

Elitist Education: Historical Experience of the Russian and Tatar Peoples

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Abstract

The article considers the essence and historical way of elitist education of the Russian Federation's peoples by the example of Russian and Tatar educational institutions. The article clarifies the concept of an "elite educational institution" and exposes the role of the state and sponsors in ensuring the activities of educational institutions. The work is based on the method of analysis of theoretical literature, periodization, and the comparative historical method. *Statement of the problem* is determined by the fact that there are many unresolved questions about this type of education: the concept of "elitist education" needs clarification; there is a necessity to identify and create pedagogical conditions for the development of modern elite schools, which can be implemented only with the support of the historical past.

Key words: *elitist education, female education, elite, madrasah.*

Introduction

Reforms and innovations in the education system have become the starting point for a lot of new scientific works and studies that consider the problems of education in different aspects. Nevertheless, elitist education stays out of the attention of researchers, although it is an effective mechanism for training talented and active youth – the future elite of the country (Sousa et al., 2019). One more problem is the inconsistency in interpreting the term "elitist education", which is understood either as education for gifted children (E. Durkheim) or as education for children from a certain (upper, elite) social stratum of society. In the authors' opinion, the most objective understanding of the purpose of elitist education is the creation of favorable pedagogical conditions that contribute to the development of natural preconditions into the extraordinary abilities of a person, which ultimately should result in public progress (Mingazova et al., 2017; Shandruk et al., 2019; Franco and Bedin, 2019). The generalization of the historical experience of elite schools and

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the analysis of tendencies in elitist education of modern Russia have great importance for science and the teaching practice.

The goal of this study is to identify conceptual foundations, main trends and pedagogical conditions for the improvement of elitist education at different stages of its historical development (Lysytsia et al., 2019). To achieve this goal, it is necessary to solve the following tasks:

1. to reveal the essence of the concept of "elitist education";
2. to identify the specifics of functioning of elite educational institutions in different historical epochs (in pre-revolutionary Russia, in the Soviet and post-Soviet periods);
3. to reveal the trends in the development of modern elite educational institutions.

Literature review

The analysis of the existing theoretical literature has shown that different researchers understand the words "elite", "elitist education" in different ways. However, experts' opinions on this subject are divided. Kryshchanovskaya writes in the work "Anatomy of the Russian elite": "I refer to the elite people who make national decisions. Often, these people are in the highest public positions. But sometimes this group included those who exerted great influence on the political process because of their richness. I refer the following groups to the elite:

- 1) top leadership of the country ("Politburo");
- 2) the government;
- 3) Parliament;
- 4) regional elite" (Kryshchanovskaya, 2005).

Afanasyev believes that it is not quite right to accept only the upper stratum of the political class as elite. According to this scientist, the country needs a developing elite, which would include the rating and status tops of social groups such as senior officials and deputies, army officers and other representatives of public authorities and management; owners of enterprises and companies of large, medium and small businesses (business representatives); heads of structural divisions of private and public companies (management representatives); as well as specialists of law, science and education, health, mass information (Afanasyev, 2009).

Due to different interpretations of the concept of "elite", researchers mean different types of education under the term "elitist education". Samartseva offers to make the distinction between elite education and elitist education. Under the term elitist education, the researcher implies "a closed system of higher education, intended for small social strata, provided at privileged

educational institutions, the access to which is limited, and admission is based on belonging to a certain social elite (blood, wealth, power)" (Samartseva, 2012). The concept of elite education in the interpretation of Samartseva sounds like "an open system of higher education, which is available to representatives of different sectors of society with high intellectual abilities and talents, regardless of belonging to the social elite" (Samartseva, 2012). The same opinion is expressed in Nazaryeva's work: "an elite school is an open-type secondary educational institution, i.e. accessible to the majority, the purposes of which are aimed at revealing a person's individual abilities, education of a socially active personality responsible for his/her actions and decisions leading to self-upbringing and bringing high moral and spiritual requirements" (Nazaryeva, 2008). Regardless of the student's social status, V.N. Ivanov sees the main feature of elitist education in the fact that it acts as the main element of the educational system, which specifically creates conditions for the development of natural prerequisites. The scientist writes: "The main purpose of the elite school is the creation of special, optimal conditions contributing to the growth of natural preconditions to the extraordinary abilities of the individual, ensuring the process of his or her physical and spiritual formation and socialization as the elite of society" (Ivanov, 1999).

The ideas of foreign researchers regarding the role of elitist education in society are of interest. The German sociologist and philosopher Karl Mannheim, one of the founders of the sociology of knowledge in the 20th century, believed that "the role of the public schools should certainly be to act as the preservers of the valuable elements in the cultural inheritance and also as the recipients of that fresh stimulus and vitality which seems always to be the quality of rising classes" (Mannheim, 2010, p. 583). Mannheim argues against providing the possibility to study at public schools, boarding schools, etc. only to children from privileged classes; he highly appreciates the mutually enriching communication of adolescents from different social strata. The ideas of differentiation of elitist education are developed in the works by the sociologist Jose Ortega y Gasset; he believes that it is impossible to adopt the experience of even the best school or university because it is closely interrelated to the society in which it was formed (Ortega y Gasset, 2005). The work by the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu "Elite Schools in the Field of Power" is developed around the key concepts of "power field", "symbolic violence", "cultural capital", etc. According to Bourdieu, the education system participates in the legitimation of the unequal distribution of cultural capital between different social groups. Pierre Bourdieu also pays attention

to the problem of education of gifted young people, believing that the idea of "gift" is closely related to the idea of early development (Bourdieu, 1996, p. 20).

The works devoted to the history of education are worth a special mention (Alajmi, 2019; Nagimzhanova et al., 2019). In the work on the history of Egyptian education, the authors note that the priestly duties were taught after school as part of advanced apprenticeship in the temple; according to another version, it is assumed that children who were to become priests were trained at separate, special schools (Lazaridis, 2010). Oliven and Bello discuss the history of elitist education in Brazil, which in its formation experienced a powerful impact of French elitist vocational schools established by Napoleon (Oliven & Bello, 2016). However, the main attention is given to the educational policy that is pursued at the present time, new strategies aimed at attracting to the university and engaging in the academic community a new category of students – Afro-Brazilians and Indians, who due to the lack of funding and a lower level of education at secondary schools previously were not able to enter prestigious universities and regarded a university only as a place for the education of the white elite. The authors reveal the difficulties and peculiarities of the struggle for higher education through the example of the life of Afro-Brazilian students who showed themselves as the best students in high school and were admitted to elite educational institutions. The French sociologist and philosopher E. Durkheim already in the second half of the 19th century came up with the idea that any person who is constantly developing and self-improving, focusing on high humanistic ideals, can belong to the elite, that the purpose of education is the development in each individual of all the perfection to which he or she is capable (Mazalov, 2013). It is likely that in some countries the understanding and, which is equally important, adoption of this idea have come relatively recently (Bigagli, 2019; Márque et al., 2018).

In this work, the authors will adhere to the opinion that educational institutions can be considered elite if the selection of students there is based on intellectual abilities, talent, but not the class and social affiliation and if they focus on providing education of spiritual, moral, social and intellectual active citizens of the country.

The functioning of elite schools for several centuries is explained by the fact that society needs elite educated persons who are able to lead the progressive development of its various social institutions and seeks to create the appropriate conditions for this (Sagdieva et al., 2019).

The formation and development of elitist education in Russia has its own history. Using E.Y. Samartseva's work as a basis, the periodization of the development of this type of education in pre-revolutionary Russia can be divided into the following periods:

The first period: the end of the 18th – the first quarter of the 19th century;

The second period: 1825-1855;

The third period: 1855 – the first half of the 1890s;

The fourth period: the first half of the 1890s – the beginning of the 20th century (Samartseva, 2012).

The first period is characterized by the fact that the main purpose of education was offered like the formation of a "new breed" of people. In 1811, "The Decree of the Imperial Lyceum" was published. It should be noted that the educational potential of this institution had a sufficiently high level; the Lyceum program harmoniously combined the human sciences and exact sciences and gave encyclopedic knowledge. Perhaps, this explains the fact that so many talented people who graduated from it became famous in various spheres, not only in the public service but also in science and culture.

The second period is characterized by the fact that at the moment the state established strict control over education.

During the third period, the educational system was reformed, so that the elitist education received a powerful impulse for its development. As the researchers note, the purposes of elite education for the period were "the formation of young people with a high level of intelligence and culture, pronounced and persisting throughout life, the desire to serve Russia in accordance with the specific and definite role of a loyal follower of the monarchy, a patriot of Russia, law-obedient citizen and father (mother) of the family" (Samartseva, 2012).

The fourth period is characterized by a breakthrough in the development of the elitist education system, which achieved a qualitatively new level, including the creation of a system of higher education.

Pre-revolutionary elitist education is considered to be of high quality in the educational plans and is represented by such educational institutions as the Imperial Lyceum, the Gymnasium of Higher Learning in Nizhyn, the Page Corps, the boarding school for noblemen in Moscow, the private gymnasium of L.I. Polivanov, Pavlov Institute in St. Petersburg, a private women's high school of aristocratic type of Princess Obolenskaya in St. Petersburg.

It should be noted that state support, including material support, played a large role in the development of the above-mentioned educational institutions. Thus, the Smolny Institute for Noble Maidens was founded by decree of Empress Catherine II to give the state educated women, good mothers, useful members of the family and society. Years later, such educational institutions began to appear all over the country.

Speaking about pre-revolutionary elitist education, it is necessary to consider the peculiarities of the formation of national elitist education. Madrasahs in the cities of the Volga Region existed at least since the era of the Golden Horde, but were destroyed after the fall of the Kazan and Astrakhan Khanates in the 1550s. The consequence of this policy is emphasized by Gainutdin: "the process of eradicating the socially active, educated, thinking layer of the population, the fight against any expression of discontent in a particularly cruel way lasted for centuries, as a result of which not only madrasahs, but even primary schools disappeared" (Gainutdin, 2013). The outstanding scientists of the 19th century R. Fakhretdinov and S. Mardzhani studied the ancient Tatar written language, but did not find outstanding manuscripts of the Tatar's life for the period of 1555-1675 and even a piece of paper with a note about the life of Tatars. Only in the early 17th century, works that filled a serious gap in Tatar literature were written and translated. The words "maktab", "madrasah" are mentioned in Mawla Coly's poem of 1677 for the first time after the fall of the Kazan Khanate. In the first half of the 18th century, madrasahs began to carry out their activities in Tashkichu, Esterlibash, Caryl, Adai, and Taisuganovo, that is, where the control of the authorities did not reach such proportions as in the center. The revival of education in the madrasah was led either by Tatars, who often received education in Muslim countries, or by immigrants from Muslim countries, mainly from the Caucasus and Bukhara. Material provision of madrasahs and schools was entirely provided by the people. Gainutdin writes: "We can safely claim that the Tatars, being colonial, powerless people, were forced to pay huge, robbery-like taxes to provide schools and madrasahs, the government had no involvement. In spite of this, those layers of the population who had at least some opportunity did not remain on the side of the provision and saving of schools and madrasahs. Repair of village schools, teachers' salaries ("Friday sadaqah") – it all was paid by the village people" (Gainutdin, 2013). In the second half of the 19th – early 20th century, many representatives of the Tatar bourgeoisie provided financial support to madrasahs, as well as activities aimed at educating the people. The most prominent among these are the brothers Ramievs, Akchurins, Khusainovs, Saidashevs. Initially, the madrasahs best known

for the level of teaching and freedom were outside of Kazan and Kargaly – in Kyshkar (Arsky District), Maccara (Kukmorsky District), Sterlibash (the Urals), but soon such prominent educational institutions as "Marjane" (Kazan, 1870), "Muhammadiya" (Kazan, 1882), "Hussainia" (Orenburg, 1890), "Rasuliya" (Troitsk, 1890) begin to implement their activities in major cities. The purpose of the madrasah is to prepare the spiritual and secular national elite. The success of the activity of the madrasah in achieving this purpose can be shown by the number of well-known personalities who studied in these madrasahs, as well as estimates of current scientists. Thus, T. Biktimirova sees "Muhammadiya" like "madrasah, worthy of the status of the University" (Biktimirova, 2017). The madrasah program assumed 12-year and, later, 14-year study. Both religious (the study of the Quran, hadith, Hafiz (learning the Quran by heart), history of Islam, the foundations of Shariah, Islam and other religions, etc.) and secular subjects (Russian language, Arabic language, rules of Turkic languages, calligraphy, literature, arithmetic, geography, history, drawing, geometry, history of the Turkic people, rhythmic, rhetoric, the rules of partition of the inheritance, psychology, pedagogy, etc.) were studied there. Students of "Muhammadiya" produce their own newspapers, namely: "Telescope", "Manzaratul-gelam", "Telcan". It is noteworthy that in the "Muhammadiya" as in other madrasahs training was combined with the education of spiritual and moral qualities, as it was believed that training without the education of spirituality is a crime against the people.

Graduates of "Muhammadiya" are such persons as Khusain Yamashev, Mahmut Dulat-Gali, Kamil Jakub, Galiaskar Kamal, Karim Tinchurin, Salih Saidashev, Fatih Amirhan, Naki Isanbet, Mazhit Gafuri, Fathi Burnash, Zarif Bashari, Ahmad Ishaq, Baki Urmanche, Fazyl Tuikin, Gybed Nagaibak, Galimzhan Sarraf, Burhan Sarraf and others. Such prominent figures as Mazhit Gafuri, Hassan Tufan, Saifi Kudash, Shaikhzada Babich, Mansur Hatipovic, Sultan Habashi and others trained in the madrasah "Galiya".

"Muhammadiya" and "Galiya" are significant, but not the only leading educational institutions of the 19th – early 20th centuries. It is worth saying about the madrasah "Izh-Bobyia". Before the Bubi brothers and their sister Mukhlisa Bubi took charge of this madrasah, its educational system was not different from other similar educational institutions (Husnutdinov et al., 2019a,b). Due to the educational activities of Nigmatullins-Bubi, the madrasah became one of the most famous Muslim schools in the Volga Region. The innovation was that the brothers sought to train not only competent religious persons but also agricultural workers and entrepreneurs. It was necessary to

radically change the entire curriculum and manuals to do this. It is worth saying about women's education. The first women's school was opened due to the efforts of Mukhlisa Bubi in the village of Izh-Bobyia in the Vyatka Governorate. The Bubi brothers also contributed to the establishment and development of women's schools, and some of the subjects were taught by them, a bold step at that time, especially when it was taken into account that at the end of the 19th century the teaching of literacy to women was considered to be a sin. Both Mukhlisa Abistai and the brothers had to deal with gossip, slandering their names, but there was a positive result: more and more students arrived from Ufa, Kazan, Moscow, Tashkent, Tyumen, Samarkand, Simberi and other areas. Girls were taught both religious and secular sciences; lessons on moral education were conducted.

Thus, the madrasah turns into a training center for teachers, scientists and cultural figures not only of the Tatar people, but also of other Turkic people of the Russian Empire. A. Gavrilenko writes: "However, the admiration of the madrasah by the Russian Turks was not transferred to the officials of the Ministry of National Education of Russia. The circular is sent out among them in which the madrasah is accused of spreading pan-Islamist ideas" (3). The brothers were arrested, and after release one of them left for China, and the second went to Ufa. The fate of their sister is tragic; she was falsely accused of participating in a nationalist movement and subsequently shot. The revolution of 1917 radically changes the fate of other madrasahs. The Bolsheviks, standing for the education of atheistic society, could not allow the activities of educational institutions, where religious science was taught. Thus, "Hussainia" was transformed into an open Soviet primary school in 1922. In the 1980s, the Faculty of Advanced Training of Bashkir State Pedagogical Institute was located in the building of the madrasah. Now there is a high school in this building. The madrasah "Galiya", which existed in Ufa from 1906 to 1919 and carried out teaching at the level of higher education, was burned during the Civil war, but later restored. The building underwent the following changes: men's secondary school for Bashkirs and Tatars; Tatar school No. 15; boarding school No. 92 for the mentally retarded. Finally, in 2001, the building was transferred to the Russian Islamic University of the Central Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Russia. The madrasah "Muhammadiya" was closed in 1918; however, in 1993 it opened the door for students once again. Today, the activity of the madrasah continues, but it is far from its former glory. Graduates of madrasahs are sent to work in Muslim meetings throughout the Russian Federation.

In the Soviet period, the system of elitist education underwent changes in accordance with the transformations that occurred at this stage of the country's history. By laying emphasis on equality as the main quality of the Soviet state, the authorities at the time tried to establish the image of the proletarian personality as a model. Elitism replaced egalitarianism. A separate stage in the development of elitist education in the Soviet period is the period of 1960s-1980s. Elitist education again begins its development; "the growing value of the results of activity of elitist education as a mechanism of personal and social development, as well as the positive experience of its institutions, contributed to the recognition by the political and administrative elite of the importance of creating schools for gifted children (with in-depth study of subjects), as well as enhancing the role of higher education in the preparation of "national talents" and high-status professionals (cultural elite)" (Oliven, Bello, 2016, pp. 17-18).

Methods

We used the following tools of Cabinet phases of design research: preparation, structuring, analysis and synthesis.

Some methods of data collection, processing and analysis are represented in the article too. To achieve the goal and solve the problems we collected secondary and primary data by means of intramethod way, the method of observation on this problem. Data processing was carried out through generalization, explanation, analysis and synthesis. To determine the features of the functioning of elitist educational institutions of the Russian and Tatar peoples in different historical eras, a multidimensional analysis of the data was carried out, using comparative-historical and system-typological methods that allowed to identify and compare the levels of evolution, changes in the phenomenon under consideration and determine the trends of its development. The comparative-historical method contributes to a more complete coverage of the history of elitist education in Russia, to identify the specifics of elitist educational institutions of both Russian and Tatar peoples. System-typological approach makes it possible to analyze elitist education within the framework of this study as a complex, open and flexible system, which tends to change according to various periods of the historical development of society.

Results and Discussion

The concept of “elitist education” is binary. We tend to the following interpretation of the term “elitist education”- an open system of higher education, where representatives of different sectors of society with high intellectual abilities and talents can get it not paying attention to their belonging to the social elite. The purpose of the elitist school is to create special, optimal conditions that contribute to the outgrowth of natural prerequisites in the extraordinary abilities of the individual, ensuring the process of its physical and spiritual formation and socialization as the elite of society.

It should be emphasized that there is some stability in the existence of elitist educational institutions of the Russian people for different eras. That is not typical for national elitist educational institutions. In the pre-revolutionary period, the elitist education of the Russian people was supported by the state, and the national elitist education-by the people, later-by representatives of the Tatar bourgeoisie. In the 80s, the national elitist educational institutions are closed and transferred to the mass organizations. It should be said that at the beginning of the 20th century, not only national education but also elitist education was damaged due to its inconsistency with the new ideology, but by the end of the 20th century, it was legalized. Unfortunately, breaking ties with the past causes some damage and hinders the development of elitist education. Despite the contradictory views on the essence of elitist education, the scarcity of practice, and the insufficient number of special theoretical studies on the problems of elitist education, it continues its development.

Modern elitist education is secular. Despite the fact that a certain proportion of commercialization exists, students with outstanding prerequisites for becoming chemists, physicists, mathematicians have the opportunity to enroll and study in schools for gifted children on the basis of entrance examinations, tests. However, in this case, both the child and the parents should be prepared for the fact that the child will have to completely focus on the study, to withstand a large educational load. The state understands that it needs scientific personnel of the higher standard. Therefore, schools for gifted children meet the requirements and needs of the state; in particular, it can be noted that such schools are designed to educate future physicists, mathematicians, chemists, computer geniuses. On the contrary, the state does not allocate funds for the education of lawyers, translators, etc. Methods of teaching at elite schools can be more different than the standard ones. Working in mini-groups, talking with students as equals, building relationships "colleague-

colleague", not "teacher-student", providing freedom of action in terms of homework, the development of creativity, creative thinking of students – these are just some of the possible approaches to individual education at schools for talented children. The curriculum also differs from mass schools, and it approaches the level of academic education in high school.

Conclusion

It should be noted that every person is endowed with different abilities by nature, different level of intellectual development. Personal qualities of people have significant differences. Therefore, it makes sense to develop elitist education. The society, which sought to ensure that the course of the country's history was determined by highly moral, highly intellectual, active individuals, cannot be mistaken; educational institutions should seek to educate the qualities necessary for the future elite of the Republic. Today, there is a question of the education of the national, in particular, Tatar elite. Scientists and public figures often suggest turning to the foreign experience and building a national university independent from the state, as "even in imperial Russia, only independent schools were able to save the Tatar nation from extinction" (Kryshtanovskaya, 2005). The time will show how real the support of the activities of national elite educational institutions and the organization is. It seems that the current political situation does not contribute to the organization of national educational institutions, although the need in them is obvious.

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