

In short, factors that have undermined legitimacy globally have been intense in this region. Something new can be perceived as unfamiliar or as strange. Sudden change can provide shock and incomprehension and multiple stereotypes. Another factor involves the lack of central planning, which is especially serious where the population has been nurtured on a culture of planning. Spontaneity and distinctiveness are then met with displeasure.

Norms

The above point about culture illustrates that low rates of legitimacy involve more than just the belated and rapid growth of higher education. In Central and Eastern Europe this new phenomenon largely clashes with traditional norms. To be sure, this trend has occurred in all regions moving away from public-sector monopoly, but usually the pace was slower and involved precedents in the form of private schools or private entities in other socioeconomic spheres.

Western Europe remains the major region in the world dominated by the public sector, with very little private higher education.

Another relevant factor is the broader European context, considering that Central and Eastern Europe, once liberated, naturally looked to its Western counterparts for legitimate norms. First, it should be noted that Western Europe, around 1989, was a region where the dominant, high-status classic university model was strongly public. Second, Western Europe remains the major region in the world dominated by the public sector, with very little private higher education. As in much of the world outside the United States, “nonprofit private” has not been a widespread or well-understood concept in Europe, and private is often associated with business, suggesting an “intrusion” into higher education. As private was a suspect concept, higher education institutions in countries like Poland preferred to be known as “nonpublic.”

The dominance of a public norm was linked to secularism and national centralism. Legitimacy is seen as based on service to broad national public interests, rather than those of religious, ethnic, cultural, and other minority factions. The norm of a single standard of (high) quality—with one set of rules, curriculum, governance, and public finance—remained strong. True, this norm had already eroded in practice in some respects even for public higher education, but private higher education brought about more dramatic and radical changes.

The “highest” legitimate norms in Eastern and Central Europe were thus at odds with many things private higher education institutions would represent and undertake. Indeed, rarely anywhere in the world and almost never in this region did privates even claim to pursue the highest academic levels or comprehensiveness. Instead, they sought to fill specialized niches, very tied to the job market or to the interests of reli-

gious, ethnic, or cultural groups. The “nonuniversity” and commercial orientation is common in private higher education globally but has been accompanied by fewer alternatives in Eastern and Central Europe.

Toward Mixed and Multiple Legitimacies

Private higher education has now existed for some 15 years in Central and Eastern Europe, and the private sector’s unusually weak legitimacy is shifting to a more mixed picture. Unfamiliarity and shock have abated; rapid growth has declined. In the region, no higher education system is more than 30 percent private, whereas outside Europe the private sector often comprises a higher percentage and sometimes a large majority.

Addressing legitimacy concerns and creating stronger institutions has made the private sector look less and less unusual, strange, or illegitimate. The growing acceptance of the privates is related to changes in public higher education itself throughout Europe. Two major financial changes in the public sector are the incorporation of paying students and other nonstate income sources. A shift has also occurred in the direction of somewhat more private managerial norms. At the same time (e.g., in Romania), the state has often installed regulations or accreditation procedures to clean up some of the most illegitimate privates and give a stamp of official approval to other institutions. Some countries in the region now even allow certain forms of state funding of private institutions. And even public higher education sometimes partners with private counterparts (though of course it also often opposes them).

Finally, society and higher education come to accept more notions of multiple or plural legitimacy and ways of doing things—befitting certain groups and values. This means more room for private institutions that serve a particular constituency, even if they do not attempt to serve all sectors of society. Private institutions tied to particular groups, intranational regions, or certain international norms are more likely now to be accepted as legitimate. None of this, however, obliterates the legitimacy issues that were uppermost a decade ago. ■

Legitimizing the Goal of Educating Global Citizens

SNEJANA SLANTCHEVA

Snejana Slantcheva directs PROPHE’s Regional Center on Central and Eastern Europe, Doiran 7 Street, Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria. E-mail: slantcheva@policy.hu.

The emergence of private sectors in higher education is recognized by UNESCO as “one of the principal developments characterizing a systemic transformation of higher education in Central and Eastern Europe.” After the fall of the Berlin wall,

private institutions sprang up across the region to fill gaps in the higher education landscape formed by the increased demand for higher education, the nascent market economies, and the priorities of a spawning civil society. Within several short years, the private higher education sectors in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe grew quickly, although unevenly, with student enrollments ranging from more than 25 percent of total student numbers in Poland and Romania and 22 percent in Estonia, to 14 percent in Hungary and 13 percent in Bulgaria, to 2 percent in the Czech Republic and less than 1 percent in the Slovak Republic. In Poland alone, 6 private institutions were registered by the end of 1990; by 2002 their number had reached 250. Private-sector enrollments of 50,000 students in 1994 climbed to more than a half million in 2001, amounting to almost one-third of the Polish student body. And between 1990 and 1993, around 250 institutions appeared in Romania.

The rapid establishment of new private institutions within an initial legal vacuum soon invited questions concerning legitimacy.

Struggling with Social Acceptance

The rapid establishment of new private institutions within an initial legal vacuum soon invited questions concerning legitimacy. And despite the fact that, unlike the existing public institutions, these new private colleges and universities are untainted by the communist past, respond to various pressing demands of a transitional society, and embrace the major postulates of higher education reform—often with little or no direct use of taxpayers' money—they still continue to grapple with social acceptability. A major factor influencing social recognition is expressed in the main goal that these institutions pursue.

Shared Characteristics

The overriding priority of private institutions of higher education, both within the region and beyond, seems to be the development of human resources for states with multicultural civil societies and increasingly characterized by global economic interdependence. In the process of accomplishing this goal, private institutions across Central and Eastern Europe, as a group, exhibit specific common characteristics. They place the student at the center—thus focusing above all on teaching and learning, or the transmission of knowledge, as their core function. Different forms of pedagogical and technical innovation are complemented by practical training in programs that promise to produce a skilled, flexible, and critically thinking labor force. Research is conducted mainly to support classroom teaching. Very few of the private institutions train doctoral students. For example, out of 221 institutions in Poland, only 51 are entitled to offer master's degree programs and only 2 to confer doctoral degrees, whereas the 7 Bulgarian private uni-

versities graduated 3 doctoral students in the 2002–2003 academic year. Involvement in the local and regional problem-solving agendas has also been a common feature.

With respect to their institutional profiles, most private institutions in Central and Eastern Europe offer a limited number of programs in fields demanded by the market—such as business, finances, banking, law, and economics—designed predominantly as short-term degree programs, mostly professional and at the bachelor's level. Although private institutions in some countries in the region outnumber public institutions—82 percent of all institutions in Slovenia are private, 82 percent in Poland, 63 percent in Estonia, 60 percent in Romania, and 52 percent in Hungary—most of these institutions are small, with weak infrastructures. Their corporate academic culture is somewhat diluted. A large number of their faculty are part time, usually coming from the larger, older public institutions. Many of their students (also representing a rather mixed group with respect to age and social status) are also part-time, distance learners, taking specific courses or virtual classes. All this appears fairly common in global perspective.

Most private institutions in Central and Eastern Europe offer a limited number of programs in fields demanded by the market—such as business, finances, banking, law, and economics—

A Shift in Goals

The teaching, learning, and professional orientation pursued by this group of institutions speaks to a very important shift in priorities within the bundle of the traditional functions of higher education, which include the pursuit of “pure” research and academic training (as a core function), general education, professional preparation, production of technically usable knowledge, and the promotion of cultural self-understanding. The shift of emphasis within the bundle of higher education functions exemplified by private institutions in the region takes place against the background of deep-seated educational values, formed above all by the philosophy of the modern German university and the integration of studies and research. Following the political changes in Central and Eastern Europe, this ideal has been upheld more than before. In most of the region, despite the separate research academies, research is declared a key mission of the university and also a high-priority requirement of the accrediting regulations.

As a result of the value placed on research, the private institutions' clear focus on developing human resources for the new regionally and globally integrated economies and knowledge societies has not been easily accepted across the region. The social acceptance of private higher education institutions will depend on their ability to address the challenges regarding their goals. Combining the search for truth and knowledge creation with the training of global citizens is a significant prob-

lem that these institutions will need to resolve. Committed as they are to human resource development, private colleges and universities must remain sites for the pursuit of truth, something that cannot be reduced to job placement but instead must promote the discovery of new scientific answers to the pressing problems of contemporary society. ■

Private Higher Education in Central Asia

BERMET TURSUNKULOVA

Bermet Tursunkulova is deputy director of Civic Education—Central Asia and Mongolia. Address: 199 Tynystanov Str., Suite 7, Bishkek 720040, Kyrgyzstan. E-mail: cepcadcd@elcat.kg.

The Central Asian republics have had much in common in terms of their culture and history, from the age of nomadic tribes to independence in 1991. Under the Soviet Union, all Central Asian republics and Mongolia functioned as centrally planned economies. Higher education, especially in the sciences, was considered to be a system of high standard. The Soviet Union's collapse was followed by discombobulating economic and social repercussions in the newly independent countries, including the education system. As in many other postcommunist countries, a large number of private universities were established. However, while some argue that these new universities challenged the existing state universities and the educational system in general, in Central Asia, most of the newly opened schools had but one purpose: to generate money for the owners or founders. This main orientation of the new private institutions has had a negative effect on the social stature of the private sectors in the region.

State Control

Higher education policies and regulations are similar in much of this region. The exception is Turkmenistan, where no private institutions of higher education exist. The so-called state patrons—consisting of the president of Turkmenistan, deputy chairman of the government, and all the ministers—supervise and monitor higher education institutions in Turkmenistan. The patrons are also responsible for student admissions and the employment of graduates.

Officially, no private higher education institutions existed in Uzbekistan until recently either, because there was no legislation permitting private education in that country. In a situation that is not uncommon internationally, some unlicensed nonstate institutions existed de facto; their diplomas were not officially recognized. The most famous of these institutions is the International Business School Kelajak Ilmi (literally translated from Uzbek as “future knowledge”) in Tashkent. On March 3, 2004 the new governmental regulation on the licensing of

nongovernmental educational institutions came into force. The International Business School managed to receive a license and now functions legally.

Thus, Uzbekistan joined Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Mongolia, and Tajikistan as countries where legislation permits the creation of both state and nonstate higher education institutions. Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, and Mongolia have the largest number of private universities. For example, Kazakhstan has 114 private universities and 50 state universities, and Mongolia has 29 private universities, while Tajikistan has only 2 (official) nonstate universities.

As mentioned above, there are many similarities in the laws regulating private higher education in the region. The key document in each country is the education law. The other common feature is that the ministry of education regulates the educational system of each country. Also, several governmental agencies (various commissions, inspection agencies, etc.) enforce the law. The law stipulates provisions on licensing and accreditation of higher education institutions. Both licensing and accreditation are carried out by state inspection at least once every five years.

The state remains the only significant source of funding for the state universities and largely controls them.

The state remains the only significant source of funding for the state universities and largely controls them. The state also controls private institutions—to some extent because the ministry issues licenses to such universities. Nonstate universities can start functioning only if they receive such licenses from the state. In order to receive the license, an institution needs to comply with the set of norms—including a certain number of qualified full- and part-time staff and space provision for staff, students, libraries, among other things. The ministry and other government agencies define this set of norms. The ministry also approves the curricula, syllabi, and textbooks. Institutions can recruit and enroll students only if they have a license. Higher education institutions are obliged to show a student candidate this license and all other relevant documentation. Besides awarding the license, the ministry also recognizes all qualifications earned by the students. Requirements for the (bachelor's and master's) thesis and final (state) exams should comply with the ministerial educational standards.

What To Do

In summary, the state has significant power, with leverage, in relation to private universities. Yet universities suffer from a lack of funding and of resources to employ enough full-time staff to enforce the ministry's specifications. Although it is legitimate for a private higher education institution to exist, according to local legislation, it is difficult to determine what really defines private institutions. Certain actions might be implemented to clarify the situation. Independent accredita-