

# Transitive Universities in Transitive Societies: Current Risks of Educational Migration

## Universidades transitorias en sociedades transitorias: riesgos actuales de la migración educativa

Mikhail Viktorovich BOGUSLAVSKY [1](#); Nataliya Sergeevna LADYZHETS [2](#); Egor Valentinovich NEBORSKY [3](#); Olga Vladimirovna SANNIKOVA [4](#)

Received: 17/04/2018 • Approved: 02/06/2018

### Contents

- [1. Introduction](#)
  - [2. Methods](#)
  - [3. Findings](#)
  - [4. Discussion](#)
  - [5. Conclusion](#)
- [Acknowledgement](#)
- [References](#)

#### ABSTRACT:

Modern society is going through transitivity that engages revisiting their role and position in the society. Being involved in transitive processes, universities take up the role of global network nodes in transnational educational student mobility. The research underpins the assumption that regional universities should be seen as transit educational zones attracting flows of educational migrants. To maintain these flows regions should develop the infrastructure of youth employment and entertainment as well as appropriate youth policy. In this case universities may take an advantage of being the centers of innovations and become an influential player in regional social and economic arena. The characteristics of a transitive university are in the focal point of the research. The research also identifies the issues of resource management in transitive period. Methods of comparative cross-cultural analysis, generalization, interpretation, and conceptualization are applied in the research.

**Keywords:** transitive university, transitive society, educational migration

#### RESUMEN:

La sociedad moderna atraviesa una transitoriedad que implica revisar su rol y posición en la sociedad. Al participar en procesos transitorios, las universidades asumen el rol de nodos de redes globales en la movilidad transnacional de estudiantes docentes. La investigación respalda la suposición de que las universidades regionales deberían ser vistas como zonas educativas de tránsito que atraen flujos de migrantes educativos. Para mantener estos flujos, las regiones deberían desarrollar la infraestructura de empleo y entretenimiento juvenil, así como una política juvenil apropiada. En este caso, las universidades pueden aprovechar la ventaja de ser los centros de innovación y convertirse en un jugador influyente en el ámbito regional social y económico. Las características de una universidad transitiva se encuentran en el punto focal de la investigación. La investigación también identifica los problemas de la gestión de los recursos en el período transitivo. Los métodos de análisis comparativo intercultural, generalización, interpretación y conceptualización se aplican en la investigación.

**Palabras clave:** universidad transitoria, sociedad transitoria, migración educativa

# 1. Introduction

The integrated research of transitivity phenomenon and discussions around have multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary nature where independent research areas may certainly be identified. In socio-cultural analysis the research is of intersectional character with certain overlapping areas. In our modern world one discourse "intersectionality" can be found in education, i.e. in university education. Actually, university is in the focal point of transitivity, which is multi-dimensional uncertainty that may create risks and negative effects. Alongside it may develop new approaches to problem-solutions and restructure institutional-subjective interactions.

Literally U. Bech, G. Bechmann, and A. Giddens (Beck 2012, Bechmann 2013, Giddens 1990) developed new interdisciplinary paradigm of modern socio-cultural knowledge in the modern world, called risk society. The main assumption of this new vision and evaluation of the world was that science and technology, previously seen as drivers for progress, have incrementally created risks, new dangers and uncertainty. Yet the paradox of current situation underlies in the understanding that it is the science and technology which should find right management solutions, develop right safety strategies and take right tactics to prevent from dangers, mitigate risks, and provide safety, trust, predictability and certainty. In 1986 U. Bech metaphorically articulated this idea: "The dream of the old society is that everyone wants and ought to have a share of the pie. The utopia of the risk society is that everyone should be spared from poisoning" (Curtis 2014). Clearly it may also mean that science sees its new role and new area of responsibility in analyzing transitivity, predicting threats and minimizing risks of uncertainty.

---

## 2. Methods

Within the framework of the research, methods of comparative cross-cultural analysis, generalization, interpretation and conceptualizations were employed to study modern theories and practices of transitive universities and risks of educational student migration. Synergetics as the methodology to research transitive processes was applied to clarify non-equilibrium dynamics of open complex self-organized systems.

---

## 3. Findings

The problematic issues of the evolution of modern society show the signs of its transitive state. Contemporary Russian researchers have consolidated sociological, economic and philosophical approaches to transitivity and identified major traits of transitive societies that are radical transformability, dynamism, projectivity, historical context link, transit instability and impermanence, multiple solutions, synthesis of traditionalism of modernization, individualism and sociality (Fedotova 2010). Ambiguity of target transitive changes implies that these transformations may be seen as new positive achievements alongside with risks and threats that may cause unpredictable destructive effects on actors engaged into these transformations (Sillaste 2016).

Societal riskogenic transformations may result in transformations of its institutions, higher education institutions; universities are not an exclusion (Baker-Shelley et al. 2017). Currently there is much of discussions that have overhauled universities' place in the modern world. Three new university missions are seen as major trends. First, it is the mission of a "market player" in the market of educational services and information. The success and competitiveness are underpinned by the amount of investment and resources as well as the demand for graduates in the labor market. Second, universities are seen as the source of intellectualism, culture and public spirit for the university alumni that will then keep and transmit society values to next generations. That is the second mission of universities. The third mission is the mission of sustainable university that provides the ground for risk minimization that is caused by global transformations in transit at existing and future societies.

That is the model of sustainable university development which allows, according to most of

researchers, to provide a synergy of tasks and solutions in transitive stage at global, national and regional levels. To implement this mission universities themselves should go into transit state, so "... the transit towards sustainable university is a common goal of the universities with global responsibility. They are consolidated at national and international level and make a political and cultural power" (Sogomonov 2016).

Universities, open to society transformations in transit, are engaged into global social, geographic and educational migrations of populations (Marginson 2017). Universities become the global network node of transnational educational migration of students. These educational exchanges and student inflows provide financial resources and good reputation, enhancing the university competitive advantage in educational markets. To enhance their reputation and strengthen their positions, national universities are striving to be part of such networks nationwide as well as worldwide. Thus, university sustainability, prosperity, reputation, and image are dependable on these educational migration flows that are part of ratings and assessments by global, national and regional communities, by populations and governments.

The desire of Russia to join global educational space and Bologna process have resulted in restructuring of Russian higher education institutions and transforming into two-tier education with bachelor and master programs. That also has legitimized educational student mobility and migration flows respectively. However, the dramatic differentiation in status of central and regional universities has built up permanent unidirectional non-compensated educational migration from regions to capital cities. Regional universities have found themselves in educational periphery. Such case creates risks of potential shortage of highly qualified personnel and decrease developmental level of regions. Another threat is that universities may lose their role and positions in economic, social and cultural space of a region. They may also be lower-rated within national educational system.

To confront such unfavorable trend Russia's regional universities should extend their missions to help regulation of national and international educational mobility and create positive image of the university with high educational rating. By this universities may be attractive for regional applicants as well the applicants from neighboring areas. As a result, regional universities may be seen as special transitive educational zones and create a set of educational mobility resources for potential university students (Sannikova and Khotinets 2017). Highly-rated educational reputation of regional universities may allow regions to attract inflows of young and ambitious migrants, and part of which may in the future address regional labor market. To retain such inflows regions will have to restructure the infrastructure of youth employment and entertainment and develop meaningful youth policy. The university then may have an opportunity to become the center of innovations and take an advantage of affecting social and economic situation in the region.

To provide sustainability and stability in the regions and for themselves universities may choose to become a transitive university that is in transit from one state to another. Transitivity is a university situation where targeted transformations are implemented. The problems in understanding of transitivity process are linked to the factor that it requires analysis of systems and structures and their interactions referring to the past, the present and the future university sustainability (Fedotova 2013). Therefore, the mechanism of implementing transitivity, and dynamic transition is in the focal point of researchers who carry out studies across transitivity of those systems with uncertain future.

Transitivity is a transitional stage in transformational processes between the stages of the certain past and uncertain future. It is an important phenomenon for complex systems seeking optimal forms of functioning and development in the situations of uncertainty and in interactions with external environment. Thus, synergetics as methodology is most effective for analysis of transitive processes as it clarifies non-equilibrium dynamics of open complex self-organized systems. Based on this methodology the process of transitive transformations may be seen as a coherent change of certain, determined states and states of uncertainty that are typical for the point of bifurcation option of changes.

Being on the crossroads of migration flows the university takes an advantage of its openness that provides internal diversity of resources to help transitions and adapt to rapidly changing

conditions of social environment. Diversity of such resources allows potential variety of future conditions of the university and its ability of selective reactions to respond global and national challenges.

On the basis of the conception of transitive society, developed by V.B. Agranovich (Agranovich 2005) it is possible to classify traits of the university in transitivity. They are: instability, resulted from uncertainty of the present and future states; temporariness of transitive stage linked to its certain completion; irreversibility, incapability to go back to previous stable states, as external social environment and internal structure are so much transformed that it doesn't allow revival of previous sustainability. It is also the forced innovation aiming to adapt to uncertainty of external norms, regulations and requirements to form the ability to operate in constant changes. Other traits involve a multiple choice of adaptation mechanisms, values, reserved content and structural "mutations" that allow to quickly respond to unpredictable external challenges. Value orientations and students' expectations from university education are changed and based on pragmatism, evolving from personal value-oriented vision of education to the vision of education as a means of acquiring status and benefits etc.

Accordingly, transitive system implies to have a set of factors, conditions and means to sustain its transition, the transition of participants and systems. Such set of factors is a reflection of interactions between the system and external environment, history of its own changes, and its own potential for transformations. Transit factors may be classified into two large groups. They are, on the one hand, external and internal factors of "repelling" the system from the state of stability, sustainability; and factors of "magnetizing" the system to new stable and sustainable state, on the other. They may also be classified by transition stages of the system and their scales at global, national and regional levels, respectively. Internal factors involve transformations in management and organizing of educational process, academic culture of institutions, adaptation of international and national transitive experience gained from other universities, and the analysis of university's own development. To identify the criteria of transitivity, it is necessary to address this issue to transformational approach, its opportunities and potential. Here transformation is seen as a mechanism of transitive transformations, the goal of which is to acquire such transitive resources that will provide its sustainability and sustainability of its components with further opportunities for educational and social transition.

Furthermore, issues of identifying transit resources are of methodological significance (Shishkina 2003). First, it should be mentioned that public regulation in university environment is weak, that is – there are few public organizations with a low level of networking. Another disadvantage is a "vertical" organizational structure with rare horizontal managerial interactions. The decisions of university administrations are beyond the control of university public organizations. Other weaknesses are high differentiations of university community both nationwide and uniwide; split in academic community and culture; incapability of university communities to independently search education meanings; low motivation to initiate networks with local communities. The researchers across transitions should certainly take into account costs of transit resources, in particular, uncertainty of faculty and staff positions, threat of redundancies, and unemployment caused by the reductions of federal budget-funded university enrollments, red tape and paper chase, growing normative uncertainty of an external environment, constant and unpredictable amendments in federal standard regulation acts of university education and university performance.

---

## 4. Discussion

It should be noted that the dichotomy of global processes of the early 21 century synchronizes diverse social trends. On the one hand, globalization provides an access to advanced education that is encouraged by world leading university (Boguslavskii and Neborskii 2016), though an access to a variety of educational courses and programs and growing commercialization of educational resources makes higher education massive and immensely decreases its value. Controversy between global, national and regional levels is

prominently seen in university practices. Whereas effective professors and students are able to seek better conditions, they, in most cases, choose to leave the regions that provided starting cultural and social capital and gave them a strong start.

In the modern world "human capital" turns to the factor of economic development that finally determines quality of life in the region. Constant outflow of human capital from regions affects the efficiency of labor and an ability to meet societal and individual needs. Modern globalistics tends to experience growing uncertainty in management decision-making. Global processes force to transfer knowledge to goods and transfer market relations across education. Diversity of up-to-date university models intensifies heterogeneity of global educational space, encourages university competition for student and teacher recruiting and forces universities to struggle for financial resources. This competitive environment stimulates inflows of educational academic and technological mobility to most competitive universities. With current global challenges competitiveness tends to be a subject of special analysis in existing university models.

Most status and highly rated universities look attractive for major participants of educational interactions. While analyzing the evolution of migration theory, H. de Haas discusses the issue that classical vision was based on the assumption of that the largest migration flows emerge between poor and wealthy societies. Economically developed countries show low levels of migration whereas countries with underdeveloped economy and social policy demonstrate high migration outflows. However, current migration flows, in education particularly, may possibly be motivated by many other reasons rather than improvement of personal well-being. Accordingly, the author emphasizes that stimulating economic development and improving education in poor countries is seen as the most effective strategy to help reduce migration, i.e. migration processes are decreased when the differences in salaries are growing closer to social, psychological and economic migration costs (Haas 2010).

Evolving the migration theory in the unstable transitive society E. Brezis asks a key question to identify main reasons for migration: Does migration emerge to encourage education or labor and employment? (Brezis 2016). As an answer to this question she suggests a unique integrated two-staged model of individual solutions to educational and labor migrations. She puts forward the assumption that majority of student will stay on in the host countries and regions. Accordingly, educational migration in transitive societies reveals its transitivity in the cases of labor migration undertaken by university graduates.

These two basic modern explanatory models are extended by many other models in transitive societies that is the sign of transferring transitivity to universities and, regional universities in particular. The processes under analysis are so crucial that it requires theoretical re-evaluation to see a complete picture. Thus, most academic publications on student mobility and university transitivity look like cases that have a multiple solutions and answers. They mostly present statics data and probability-based recommendations.

For example, in 2014-15 the research "The Great British Brain Drain: Where graduates move and why" stated that dominant migration flows in Great Britain were students' mobility from rural to urban areas, from economically less developed cities to more prosperous cities. The highest inflow of school leavers was found in London, and after university graduation a quarter of qualified graduates continue to work in the capital of Great Britain. The new vision of the reality is based on understanding of the fact that most talented graduates take into account economic attractiveness of the territory with its real resources for career growth rather than the amount of salary in their future employment. The comparative statistics of a total number of British universities graduates, who found employment in London and Manchester in 2015 (38% and 3% respectively) and graduates of elite Oxbridge (52% and 2% respectively), sounds convincing (Semple 2016).

New motivational trends in graduates' employment choices underpin the assumption that national and regional developers of social and economic strategies in transitive societies should focus not only on standards of student life and facilities in university campuses but also on their territorial locations. University graduates must be assured that they will be able to find good jobs with good perspective of professional growth in their regions. Thus

municipal and regional investment programs should aim to support regional economies, technology and innovations in industries and businesses (Swinney and Williams 2016). It may also include programs that integrate resources, cooperation and networks of different agents and stakeholders.

---

## 5. Conclusion

Based on the analysis and evaluation of statistics, modern transitive knowledge societies should be aware of risks from transitive universities. If they turn to be exclusively transit zones for students and professionals to move to more economically and professionally attractive regions, local administrations should think of creating advantages to significantly decrease outflows of the most educated and perspective population group like university graduates. Even socially-oriented retention strategies may not be sufficient. It is necessary to switch over from narrow target policies to integrated developmental stakeholder inclusive strategies.

Integration of analytical resources, theoretical and empirical research findings on new social trends are necessary to enhance effects of scientifically-proved management decisions that reflect regional and national priorities in transitive societies where transitive universities may create real and potential risks for regional development and even regions' survival. These tasks are resource-consuming and labor-intensive, however the solutions to these problems will provide a ground for sustainable development of national and regional economies and territories.

## Acknowledgement

The research has been accomplished under the auspices and with the financial support of Russia's Foundation of Fundamental Research, #18-013-00447-a "Transitive University versus global, national and regional challenges".

---

## References

- Agranovich V. (2005). Tranzitivnyy period razvitiya obshchestva i kachestvo obrazovatel'nykh protsessov [Transitive period of development of society and the quality of educational processes]. *Inzhenernoye obrazovaniye*, 3, 158–163.
- Baker-Shelley A., Zeijl-Rozema A. and Martens P. (2017). A conceptual synthesis of organisational transformation: How to diagnose, and navigate, pathways for sustainability at universities? *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 145, 262–276.
- Bechmann G. (2013). *Risiko und Gesellschaft: Grundlagen Und Ergebnisse Interdisziplinärer Risikoforschung*. Opladen, Westdt. Verlag, pp. 436.
- Beck U. (2012). *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*. London, Sage, pp. 260.
- Boguslavskii M.V. and Neborskii Y.V. (2016). Development of the university education in the context of globalization. *SHS Web of Conferences*, 29.
- Brezis E. (2016). Why migrate: For study or for work? *Economies*, 4(3), 1–12.
- Curtis A. (2014). The vegetables of truth. BBC, Friday 10.
- Fedotova M. (2010). K sodержaniyu ponyatiya "tranzitivnoye obshchestvo" [To the content of the concept of "transitive society"]. *Vestnik Vyatskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta*, 1(4), 28–31.
- Fedotova M. (2013). K voprosu o metodologii issledovaniya tranzitivnogo obshchestva [To the question of the methodology of investigating a transitive society]. *Teoriya i praktika obshchestvennogo razvitiya*, 6.
- Giddens A. (1990). *The Consequences of Modernity*. Cambridge, Polity, pp. 188.

Haas H. (2010). Migration transitions: A theoretical and empirical inquiry into the developmental drivers of international migration. International Migration Institute Working papers, 24, pp. 46.

Marginson S. (2017). Higher education, economic inequality and social mobility: Implications for emerging East Asia. International Journal of Educational Development. In Press.

Sannikova O. and Khotinets V. (2017). Tranzitnyy universitet kak faktor mezhregional'noy obrazovatel'noy migratsii [Transit University as a factor of interregional educational migration]. Vestnik Udmurtskogo universiteta. Seriya "Filosofiya. Psikhologiya. Pedagogika", 27(1), 41–45.

Semple B. (2016). New report reveals scale of UK brain drain – with London attracting lion's share of top-ranking Russell Group and Oxbridge graduates. Centre for Cities, 21 Nov. 2016.

Shishkina N. (2003). Ontologiya tranzitivnogo vektora preobrazovaniy ekonomiki Rossii [Ontology of Transition Vector of Economic Transformation in Russia]. Izvestiya vuzov. Severo-Kavkazskiy region. Obshchestvennyye nauki, 12, 64–69.

Sillaste G. (2016). Sotsial'nyye riski krizisov tranzitivnogo razvitiya: metodologicheskiy sotsiologicheskiy diskurs [Social risks of crises of transitional development: methodological sociological discourse]. Gumanitarnyye nauki. Vestnik Finansovogo universiteta, 3, 6–17.

Sogomonov A. (2016). "Ustoychivyy universitet" (missiya, smysly, programmy, keysy) ["Sustainable University" (mission, meanings, programs, cases)]. Vedomosti prikladnoy etiki, 49, 151–170.

Swinney P. and Williams M. (2016). The Great British Brain Drain: Where graduates move and why. Centre for Cities, 21 Nov. 2016.

- 
1. Institute for Strategy of Education Development, 105062, Moscow, Makarenko st. 5/16. E-mail: [neborskiy@list.ru](mailto:neborskiy@list.ru)
  2. Udmurt State University, 426034, Izhevsk, Universitetskaya st. 1.
  3. Udmurt State University, 426034, Izhevsk, Universitetskaya st. 1.
  4. Udmurt State University, 426034, Izhevsk, Universitetskaya st. 1.
- 

Revista ESPACIOS. ISSN 0798 1015  
Vol. 39 (Nº 38) Year 2018

[Index]

[In case you find any errors on this site, please send e-mail to [webmaster](mailto:webmaster)]

©2018. revistaESPACIOS.com • ®Rights Reserved