, so that all sixty could study together, and then in the last two years (Master's programme) we would divide them into smaller groups for specialised subjects... We made the decision to start this programme not because I am a great supporter of the new model, but because at the time it was the only solution to the problem. (D-3(S))*

It is expected, though, that with the introduction of amendments to the federal Employment Code, legally recognising the degrees of Bachelor and Master, the situation will change and the university will offer more programmes, based on the two-tiered degree structure, for full-time students (D-1(L)*; D-3(S)*). Furthermore, if such

amendments are made, not all Bachelor's degree graduates will want to proceed to Master's or diploma programmes, thus releasing additional financial resources.

The picture drawn from the interviews indicates that most university staff at YSU held positive views regarding the introduction of the state standards, because they *'help preserve unitary educational space and give a sense of direction for academics'* (IM-7). However, the standards were seen by most institutional actors purely in terms of input requirements. For example, one of the university managers commented:

Everything we do at the university should be in accordance with the state standards: number of students per square metre, number of textbooks per student, number of teaching hours, number of exams and tests, number of disciplines to be taught... In all these matters the university should comply with the state standards, as everything we do is assessed against the standards. (IM-2)*

Current practices of accreditation focus on whether the federal input requirements have been met; they adopt a retrospective approach, which, Billing and Temple (2001) argue, does not necessarily promote a vision for future institutional development. Indeed, the experience of YSU supports this argument. Institutional managers and academics at YSU perceive state accreditation as an end in itself and the ultimate goal of attestation, rather than an opportunity for institutional self-reflection and quality improvement; they perceive standards as meaning exactly the same as quality (for example, H-2(L)*, IM-2*). For example, one dean emphasised:

We were accredited in 1998. The next quality assurance procedure will take place in 2004. State accreditation means that we have met all the threshold requirements of the state standards, and only the state standards can guarantee high quality of education... Hence, we should strictly follow the state standards... There is not much room for manoeuvre. If we do not comply with the standards, we will not be accredited. There have already been cases when academic units and even entire institutions have been closed down after their non-compliance with the standards (D-5(S))

At the same time, several HEIs, branches, and academic units in Russia were closed down, not because of the low quality of teaching, but because they violated the federal requirements by, for example, starting new programmes without a license or admitting more students per square meter than allowed by the standards (Agranovich, 2004).

The introduction of the state standards and the pressures of accreditation leave very limited, if any, room for manoeuvre to the university and academics. The views of the majority of heads of 'chairs' (all of whom were also teaching academics) was that the

federal component of the state standards does not allow academics to have an individual approach to designing curricula and courses and to introduce the regional/institutional component, even if they wish to, because in practice federal minimum requirements in terms of content and classroom hours have turned out to be extremely detailed, rigid and prescriptive (for example, H-2(L)*, H-4(S)*, H-3(SS)*). Other Russian HEIs are also reported to not make a great use of the 20% of the regional/institutional component (OECD, 1999). Thus, on the one hand, the federal MOE appears to encourage academics to be creative in designing curricula and courses, but on the other, it limits this freedom by prescribing detailed guidelines and requiring them to follow precisely the federal requirements.

A few interviewees thought that through the development of very detailed curricular requirements, the federal MOE *'tried to regain power and authority lost at the beginning of the 1990s'* (H-4(S)*). One institutional manager argued that the state standards were aimed primarily at interfering in the internal academic affairs of the university:

The federal government is in a position to impose any policy on the institutional level under the slogan of quality... the standards are necessary, but the ministry seems to contradict itself, as whilst in theory promoting the diversification of academic programmes and courses, they are actually encouraging universities to be uniform by issuing numerous detailed requirements and regulations. (IM-5)

Academic programmes which do not to comply with the federal component of the state standards either lose their state accreditation or are not accredited by the federal MOE. This puts much pressure on central university managers to be preoccupied primarily with academic work rather than creating strategies, setting goals or evaluating performance, since the penalties for failing over quality assurance are understood very well by all (D-7(SS)*, H-3(SS)*).

The introduction of the quality assurance procedures has also led to a significant increase in the university bureaucracy. Since external assessors are more concerned with collating curricula and time-tables with the state standards rather than with conducting tests, the curricula of individual academics have to be approved by all the levels of the university bureaucracy (H-2(L)*). One interviewee, however, recalled:

...When academics were required to present their curricula to the Methodological and Curriculum Department of the university, ... most copied the

exemplary curricula approved by the federal ministry.... The university is to review every individual curriculum for every single course, but I think it is a pure formality, as this department cannot possibly evaluate every single curriculum (H-3(SS))*

For the same reason, according to another interviewee, even though in the normative mode all academics subscribe strongly to the requirements of the state standards, there are some academics who in the operational mode are *'truly creative and do not necessarily follow the federal requirements in their actual work'* (H-2(L)*).

Although most interviewees agreed that the state standards were too detailed and prescriptive, academics at YSU neither demand more autonomy nor resist extensive federal control in purely academic matters. One of the main reasons is that compared to the old Soviet curricula, the new standards are general (for example, D-2(L)*, H-8(L)*, D-7(SS)*). Other reasons which help explain why academics do not strive for more autonomy in academic matters are the long tradition of state control in curricular matters, the slow change in their mentality, the culture of compliance, and the pre-occupation with financial rather than academic autonomy.

As for the new admission procedure, all central university managers interviewed said that they supported it, because it provided greater access for students from rural areas and greater objectivity. However, they also said that the procedure should be developed further, as it has many flaws. One interviewee said that YSU did not oppose it for the simple reason that with its introduction *'no one will accuse us of corruption'* (D-4(SS)*).

Several interviewees, however, said that the fact that the new procedure is directly related to the new voucher funding mechanism suggests that the federal MOE is trying to further reduce its funding for HE (see 7.5). There was also a concern that with the new procedure, the university was losing its control and freedom (D-2(L)*; IM-5). An interviewee, IM-5, said:

Traditional entrance exams should be preserved with the introduction of a new procedure. Applicants should have a choice which procedure, new or old, to choose. University autonomy in selecting its own students is now being taken away by the federal ministry, and it is really worrying. How is it possible to have written multiple-answer tests for all the disciplines? Furthermore, how, through written tests, can we screen really gifted students? We should retain oral exams

or essays for at least some of the disciplines, such as literature, and be able to conduct interviews at the university for candidates selected on the test results. I think the university should be given more freedom in choosing additional methods of selection on top of the new examination results.

Some interviewees also commented that the new admission procedure would affect the university's financial situation, as with the old practice of oral examinations, the university offered preparatory courses for applicants in return for fees, and in this respect, the federal MOE was infringing and restraining university financial autonomy (D-1(L)*). However, the response of the university to this is that it has already started offering preparatory courses for the new standardised examination and that academics still continue to give private tuition to those who want to enter the university.

This experiment is currently being implemented by administrative order rather than by legislation. Although it was largely a 'top-down' reform, the university actors seem to be coming to terms with it. An institutional manager recalled:

In the first year of reform, in 2001, it was very difficult to introduce this admission procedure. There was much misunderstanding, but we have learnt from our mistakes, and now many people, especially students, have seen the advantages of this system. At the university level, we have more or less reached consensus and now our academics actively participate in designing tests to be included in the examination. Perhaps, compared to the experiment on the new federal funding mechanism, academics no longer see the standard examination as so controversial. (IM-2)*

Although the reform was implemented 'top-down' without much normative discussion, the experience of YSU suggests that change introduced in the operational mode may affect the way people perceive it in the normative mode. The fact that none of the interviewees opposed this 'top-down' reform supports this argument. Although the experimental phase for the new admission procedure was extended to 2008, at present it is not clear whether it will eventually become the practice throughout Russian HE, because of the continuing opposition of some of the regions and HEIs.

To conclude this section, Table 7.7 summarises the federal normative policy intentions in academic matters, their implementation and implications for YSU in the operational mode.

Table 7.7 Summary of Federal Policy Intentions in Area of Academic Matters, Their Implementation and Implications for YSU

Normative Policy Intentions	Implementation and Implications for YSU in the Operational Mode
The two-tiered degree structure was to be introduced in 1992/93.	There was resistance to policy. In 1993/94 one faculty introduced the new structure, in response to declining admissions. Currently, Bachelor's and Master's programmes are mainly offered on a part-time basis. Traditional five-year diploma programmes continue to dominate.
Ideological courses were to be abolished and replaced with new courses on social sciences and humanities.	YSU abolished the ideological courses, but the process was slow. In the absence of the centrally designed curricula and in spite of unsuitability of old Soviet curricula, many academics continued using the old curricula. It was difficult to change the attitude of academics, even in a situation of changing social order.
The federal component of the state standards for HE was to be developed and introduced to serve as minimum requirements and guidelines. HEIs were to develop their own curricula on its basis and introduce the regional/institutional component (Law, 1992).	The state standards were introduced between 1994 and 1996. The federal SCHE approved the federal component of the state standards, occupying 80%, and allowed HEIs to develop the regional/institutional component. However, YSU makes a very little use of the 20% of the regional/institutional component, mainly because the federal component is rigid, prescriptive and demanding. Although compared to the Soviet curricula the new state standards are general enough, they do not leave sufficient flexibility to academics at YSU in designing their own curricula. Since institutional performance is measured strictly against the federal component of the state standards, YSU is forced to follow them in every detail. Through the state standards the federal MOE has maintained its control in purely academic matters.
HEIs were to facilitate a student-centred HE with individual approaches to teaching and learning (Law, 1992 and 1996).	The system as it presently operates does not allow either academics or students to be flexible. The old ideological disciplines are replaced by subjects often not related to the student's chosen specialism. The student workload is still very heavy, and the learning of masses of factual material is still required. There are no elective courses, and academic programmes are still geared toward training specialists in narrow fields and for specific branches of the economy. In short, very limited change.
HEIs were to be granted autonomy by putting in place the quality assurance procedures: licensing, attestation and accreditation (Law, 1992 and 1996).	Quality assurance started in 1996. It has not resulted in a great degree of autonomy, but on the contrary the federal MOE retains extensive control over the academic process and product by requiring YSU to meet federal input requirements in terms of the physical plant, number of hours, content covered, type of qualifications, in order to be accredited. Result: increased bureaucracy and 'red tape'. Accreditation is seen as an end in itself.
A Standard State Examination, combining secondary school final and university entrance examinations, was to be introduced in 2001/02.	Sakha was among the first regions to implement this experiment. It was administratively implemented by the regional and federal governments in a 'top-down' fashion. Some interviewees commented that the federal MOE was trying to reduce its funding commitment and infringe university autonomy, but a consensus among university actors is said to have been reached. YSU has responded by offering preparatory courses for the new examination and academics participate in designing tests for the examination. Although none of the interviewees opposed the new admission procedure, many said that its details should be discussed more and developed. At present, however, it is not yet clear whether the reform will be fully implemented.

Source: developed by the author from data used in this study.

7.7 Summary and Conclusion

This chapter has examined the impact of reform at the institutional level and the responses of the actors at YSU to the federal and regional policies discussed in Chapters 5 and 6. The chapter concludes that although change has originated at different levels, the first Sakha President and his government shaped priorities and developments for YSU through relatively generous funding, which allowed the university to expand significantly in terms of the numbers of enrolments and academics, reorganise its academic structures and broaden its academic portfolio. However, despite impressive structural developments, change in actual practices with regard to different institutional matters has been slow and difficult for several reasons.

First, the university goals are set externally. It was clear that with insufficient state funding YSU could not fulfil the myriad of goals prescribed to it by the federal government, and therefore the university actors adhered more strongly to their traditional mission of manpower training. The mission of the university has not changed, and teaching has remained a largely shared institutional culture, on which the university actors have based their response to change. Second, YSU remains a highly hierarchical structure with clear chains of command and bureaucratic decision-making, and is clearly a rector-led institution. The increased autonomy of the university as a whole has not translated into greater decision-making power for the individual academic units, or into the participation of 'genuine' academics in internal governance and management. The reasons for this are the perception of university actors that a hierarchical and bureaucratic decision-making is a long university tradition, the preservation and creation of a large number of small 'chairs', which hamper institutional decision-making, and federal regulations, which make institutional adaptation more difficult.

Furthermore, line-by-line government funding also contributes to the continuation of the old bureaucratic practices within the university, whilst a lack of skills and experience and national legal constraints limit and frustrate entrepreneurial behaviours. Last but not least, through the introduction of the state standards and quality assurance procedures, the federal MOE still controls purely academic matters within the university, leaving very little flexibility to the university and academics in designing their own curricula and courses. As a result, due to the pressures of state accreditation, the central university

managers are largely preoccupied with controlling academic processes rather than setting goals and developing strategies.

The outcomes of the reform implementation have thus been very mixed. The federal policy of a two-tiered degree structure has not been extensively implemented at the university, mainly because of academic resistance. Although the university has clearly diversified its funding base, there is still a strong reliance on state funding from the regional government. There is no corporate university strategy with regard to generating non-budget funds, and this activity depends more on the initiatives of individual academics and/or academic units. The regional policies of opening new academic programmes and units have been extensively implemented, but the actual practices of teaching have changed very little and the traditional form of lecturing continues to dominate.

As for the most recent reforms, namely the HE voucher scheme and the new admission procedure, it is difficult to assess their impact due to the unavailability of comprehensive data. These reforms have been implemented at YSU at the initiative of the regional government, even though many institutional actors have opposed them. Nevertheless, some changes have originated at the lower institutional levels and have sometimes been supported by the rector.

In short, despite some successes, most of which are quantitative, the actual practices of decision-making within the university and institutional behaviours have changed very little. One of the main reasons behind the moderate achievements of reform at the institutional level lies in the nature of the relationships between the federal and Sakha governments and YSU. The following chapter brings the three levels discussed in Chapters 5 to 7 together by examining the relationships between them, as they have evolved since 1991, in more detail.

CHAPTER EIGHT

NATURE OF STATE-UNIVERSITY RELATIONSHIPS

8.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to examine how the three levels discussed in Chapters 5 to 7 have connected with each other since 1991. First, Section 8.2 examines the legal framework of relationships between the Russian and Sakha governments and the extent of university autonomy at Yakutsk State University (YSU). The legal framework of HE decentralisation from the federal to lower levels has been characterised by ambiguity, with no clear distribution of authority between the levels, the federal MOE legally retaining most powers or assigning them as a 'joint' federal and regional responsibility and granting only limited and partial decision-making authority to the region and university. Then, Section 8.3 looks at the interaction between the Russian and Sakha governments and YSU and presents institutional views of the extent of university autonomy. Despite the federal government retaining most powers according to the legal framework, several shifts in the balance of power have occurred. The interviewees' views on university autonomy have been mixed, ranging from the view that at the institutional level there is a great degree of autonomy, to the view that there is no autonomy at all. Section 8.4 concludes this chapter by arguing that although the extent of university autonomy has increased, the room for manoeuvre at the institutional level remains limited; since 1991 YSU has become subjected to two sources of control, the federal as well as regional governments.

8.2 Legal Framework of State-University Relationships

8.2.1 Distribution of Authority between Federal and Regional Governments

Although the distribution of decision-making authority between the federal and regional governments was first referred to in the 1992 Law (Articles 28-29), the HE sector, in theory at least, remained a federal responsibility until 1995. However, since the 1992 Law did not explicitly refer to any particular sector of education in specifying the distribution of authority between the federal and regional levels, it provided some regional governments with a lever to penetrate the federal domain, and in a climate of uncertainty allowed them to emerge as powerful sources of influence on their regional HE sectors. This situation, however, was to be altered with the signing of bilateral agreements clarifying the respective roles and responsibilities of both levels of

government in the area of HE within the framework of the 1995 Federation Treaty (see 5.2.2). By 1996, sixty regions had signed bilateral agreements regarding HE as well as other sectors of education (Bolotov, 1997).

The Sakha government signed its bilateral five-year agreement on HE with the federal government in June 1995 (Shkatulla, 1998). By this agreement, the powers were divided into federal, regional and 'joint' ones. The federal powers were to be exercised exclusively by the centre, whilst the regional ones were to be transferred to the Sakha government, the latter having full authority in the regional domain. Although many observers have claimed that in post-1991 Russia regional authorities have been granted many legal powers by the federal authorities with regard to HE (see, for example, Endo, 2001; Johnstone and Bain, 2001), this chapter argues that how much legal power the individual regions have effectively possessed entirely depended on the extent of powers attributed to the federal and 'joint' domains.

The 'joint' domain, i.e. powers to be shared by both the federal and regional governments, has been driven by a tension between the federal and Sakha governments. The former clearly intended to play a major role in regulating HE, but could not provide sufficient funding, whilst the latter also wished to be involved in HE. In this situation, the federal government had to relax some of its constraints through deciding to what extent they wanted the Sakha government to be responsible for regulating HE since it provided the greatest share of funding. A solution was found in attributing half of the powers to the 'joint' domain, thus accommodating the interests of both the federal and regional stakeholders.

The concept of a 'joint' domain, however, was unclear and open to various interpretations. In this domain, the federal authorities wished to promulgate legislation on the basis of which the Sakha authorities would develop their own laws and policies. This would mean that if the centre disagreed with any regional laws or policies, it would have full legal power to reject or overturn them. The Sakha authorities, on the other hand, wished to see regional legislation take precedence over federal legislation, and assume the right to enforce federal laws in the republic only after their approval by the regional Parliament. Thus, both the federal and regional governments had their own

interpretations of the ‘joint’ domain and tried to use powers assigned to it to their own advantage.

Table 8.1, based on the 1995 bilateral agreement, shows the powers and their assigned domains in the three areas of HE under consideration. It shows that the federal government has retained a great degree of power, and whilst the Sakha authorities were allocated certain powers according to some clauses of the agreement, these powers were then overridden in other clauses, with the responsibility to be retained by the federal level or to be exercised ‘jointly’. The Sakha government has not received any exclusive decision-making authority, except over funding, and has been granted only a residual responsibility for implementing federal policies or marginally supplementing the federal powers. Thus the federal government has been reluctant to hand over extensive control. In short, many contradictions are apparent, and the agreement failed to provide for the clear distribution of authority and simply listed the powers ambiguously assigned to both levels of government by Articles 28 and 29 of the 1992 Law.

Table 8.1 Powers and Their Assigned Domains in 1995

Powers	Federal Domain	‘Joint’ Domain	Regional Domain
I. General Aspects of Governance and Management:			
I.1. Development and implementation of HE policy	V	V	V(fed)
I.2. Development and implementation of HE development programmes	V	V	V(fed)
I.3. Development of a uniform statute for HEIs	V		
I.4. Development of legislation and control over its implementation	V		V(fed)
I.5. Approving institutional charters	V		
I.6. Creating, reorganising and closing down HEIs	V	V	V fed.
2. Finance:			
2.1. Drawing up annual budget for HE		V	V
2.2. Determining the funding norms for HE	V(guideline)		V
2.3. Determining salary scales for academic staff	V(guideline)		V
2.4. Determining stipend levels of students	V(guideline)		V
2.5. Capital investments			V
3. Academic Matters:			
3.1. Licensing, attestation and accreditation of HEIs	V		
3.2. Development of state standards for HE (contents)	V(80%)		V(20%)
3.3. Setting degree requirements (duration, classroom hours, etc.)	V		
3.4. Development of exemplary curricula	V		
3.5. Determining the number of entrants to HEIs		V	

Notes: V–full power assigned to this particular domain; V(fed)–power assigned to the regional government, which should base its decisions on the federal policy framework; V fed.–power assigned to the regional government, but the approval and authorisation of the federal government are required. V(guideline)–the federal government’s decisions in these aspects only serve as general guidelines for the regional government to make its own decisions.

Source: developed by the author from the text of the 1995 bilateral agreement in Shkatulla, 1998:450-453.

In the area of governance and management, most regional initiatives were to be either based on the federal framework or approved by the federal government, whilst in academic matters, the regional government was to be responsible only for approving the 20% of the regional component of the state standards. The only area over which the Sakha government gained final decision-making authority was HE finance; it supplemented the federal funding norms for per capita funding, salary scales for academic staff and stipend levels of students with regional funds and provided capital investment. The explicitly-stated funding commitment in the bilateral agreement appears to be unique to Sakha, and did not apply to other regions. For example, the agreements of such relatively prosperous republics as Bashkortostan and Tatarstan did not contain any funding responsibility on the part of their respective governments (Shkatulla, 1998).

In the case of Sakha, the bilateral agreement over HE can be argued to have been a result of a bargaining process, in which the federal government in return for providing economic benefits and tax privileges wished to withdraw legally from the funding responsibility for Sakha HE, and devolve it to the regional level, but without transferring extensive control. The Sakha President and his government, on the other hand, were prepared to commit themselves to financially supporting the regional HE sector from the revenues generated by their strong economic base. Furthermore, since the Sakha government's appropriations for its HE sector was already greater than that of the federal government at the time of signing the 1995 bilateral agreement (see 6.5.2), the explicitly-stated funding responsibility was not perceived as a new policy, but as consistent with the proclaimed regional agenda for HE expansion and massification. Thus the agreement simply legalised the funding function that the regional government was *de facto* performing.

Some observers may argue that the Sakha authorities should have bargained for greater powers in exchange for a major funding role. On the one hand, the bilateral agreement in HE was not seen as being as important as bilateral agreements on the distribution of authority over budget and tax relations, the ownership of natural resources and property issues, and given that bilateral agreements in such arguably more pressing matters were left ambiguous (Kahn, 2001), it is not surprising that in the area of HE most responsibilities of the federal and Sakha governments also overlapped one another. Such

ambiguities, however, were typical of bilateral agreements with other regions, too⁶⁷. When other more important political and economic matters were at stake, agreement in the area of HE might have been considered as a low priority by the regional elites.

On the other hand, it could be argued that the Sakha government did not claim more legal powers in HE areas because the 1995 bilateral agreement, as noted by some observers, was largely seen as a situational document reminiscent of formal agreements on co-operation, rather than as providing for the clear distribution of authority between the federal and regional governments (TACIS, 2000a). The regional leaders seemed to believe that even though the Sakha government had not received any exclusive power, except over HE finance, the nature of the wider centre-periphery relationships in the mid-1990s (see 5.2.2), the geographic distance of Sakha from the centre and insufficient federal funding would in practice allow the federal government continue to exercise only very limited control over HE. The regional authorities were confident that this would be the case, as even before 1995, despite HE being the exclusive federal responsibility, the federal government was forced to administratively transfer some of its powers to the regional government (see 8.3.1).

Since all regions were not equal in claiming more powers within the bilateral agreements, with the enactment of the 1996 Law on HE the federal authorities tried to equalise all regions' decision-making authority in HE. Although Article 2 of the 1996 Law stated that the sovereignty of regions in developing and implementing their own policies for HE would be recognised and respected, the Law did not specify any powers to be granted to the regions or even to be exercised 'jointly' with the federal government, other than saying that regions could assume all powers not assigned to the federal authorities (Articles 24 and 25). However, the list of federal powers was so detailed and comprehensive that virtually no decision-making authority or room for manoeuvre was left to the regions. The only area which was legally transferred to the regions was HE finance.

In the words of one institutional manager, ambiguous and overlapping powers and responsibilities between the various levels of the system were stumbling blocks for HE reform (IM-3). Such a view was shared by the rector of a university in Novosibirsk

⁶⁷ For the texts of the bilateral agreements of other regions, see Shkatulla, 1998:406-468.

(personal communication, 16 April 2000). At first, ambiguities in the legal framework allowed the regional authorities in Sakha to challenge the federal authorities, but later they made it possible for the federal authorities to undermine the regional leadership.

The fact that the legal framework did not transfer any exclusive power to the regional authorities clearly reflects the lack of trust on the part of the federal authorities. The OECD team also observed that the federal MOE officials lacked confidence regarding the commitment of the regional leaders to implementing federal policies (OECD, 1999). Thus it is clear that in the Russian Federation, the main ingredient needed for successful decentralisation, that is, agreement on what should be transferred to the regional level and which government level should be responsible for what, was missing. Instead, the federal authorities were more prepared to legally transfer decision-making authority to the institutional level rather than to the individual regions; or so the federal legal framework for university autonomy, analysed in the following section, suggests.

8.2.2 State Control and University Autonomy

As the nature of state-university relationships directly affects university autonomy, this section examines the powers which YSU has acquired and possesses within the existing federal legal framework. Indeed, the 1996 Law recognised and defined university autonomy as “the extent to which HEIs are independent in decision-making on personnel policies, academic, research, financial, economic and other matters” (Article 3), but as existing within the boundaries set up by the federal legal framework; the Law stressed that HEIs, in return for being granted autonomy, would be held accountable before various stakeholders through being scrutinised by the founder, which in the case of YSU is the federal government in the person of MOE.

The exploration of the legal framework of university autonomy in post-1991 Russian HE can be daunting and frustrating, due to the over-regulated and often unclear legal environment in which YSU and other Russian HEIs have to operate. Nevertheless, Table 8.2 attempts to bring together major pieces of federal legislation which define state-university relationships, and to identify which level or mix of levels, represented by the federal MOE, the regional MSPE and YSU, has legal control in three key institutional areas since 1991.

Table 8.2 Legal Framework of Autonomy at YSU

Year and Levels Category and Items	Legal Autonomy, 1992-1995			Change in Legal Autonomy since 1996**
	MOE*	MSPE	U.	
I. Aspects of Governance and Management:				
I.1. Defining mission and goals			U(MOE)	
I.2. Drawing up university charter			U(MOE)	
I.3. Determining administrative structure			U.	
I.4. Determining academic structure (institutes and faculties)			U.	
I.5. Establishing university branches			U.	MOE (since 1998)
I.6. Appointment of rector			U.	U→MOE (since 2001)
I.7. Appointment of vice-rectors			U.	
I.8. Appointment of heads of academic units			U.	
I.9. Appointment of academic staff			U.	
2. Finance:				
2.1. Drawing up annual university budget	U→MOE			U→MSPE (since 1996) as well as U→MOE
2.2. Internal allocation of budget funds	V/Block grants	V/Block grants		V/Line-item (since 2000) and Voucher system (since 2002)
2.3. Internal allocation of non-budget funds			U.	V/Treasury (since 2000)
2.4. Borrowing money from capital market and opening accounts in commercial banks			V/Allowed	V/not allowed (since 2000)
2.5. Setting level of tuition fees			U.	
2.6. Determining price of educational services			U.	
2.7. Determining price of research contracts			U.	
2.8. Determining salary scale of academic staff	MOE	MSPE		
2.9. Determining salary of individual academics			U.	
2.10. Determining number of state-funded undergraduate/postgraduate students	MOE	MSPE		
2.11. Determining number of fee-paying students			V(10% of intake)	V(25% in 1996, 50% in 2002 and removed in 2004).
3. Academic Matters:				
3.1. Setting degree requirements (standards)	MOE			
3.2. Awarding degrees (accreditation)	MOE			
3.3. Development of exemplary curricula	MOE			
3.4. Structure and contents of academic programmes			U(MOE)	
3.5. Contents of individual courses			U(MOE)	
3.6. Adding undergraduate/postgraduate programmes (licensing)	U→MOE	U→MSPE		U→MOE (since 1996)
3.7. Setting entry regulations and rules for state-funded students			U(MOE)	MOE (since 2001)
3.8. Setting interim and final student assessments	MOE			

Notes: * - It should be borne in mind that between 1992 and 1996 the federal government body responsible for HE was SCHE, but in order to avoid confusion, the post-1996 name, MOE, is used throughout this table; ** - only those items in which change in legal autonomy has occurred are shown; in the rest of the items, the extent of legal autonomy remains the same as in 1995. V – regulated by federal legislation; MOE – by legislation, power is assigned to the federal government in the person of MOE; MSPE – by legislation, power is assigned to the regional government in the person of MSPE; U – by legislation, power is assigned to the University; U→MOE, U→MSPE – by legislation, power is granted to the University, but the University should seek the approval or final decision of the federal MOE and/or the regional MSPE; U(MOE), U(MSPE) – by legislation, power is granted to the University, but the University should base its final decision on the regulations of the federal MOE and/or the regional MSPE; V/Treasury – regulated by legislation, which grants power to the federal Treasury and its regional branches.

Source: developed by the author from legislation used in this study (see, for example, Amendments, 2002; Charter, 1996 and 2002; Government of Russia, 1993 and 2001; Law, 1992 and 1996).

As is evident from the legal framework of university autonomy, presented in Table 8.2, out of nine aspects of governance and management, YSU has complete autonomy in five aspects, relating to determining administrative and academic structures (institutes

and faculties) (Items I.3 and I.4) and appointing managerial and academic staff (I.7 to I.9). In the remaining four aspects, internal university decisions should be either based on the guidelines or authorised by the federal MOE. The university has been externally controlled in setting its mission and goals, and in drawing up of a university charter, which is based on the uniform statute, issued by the federal government (I.1 and I.2). In two other aspects the extent of university autonomy has recently been restricted. Thus, since 1998 university branches can only be established by the decision of the federal MOE, and since 2001 the elected university rector may be effective only after obtaining approval of the federal MOE (I.5 and I.6). The fact that the federal MOE has penetrated areas which were previously the sole prerogative of the university is illustrative of the federal government attempts to re-establish centralised control.

In the area of finance, out of 11 aspects YSU has complete autonomy in four aspects, relating to setting the level of tuition fees, the price for educational services, research contracts and the salaries of individual academics (Items 2.5 to 2.7 and 2.9), whilst in the remaining seven aspects decisions are either made by the federal and/or regional levels or regulated by legislation. Both federal and regional authorities approve the budget for YSU, and determine the salary scale of academic staff and the number of students to be funded by the federal and regional budgets (2.1, 2.8 and 2.10). In three aspects relating to the internal allocation of budget and non-budget funds and participation in the capital market (2.2 to 2.4), the largely decentralised policies have since 2000 given way to more centralisation, leaving YSU under extensive external control (for more details, see 5.5.2 and 7.5). Finally, the university's freedom to decide on the number of fee-paying students was restricted and regulated by legislation until June 2004 (2.11).

The area in which YSU does not have complete legal autonomy in any aspect is that of academic matters. Although the 1992 and 1996 Laws stipulate that HEIs are completely autonomous in academic matters, the simultaneous imposition by the federal MOE of degree requirements in the form of state standards and exemplary curricula (3.1 and 3.3) considerably strait-jackets YSU and its academics, who have to base the structure and contents of academic programmes and individual courses on federal requirements (3.4 and 3.5) (for more details, see 7.6). The university cannot award its own degrees, as only degrees awarded by the federal MOE, i.e. accredited by the state, are recognised

(3.2). Within the state standards, the federal MOE also regulates the number and form of interim and final student assessments (3.8).

In the aspects of entry regulations and rules for state-funded students, YSU had a limited margin for discretionary behaviour until 2001, but with the introduction of the new admission procedure detailed guidelines are administratively prescribed by the federal MOE (3.7). Stronger interference of the federal MOE in academic matters is further manifested in the detailed federal requirements for establishing new academic programmes through the process of licensing (3.6). The licensing responsibility as stipulated in the original 1992 Law was illustrative of the ambiguous distribution of powers, as whilst Article 28 assigned this function as a federal responsibility, Article 29 simultaneously allotted it to the regional authorities. However, with the 1995 bilateral agreement between the Russian and Sakha governments and the enactment of the amended version of the 1992 Law this power was exclusively granted to the federal MOE. Thus, in academic matters, the federal MOE continues to legally control both the process and the product.

The exploration of the legal framework of university autonomy in Table 8.2 encompassed not only federal legislation specific to HE, but also other legal acts (for example, the budget and tax codes). The rationale behind this is that several key articles of the 1992 and 1996 Laws have not yet been amended to include the changes, introduced by other legislation, which affect institutional affairs; therefore, merely examining federal legislation specific to HE may overestimate the degree of legal autonomy, which YSU and other Russian HEIs now enjoy. Although there is clearly some participation by the university, the federal legal framework strongly suggests that key institutional decisions are made or should be authorised by the federal authorities, clearly indicating that within the legal framework of university autonomy the weight of the federal power remains strong.

The federal legal framework of university autonomy further shows that the role of the regional authorities in regulating the Sakha HE sector is minimal. Within the framework, university finance is the only area in which YSU simultaneously interacts with the federal as well as regional HE authorities. Despite not having legally received any other function, the regional authorities developed their own policies by issuing

decrees and administrative regulations, thus in practice affecting the autonomy granted to the university by federal legislation and shifting the balance of power between the three levels. Therefore, although the examination of the legal framework is important in analysing the relationships between the federal and regional governments and the university, the actual interaction of the levels with each other, rather than the outcome of legislation, has the most significant implications for the state-university relationship in Russia in general and in Sakha in particular.

8.3 Actual Process of State-University Relationships

8.3.1 Shifts in Balance of Power

As discussed in Chapter 4, in the Soviet period the state-university relationship in Russia was explicit and direct. It was explicit because most observers had no difficulty in defining the state-university relationship in the USSR as a clear example of the state-control model (see, for example, Clark, 1983), in which the State made sure that HEIs were included within the national bureaucracy. It was direct because the central authorities were dominant in defining the relationship by controlling all areas of institutional affairs. In such an authoritarian and centralised context, HEIs were compliant with what the State determined via its regulation and its resource-giving capacity (Kogan, 1998) and did not make demands for university autonomy and academic freedom.

Although diverse pieces of legislation still point to this explicit and largely centrally controlled relationship, the actual process of interaction has been more complex. In the case of YSU, state-university relationships have in practice been complicated by the emergence of a completely new set of relationships with the Sakha regional government. The previous simple pattern, in which the 'state' encompassed only the central government, has given way to a more complex one, in which the regional government has also become one of the embodiments of the 'state'. As a consequence, in Sakha the notion of the 'state' becomes blurred because the previous centralised control over HE has to some extent been replaced by regulation by the Sakha authorities. Although the discussion in this section is based on the actual experiences of interaction between the Russian and Sakha governments and YSU, inferences are also drawn from the wider HE context.

8.3.1.1 Emergence of Regional Control and Its Effect on University Autonomy

Within the legal framework the weight of the federal authorities was still strong, but in practice in the initial years after 1991 the role of the Sakha authorities in regulating the regional HE sector started to substantially increase. This was because the evolving wider centre-periphery relationships, uncertainty in political and economic spheres, and the continuous scaling down of the federal government's funding for HE prevented the federal government from having effective and sufficient administrative control over Sakha HE to the extent that the old centralised system allowed. As a result, a 'gap' in controlling the regional HE sector was created and occupied by the Sakha authorities. Consequently, in the first half of the 1990s the Sakha authorities could launch any HE policy, even if it contradicted federal legislation, in a way not foreseen before 1992 and without fear of their policy being overturned by the federal government, as the latter either remained silent in HE matters or was increasingly preoccupied with the more pressing issues of dealing with political and economic chaos in the centre. The federal SCHE alone, in the meantime, was too weak a structure to countervail the increasing authority of the regional leadership.

Having realised its incapacity to exercise exclusive control over all HE areas, the federal SCHE had to extend the regional powers beyond those authorised by legislation by transferring some powers initially retained by the federal level to the regions. Thus the federal SCHE in practice withdrew from licensing new HEIs and academic programmes, which was stipulated as both the federal and regional responsibility by the 1992 Law, and administratively transferred to the regions the power to assess all existing HEIs and their academic programmes, stipulated as an exclusive federal responsibility by the 1992 Law. When the 1992 Law made a provision for federal quality assurance procedures, there were already hundreds of HEIs operating in Russia, and therefore all existing HEIs had to be only formally assessed *post-facto* by the regional authorities and were assumed to be accredited by the federal SCHE.

Through this administrative transfer of nominally federal powers, the Sakha government received arguably the most important levers of control over its HEIs. Subsequently, the balance of power in practice shifted from the federal to the regional level, making the role of the federal SCHE in the initial years after 1991 minimal, and allowing a network to be established below the federal level (for example, that of the regional MSPE), and

as the regional actors gained power and resources, so did the federal SCHE lose the ability to impose overall coherence on the HE policy.

The actors at YSU, in the meantime, neither claimed nor demanded autonomy. The relatively comfortable life of staff at YSU, and indeed other Russian universities in the Soviet era, may explain this situation: the rector did not have to worry about utility and other bills, funding and curricula were centrally administered, professors and academics enjoyed high prestige and special privileges and were relatively well paid. It would be fair to say that university leaders and academics were somewhat reluctant “to give up the security the communist system provided for its loyal institutions” (Tomusk, 1998:127) and take the responsibility for the destiny of their university, as there was great uncertainty regarding the future. The lack of managerial experience and skills, mentioned by interviewees, also contributed to institutional conservatism.

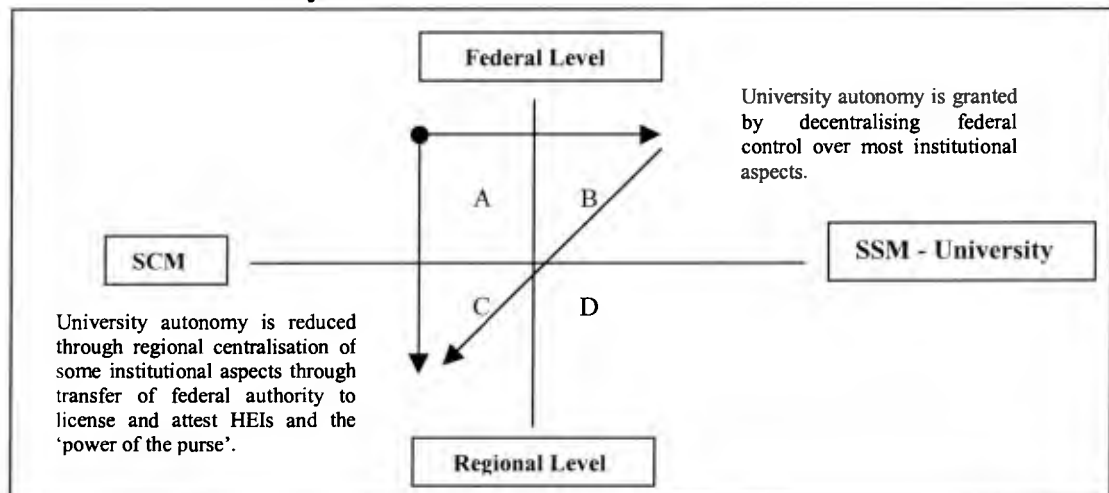
Nevertheless, when the federal government relaxed some of its control, it was expected that new decision-making structures and procedures would evolve at the institutional level. In the case of YSU, however, the vacuum in decision-making was almost immediately occupied by the Sakha political authorities rather than by the university⁶⁸. The regional government started to exercise a considerable degree of influence on shaping priorities for YSU, and to infringe the newly granted university autonomy through its ‘power of the purse’, particularly by determining internal academic structures and establishing new academic programmes, both of which were stated as the internal university powers by the 1992 Law. For example, in the early 1990s, the initiative to establish two new branches and a number of new faculties and academic programmes came not from the university but from the Sakha President and his government, and they simply informed the federal SCHE of their decisions, which the latter had to accept without questioning (Regl-2).

The shift in the major source of funding from the federal to the regional government further resulted in YSU staff shifting from being loyal to the federal government to being loyal to the regional government, and accepting the latter’s interference in internal

⁶⁸ It should be noted that in those regions, where the regional government did not fill the power vacuum left by the federal government and SCHE in the initial years after 1991, the balance of power would be on the side of the university.

university affairs. Regional interference was perceived as providing the university with stability and financial security at the beginning of the turbulent transition, and was seen by some as the outcome of regionalism. For the first time, YSU could reconfigure its relationship with the federal government by, for example, refusing to fully introduce the federal policy of the two-tiered degree structure, but, also for the first time, it had to strongly adhere to the policies imposed by the regional government. Thus, even though between 1992 and 1995 HE legally remained the responsibility of the federal government, with some of its previous powers legally granted directly to the university rather than the regional government, the Sakha authorities found themselves almost fully in control of their HE sector and able to modify their relationship with both the federal authorities and university. The theoretical framework developed in Figure 2.2 (see Chapter 2), can be applied to the discussion above, and, based on the situation in Sakha HE between 1992 and 1995, can be presented as in Figure 8.1.

Figure 8.1 Balance of Power between the Russian and Sakha Governments and YSU, 1992-1995: Emergence of Regional Control and University Autonomy



Notes: developed by the author; ● – denotes a starting point for control over the university at the beginning of 1992.

Figure 8.1 shows that at YSU two simultaneous processes of decentralisation and centralisation were evident. There was a clear shift from the federal state-control model (SCM) to the federal state-supervisory model (SSM) over most institutional matters (from Quadrant A to B), which resulted in the enhancement of university autonomy. Although within the federal framework academic matters largely remained under federal control, since the state standards took a number of years to develop before being put in place, immediately after the enactment of the 1992 Law all Russian HEIs found themselves completely independent of federal government control. There was also a

clear decentralisation from the federal to regional level, which strengthened regional authority (from Quadrant A to C). In parallel, the regional government in Sakha adopted the SCM by re-centralising some of the institutional powers at the regional government level (from Quadrant B to C). Thus, as indicated by the two arrows in Quadrant C, between 1992 and 1995, decentralisation of control from the federal level, on the one hand, and centralisation of control from the institutional level to the region, on the other, allowed the regional government in Sakha to concentrate most power in its own hands.

8.3.1.2 Contested Federal and Regional Control

Because of the regional predominance in HE, by 1996 the federal authorities had become increasingly worried about the strengthening influence of the regions, especially as at the federation-wide level the transfer of licensing and attestation functions to the regional authorities resulted in an unregulated expansion of both state and private HE sectors. Between 1991 and 1996, 54 state and 244 private HEIs were created (SCS, 2003:396-397). The federal SCHE did not expect the expansion to be so fast and became increasingly concerned about the quality of HE provided. By amending the 1992 Law, adopting separate legislation specific to HE, and merging the federal SCHE and MGE into a single ministry (MOE) in 1996, the federal authorities clearly intended to develop a coherent HE policy, and to reverse the shift of power by revoking decision-making authority from the regional governments and HEIs.

By assigning the licensing function as an exclusive federal responsibility, the federal government aimed to hinder the further expansion of the HE sector. It could be argued that in a period of increasing chaos, instability and uncertainty, a higher degree of federal control may have been necessary, but such a high degree of administrative control and over-regulation contradicted the very notion of decentralisation. For the federal MOE to perform all the functions retained or revoked by it proved difficult because of staff overload and insufficient resources. It had to occupy itself with more urgent tasks or with setting broad frameworks, rather than assuming responsibility for licensing, which was clearly of low priority. As for the responsibility for attestation, an interviewee at the federal level commented that *'since this function was transferred to the regions by an administrative regulation and not by legislation, it was an illegitimate transfer of power that had to be reclaimed by the federal authorities sooner or later, especially since the situation was getting out of control, leading to the system's fragmentation'* (Fed1-2).

Ironically, having revoked the responsibility for licensing and attestation, the federal MOE later delegated to the regional MSPE in Sakha the power to oversee whether the federal licensing and accreditation requirements were followed by YSU and other regional HEIs. It did so by an administrative regulation, which means that at any point, the federal MOE could simply reclaim this function, as it did with the processes of licensing and attestation. Thus, from 1996 onwards, a new shift in the balance of power began to take shape, in which the federal government was inclined to perceive the regional MSPE as an extension of the federal MOE, making the position of the regional government ambivalent. On the one hand, legally the Sakha authorities had almost no room left for manoeuvre, but on the other, they continued to provide the largest share of funding to YSU. For example, if the Sakha government initiated a new academic programme with regional funds, the ultimate decision from now on was to rest legally with the federal MOE, which through the process of licensing could halt the regional initiative.

Although the post-1995 legal framework created a fertile ground for reinstating federal control, the ongoing political and economic chaos in the centre, frequent changes in the federal ministerial leadership, the remoteness of Sakha from Moscow, and Sakha's control of the major source of funding for regional HE in practice made an intense affirmation of federal policies less feasible and undermined the federal attempts at re-centralisation. The Sakha government continued to demonstrate a high level of involvement in HE and largely ignored the federal legislation. Paradoxically, the majority of new HEIs in Sakha and new academic programmes at YSU were opened after 1996, when licensing and attestation functions became the prerogative of the federal MOE. As already noted, most HEIs started their educational process in newly opened academic programmes without receiving federal licenses.

Informal political relationships may have made establishing new regional HEIs easier for Sakha, since all of them were initiated by the first Sakha President, Nikolaev, who was known to be on the best of terms with the then Russian President, Yeltsin. Indeed, informal political relationships have been a long-standing feature of Russian HE (TACIS, 2000a). In addition, since the Sakha government was readily backing regional initiatives with financial resources, in a situation of insufficient federal funding, the

federal MOE had to tolerate violations of legislation, as at the macro-level Sakha being part of the federal state, was ultimately contributing to the development of the federal HE sector without asking for financial investment from the centre.

As for the extent of university autonomy, at first sight the 1996 Law seemed to grant the university greater autonomy in most internal aspects, but in reality the “autonomy granted to the university to the extent provided by legislation and the institutional charter” (Article 3) ended up as an irony, because the room for discretionary behaviour in most institutional matters became so limited and marginal in the presence of heavy federal regulations. Similarly, whilst the institutional charter might give the impression being independently drafted by the university, as already noted it was based on the uniform statute issued by the federal government, thus making the charters of all institutions, irrespective of their status and location, identical.

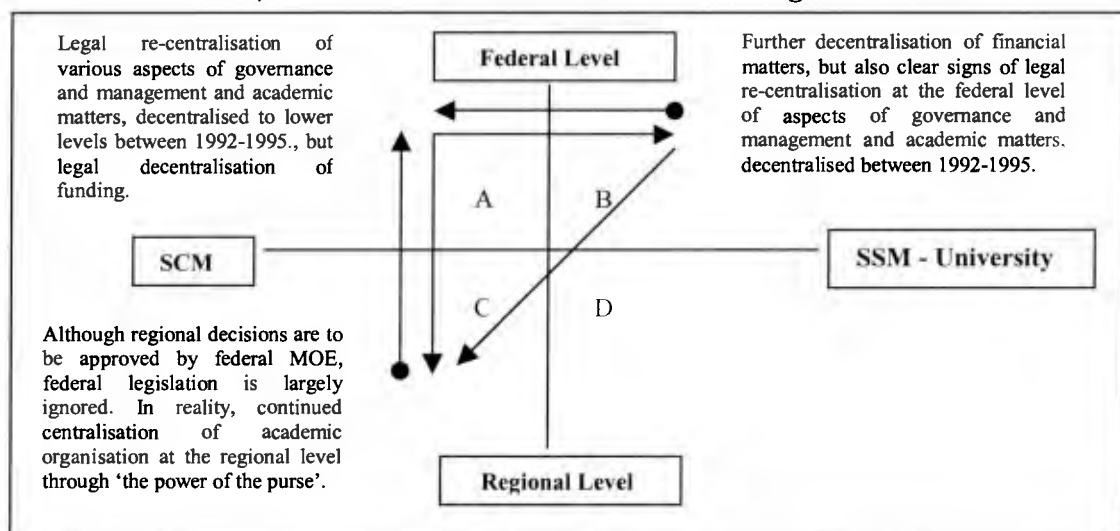
By 1996 the *ad hoc* decentralisation of decision-making in curricular matters was reversed, as a complete set of state standards for all specialisms was finally introduced by the federal MOE. MOE also reduced the extent of university autonomy in governance and management by revoking the institutional power to establish branches, since the number of branches operating as for-profit academic structures had mushroomed. However, since the federal government could not provide an adequate level of funding, a compromise was reached between the HE community and the federal authorities: the reduction in university autonomy would be neutralised by the increase in financial freedoms. This provision enabled further entrepreneurial activities at YSU, allowed an increase in the number of fee-paying students, and provided the university with favourable tax arrangements.

At the federation-wide level individual HEIs, RUR and various institutional associations bargained with the federal government for more autonomy, but YSU managers and academics were outside this process. This, I argue, was partly because of YSU’s long distance from the federal centre, but more importantly because of the presence of another layer of authority between YSU and the federal MOE, that of the regional government. This middle layer of authority in practice made the university autonomy granted within the 1992 federal legal framework even more limited by placing new demands on the university and by initiating and pursuing new regionally oriented

policies. From 1992 onwards, the regional rather than the federal government came to be perceived as the embodiment of state control by the actors at YSU, and the university's heavy dependence and reliance on regional funding quickly developed an institutional culture of compliance, conformity and strong adherence to the regional authorities, which was also strengthened by the ideology of 'sovereignty'.

Thus, as Figure 8.2 shows, despite the enactment of the new federal legislation, which gave clear signals for re-centralisation at the level of the federal government, the actual balance of power between the three levels was uneasy.

Figure 8.2 Balance of Power between the Russian and Sakha Governments and YSU, 1996-1999: Contested Federal and Regional Control



Notes: developed by the author; — denotes a starting point for control over the university at the beginning of 1996.

Figure 8.2 shows that there was a return from the federal SSM to the federal SCM in areas of governance, management and academic matters (from Quadrant B to A). The federal government decentralised funding responsibility to the regional level (from Quadrant A to C) and the university (from Quadrant A to B). Although the federal government revoked some of the powers previously transferred to the regional level (from Quadrant C to A), the Sakha government continued to control aspects of university academic organisation, which had moved from Quadrant B to C. Thus, between 1996 and 1999 both the federal and the Sakha governments exerted great influence in most institutional matters, leaving the university responsible only for generating and allocating non-budget funds (Quadrant B).

8.3.1.3 Re-centralisation of Control at Federal Level

Despite the financial austerity of the 1990s, Russian HEIs had survived and significantly expanded. By 2000, most Russian HEIs had also come to value the autonomy which they were enjoying in the control of their non-budget funds and entrepreneurial activities. All initiatives at the institutional level, however, were enabled by appropriate provisions of the 1996 Law, which compensated to some extent for the lack of a single coherent federal reform programme. However, the lack of federal or regional control in financial matters encouraged many HEIs and individual academics not only to explore external opportunities, but in many instances engage in illegal and sometimes corrupt activities (Temple and Petrov, 2004).

At the beginning of 2000, the new federal government reformers started to speak openly about billions of dollars of ‘shadow’ capital generated by and circulating in the HE sector, and extensive media coverage formed a public view of the HE sector as overly corrupt and inefficient (see, for example, Bondarev, 2002; Kostikov, 2002). The Russian public became convinced that the federal government should place stronger demands for accountability on HEIs. In short, the re-centralisation policy was launched as a conscious effort to eliminate corruption and improve the quality of what was offered. This policy, however, was not exclusive to HE, but rather part and parcel of the wider ‘Dictatorship of Federal Law’ agenda, initiated by Putin, who planned to restore the central power by weakening the political influence and economic power of the regional elites.

The HE sector was one of the main targets for stringent control by the federal government, which proposed the execution of the 1999 Budget Code and 2000 Tax Code, as despite the protests of the academic community, the federal authorities were not prepared to continue to provide HEIs with the financial and tax concessions stipulated in the 1992 and 1996 Laws. The underlying reason for reintroducing stringent federal financial and tax control was that the HE sector became the second largest corrupt sector in Russian society after the police (Kostikov, 2002), operating one of the largest ‘shadow’ markets in the country, and accounting for approximately five billion US dollars annually (Milkus, 2002). Since the institutional financial reports did not reflect the ‘true’ figures, the new federal government officials thought: “We do not like what the regions and HEIs are doing, so we will require them to do the following”. In

the newly emerging political and economic context (see 5.2.2) they appointed a federal treasurer to every Russian region to restrict the ability of regions to determine how to spend the federally allocated budget, and to oversee the use of budget and non-budget funds by HEIs.

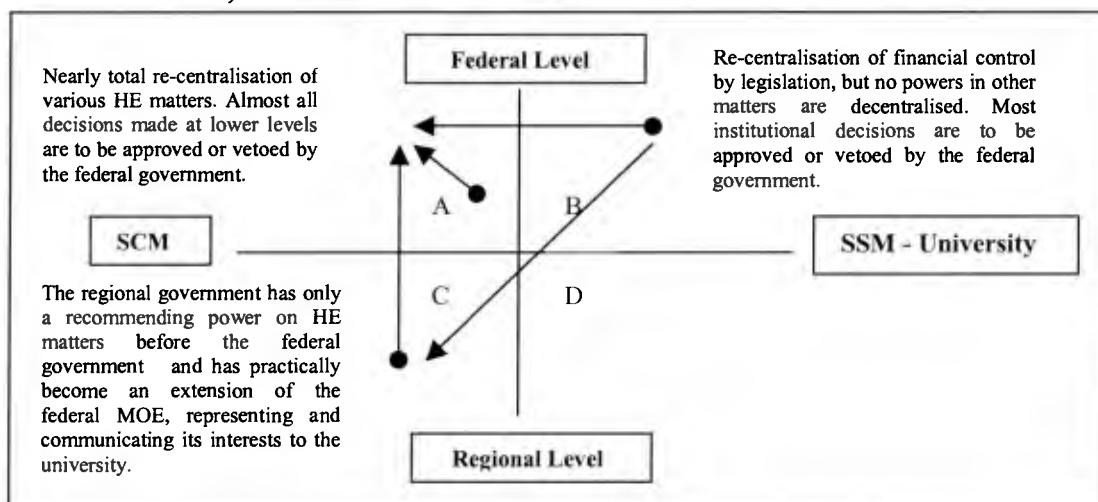
In this new context, the Sakha authorities became increasingly vulnerable vis-à-vis the centre. The recently elected Sakha President, Shtyrov, and his government became more pro-federal and readily accepted the shifting balance of power and, as discussed in 7.5 and 7.6, volunteered YSU to take part in the federal experiments with the new admission procedure and funding mechanism. Whilst most regions and HEIs openly opposed the new federal policies or agreed to participate in these experiments only on their own terms (see, for example, Vasin, 2004), the behaviours of the majority of actors at YSU were in line with the aspirations of the regional government, which now started to promote the implementation of the federal policies. Thus the federal government was able to use its powers and implement its new policies not directly but with the help of the regional government. In tune with the regional authorities, the university rector, Alekseev, expressed his support for the experiments and did not fail to criticise the former Sakha President for his policies aimed at an ‘unnecessary’ and ‘excessive’ increase in the number of students at YSU (Savvinov, 2004), criticisms which Alekseev never voiced whilst that President was in office.

The post-2000 federal policies have had a direct impact on YSU, as the return of the federal government to the area of HE effectively eroded the limited powers which the university had possessed. The federal government has concentrated most power at the central level, and whilst centralising previously decentralised powers in some aspects, such as control over the internal use of ‘earned’ income, it has not transferred any new power in other aspects to the university. Undoubtedly, the extent of university autonomy has increased since 1992; nevertheless, there is only a small proportion of university affairs which YSU can decide for itself. However, the institutional actors are not in a position to challenge the federal authorities, whose policies are now communicated and implemented through the regional government, to which the central managers at YSU are extremely loyal. The culture of conformity of academics and middle-level managers to the university central management allows the imposition of these policies without

open opposition. Furthermore, although the federal government shares some of its power with the regional government, it largely decides on HE areas on its own.

Figure 8.3 shows the balance of power between the three levels in 2000-2003. It is evident that the federal government has become the most powerful force in shaping relationships with the regional government and YSU.

Figure 8.3 Balance of Power between the Russian and Sakha Governments and YSU, 2000-2003: Re-centralisation of Control at Federal Level



Note: developed by the author; ● denotes a starting point for control over the university at the beginning of 2000.

In Figure 8.3 the three arrows in Quadrant A indicate the significantly increased legal and actual power of the federal authorities and the shift to the federal SCM in most institutional matters. Because of the new pro-federal regional leadership and the changes in wider centre-periphery relationships, the regional MSPE has been practically turned into an extension of the federal MOE, whilst the university continues to be externally controlled by both the federal and regional governments. This time, however, the regional government's strong grip on YSU allows the former to promote the implementation of the federal policies, which is indicated by an arrow from Quadrant B to C. The lack of arrows in Quadrant B indicates that YSU has only partial and limited decision-making power in key institutional matters.

It is clear from the discussion above that between 1992 and 2003 there have been several shifts in the balance of power between the federal and Sakha governments and YSU. After a period of neglect of the federal legal framework at the regional level, when due to uncertainty and instability the regional powers in practice went beyond those authorised by federal legislation, allowing the Sakha authorities to infringe the

university's autonomy granted to it by the federal government, since 2000 the extent of regional decision-making authority provided by the federal legal framework, has come very close to being the actual extent of the regional powers. As for federal regulation of YSU, there was a clear shift to the federal SSM in most institutional aspects, but the federal government has recently re-established the SCM, and by doing so has shifted the boundary of the federal government-university relationship and reduced the extent of university autonomy. The following section examines the views of institutional actors concerning university autonomy.

8.3.2 Institutional Views of University Autonomy

One of the questions concerned the perceived driving forces for the decentralisation of decision-making and university autonomy in the early 1990s. Some interviewees pointed out that the university had received an unprecedented degree of autonomy, because the regional government adopted a Declaration of Sovereignty in 1991 and that university autonomy '*was a great achievement of regional sovereignty*' (D-4(SS)*; also IM-3). Another view was given by an institutional manager, IM-1, who claimed that autonomy was almost incidental to HE and was driven by a wider societal transformation occurring in the political and economic spheres. Most interviewees, however, stated that due to its inability to adequately finance HEIs, '*the former federal SCHE did not have any choice but to decentralise and grant some powers to regions and universities themselves*' (D-3(S)*; also D-6(S), H-5(SS)*, IM-5). Thus, according to interviewees at YSU, there were several simultaneous forces driving university autonomy. Paradoxically, none of the interviewees mentioned the university itself as a force striving or asking for autonomy.

Several interviewees (for example, D-5(S), IM-2*, IM-7) claimed that YSU was completely autonomous in running its own affairs. However, these interviewees tended to see autonomy in institutional decision-making as something granted from upper levels, and seemed to question whether the university deserved it or not. Furthermore, autonomy was seen as something which should be exercised within laws, regulations and limitations imposed by the federal government. For example, an institutional manager on academic affairs claimed:

We even have a great degree of autonomy in decision making in the area of implementing state education standards at the institutional level... we have the

right to define 20% to 30% of the curricula by adding the regional/ institutional component to the federal state standards. Such a substantial degree of autonomy was granted to us by the federal ministry. (IM-2)*

The exercise of some power within the limitations imposed by the federal government was also confirmed by another top manager, who said:

... Now the university independently initiates the establishment of new academic programmes. It entirely depends on the university, as long as the specialisms we wish to open are listed in the List of Fields of Study and Specialisms, issued by the federal government. (IM-1)

In view of the past contexts within which YSU operated, and since autonomy in decision-making was not deeply rooted in the Russian HE system, it is natural that interviewees considered the university to have an extensive degree of autonomy. Relative to the lack of autonomy in the Soviet era, the powers which the university received from the federal government in the 1990s were judged by these interviewees to be extensive.

However, some interviewees recognised that although the university autonomy had increased, YSU largely remained under external control, and that the room to exercise autonomy was still constrained. Interviewees D-2(L)* and IM-7, for example, maintained that the university did not have decision-making power in anything except a few areas. A vice-rector claimed that there was some autonomy in deciding the internal academic and administrative structure of the university, but *'in purely academic matters, ..., there is no real decentralisation of power or university autonomy'* (IM-7).

This view was supported by a dean, who commented that:

... the university makes decisions, but still the majority of these decisions must be approved by the federal and/or regional authorities... even the number of students we can admit on a fee-paying basis is regulated. By law we can admit up to 25% of fee-paying students [until 2002], but the number is only tentatively determined by the university, as we still need approval from the regional and federal ministries. (D-7(SS))*

Interesting responses were received when interviewees were asked for their views about the extent of external control by the federal and regional governments in internal university affairs. All interviewees expressed the view that since the federal and regional governments *'pay the money to the university, they should regulate the university'* (IM-1). However, several interviewees (for example, H-2(L)*; IM-7) believed that the governments should exercise control reasonably and should not

intervene in purely internal university affairs, such as the opening of new programmes and internal allocation of funds.

Several interviewees also expressed the view that they would not expect a great degree of control, especially from the federal government, at a time when it was not fulfilling its funding commitment. The shortage of funds disbursed by the federal government was seen by these interviewees as a reason for not complying with federal government policies, as indicated by IM-2*:

...I agree that the federal government should exercise control over the university, but only in case it meets its funding commitment, but at present since they do not pay the amount budgeted, we feel we may do something which would not be necessarily welcome by the federal government, but we are being sensible and would not do it deliberately.

This view was supported by IM-1, who said that *'when the federal government do not pay enough money, they cannot expect to acquire as much control as they want and exercise a great degree of influence over the university'*. It is interesting to note here that these interviewees saw insufficient federal government funds as providing room for manoeuvre.

Whilst the federal government's role in controlling the university was perceived to have diminished in the 1990s, the regional government, according to several interviewees (for example, D-2(L)*, D-5(S) and IM-5), emerged as the main force regulating and controlling internal affairs. One account, given by a dean, claimed that the university was totally controlled by the regional authorities. In this interviewee's view:

...[The regional government] pay the money to the university, so they would like to have a rector they can trust... At the regional level, the relationships between the university and the government are characterised by complete subordination on the part of the university... The relationships are paternalistic. As far as the relationships with the federal government are concerned, the university can afford itself if not complete autonomy, then some degree of liberty, since the presence of other layers between the university and the federal government makes the relationships not very transparent. Here in the region, however, the fate of academics may depend on the relationships between the university rector and the [regional] President and his government...If the relationships are good, then there is good money [for the university], but if the relationships are bad, then there is no money. Hence, complete subordination of the university leaders to the regional government. (D-2(L))*

Another interviewee claimed:

If the federal and regional governments almost fully finance the university, they by proxy transfer their power to manage internal university affairs to the rector.

In such a situation, university autonomy is impossible and unimaginable... A university is the same as a corporation with its own laws. If this corporation has large resources of its own, it can, perhaps, be independent in pursuing its own policies, but if it were almost fully funded by the state, every encroachment upon the authority of the state would be severely punished. Unfortunately, it is the same with a university, and considering the current pattern of finance, it is reasonable that the regional government interferes a lot in university affairs. (IM-5)

Indeed, when asked about the origin of change, most interviewees referred to the Sakha political authorities as the main initiators of major internal changes.

The following interview excerpt reveals the extent to which the first Sakha President was personally involved in internal decision-making within the university. One of the interviewees recalled:

... The President [of Sakha] summoned us to a meeting and directly said to us that it was necessary to open an institute on the basis of our faculty... and shortly afterwards, the presidential decree followed. (D-5(S))

Since the establishment of new academic units by regional presidential or governmental decrees meant more funds, in the words of an interviewee IM-6, the university could not afford not to conform to the Sakha political authorities. However, once a decision to establish new academic units was taken by the regional authorities, they were prepared to withdraw to a more facilitating role and allow the university to decide independently on the internal organisation of new units. For example, it was the university's prerogative to decide on what faculties and/or 'chairs' should be transferred to, or created within, the structure of a new, larger academic unit.

Whilst many interviewees thought that in the 1990s the regional authorities in practice exercised a considerable degree of control over university affairs, they also confirmed that the role of the federal authorities in regulating institutional affairs has increased since 2000. Some institutional actors perceived an increased role of the federal authorities to be necessary and desirable (for example, D-4(SS)*, IM-1). An institutional manager, IM-1, for example, said:

We now see clear attempts of the federal government to concentrate in the federal ministry many of the functions previously exercised at the regional and institutional levels. However, the importance of the federal authorities is increasing in every aspect of our society. I think it is necessary, because we all are tired of permanent state of uncertainty and confusion and long for some stability, which the federal government is now trying to introduce into our lives.

Indeed, according to several interviewees (for example, D-4(SS)*, IM-2), a decade of experiencing university autonomy has brought more problems and disappointments than positive outcomes. Overall, the university has failed to fully use even the limited autonomy granted to it by the federal government, particularly to introduce entrepreneurial activities and the regional/institutional component in the curriculum (see Chapter 7). Some university actors also implied that the university would be more active in exercising autonomy if it had sufficient state funds. For example, a top institutional manager recalled:

On the one hand, compared to the past Soviet contexts, we have a great degree of autonomy, but on the other, in those days we had stable financing and did not have to worry about the payment of academic salaries or heating bills. In those days we could work. Compared to the old Soviet control, the present government regulations are mild, but we have many more problems of an economic and financial nature, which prevent us from exercising the decision-making powers granted to us. (IM-2)*

Having been hit hard by financial austerity, some university managers were ready to accept re-centralisation in exchange for federal funds. On this issue, one of the interviewees said:

I do not think that university autonomy is being infringed or its extent is being reduced. The most important concern for us is the solution of financial problems. Since the level of federal funding has increased, they have resumed their control. (D-3(S))

Although a number of other interviewees thought that with the increase in federal funding should come stronger federal control, they, nevertheless, held more pessimistic views about the new federal policies, saying that even the limited autonomy is now being infringed (for example, H-3(SS)*, H-8(L)*). For example, an interviewee, H-3(SS)*, commented:

The extent of university autonomy is clearly diminishing, particularly in financial matters. The federal government should exercise more control because it is increasing its share of funding, but it should not interfere in the use of our non-budget funds.

Another interviewee claimed:

We no longer have any autonomy, particularly in financial matters, and we are not in a position to claim or fight for autonomy... All new federal policies are imposed 'top-down', and nobody even asks us. Well, at the federal level Sadovnichii [Rector of Moscow State University and President of RUR] is attempting to oppose the federal policies, but that sort of opposition is impossible to imagine in our republic, simply because our university leaders act as vanes in the regional political winds, which are currently blowing in the direction of the federal centre. (H-8(L))*

One example, although it does not directly relate to YSU, clearly demonstrates the power of the Sakha regional authorities. A recent article in a regional newspaper, devoted to a street protest by public-sector employees against the new federal laws, claimed that one of the deputy heads of the regional government responsible for the education sector asked a certain source to provide her with a list of school teachers who had taken part in the protest, in order to take measures against them (Berezovskii, 2004). Thus fear is being instilled at the regional level. This was indirectly confirmed by an institutional manager at YSU, who said that *'although there is no diktat, there have recently been certain attempts to subordinate the university to the federal and regional governments more strongly, particularly from the political point of view'* (IM-1). Similarly, it was reported to me that under pressure from the regional government the university managers had forbidden YSU academics and students to participate in the street protest against the new federal funding mechanism (personal communication with an academic at the Faculty of Foreign Languages, 28 December 2003; also see Maksimova, 2003). Since YSU is a strongly hierarchical institution, with the rector exerting great authority and near-total control within the university, institutional actors had to accept such a directive.

Nonetheless, most interviewees were satisfied with the extent of university autonomy, with only a few commenting that the university should claim more freedom in using its non-budget resources (for example, H-3(SS)*, H-8(L)*). For example, an institutional manager, who considered the extent of university autonomy to be limited, nevertheless, said that he *'cannot imagine any greater autonomy than what the university already has now'* (IM-7). Several interviewees also claimed that whether university autonomy could be enhanced did not depend on the university, but rather on the intentions of the federal authorities.

Thus the interview data on institutional views of university autonomy have produced very mixed results. Although the majority of interviewees considered that the extent of university autonomy has increased, there were interviewees who had reservations on this. Nevertheless, the data suggest that at least at YSU, there is not a process of bargaining between the university actors and governments, both federal and regional, as the former do not fight for more autonomy, but readily accept the imposition of boundaries by the federal and regional authorities. The results also support the

arguments that university autonomy is politically and contextually defined (Neave, 1988) and that autonomy is always relative, never absolute (Caston, 1992). The varied views of institutional actors on the extent of university autonomy suggest that the views of an interviewee who is at the top university management level, may be different from those of a middle-level manager.

8.4 Summary and Conclusion

This chapter has explored the legal framework for the distribution of decision-making authority between the federal and Sakha governments and YSU, and has then examined how in the process of reform the three levels have connected with each other. First, it has been argued that the legal framework for the distribution of decision-making authority between the two levels of government has been characterised by ambiguity, with the federal government either retaining most of its previous powers or simultaneously assigning control over HE areas as a 'joint' federal and regional responsibility. Second, the exploration of legal university autonomy has suggested that the federal government was more prepared to transfer decision-making authority to the institutional level rather than the regional government, and that although the extent of university autonomy has increased, the number of issues which the university can independently decide for itself is still limited.

Although within the legal framework the weight of the federal authorities remained strong throughout the 1990s, the actual process of interaction was complex, with the Sakha government in practice emerging as a strong source of influence on both the federal government and the university between 1992 and 1995. Although the post-1995 legal framework pointed to clear attempts at re-centralisation at the federal level, the Sakha government continued to exert considerable power, due to the continuing political and economic uncertainty, its control of the main source of HE funding, and the distance from the centre. Only with the change of the federal leadership in 2000, was the federal government able to reinstate its central control not only over the region, but also the university.

Compared to the old Soviet contexts within which YSU had operated, the extent of university autonomy was perceived to be broad by most interviewees, even though the Sakha political authorities infringed institutional powers initially granted to the

university by the federal government, and the federal authorities later diminished the extent of autonomy through the revision of various pieces of legislation. Although the 1996 Law made provision for university autonomy in exchange for greater accountability, it is concluded that YSU is being 'controlled' by both the federal and regional governments, rather than being 'accountable'; thus the SCM continues to dominate. University managers and academics, in the meantime, do not claim autonomy, but, nevertheless, seem to check whether the parameters imposed by the regional and federal governments in regard to the control of internal university affairs are legitimate.

Complex legislation and heavy administrative regulations are still imposed by the federal government on YSU and other Russian HEIs, and this illustrates a lack of trust in the university. The same is true of the relationships between the federal and regional governments. However, the regional government now complies willingly with the centre, and has become an agent of the federal authorities in implementing their policies. The culture of institutional compliance with the regional government has allowed these policies to be implemented without open resistance. Thus it is concluded that in 1992, YSU effectively fell under the control of the regional authorities, but since the federal government has returned to the HE sector, the regional government has not retreated from controlling the university, but has become a second source of control, subjecting the university to dual external control and regulation.

CHAPTER NINE

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This chapter aims, first, to present in Sections 9.1 and 9.2 the main findings of the study with regard to the policy of decentralisation and its implementation in post-1991 Russian HE and, second, to look at these findings through the prism of the HE theories and perspectives discussed in Chapter 2. Some findings confirm and reinforce arguments and conclusions found in the existing literature, whilst others point to its certain limitations. However, it must be remembered that the empirical study concerns only one HE sector, one region and one university within that sector. Nevertheless, the findings offer some new insights into the practice of decentralisation, state regulation, and university autonomy. Section 9.3 puts the main structural developments in Sakha HE and Yakutsk State University (YSU) in the context of other Russian regions and HEIs, and points to similarities as well as differences. Although all Russian HEIs operate within the same federal legal context, the developments across individual regions and HEIs have varied. Finally, Section 9.4 provides the overall main conclusion and suggests areas where the research might be further developed.

9.1 Decentralisation: Divergence between the Rhetoric and Implementation

Decentralisation in Russian HE was not unique to the HE sector; its origin lies in a general trend of decentralisation in different public sectors brought about by political and economic changes. Decentralisation in Russian HE is generally considered to have started after 1991, but this study has revealed that an initial limited transfer of decision-making power to individual HEIs was in practice made in the late-Soviet period between 1987 and 1991 within the wider *perestroika* movement. Then, immediately after the break-up of the USSR at the end of 1991, the institutions' powers were further increased, and until 1996 Russian HEIs found themselves having an unprecedented degree of autonomy in key areas.

In the early 1990s, the Russian federal authorities expressed their overwhelming desires to reorient themselves towards a new community of free-market economies and to integrate Russian HE into the world HE system. Indeed, westernising and Europeanising Russian HE and granting autonomy to HEIs could be perceived by the outside world as an element of true democracy that completely rejected the Communist

past and broke away from the socialist notion of central control and decision-making. However, the transfer of decision-making power to HEIs was largely *ad hoc* rather than well planned, and was driven primarily by the political and economic turbulence in the federal centre.

As for decentralisation to the regions, whereas it is normally argued that decentralisation to the regional governments originated at the federal level, the findings of this study indicate that HE decentralisation was not driven solely by the federal policy-makers in all regions; sometimes it was a result of the interplay of several factors. For example, within the 'sovereignty' discourse of the early 1990s, the Sakha leadership saw regional HE as the major driver of economic regeneration and as a necessary part of being a proper nation, but the Sakha authorities did not strive for authority in HE *per se*; they aspired for some form of autonomy in political and economic spheres. Subsequently, regional autonomy and special economic benefits granted by the federal centre allowed the regional authorities in Sakha to develop their own vision for regional HE and to interfere in internal institutional affairs. However, as soon as the wider decentralisation to the regions became a real threat to the influence of the federal authorities, they wished to sabotage it by resuming federal control.

Throughout the 1990s, the federal authorities presented the decentralisation of decision-making authority as the cornerstone of the HE reform process, with the rationales of improving the effectiveness of the sector and enhancing individual approaches to teaching and learning, but they failed to formulate and adopt a coherent and clear decentralisation programme. The delays in formulating and adopting a stage-by-stage reform programme had to do with controversies over HE economics and finance, numerous changes in the federal government and MOE leadership, and political game-playing between various federal ministries and Parliament. There was no agreement among various stakeholders on what decentralisation was to achieve and what exactly it was for. From 1996, whilst the decentralisation of HE continued to be at the top of the official political agenda, the federal authorities gradually started to re-centralise power, and between 2000 and 2003 were able to almost fully reinstate their centralised control over key HE areas. Thus there has clearly been a divergence between the official rhetoric of decentralisation and its actual implementation.

In this respect, the interviewees' views that the federal government's incapacity to finance HE and not its publicly proclaimed rationales was a decisive factor in decentralising power to the lower levels in the early 1990s, deserves attention. The timing of the empirical study, however, may have contributed to the existence of such a view, as when the interviews for this study were conducted in 1999 and the early 2000s, the federal government was already starting to re-centralise previously decentralised powers, whilst simultaneously increasing its share of HE funding. This link between federal funding and re-centralisation may have led the interviewees to believe that the lack of federal funds for HE in the early 1990s was indeed the underlying motive of the federal government. Perhaps, if the study had been conducted in the early 1990s, the views as to what was perceived to be the underlying rationale for decentralisation might have been different.

Another reason for the swing from decentralisation to re-centralisation is that the outcomes of HE decentralisation have not been assessed as positive by the federal authorities, as it has led to adverse effects, notably the violation and neglect of federal legislation by the regions and HEIs, an increasing number of 'diploma mills', the abuse of financial freedoms and also corruption. These adverse effects, and the almost unregulated and uncontrolled expansion of the HE sector, have given the federal government, and the Russian public in general, great anxiety about the perceived prestige and quality of Russian HE, and increasingly make them see Russian HE in the Soviet period in an idealised way. Against the backdrop of the chaos left by Yeltsin's leadership, not only is Soviet HE now seen in an idealised way, but concerns about the crisis in Russian HE are usually interwoven with regret over the collapse of the USSR as a great power. The federal government is now convinced that the former glory of Soviet HE, considered to have been the best in the world, and stability in Russia can only be restored by reinstating central control.

Nevertheless, despite the divergence between the rhetoric of decentralisation and its implementation, the powers in some matters at the YSU level have clearly increased, but the room for manoeuvre is still limited. The reason for decentralisation being only limited may also lie in the origin of the university tradition in Russia as well as in the legacy of the Soviet period, in which the HEIs were virtually extensions of the state apparatus, and regarded as state rather than public institutions. This legacy led to a

general assumption that it was the state rather than professionals which was offering the best education. This assumption, as shown in this study, still persists in post-1991 Russian HE; the federal policy-makers and, indeed, some institutional actors at YSU believe that key HE matters should ultimately be controlled by the state rather than HEIs.

In the meantime, actors at YSU failed to exercise even the limited autonomy granted to them. The academic community in Sakha and in Russia as a whole do not really want autonomy in academic matters, and do not consider it as vital as autonomy in financial matters. Given the difficult financial situation, it is probably unsurprising that they are more prepared to fight for autonomy in financial than in academic matters, and, as this study shows, whilst the infringement of financial autonomy since 2000 is perceived as an immediate threat to institutional vitality, interference in academic matters is considered to have been always part of the very fabric of the university. However, the return of external control and scrutiny was not unique to the HE sector, but was driven by the desire of the federal authorities to fight against corruption in Russian society as a whole.

Thus various factors have contributed to the divergence between the rhetoric of decentralisation and its actual implementation. The following section attempts to build links between the main findings and the published literature. It looks at the impact of the policy instruments used by both the federal and regional governments in regulating HE and their impact on YSU, analyses the forms of decentralisation pursued by the federal authorities in more detail, and looks at them through the typology of the state-university relationship.

9.2 Building Links between the Main Findings and the Literature

9.2.1 Instruments of Government Regulation

It is evident from the findings of this study that the range of instruments used by the federal government in regulating HE has increased since 1991. If before 1991 the only instruments were central administrative and legal controls, since then the federal government has used to various degrees alternative instruments, those of financial controls, evaluation, and the market. However, despite the increasing array of new instruments, the old instruments remain the most influential, as the new instruments did

not replace but were additions to administrative and legal controls, and often the ways the former were deployed were very similar to the ways the latter were used.

The Russian government has relied heavily on uniform and rule-oriented frameworks, the use of which has been justified by the preservation of 'unitary educational space' and concerns for HE quality. As a result, detailed federal legislative and administrative measures still determine key HE issues, and do not encourage institutional diversity and change. However, whilst some measures were intended to forbid and restrain, others were intended to permit certain institutional activities by granting greater freedoms through changes in legal and administrative regulations. Most of these institutional freedoms also came with certain restrictions. For example, only up to 20% of the curricula was to be determined independently and until 2004 only a limited number of fee-paying students could be admitted. The developments in Russian HE support van Vught's (1989) argument that the use of administrative and legal controls ranges from being completely restrictive to mildly restraining.

The main reason for the reliance of the federal authorities on administrative and legal controls is that they have not been able to deploy finance to influence the behaviour of institutional actors, since federal funds have been hardly sufficient to secure even the mere existence of YSU and other HEIs. Although since 2000 the federal authorities have had control over the use by YSU of budget and non-budget funds, the federal restrictions should be seen as administrative and legal controls rather than financial instruments. By contrast, the Sakha regional authorities have used financial instruments extensively by exchanging regional funds for a particular service required of YSU. These 'payments with strings attached', to use van Vught's (1989) term, have not only enabled the university to expand considerably, but have also constrained institutional behaviours, as regional funding was rarely available for initiatives stemming from the university itself.

As for the evaluative processes introduced in 1996, they are carried out exclusively by the federal MOE, and mainly seen by the institutional actors as the reinstatement of Soviet bureaucratic control, as through priori as well as posteriori evaluation the federal MOE continues to control both the process and the product of HE. With the introduction of this system of evaluation, often referred to by Russian academics as the 'quality

police', the federal MOE has clearly increased its formal central power, and instead of being an incentive it fosters fear and anxiety among university actors by penalising weak academic units and programmes and thus promotes institutional and academic compliance. Thus, through the evaluative processes Russian HEIs are 'controlled' by the federal authorities rather than held 'accountable' to various stakeholders in society. What is clear is that the use of this instrument has increased institutional bureaucracy at YSU, but whether it has improved institutional performance needs further empirical exploration.

With regard to the private 'commercial' market in HE, i.e. what is not directly managed by the state, the Russian government has only created the necessary conditions for entrepreneurial behaviour within and among HEIs through changing the legal context, but has left it to institutions to decide whether to explore external opportunities. As for the state-managed market mechanisms, they were introduced not only to limit federal budget expenditure and increase competition for state funds but also to improve the quality of teaching and research and reduce the instances of corruption. The federal government developed explicit policies, namely for government research grants and new admission and HE voucher schemes, to create and facilitate quasi-markets in the allocation of resources and students which would stimulate market-like behaviour and competitiveness among HEIs. It is expected that in seeking to attract the largest proportion of federal funds and the best students, the HEIs will become more competitive and, consequently, improve the quality of their services.

The conclusions stated above are consistent with the arguments of Bleiklie (2000) and Kogan (1998), that policy instruments used by governments in regulating HE are not mutually exclusive, since the discussion of measures under one specific instrument does not mean that they cannot simultaneously belong to other categories. It is concluded that in Russia federal evaluative processes and financial controls bear a strong resemblance to strict administrative and legal restrictions, which have nothing to do, at least at this time, with whether the federal government is the main resource-provider. There is no direct relationship between the level of federal government funding and the extent of its control. As for the Sakha regional authorities, although they continue to provide the largest share of funding to YSU, their actual powers have diminished. The area of HE became more politicised and determined primarily by the federal authorities without

much deference to actors at the regional and institutional levels. How these instruments affected autonomy at YSU is discussed below.

9.2.2 Impact of Instruments on University Autonomy

The examination of legal and effective university autonomy suggests that although overall university autonomy has increased there is still only a very small proportion of key university matters which YSU could decide independently of the federal and regional governments. There is evidence of mixed or shared powers, in which autonomy is constrained by federal regulative frameworks and regional intervention. Nevertheless, the majority of the interviewees appeared to be satisfied with the degree of decision-making power which they have been granted. The reason is that compared with YSU's past experiences of the Soviet period university autonomy is substantial, even though in most matters there is still strong state regulation.

Although Berdahl (1999) and Neave and van Vught (1991) argue that the division of decision-making powers between the government and HEIs, and their respective roles should be constantly negotiated in the light of the availability of state resources and institutional performance, the Russian case indicates that at present, the extent of decision-making powers granted by the federal government depends neither on the amount of federal funding nor the institutions' performance, but rather on the political will of the federal government. The nature of regulation and control is such that it is not for the HEIs to negotiate the extent of university autonomy with the federal government, or to bargain with the centre for decision-making powers. YSU, and other Russian HEIs are thus very vulnerable to changes in the federal legal context. As for regulation by the Sakha government, the terms under which it provides resources to YSU are also imposed rather than negotiated.

After a period when there was a gap between the federal legal framework and the actual extent of university autonomy (1992-1996), when the federal government had to transfer powers, nominally retained by it, or to ignore the violation of the federal legislation by the institutional level, the extent of the actual powers of the university has recently come very close to the decision-making powers provided by the federal legal framework. Notwithstanding regional interference in some institutional affairs, if this empirical research had been done before 1996, when the federal government could not

in practice enforce its legal constraints, the results would have been different, with the university in practice enjoying greater decision-making powers than those envisaged by the federal legal framework. However, since 1996 the university actors seem to have come to terms with the fact that the gap between the degree of decision-making powers granted by the federal legal framework and the extent of actual decision-making powers at the institutional level has been gradually and considerably diminished.

With the comprehensive use of the old instrument of administrative and legal controls and instruments of financial controls and evaluative processes, deployed mainly as bureaucratic measures, the federal government restricts both substantive autonomy, or the university's power to determine its goals and programmes, and procedural autonomy, or its power to determine the means by which its goals and programmes are pursued (Berdahl, 1999). YSU exercises its decision-making powers in most aspects within the elaborate framework of external regulations and requirements. Therefore, its main tasks largely remain the implementation of externally defined goals and externally approved programmes, and the allocation of funds, both state and self-generated, in accordance with the federal and regional governments' prescriptions.

Such restrictions on substantive and procedural autonomy do not encourage changes in university decision-making processes, or the university's ability to respond to the external environment. As a result, the decision-making style at YSU remains mainly bureaucratic and 'top-down', with the rector exerting the greatest degree of power in most areas. The university's business is run in a hierarchical manner, with strong delineation between academics, on the one hand, and a large central university bureaucracy, on the other. This is not to deny, however, that other forms of governance and management are also apparent, but to a lesser extent.

The collegial model is evident at the discipline-based 'chair' level. Even though there is no pure collegiality at YSU, academics have received limited decision-making powers in curricular and personnel matters; but all decisions reached by academic collegia are to be followed by the bureaucratic stage at the central university level. Whilst in some HE systems, collegiality is said to be no longer free of bureaucracy (see, for example, Clark, 2001; Henkel, 2000; Kogan and Hanney, 2000), in Russian HE bureaucracy can no longer be perceived to be free of collegiality. Evidence of the political model is

found in manifestations of power relationships between senior managers and the professoriate. In general, however, in this largely bureaucratic and hierarchical organisation, the central university managers at YSU tend to subdue academic opposition and tensions, and academics prefer to preserve the status quo vis-à-vis the university management.

Despite some evidence of entrepreneurial activities, entrepreneurial behaviour within YSU is limited, fragmented and dependent on individual initiatives. It has not yet embraced the entire university. So far, entrepreneurial activities at YSU have concentrated on small changes in teaching. There is no strengthened steering core, which would involve 'genuine' academics in central steering groups. There is a clear sign of a diversified funding base, but at the same time a very strong reliance on state funding, particularly that of the regional government, is apparent. There is still a long way to go before YSU finds itself on Clark's (1998) five pathways of transformation to an entrepreneurial university.

The findings support Kogan's (1998) argument that granting even limited autonomy to HEIs requires new internal decision-making structures. However, despite the changes in formal structures, the actual processes at YSU have altered very little. Limited autonomy for the university as a whole has not translated into increased decision-making powers for the academic units within YSU. The main problem that seems to inhibit these processes, I conclude, are the constraints erected by the nature of the federal and regional government control, which result in the preservation rather than elimination of the long history and tradition of internal bureaucratic decision-making. Thus institutional decision-making processes and behaviour have changed less than changes in institutional size and formal structures would suggest.

Although federal policy documents do not specify the forms of decentralisation which have been pursued, it is useful in the following section to draw a distinction between the forms discussed in Chapter 2, namely de-concentration, delegation, and devolution, as they apply to Russian HE. As each form varies in the degree of decision-making authority held at the lower levels, if no differentiation is drawn between the forms when discussing decentralisation there is a danger that its extent can be over- or underestimated.

9.2.3 Decentralised Centralisation?

The swing from decentralisation to re-centralisation in post-1991 Russian HE complicates drawing a clear distinction between the forms of decentralisation. Whilst some aspects have been and still remain completely or largely devolved to the level of the university, others have taken various forms. Furthermore, in some aspects, the federal government shares its power not only with the university, but also with the regional government. Therefore distinguishing between the three forms of decentralisation becomes problematic, and not possible in all situations. Nevertheless, the findings reveal the relevance as well as certain limitations of the theoretical discussions regarding decentralisation, and offer new insights into the existing theories and perspectives on government regulation in HE

As for devolution, the most extensive form of decentralisation, one finding challenges the accepted assumption that once powers are legally devolved to the lower levels, they cannot be revoked merely by the decision of the central government without the consent of actors at the lower levels (see, for example, Bray, 1999). Two examples in this study (the shift in control of the use of non-budget resources from the institution to the federal government in 2000, and the transfer of licensing from the region to the federal MOE in 1996) show that, in Russian HE at least, this is not necessarily the case, and lead to doubts regarding not so much the extent of devolution, as in both examples above the federal government was responsible only for the collection and exchange of information before single-handedly reintroducing its rigid control, but rather the permanent nature of devolution once it takes place. In Russia, legally devolved powers in some HE aspects in practice ended up being more like delegation, in which the federal government only temporarily transferred some of its power to the lower levels. In fact, what powers are transferred to the lower levels largely depends on the federal authorities, and not on the various actors at the lower levels in the system.

Example of delegation in Russian HE would include the ‘lending’ of extensive control over academic matters (curricula and accreditation), stipulated as the federal responsibility in the 1992 Law, to the lower levels between 1992 and 1996. Although in this example delegation can be clearly perceived as a form of decentralisation, other findings also indicate that the same strategy has been used by the federal government for tightening its control over HEIs through transferring some of its controlling

functions to the regional level (for example, the control of the fulfilment by HEIs of the federal licensing and accreditation requirements). The federal MOE has merely shifted its workload to the regional MSPE by transferring the responsibility for implementing central rules, but not for making them. Through such a transfer, the federal MOE was able to reinstate its control, but exercises it in a more decentralised manner than before. This strategy can also be perceived as a de-concentration of authority, as the regional officers ultimately represent the values of the federal government rather than local or institutional interests and are held directly responsible and accountable to the federal MOE. Thus de-concentration and delegation, generally perceived as forms of decentralisation in the academic literature, can also be deployed as strategies for centralising power.

One of the limitations of theories on decentralisation is manifested by the existence of shared or mixed powers over key matters in Russian HE (for example, the opening of new academic programmes). This immediately raises the question of what form of decentralisation such a shared or mixed control best fits into. It is clearly not devolution, since the lower levels must seek higher-level approval for their actions. It is neither de-concentration nor delegation, as the former only implies the authority to implement central decisions and policies, but no freedom to initiate or plan new projects, whilst the latter suggests broad decision-making and management authority, albeit this is only temporarily transferred. It cannot be seen as centralisation in its extreme form either, since lower levels share a degree of power, however limited it might be, with the central government.

In the light of the above discussion, it is suggested that for some systems a new form of decentralisation can be conceptualised. Such a form can be termed *decentralised centralisation*, or *centrally-controlled decentralisation*, in which the lower levels have only a recommending or initiating power in key HE matters, but need to seek higher-level approval and endorsement before taking further actions. First, this implies the resistance of the higher level to truly devolving power to the lower levels and the lack of trust on the part of the top authority, and whilst it transfers or shares some power in certain aspects, it does so within tight central regulation, and by doing so it retains and may even reaffirm its supreme control. Secondly, this form is characterised by hierarchical structures of authority, strong highest level and weak lower levels, and

contrary to what the notions of ‘transferring power’ would suggest. Thus, in this form of decentralisation, centralisation does not disappear but is reformulated.

The findings of this study confirm the existence of a variety of often conflicting labels, concepts, and strategies relating to decentralisation, noted by writers such as Bray (1999), Cheema and Rondinelli (1983), McGinn and Welsh (1999) and others. It also shows that the traditional forms do not fit all systems and contexts, and that not one form but rather a mixture of different forms of decentralisation, or centralisation for that matter, can be pursued by a federal government, depending on its objectives and rationales, its capacity to implement policy, and its commitment. The choice of forms can also change over time, and depends on the HE aspects in question, since authority over those aspects deemed to be important by the federal government may be de-concentrated, delegated, or decentralised only within strict control, whilst aspects not considered to be as important may be fully devolved to the lower levels. Whether and how these conclusions fit and apply to the models of the state-university relationship is addressed below.

9.2.4 Applicability of Models of the State-University Relationship

This section elaborates on the conclusions made above, using a typology which distinguishes between two extreme types of state regulation vis-à-vis HEIs, those of state control and state supervision. Van Vught (1994) argues that in the state-university relationship the centralisation of decision-making authority implies the state-control model, whilst decentralisation implies the state-supervisory model. However, the findings of this study suggest that when a stronger distinction is made in analysing some HE systems between the strategies used for decentralisation, this adds some new insights to van Vught’s argument.

Centralisation in its extreme form clearly corresponds to the state-control model, whilst devolution, the most extensive form of decentralisation, implies the state-supervisory model. However, the conclusion that delegation and de-concentration, usually perceived as forms of decentralisation, have also been used by the Russian federal government to re-centralise control shows that these forms do not necessarily fit the state-supervisory model. When delegation and de-concentration are pursued to create a more effective partnership with and enhancement of decision-making at the lower levels within broadly

set frames, then they clearly correspond to the state-supervisory model. By contrast, when the same strategies are introduced with the goal of tightening central control, with the use of the actors at the lower levels to extend centrally established priorities and values, as happens in Russian HE, they do not neatly fit the state-supervisory model, but imply a state-control model, albeit with dispersed control. As for what I have termed decentralised centralisation, it is likely to represent a mixed form of state control and state supervision, with different degrees of intensity between the two.

Whilst the literature on HE decentralisation emphasises a shift in the locus of control from the state/government to the university, the findings of this study reinforce the argument of Goedegebuure and his colleagues (1994), that in some systems it is necessary to distinguish between national and sub-national levels of government. Therefore, as this study concerns two levels of government, it is necessary to look at the categorisation of state regulation separately for the federal and regional governments. The case of Sakha, particularly in the period before 1996, shows that if only the federal government and university relationships were considered there would be a danger of overestimating the actual extent of decentralisation and autonomy at YSU, because, the regional government in practice infringed the autonomy granted to YSU by the federal government. Thus examining the behaviour of the sub-national government actors for this study enhanced the appreciation of the complexity of the issue of decentralisation.

In respect of the regulation by the regional government, I conclude that a mixture of the state-control and state-supervisory models was apparent. Over establishing new academic units and programmes, the regional government's regulation was characterised by rigid control; they strongly influenced the behaviour of the institutional actors by externally setting the university objectives and directing certain institutional actions to achieve these objectives through the use of the instrument of finance. However, the regional authorities at the same time were prepared to withdraw to a more facilitating and coordinating role in internal management and purely academic matters; they did not interfere in determining the structure of subunits within larger new academic units, curricula, and the content of new courses. With the lack of federal control in academic matters in the first half of the 1990s, these crucial aspects were a matter of purely professional judgment. Overall, it can be argued that the regional government was more concerned with macro-issues, such as the size of the regional HE

sector and YSU, whilst control over micro-issues was exercised first by the university itself (1992-1995), and later by the federal MOE (1996-onwards).

Whilst the federal reformers shifted to the state-supervisory model by transferring power in almost all key aspects in 1992, this shift proved temporary. Although since 1996 university autonomy and enhanced regional authority have been largely lost as the federal government has started to move its regulation toward a predominantly state-control model, this is not to deny that the state-supervisory model is still influential in certain HE aspects. However, in most aspects, either the state-control model alone, or a combination of state control and state supervision, is increasingly evident. Such a combination has been termed a 'strange hybrid' by Maassen and van Vught (1988) which in Russian HE is found in the strategy of decentralised centralisation. However, even within a 'strange hybrid' model, the elements of state control have a greater intensity than those of state supervision.

The models of government regulation have been criticised by authors such as Braun and Merrien (1999) as too general. Similarly, Frazer (1997) and McDaniel (1996) have criticised the application of models such as 'continental', associated with the state-control model, and 'Anglo-Saxon' (Clark, 1983), associated with the state-supervisory model, as treating university regulation as a homogenous and static category. The conclusions reached above also point to the limitations of the state-control and state-supervisory models, and reinforce the argument that variations of government influence depend on the particular attribute of university autonomy. Nevertheless, the value of the models of government regulation in providing a conceptual tool cannot be denied, as the findings of this study clearly indicate that overall in Russian HE there is a predominance of the state-control model, with only some elements of the state-supervisory model.

Another insight provided by the findings is that whilst one assumes the presence and dominance of either model in government regulation vis-à-vis HEIs, these models can also apply to the regulation of the national government vis-à-vis the sub-national government, which can broadly be categorised into national supervision or national control. In this sense, if the federal government transfers extensive decision-making authority to the sub-national level, this can be perceived as national supervision, but if it transfers the implementation of central rules only or transfers powers within strict

central control, such regulation can be seen as fitting the national control model. As is the case with university autonomy, the form of national government regulation of the sub-national government would be dependent on the particular HE aspect concerned.

9.3 Sakha HE in the Russian Context

Although all Russian HEIs operate within the same federal legal context, it would be wrong to conclude that the reforms in Sakha HE and YSU necessarily correspond with other regions and institutions. Such a conclusion proves fragile, simply because the findings from one region and one university cannot be generalised to the entire HE sector, comprising over a thousand state and private HEIs, each with its own history, tradition, and culture. Nevertheless, drawing on the study findings and recent literature and statistics on Russian HE, it is possible to briefly summarise similarities and differences between the case-study region and university and other regions and HEIs. This is not to imply, however, that comparisons are exhaustive, as many other interesting and paradoxical examples can be found.

As noted, one of the main similarities with other Russian regions is that in Sakha the HE sector has significantly expanded in terms of the numbers of HEIs and students. But the nature of expansion in Sakha is different from that in most regions. For example, in Sakha the number of students in state HEIs has increased mainly due to the regional government funding rather than through the admission of fee-paying students. In 2002/03, the proportion of fee-paying students in Sakha state HEIs remained quite modest at 37%, whilst in most other regions it was over 45% (SCS, 2003:472-374). Whilst between 1991 and 2003 the number of state HEIs in the majority of regions either increased insignificantly or even decreased, the speed of increase in state HEIs in Sakha was the second fastest in Russia, after Moscow (SCS, 2003:154-157). It is a different story, however, if the private HE sector is taken into account, as Sakha is one of few Russian regions which do not have any independent private HEIs, except branches established by founding state and private HEIs located outside the region.

The Republic of Sakha was among a small number of regions which emerged as 'winners' in the transition to a market economy in the early 1990s. Sakha's economic prosperity was reflected clearly in the fact that in 1996, for example, its Gross Regional Product (GRP) per capita was 2.3 times higher than the national average and the second

highest among Russia's regions after the oil-rich Tyumen Oblast (Canning *et al.*, 1999:35). Such an economic base and the special status of the region in its relation with the federal centre contributed to a strong regional budget and gave Sakha flexibility and more autonomy than most less prosperous regions in the financing of public sectors, including education. Sakha had one of the highest levels of spending on education in general throughout the 1990s. Thus whilst in other Russian regions and HEIs, expansion was driven by the initiatives of individual HEIs, in Sakha it was a deliberate regional government policy.

In other respects, the developments at YSU have been similar to those in other Russian universities. There is no intention to repeat the discussion of institutional changes again here, but the main similarity with most other Russian universities is that YSU has established many new academic units and programmes (for other HEIs, see Bain, 2003; Morgan, 2002; TACIS, 2000b). However, whilst many Russian HEIs were able to expand and broaden their academic portfolio mainly thanks to their 'earned' income, most innovations at YSU were financed by the regional government. As a result of relatively generous funding from the regional government, internal changes and entrepreneurial activities at YSU have been patchy and fragmented, and have not yet become part of its culture, as may have happened in other universities (see, for example, Shattock, 2004). Whilst there are similarities between various regional HE sectors and HEIs, the origin of change or what and who drives the change has depended on regional and institutional contexts.

9.4 Concluding Remarks

This study set out to examine the formulation and implementation of the federal policy of decentralisation in the post-1991 Russian HE sector, and the extent to which this policy impacted on HE reforms in one region and one university. Although the initial intention was to cover the period up to 2001, it became clear to me that since 2000, despite the continuing rhetoric of decentralisation, the process started to be reversed and signs of re-centralisation have become strongly evident. This led to the inclusion of post-2001 events in the scope of this thesis, with the rationale of taking some account of more recent developments. Accordingly, in addition to the main field visits undertaken between 1999 and 2001, a number of follow-up interviews were conducted after 2002.

An extensive literature review helped me identify elements involved in the HE decentralisation process by exploring the relevant theoretical issues developed in Western European and North-American scholarship, including the state-university relationship and its effects on university autonomy, government instruments of regulation, and internal university governance and management, and to build a theoretical framework for looking at decentralisation from the federal to the regional and institutional levels in Russian HE. Although the elements were identified in connection with the concept of decentralisation, they also proved pertinent when discussion concerned the reversal of the process, i.e. re-centralisation.

The exploration of theoretical issues helped me realise that government influence varies depending on the particular HE attribute, and that therefore decentralisation should be examined in relation to particular areas. In this study, three HE areas are included: 1) general aspects of governance and management; 2) finance, and 3) academic matters and quality. The discussion of decentralisation/re-centralisation in these three respects is not limited to describing factual data and presenting the views of actors at various levels in the system, but seeks to relate what has been observed empirically to the existing HE policy and organisational theories. Through building links between the empirical findings and theoretical issues, the understanding of the nature and process of decentralisation as well as re-centralisation in the HE context is enhanced.

The overall impact of the policy of HE decentralisation on the Sakha HE sector, and more importantly, on YSU, has been limited. I did not find much evidence of extensive decentralisation, i.e. devolution, from the federal to the regional and institutional levels in any of the three areas considered in this study, but mainly signs of de-concentration and delegation, and what I have termed a decentralised centralisation/centrally controlled decentralisation, or shared authority with a greater intensity of the central control. Although compared to the old Soviet context, the region and university enjoy a greater degree of decision-making authority, there is still a very long way for Russian HE to go before it can be considered a truly decentralised system, with its regions having clearly devolved powers and its universities exercising autonomy and freedom in running their day-to-day business. Thus a reasonable balance between centralisation and decentralisation is yet to be found, and despite the constant rhetoric of decentralisation

throughout the last decade, centralisation remains a dominant trend in present-day Russian HE.

The main reasons for a failure of HE decentralisation can be briefly summarised. First, decentralisation was seen simply as a technical process, which could be decided single-handedly from the centre using old administrative command mechanisms and without the involvement of the immediate actors in the system. Since the federal government did not have the financial means to effectively enforce and implement its decisions, it enforced them through the resurrection of the old administrative and legal constraints, which resulted in over-control of the HE system and limited incentives for the HEIs. Secondly, the use of various instruments of regulation did not combine harmoniously, but they often contradicted and paralysed one another, creating numerous tensions and leading to fragmented quasi-reforms and unpredictable outcomes. Thirdly, since funding was uncertain and HEIs were not given clear signals of the actual and potential education needs of the society, universities responded to immediate market signals without giving much thought to medium-to-long term effects and the viability of their innovations. What we have seen so far in one of the Russian regions, therefore, is cosmetic change and superficial reforms, achieved by expanding the numbers of students, creating new and renaming old institutions, academic units, courses, programmes, and formal decision-making structures, but leaving the old system's fundamental structures intact.

On the basis of this conclusion, some suggestion for further development of the research may be proposed. First, in exploring the impact of the federal and regional policies on the university, the managers at the central (rector, vice-rectors, heads of central administrative units), intermediate (directors of institutes and deans of faculties), and basic levels (heads of 'chairs') were interviewed, but no conceptual distinction between the three was drawn, the rationale being to see the university as one single entity, able to create its own institutional saga (Clark, 1998). With regard to implications for future follow-up research, there is a need to make clear distinctions in order to explore how the same federal and regional policies affect interactions between separate levels within the university. Furthermore, the inclusion of individual academics without managerial responsibilities is desirable. Since the institutional actors interviewed for this study were likely to offer views that they thought the interviewer wanted to hear, or indeed, should

hear (Cohen *et al.*, 2000), and since ‘genuine’ academic opinion may be more critical of government policies, such an inclusion would provide an important counterbalance to the views of the academic managers. Also, it should be admitted that the conclusion that actors at YSU are more interested in autonomy in financial rather than academic matters may have been affected by the lack of interviews with ‘genuine’ academics.

Second, the government’s influence on university autonomy should be seen in relation to its various attributes. It is clear from this study that various institutional aspects have different weights, depending on the perceptions, of university staff, of each aspect’s importance to university autonomy. Although in this study, various aspects within the three broad areas are considered, especially in the discussion of the legal framework within which the university operates in Chapter 8, it was not possible to explore them in a multi-dimensional way or to learn of the views of the interviewees on every individual aspect of autonomy. In this regard, a quantitative approach, such as the use of questionnaires, which would investigate the perceptions of university actors of each aspect and how they rank each in the degree of its importance to university autonomy could make the findings more generalisable.

Third, this study concerns only one region and one university, as the rationale was not to represent the world by generalising the findings to the wider cases, but rather to explore this particular case with its own issues, contexts, and interpretations (Stake, 1994). Nevertheless, through drawing on this study’s findings, the review of the literature on Russian HE, and conversations with university leaders and academics from other Russian HEIs, many similarities as well as differences between the case-study region and university and other regions and HEIs are evident. Although the approach used in this study is considered to be valid, the inclusion in future research of more than one region and more than one university, both state and private, in the actual study of the Russian HE sector would prove valuable.

Finally, as the Russian Federation is not the only country where HE is undergoing reform, this study could become a link in a network of comparative research into reforms in Russian HE and other systems in transition. A comparative approach can enhance understanding of one’s own education and society and one’s appreciation of the differences between national systems in the international community.

This study concludes that wider policy swings have been most important in the moves evident in post-1991 Russian HE from decentralisation to re-centralisation. The state should have a role to play in HE, as no government “can afford to leave its higher education to its own devices” (Salter and Tapper, 1994:18), but governments in democratic systems should largely leave it to universities to decide on the content of the curriculum, methods of assessment and degree standards, allocation of funds between different expenditure heads, the conduct of research, and the selection of staff and students (Ashley quoted in Berdahl, 1999; McDaniel, 1996). In Russia, the reinstatement of federal control over HE may be argued to be necessary to re-build the HE system after a decade of chaotic developments, but it has endangered even the limited university autonomy which has developed. Thus the re-centralisation trend gives the author very little hope that the importance of university autonomy in Russia is being appreciated.

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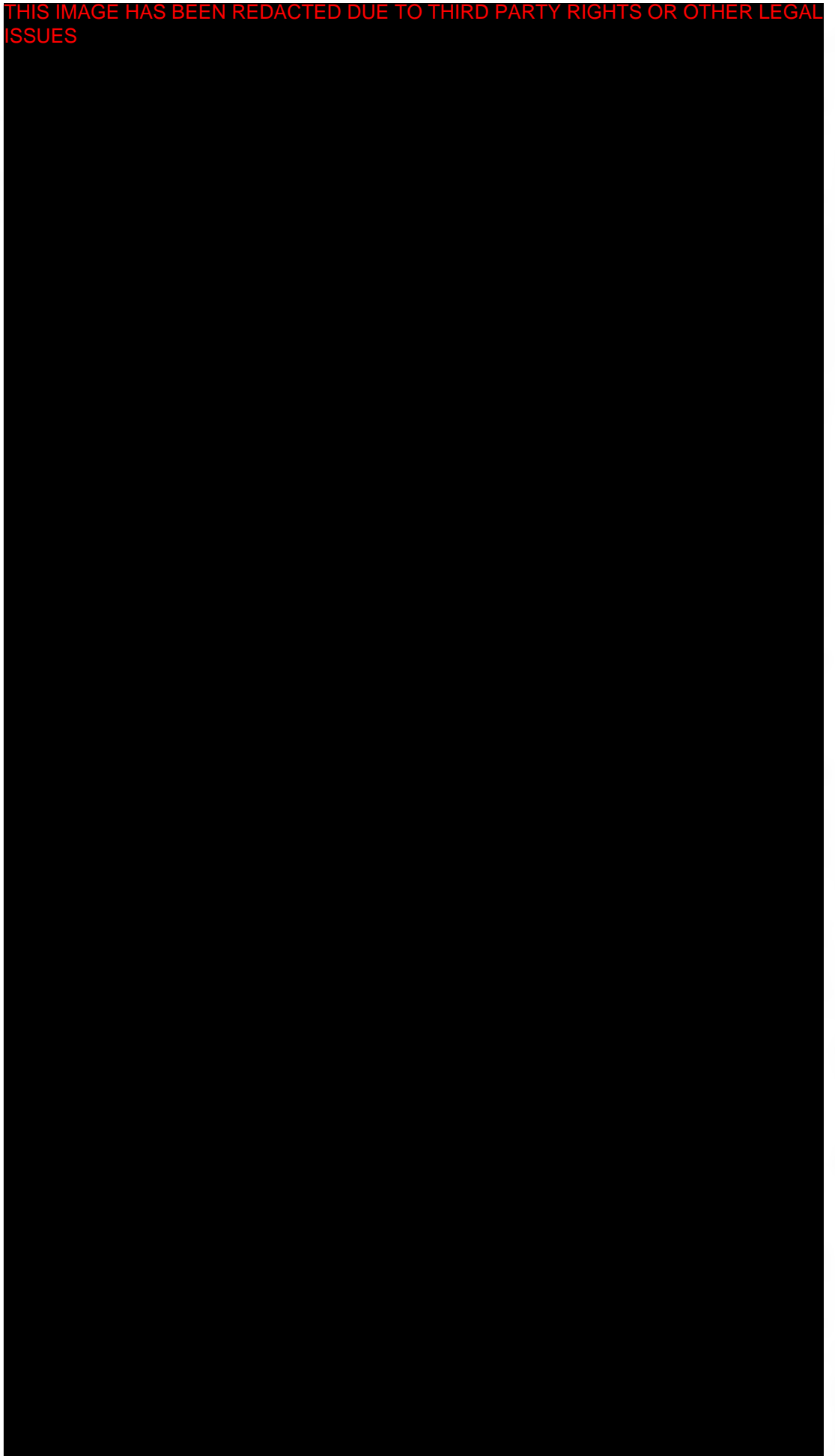
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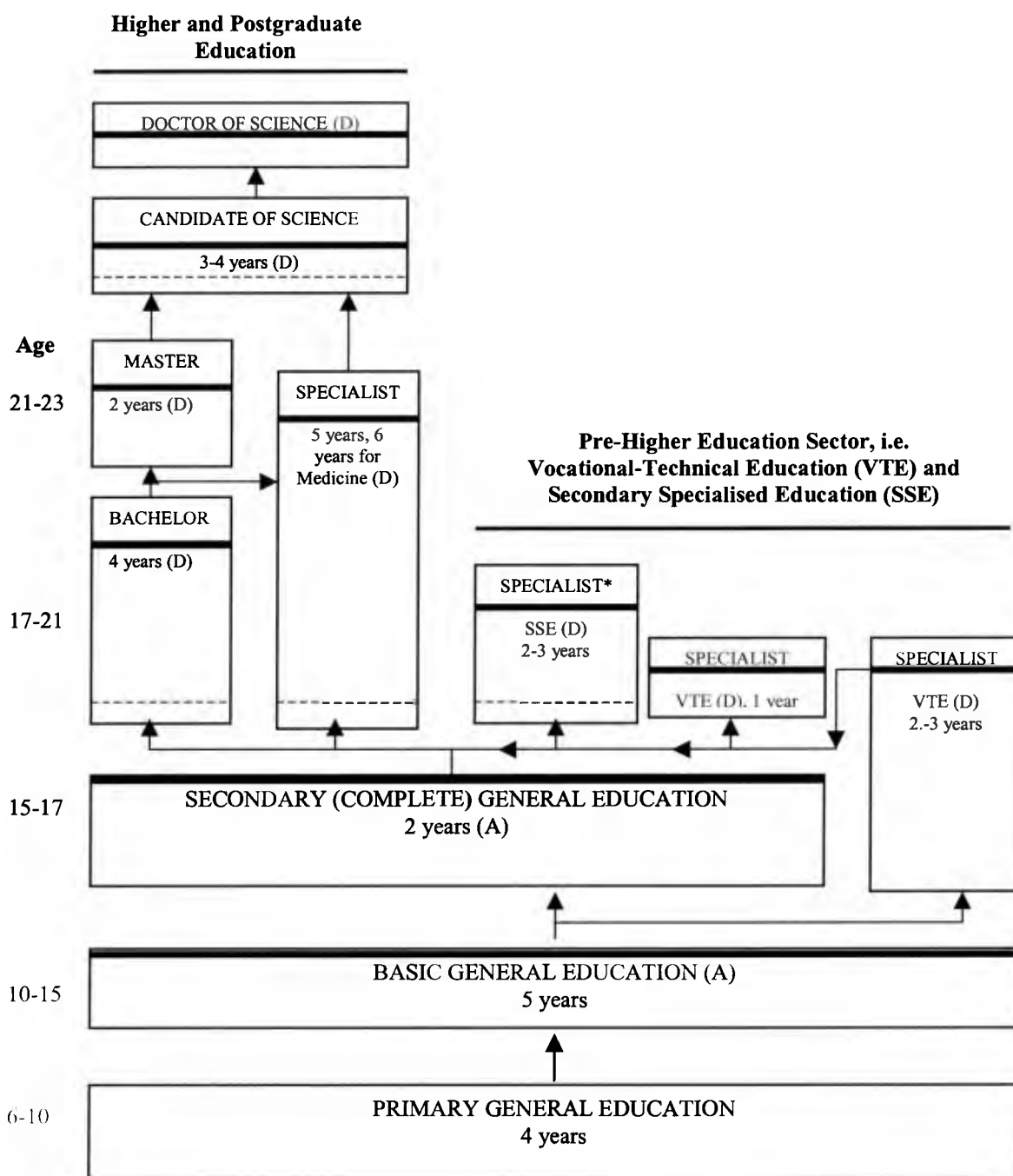
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Appendix 1 **Administrative Map of the Russian Federation**





Notes:

Drawn by the author. (A) – *Attestat* (Certificate); (D) – *Diplom* (Diploma);
 * - graduates of secondary specialised educational institutions also may enter the third year of the HE programme in some HEIs;
 ----- - Entrance Examinations;
 _____ - Final Examinations.

Since 2001, the federal MOE has been implementing a Standard State Examination as an experiment, which combines secondary (complete) general school final and HE entrance examinations in the form of written tests and replaces the practice of oral entrance examinations at a specific HEI.

Dear,

Following our previous correspondence (contact), I would like to meet and talk with you on the issue of the decentralisation policy in post-1991 Russian higher education (HE). I have outlined a general schedule with topics to be covered and a number of general questions, which we can follow to act as a guideline for the interview. I also would like to reconfirm with you about the length of interview, which will last from 45 minutes to one hour.

Part I: Origin of and Rationale for Decentralisation.

1. In your view, what were the reasons and contexts that drove the policy of decentralisation in Russian HE after the dissolution of the Soviet Union?
2. How has the policy been formulated?
3. In your view, what forces facilitate and/or hinder the actual process of decentralisation at the federation-wide level?

Part II: Governance and Management.

1. Can you tell me about the measures that have been pursued by the federal government to change the patterns of governance and management at the federal level within the framework of decentralisation?
2. How have these measures affected HE governance and management at the regional and institutional levels?

Part III: HE Finance

1. How have the federal funding patterns changed within the framework of decentralisation?
2. In your view, what are their impact on regional and institutional levels?

Part IV: Academic Matters and Quality

1. Can we talk about the state standards for HE?
2. Can you tell me about federal quality assurance mechanisms? How have they been developed, and what are their implications for individual HEIs?

The Definition of Decentralisation and Centralisation

Decentralisation is a shift of decision-making authority from the federal to the regional level and the granting of autonomy over key HE matters to individual higher education institutions; **Centralisation** is the concentration of decision-making authority on a wide range of matters at the federal authority (Bray, 1999; Conyers, 1984; Lauglo, 1995; McGinn and Welsh, 1999).

I am looking forward to meeting you,

Yours sincerely,

Georgy Petrov
Research Student
Institute of Education
University of London

Date:

Dear,

Following our previous correspondence (contact), I would like to meet and talk with you on the issue of the impact of the post-1991 federal policy of higher education (HE) decentralisation on the Sakha government regulation over its regional HE sector. I have outlined a general schedule with topics to be covered and a number of general questions, which we can follow to act as a guideline for the interview. I also would like to reconfirm with you about the length of interview, which will last from 45 minutes to one hour.

Part I: Origin and Impact of Decentralisation

1. In your view, what were the driving forces behind the federal policy of decentralisation?
2. In your view, what is the main challenge to HE decentralisation now and in the future?

Part II: Governance and Management

1. Has decentralisation led to a greater degree of regional decision-making powers in the governance and management of Sakha HE?
2. If so, what policies and reforms has the regional government pursued in developing Sakha HE within the framework of decentralisation?

Part III: HE Finance

1. How has federal decentralisation affected the funding of the Sakha HE sector?
2. Can we talk about the financial relationship between you and HEIs?
3. What are the main financial sources for HEIs in Sakha?

Part IV: Academic Matters and Quality

1. Has decentralisation led to greater regional emphasis in curricular matters?
2. Can you tell me briefly how the regional government monitors the quality of services provided by the Sakha HEIs?

The Definition of Decentralisation and Centralisation

Decentralisation is a shift of decision-making authority from the federal to the regional level and the granting of autonomy over key HE matters to individual higher education institutions;

Centralisation is the concentration of decision-making authority on a wide range of matters at the federal authority (Bray, 1999; Conyers, 1984; Lauglo, 1995; McGinn and Welsh, 1999).

I am looking forward to meeting you,

Yours sincerely,

Georgy Petrov
Research Student
Institute of Education
University of London

Dear,

I would like to meet and talk with you on the issue of the impact of the post-1991 federal policy of higher education (HE) decentralisation and regional policies on your university. I have outlined a general schedule with topics to be covered and a number of questions, which we can follow to act as a general guideline for the interview. I would like to assure you that all answers given by you will be confidential and under no circumstances will your identity be revealed. I would also like to confirm that the length of interview will be 1 to 2 hours.

Part I: Origin and Impact of Decentralisation

1. In your view, what were the main driving forces behind the federal policy of decentralisation?
2. Overall, how would you assess the impact of decentralisation on university autonomy?
3. Has decentralisation led to greater decision-making powers in the following institutional matters:
 - Defining the mission and goals;
 - Aspects of governance and management;
 - University finance;
 - Academic matters and Quality.

Part II: Defining the Mission and Goals

1. What is the main mission of your university?
2. Is this mission externally prescribed or internally generated?
3. How is this mission reflected in university strategic plans and other planning documents?

Part III: Aspects of Governance and Management

1. Has decentralisation led to more decision-making powers at the university level in aspects of governance and management, such as establishing new administrative and academic units and personnel policy?
2. If so, what have been the major changes in the last decade?
3. How are academic and other decisions made at the university? What is the internal decision-making procedure?
4. In your view, do you see any interference in institutional decision-making on the part of the federal and/or regional governments?

Part IV: University Finance

1. How has decentralisation impacted university finance?
2. Can you briefly let me know which sources of funds have been pursued by the university?
3. In your view, which sources of funds enhance or which possibly limit the extent of university autonomy?
4. How do funding patterns affect the behaviours of university actors?
5. How are financial decisions made at the university central level and in lower academic units?

Part V. Academic Matters and Quality

1. Has decentralisation introduced real choice in learning and flexibility in curricular matters?
2. What are your views on the state standards for HE?
3. How are these standards being introduced at the university and what is their impact?
4. Can you tell me about the federal quality assurance procedures and their impact on the university and its academic units?

Part VI: University Autonomy

1. Overall, do you think that decentralisation has led to greater decision-making authority at the university and the enhancement of university autonomy? If so, has the autonomy granted to the university led to greater decision-making powers at the lower levels (institutes, faculties, 'chairs')?
2. How do you think your relationships with the federal and regional governments affect the extent of university autonomy?
3. Has the relationship between the federal and regional governments changed in the last decade?
4. Which level of government, in your view, exerts the greatest degree of control over internal university affairs? What is the nature of external control?
5. What do you think the university should do to further enhance its autonomy?

The Definition of Decentralisation and Centralisation

Decentralisation is a shift of decision-making authority from the federal to the regional level and the granting of autonomy over key HE matters to individual higher education institutions;

Centralisation is the concentration of decision-making authority on a wide range of matters at the federal authority (Bray, 1999; Conyers, 1984; Lauglo, 1995; McGinn and Welsh, 1999).

The Definition of University Autonomy

University Autonomy is decentralised decision-making that gives university managers the power to make decisions independently of the government authority, both federal and regional (Kogan and Hanney, 2000; Kogan and Marton, 2000).

I am looking forward to meeting you,

Yours sincerely,

Georgy Petrov
Research Student
Institute of Education
University of London

As mentioned in Chapter 3, all interviewees were given a unique code in this study (see Table 2 overleaf). This code informs about the level to which the respondent belongs.

- I. At the **federal** level, all interviewees were given a code - **FedI**, followed by a number, which designates the ordinal number of the interview at this particular level. As all interviewees at this level were representatives of the federal Ministry of Education, the areas of their expertise within HE governance are not disclosed, to ensure confidentiality.
- II. At the **regional** level, all interviewees received a code – **RegI**, followed by the ordinal number of the interview at this particular level. All but one interviewee at the regional level were representatives of the Ministry of Science and Professional Education in the Government of Sakha. The remaining person was working in the Administrative Office of the President of Sakha in the area of HE. As is the case with the federal level, the areas of their expertise are not revealed, to ensure confidentiality.
- III. At the **institutional** level, Yakutsk State University (YSU), three categories of respondents were interviewed: 1). The top **institutional managers** (rector, vice-rectors, heads of various central planning offices) received a unique code – **IM**, followed by the ordinal number of the interview conducted with this particular category of the institutional actors. As the top institutional managers would be inevitably identified if their areas of expertise were revealed, this information is not disclosed; 2). **Directors** of institutes and **deans** of faculties were given a unique code – **D**, whilst **heads** of ‘chairs’ were given the unique code – **H**, followed by the ordinal number of the interview within the specific category. The names of institutes, schools and ‘chairs’ are not revealed, but only the broad fields of study (**sciences, social sciences, linguistics**) to which the particular unit belongs (see Table 1 overleaf). The interviewees who also acted as academics at the time when the interviews were conducted are marked with the “*” symbol.

Table 1 (Appendix 4) Coding System for Academic Units at YSU

Field of Study	Code	Names of Units (Institutes and Faculties)
Science	(S)	Biology and Geography, Construction Engineering, Geology, Mathematics and Information Sciences, Medicine, Physics.
Social Science	(SS)	Education, Economics, History, Law.
Linguistics	(L)	Foreign Languages, Linguistics (Russian, Northern minority languages), Sakha Language and Culture.

Table 2 (Appendix 4) Summary of The Coding System

Level and Unit	Codes for Respondents
Federal: The Ministry of Education	Fed1-1, Fed1-2, Fed1-3, Fed1-4.
Regional: The Ministry of Science and Professional Education. The Administration of the President.	Reg1-1, Reg1-2, Reg1-3, Reg1-4, Reg1-5.
Institutional: Yakutsk State University	IM-1, IM-2*, IM-3, IM-4, IM-5, IM-6, IM-7, IM-8, IM-9. D-1(L)*, D-2(L)*, D-3(S)*, D-4(SS)*, D-5(S), D-6(S), D-7(SS)*. H-1(L)*, H-2(L)*, H-3(SS)*, H-4(S)*, H-5(SS)*, H-6(S)*, H-7(S)*, H-8(L)*.

Appendix 5

Major Events and Their Implications for the Soviet HE System between 1917-1985

Year	Document or Event	Policy and Its Implication for HE
1917	The beginning of Bolshevik control	Bolsheviks seized the power in Russia and took all HEIs into the hands of <i>Narkompros</i> (People's Commissariat of Enlightenment).
August, 1918	Decree on the Entrance to HEIs	Any person who reached the age of 16 was admitted to HEIs regardless of whether they had any previous educational background. Tuition fees were abolished. State financial support for students was introduced. Workers, peasants, Communist students were encouraged to enter HEIs. Later, special preparatory courses were opened for those without any educational background. To accommodate the demand for HE, new universities and new institutes were opened between 1918 and 1920.
March, 1919	8 th Congress of the Communist Party of the Russian Soviet Socialist Federative Republic (RSFSR)	All university lecturers were to be inculcated with Communist ideas and values. After the Congress, specialised research institutes were set up and clear distinctions were made between research and teaching.
February, 1921	Decree of the Council of People's Commissariat (CPC) of the RSFSR	Established an Institute of Red Professors in Moscow and Petrograd (St.Petersburg) to train lecturers in ideological subjects. Anti-Bolshevik lecturers were dismissed and compulsory ideological subjects introduced.
September, 1921	CPC's enacted the Statute for HEIs	Set forth aims, tasks and organisation of the Soviet HE system. The Statute reorganised HEIs for the purposes of social revolution. Many powers of HEIs were handed over to the <i>Narkompros</i> (for example, the appointment of rectors).
1922		The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) was established
1923	CPC's Decree	Tuition fees were reintroduced because the country could not afford the further expansion of the system. The composition of students changed from this period from being mostly workers and peasants to being mostly students from white-collar families. Tuition fees were again abolished in 1928 after the financial situation had improved.
1928-1933	First Five-Year Plan	Emphasised the development of heavy industry and focused on HE as one of the important conditions of industrial progress. Increased the number of HEIs and students. The number of narrowly specialised institutes grew.
1930	<i>Narkompros</i> Regulations on Dual Control of HEIs	The emphasis on central planning led to a strict system of job assignment for graduates. Because of this new system and the continuing expansion of the HE system, some powers of the central ministry were handed over to branch ministries. As a result, since 1930 21 central branch ministries had become responsible for HEIs. The vocational character of HE was emphasised, and new courses on sciences introduced.
1932, 1936, 1938	Changes to the 1921 Statute for HEIs	Slight changes were introduced to the 1921 Statute in 1932 and 1936. The major revised version appeared in 1938, which formalised course structures and curriculum, regular examinations, and provisions for student discipline. Subsequent minor changes followed in 1961 and 1969, but the main organisation and structure of HEIs remained virtually unaltered.
1936	USSR Ministry for HE (UMHE) was established	After the establishment of UMHE the 'bourgeois' professors suffered purges. Loyal academics were given material benefits and a growing differentiation in salaries according to their ranks. A unified system for research degrees was introduced: Candidate of Sciences (<i>Kandidat Nauk</i>) and Doctor of Sciences

		<i>(Doktor Nauk).</i>
1940-1945	World War II (WWII)	The war was destructive for HEIs. Many were either closed down or destroyed. The number of students fell.
1946-1948	Policy on Development of Science and Technology	The development of science and technology came to be perceived as a powerful tool for growth. It was also seen as a response to the perceived military threat and the desire to become the dominant superpower. Therefore, the system had to be rapidly reconstructed. The reconstruction, however, was more quantitative than qualitative. Many HEIs were re-opened, but often in inadequate facilities with very limited equipment. The emphasis on science and technology further divided basic functions of research and teaching. By 1948, HEIs reached the pre-WWII level.
1951-1960	Policy on Development of Heavy Industry and Agriculture.	These years put great stress upon the development of heavy industry and agriculture. In HE, the policy provided for an increase in the number of technological and science courses and in the number of students in these fields. During these years, there was a substantial increase in the number of students studying in part-time and correspondence courses. New HEIs were established outside the European part of Russia, particularly in Siberia and the Russian Far East.
1958	The Reform Programme of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU)	The Departments of Education and Science were established in regional/local Party committees of the RSFSR. This increased Party intervention in the activities of HEIs, and in all HEIs Primary Party Committees (PPC) were established. The PPC was active and took part in all internal decision-making together with the university administration. The subsequent years saw a considerable increase in CPSU membership among HEI academics.
1961-1970	Policy on Improvement of Ideological Inculcation	Further expansion of HE, and a greater emphasis was put on the study of ideological disciplines. The importance of HE in moulding a new Communist person was strongly emphasised.
1966	Decree of the UMHE	The UMHE started the process of inspecting all HEIs to ensure that the policies and directives of the CPSU were met.
July, 1972	Decree of the UMHE	Established HE Council within the UMHE, comprising officials of the USSR and Union Republics' ministries, Gosplan (Central Planning Committee), Academy of Sciences, the CPSU and Komsomol. The Council was charged with drawing up recommendations for improving teaching and research in HEIs, long-term plans, the assignment of graduates, and the improvement of teaching and research staff qualifications – almost all aspects of HE. Also set up Councils of Rectors in large cities to co-ordinate activities of HEIs. However, besides the rectors of HEIs they included Party officials, Komsomol representatives, etc. These councils were aimed at intensifying party work in HEIs.
1972-1985	Period of Stagnation	This period was marked by a continuing rapid growth of HEIs, and demand for HE was high. During these years, HE was functioning according to the previously created set-up, with very minor changes, which dealt with ideological disciplines and strengthening of Party control. Part-time and correspondence study was further emphasised, although its quality was recognised to be much lower than that of full-time education, and the rate of dropouts was high. The emphasis on improving the teaching of Soviet social sciences (ideological disciplines) did not lead to success. Personal initiative and creativity remained suppressed. In short, the HE system as other branches of the Soviet economy was in a state of deep stagnation (<i>zastoi</i>).

Source: compiled by the author from sources used in Chapter 4.

Appendix 6

Comparison of Types of Russian HEIs

	University	Academy	Institute	College-*
Offers undergraduate programmes in a wide range of areas (five and more)	V			
Offers undergraduate programmes primarily in one area		V-mainly in one area	V-only in one area	V-only in one area
Offers postgraduate programmes in a wide range of areas (five or more)	V			
Offers postgraduate programmes primarily in one area		V-mainly in one area	V-only in one area	
Carries out research in a wide range of areas	V		V-only in one area	
Carries out research primarily in one area		V-mainly in one area	V-only in one area	V-only in one area of applied research
Offers professional re-training in a wide range of areas	V			
Offers professional re-training primarily in one area		V-mainly in one area	V-only one	V-only in one area
Offers re-training for academic and research staff of HEIs	V			

Note: *- The title 'college' was introduced by the 1993 federal Statute on HEIs, but omitted in the classification of types of HEIs in the 1996 Law as many pre-HE institutions were granted the title of a 'college'.

Source: compiled by the author from Chang, 2001; Government of Russia, 1993; Law, 1996; and Shadrikov, *et al.*, 2001.

