



# Paths for Developing Russia's Professional and Higher Education in Conditions of Economic Turbulence

Martin Carnoy, Stanford University and International Laboratory of Education, Higher School of Economics,  
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# Conflicting Views on the Role of Secondary Professional Education in the 21st Century

- Many countries are considering whether the expansion of university education to incorporate a higher and higher percentage of youth is the best strategy, particularly if the job market cannot absorb all university graduates in “university level” jobs.
- One view is that high quality professional secondary school is more appropriate for a high fraction of youth. Many European countries have in place some form of “dual system” that links a mix of academic and specific training to apprenticeships.
- But another view is that 21st century jobs require the greater flexibility and broader skills (including social skills) provided by a general education, plus higher levels of critical thinking skills provided by university.
- There is very little evidence that either strategy reduces unemployment, which is heavily influenced by macroeconomic factors rather than “job match.”

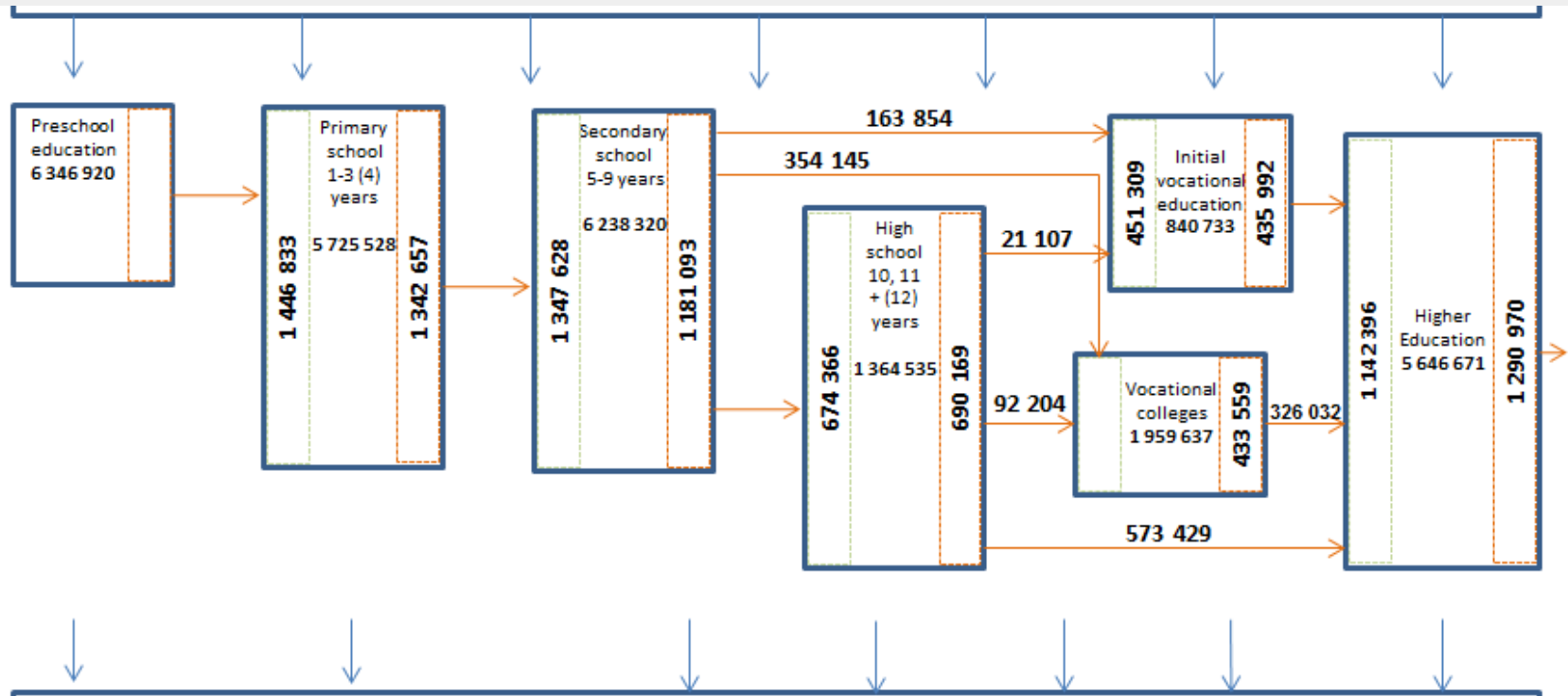


# Russia's Particular Case

- Russia is in a particular situation regarding professional and university education. I will argue that this situation may be the result of three factors:
- 1. An inherited educational system designed for a different type of economy;
- 2. Very low average economic rates of return to graduates of professional education;
- 3. Current educational policies that provide “inefficient” incentives to both youth and academic secondary schools.

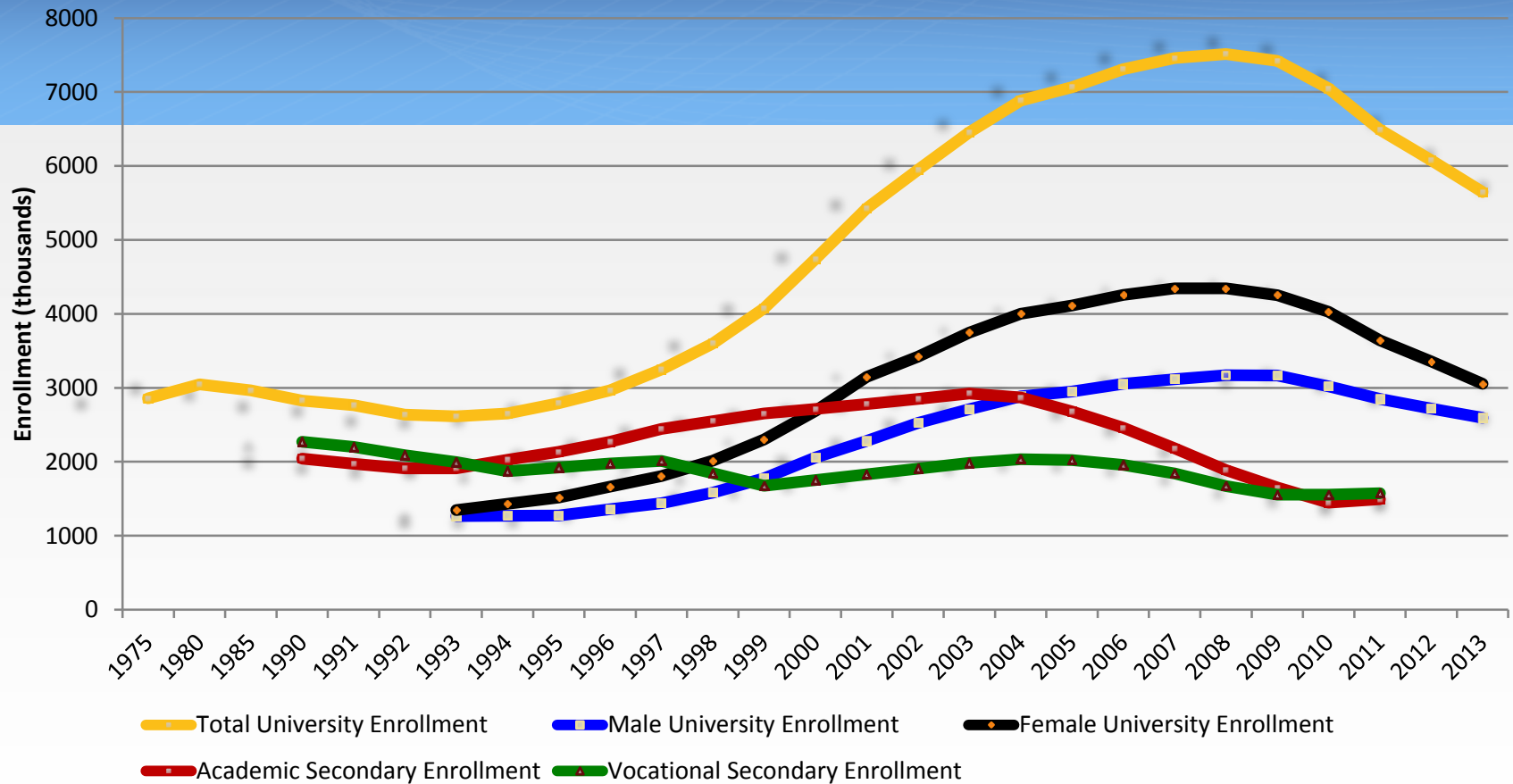


# Russia: Student Flow in the Education System 2013



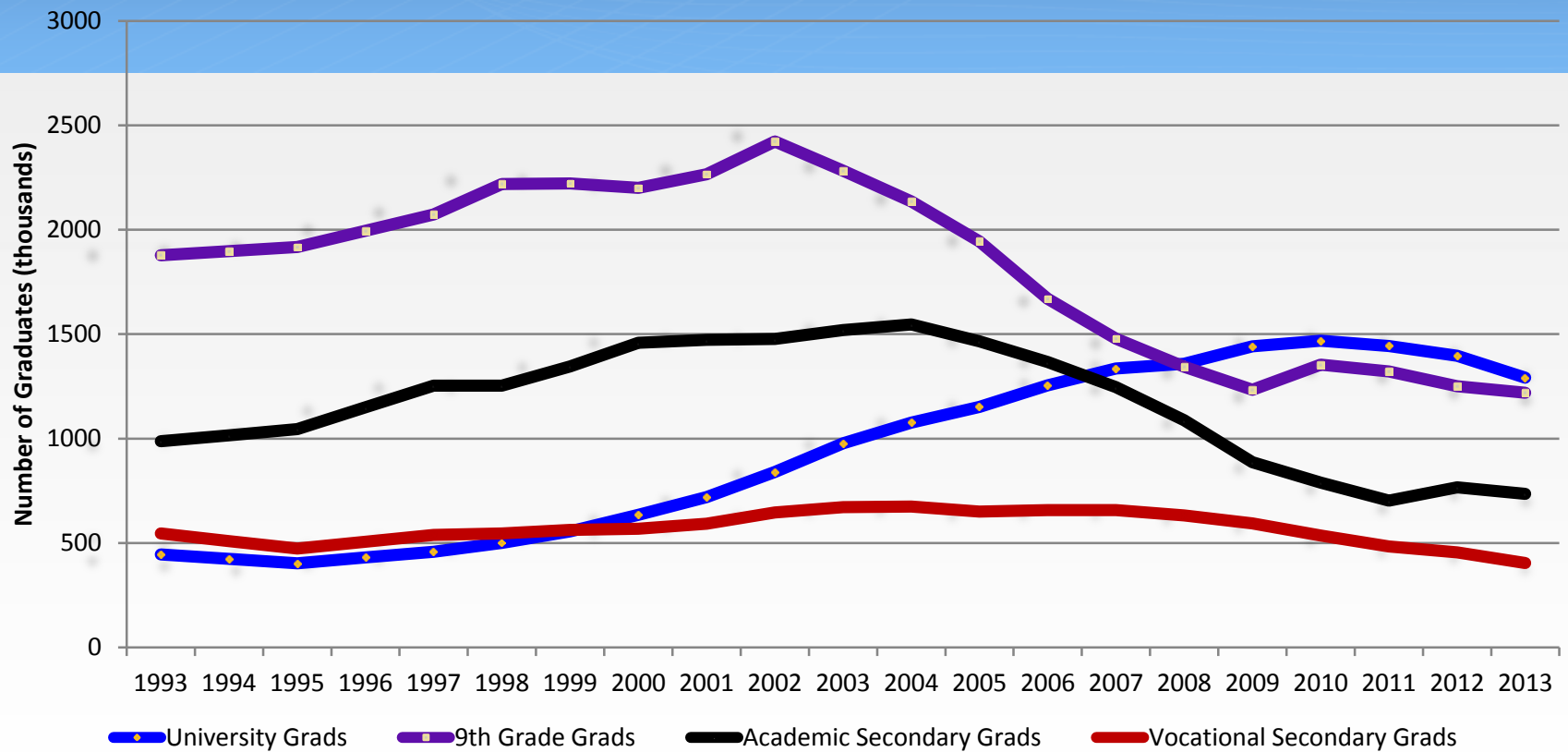


# Student Enrollment in Secondary and HE, 1975-2013





# Graduates, by Level of Education,





# The Demographic & Social Reality of Russia's Higher & Professional Education

- The number of 9th grade graduates drastically declined and has now leveled off at about 1.2 million.
- This suggests that the number of graduates from university will continue to decline from its present level of 1.3 million.
- The number of graduates from academic secondary school has also declined drastically.
- However, although the number of graduates from vocational secondary school has also decreased, the decline has been relatively small.



# Implications for Higher Education

- The composition of secondary graduates implies that a higher & higher percentage of university entrants come from professional secondary schools who generally do not take the EGE examination.
- We know relatively little about what kind of preparation these professional school students have received. Many of the schools are leftovers from a time when they were connected to particular industries. Most are unlikely to be preparing students for university.
- Yet, because the payoff to professional secondary schooling is relatively low, we can expect that an increasing percentage of graduates of such schools will continue to enter university.





# Implications for University Education

- The general decline of university enrollment raises serious issues about the continued existence of many lower tier universities.
- However, if the preparation of an increasing proportion of youth for university education is conducted in professional secondary schools rather than academic schools, there is a serious question of whether these youth will be prepared for higher tier university education.
- We also have to question why, when there are many places available in universities, the proportion of youth going to university prepared by academic secondary schools appears to be decreasing, not increasing.

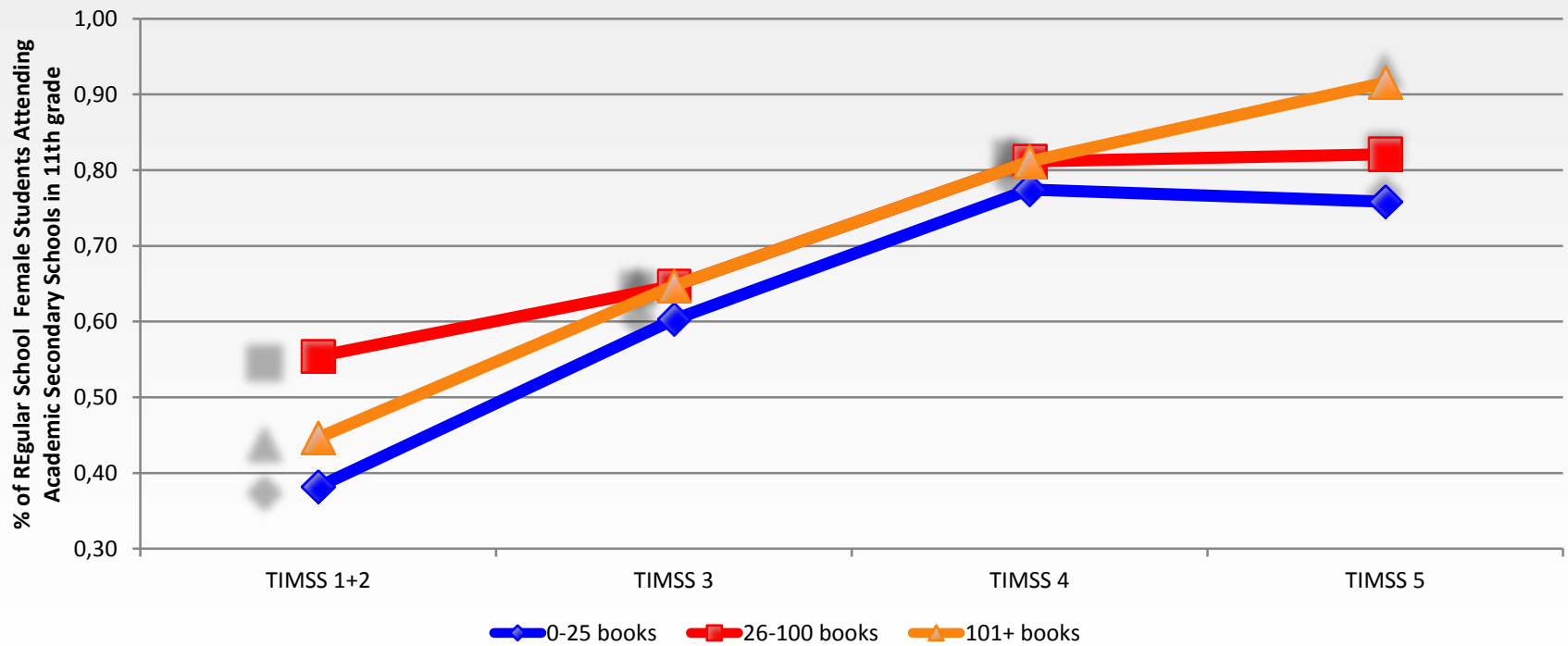


# Implications for Secondary Education

- I began the presentation by describing a “pro-vocational/specific skills” view of educational policy, and “pro-university/general skills” view.
- In Russia, the conflict between these two views is played out at the secondary level, and it is influenced by the conjuncture of student social class and academic schools deciding how to advise students in the 9th grade.
- Are youth making the “right decisions” in choosing different types of secondary schools given Russia’s future labor market needs and these youths’ aspirations to attend university?



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# Choice of Vocational Schools by TIMSS Benchmark Scores & Books in Home for Males

