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# Inequality in education: policy perspectives

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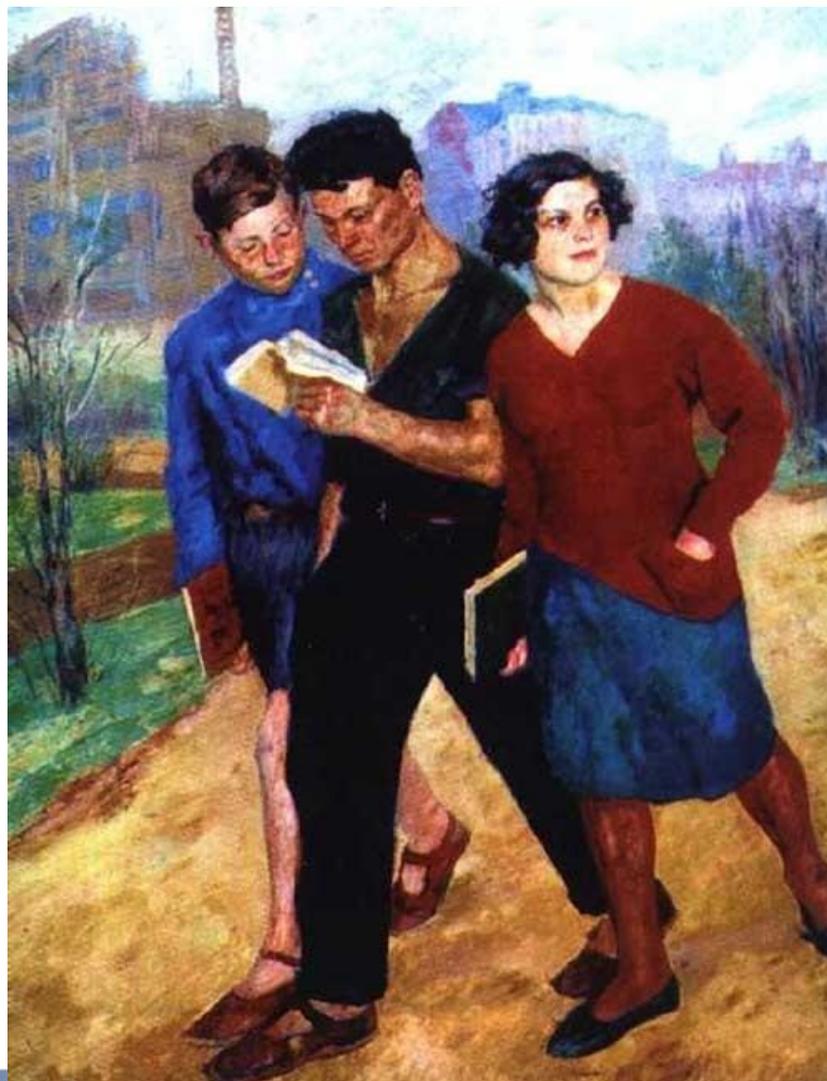
# Day of Russia



# Declaration of State Sovereignty of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (1990)



# Working class youth at university (rabfak) (1928)



- **Policy goals and objectives**
- **Affirmative actions – Soviet history**
- **Discussion and further questions**

**Race, Class and Affirmative Action (*S.Alon, 2015*)**

**Affirmative Actions Empire (*T.Martin, 2001*)**

**Affirmative Action Matters: Creating Opportunities for Students Around the World (*L.Jenkins, 2014*)**

# Different goals – different visions

- **Fair society – Just society**
- **Poverty alleviation**
- **Meritocracy**

**What are driving forces behind these goals?**

- **Marx (1840) – society without alienation – just distribution**
  - **Socialism – by labor efforts**
  - **Communism – by needs**
  - **Changes are driven by exploited class**
- **J.S.Mill (1861)– Just society – common good**

The Just Society will be one in which the rights of minorities will be safe from the whims of intolerant majorities. The Just Society will be one in which those regions and groups which have not fully shared in the country's affluence will be given a better opportunity. (Trudeau, 1968)

# Diversity – protecting the rights of minorities

Politics

Social class

Family

Occupation

Race, cast

Health

Ethnic minorities

Gender

Foreign  
citizens

# Education and diversity ideal

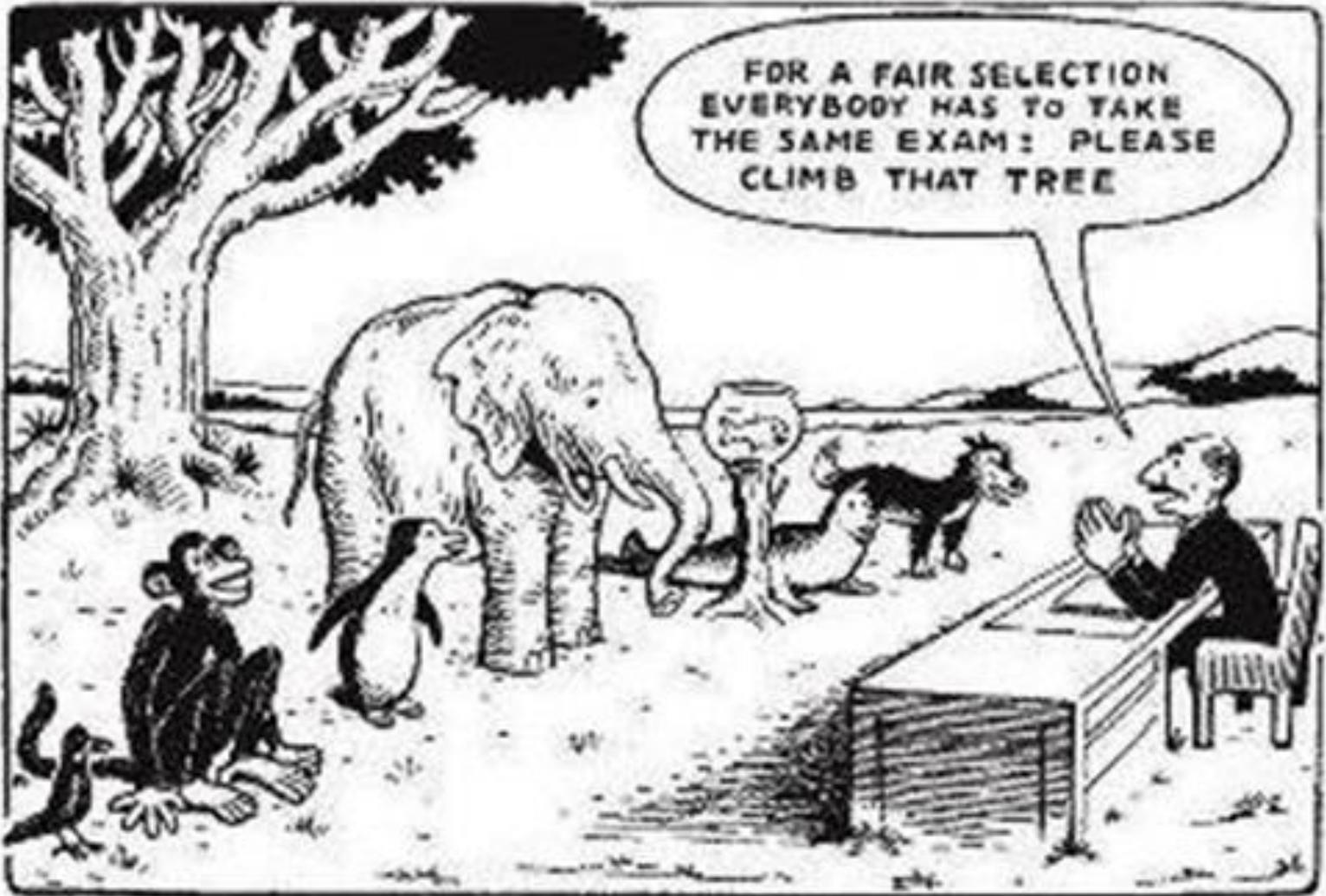
- **History of education as the history of expanding rights to education and fights for this expansion**

# Education and poverty alleviation -

- **Poverty in the center of the development agenda (UN, WB)**
- **Poverty agenda is driven by the state legitimacy needs, social issues and ideas of just society**
- Education is the brightest hope for breaking the cycle of multi-generational poverty - the average African-American with some form of education will earn at least \$9,142 more in annual income than a high school dropout.
- **Higher education is not in the center of this agenda**

# Meritocracy

- **Social mobility as a condition for successful economic development – talents' hunting**
- **IQ + effort = success** (Young, 1958. *The Rise of the Meritocracy*; Lister, 2010. *Understanding theories and concepts in social policy*)
- **Education is key for the meritocratic society -IQ + effort + education =success**
- In the current neo-liberal order with its cultural imperative of “responsibility”, education – is the most legitimate way to enhance social mobility of disadvantaged groups because it implies efforts from the recipients (instead of granting them higher social status automatically)
- **Quasi-natural process**



# Educational policies to achieve the goals

- **Equal Access – removing barriers**
- **Equal Opportunities – support system**
- **Equal Outcomes (learning outcomes or representation) – social engineering (quotas)**

**Indirect:**

**Increased value of specific experience, knowledge, cultural and social capital**

# Affirmative actions

Affirmative action is one of the most controversial topics for constitutional scholars, perhaps for American society at large as well” (US Supreme court lawyer)

# Affirmative actions (positive discrimination)



## Direct

**Admission privileges**

*-lower bar*

**Quotas**

## Indirect

- **Additional preparation**
- **Financial support**
- **Information support**
- **Negative discrimination of others**

# Soviet education - radical experience of the replacement of elite

- **Discrimination of old elites**
- **Promoting new elites**
- **Developing new cultural and social capital through education**

# Soviet experience



1919	<b>Working class</b>	Direct admission Additional preparation Negative discrimination toward former privileged groups
1924	<b>Ethnic minorities</b>	Quotas – up to 80%. Could not be filled
1945	<b>War veterans</b>	Direct admission
1958	<b>Working class</b>	Privileged admission (especially – post experience) Preparatory year
1965	<b>Retired soldiers</b>	Preparatory year with the privileged admission
1980	<b>Vocational schools graduates</b>	Merit based direct admission
1989	<b>Orphans</b>	Privileged admission

# Soviet educational policy

## Stated

- Equalization (standardization) of universal services
- Meritocratic selection and positive discrimination to assure equal opportunities

## Real

- Equalization (standardization) of universal services accompanied by growing differentiation of high value education
- Meritocratic selection and positive discrimination with secure positions for the ruling groups

# 1918-1931: dictatorship of the proletariat - aggressive social engineering

- ▶ Lack of trust to bourgeois specialists
- ▶ Promotion of workers and peasants (targeted training)
- ▶ Barriers for “exploiters’ classes” (social purges, tuition)
- ▶ Quotas for workers and intellectuals
- ▶ 1928- 1932 – mobilization of adult workers to universities
- ▶ Creation of the “new intelligentsia” (Stalin)
- ▶ “Empire of positive discrimination” based on ethnic origin
- ▶ Mandatory job placement - meritocratic

# Institutional supports for positive discrimination

- Instead of direct benefits – increased value of specific social and cultural experience:
  - elimination of the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grades – admission after factory apprenticeship school, vocational school
  - supporting competitiveness of workers and peasants (workers' faculty, allocation of scholarships)

## 1932-1957

meritocracy with elements of positive discrimination

- ▶ 1932 – «establishing order» - introduction of strict curricula, worker experience requirement for admission dropped
- ▶ 1936 – Constitution – direct positive discrimination officially abandoned
- ▶ 1936 «cultural» curricula supporting the “new intelligentsia” on condition of ideological loyalty
- ▶ Social mobility through expansion - broader coverage
- ▶ Continued support to individuals with workers’ and peasants’ background

# 1958-66

## changing nature of the elite

- Mandatory vocational training
- Quotas for “workers” cultural capital
- «Tracking» with career path support
- Broader access to higher education – privileges in a shortage-free context are inefficient
- Development of ethnic regions and ethnic discrimination
- Continued institutional support to affirmative action (social support)

# 1967-1991

## meritocracy and reduced mobility

- ▶ Specialized classes appear— diversification of schools and universities, institutionalization of the new discrimination in the interest of intelligentsia
- ▶ Abandonment of positive social discrimination
- ▶ Continued ethnic discrimination
- ▶ Reduced space for social mobility
- ▶ Advent of sub-elites with own discrimination agendas
- ▶ Overall, however, meritocratic approach still possible thanks to uniformity

## Evolution of the Soviet education:

- Initially high level of education standardization, social mobility opportunities
- Gradually a diversified school and higher education system emerges with a more complex educational context
- In late 80<sup>th</sup> high average level, still low influence of SES to academic achievements

# 1991-2011

## triumph of inequality

- Abandonment of Soviet institutions of educational standardization and affirmative actions
- Greater influence of parents who target a specific cultural capital
- Dramatic vertical differentiation of universities,
- Higher impact of SES to academic achievements

# Impact of affirmative actions - US

- Steady decrease of the gaps in college enrollment between minority and white students
- The percentage of women doctors more than doubled from 10% to 22% of all doctors; the percentage of women lawyers grew from 4% to 23% of the national total;
- After Texas abolished its affirmative action program in 1996, Rice University's freshman class had 46 percent fewer African-Americans and 22 percent fewer Hispanic students.
- The impacts of Affirmative Action – as measured by any positive effects on the probability of admission for being black or Hispanic, controlling for scholastic performance in high school and family background – are quite small for the majority of colleges and universities; but they rise with the quality of the school, and become quite substantial at elite schools
- High level of dropouts among minorities

# International experience of affirmative actions

- China – ethnic minorities, rural population. Growing evidences of positive impact. Insufficient support at universities
- Brazil – recent ethnic and class-based discrimination .
- After California abolished its affirmative action programs in 1998, the minority student admissions at UC Berkeley fell 61 percent, and minority admissions at UCLA fell 36 percent.
- After Texas abolished its affirmative action program in 1996, Rice University's freshman class had 46 percent fewer African-Americans and 22 percent fewer Hispanic students.
- The impacts of Affirmative Action – as measured by any positive effects on the probability of admission for being black or Hispanic, controlling for scholastic performance in high school and family background – are quite small for the majority of colleges and universities; but they rise with the quality of the school, and become quite substantial at elite schools
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# Political context of the affirmative actions in higher education

- ▶ The formal institutions work differently depending on the social order in which they are embedded. When the institutional forms of an Open access societies are transplanted to a Limited access societies, the logic of the LAS bends them to the purpose of rent-creation to sustain the existing dominant coalition.
- **Violence and Social Orders: A Conceptual Framework for Interpreting Recorded Human History (North, Walles, Weingast, 2009)**

Solution 1:  
Aggressive affirmative action

Key mechanism: quotas

Outcomes:

Equal opportunities in the end;

Access to higher quality institutions at each stage;

Expansion of the elite class, mobility among classes

Education system impacts:

less differentiation, variability, variety

## Solution 2

Creation of a low-differentiated system

Key mechanism: creating equal opportunities at the beginning, meritocratic policy

Outcome:

Expansion of the middle class, its sustainability improved

Educational system impacts: standardization

# Discussion – did it work?

- Social engineering in Soviet Union achieved its goals – it replaced elites and created limited meritocracy
- It showed that it is possible to combine class-based and ethnic-based mechanisms
- The inequality reproduces itself in the absence of further social engineering especially in the context of growing vertical differentiation?
- Resilience and HE
- Further impact evaluation studies are needed