

**WORLD EDUCATION PATTERNS
IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH**

INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON EDUCATION AND SOCIETY

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**WORLD EDUCATION
PATTERNS IN THE GLOBAL
SOUTH: THE EBB OF
GLOBAL FORCES AND THE
FLOW OF CONTEXTUAL
IMPERATIVES**

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PREFACE

World Education Patterns

Global South Volume

Identifying the global patterns within and across educational systems worldwide is a significant challenge, and one that has been addressed throughout the history of comparative and international education scholarship and practice. This volume is the second in a pair of companion volumes addressing *World Education Patterns: The Ebb of Global Forces and the Flow of Contextual Imperatives*, which focuses on education in the Global South, broadly defined. The first volume, which focuses on education patterns in the Global North, begins with three aligned chapters by C. C. Wolhuter. These three chapters develop a fundamental framework for the comparative and international examination of education based on context and an understanding of the role of globalization on educational policy and practice (see “Terra Invicta: Comparative and International Education” in the Global North volume). Wolhuter’s second framing chapter provides a set of several contextual markers, including geography, demography, economy, technology, society, politics and policy, religion and culture. Using these markers, Wolhuter suggests that educational patterns can begin to be unraveled and recognized across otherwise unique and often unrelated contexts (see “Terra Incognita: The Challenging Forces of the Unprecedented 21st Century Globalized Societal Context” in the Global North volume). Finally, Wolhuter’s third chapter in the first volume examines the educational response to globalization with a specific focus on mass education enrollment and the development of global agendas regarding education (see “Terra Nova: The Global Education Response” in the Global North volume).

In this volume, which focuses the question of world education patterns on the Global South, authors focus more on the role that external forces of globalization have influenced education in specific countries and regions. Olena Lokshyna investigates how national education developed in Belarus, Russian, and Ukraine as a result of both globalization and Europeanization. Awatif Boudihaj and Meriem Sahli explain how education development occurred and continues to occur in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. Likewise, Guldana Akhmetova, Duishon Shamatov, and Mir Afzal Tajik overview educational patterns and contexts in the Central Asian countries of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan. V. Santhakumar similarly examines the intersection of globalization and context in the South Asian countries of India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Sri Lanka. Vina Adriany, Irwan Gunawan and Rita Anggorowati get more specific in their investigation of early childhood education and neoliberalism in Southeast Asian countries, including Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam and Myanmar.

Thiên Nguyễn Hoàng explicitly uses Wollhuter's frameworks to examine Vietnamese education in the effects of globalization on it, while Donella J. Cobb, David Fa'avae, and Anna Joskin interrogate the global-local dialect in Oceania by looking for the specific with the "ocean" of globalization. Ileana Rojas-Moreno and Zaira Navarrete-Cazales take a more historical approach to understanding how society and education intersect in Latin American and the Caribbean broadly speaking, which is complemented by Luis Enrique Aguilar, Eliacir Neves França, and Ana Elisa Spaolonzi Queiroz Assis's discussion on the development of the Brazilian education system. Gilberto Garcia Batista provides a rare internal perspective on comparative education and the development of education in Cuba, as well. And, finally, C. C. Wollhuter provides an insightful survey of educational development in sub-Saharan Africa.

The Global South-focused chapters in this volume lean more toward the survey or descriptive at times, but that basic understanding educational patterns in the Global South is often what is lacking the most in comparativists' broader scholarship and practice in these regions. By examining educational patterns in both the Global North and Global South through the two companion volumes of *World Education Patterns*, readers not only understand more fully what the contextual factors are, but also how they either uniquely intersect or follow a more common or shared set of structures, expectations, policies, and practices. Either way, the goal of these volumes is to bring the role and importance of context in understanding education worldwide back to the fore of comparative and international education scholarship and practice and remind readers of the importance of being thoughtful and diligent about both the differences and similarities in education that result.

Alexander W. Wiseman
Series Editor

BELARUS, RUSSIA AND UKRAINE: DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL EDUCATION IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBALIZATION AND EUROPEANIZATION*

Olena Lokshyna

ABSTRACT

This chapter offers a survey of education transformations in the East Slavic countries, Belarus, Russia and Ukraine, in the context of globalization and Europeanization. It gives first an overview of the common USSR background, followed by a description of education developments in these countries after gaining independence in 1991. It states that the present development of the national education systems is under the influence of powerful globalization and Europeanization trends. The national features of education systems in these countries are described. Global and European benchmarks for the development of education influencing educational reforms in these countries have also been identified. The author concludes that the development of education in Belarus, Russia and Ukraine combines national priorities and the countries' need for integration into the European and global spaces. The research would be of interest worldwide in the aspect of the East Slavic region's education transformations under common challenges.

Keywords: Comparative and International Education; globalization; glocalization; Europeanization; the East Slavic countries; Belarus; Russia; Ukraine; education transformations; context

* This Chapter reflects the situation in education in Belarus, Russia and Ukraine before Russia's military aggression against Ukraine launched on February 24, 2022 and assisted by Belarus.

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INTRODUCTION

After the collapse of the USSR and the declaration of independence in 1991, the East Slavic countries – the Republic of Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine began to develop their national education. The process started with the formation of legislation and decommunization of the content of education; the countries have been implementing the education reforms that are determined by the political course and demands of the countries' economies. As a result, they have formed their national systems with specific parameters. At the same time, globalization (as a process of global economic, political and cultural integration/unification) and Europeanization (as a process of economic, political and cultural integration/unification within the EU borders and in Europe) are supranational factors contributing to the harmonization of educational realities in these countries.

The rapid development of ICT strengthens these forces. Globalization and Europeanization impacts on education are manifested in education internationalization, standardization, academic mobility, etc. The key imperatives of the international agencies (UN, UNESCO, OECD), that is, the “quality of education,” “equal access to education” and “lifelong learning” have become the goals of the educational policy in Belarus, Russia and Ukraine. Participation of the countries in the international comparative studies PISA, TIMSS and PIRLS ensures the synchronization of the secondary education with the international quality standards. Russia (2003), Ukraine (2005) and Belarus (2015) are participants of the Bologna Process. It launched the harmonization of the higher education systems with the European countries.

The academic mobility is provided in all countries through ERASMUS + and SOCRATES Programs. The Europeanization impact is also manifested in the transformation of education into the competence basis. Taking into consideration the European Reference Framework on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning (2006, 2018), the countries declared competences as a result of education in their legislation. There is also interstate influence within the national education systems development. It is based on the common Soviet heritage and still strong political, economic, cultural and linguistic ties (Russia and Belarus). Thus, there are national differences in the organization of education in Belarus, Russia and Ukraine, which are independent states since 1991.

This chapter offers a survey of education transformations in the (East Slavic countries: Belarus, Russia and Ukraine in the context of globalization and Europeanization. It gives first an overview of the common USSR background, followed by a description of education developments in these countries after gaining independence in 1991. It states that the present development of the national education systems is under the influence of powerful globalization and Europeanization trends.

REGIONAL CONTEXT

Geography

Belarus (official name – Republic of Belarus), Russia (official name – Russian Federation – Russia) and Ukraine (official name – Ukraine) belong to the Eastern

European region. Belarusians, Russians and Ukrainians form the East Slavic branch of the Slavs.

Belarus borders on Ukraine in the south, Poland in the west, Lithuania and Latvia in the north and Russia in the north and east. The capital and largest city is Minsk. The population of Belarus is 9.4 million ([World Bank, 2020a](#)).

Russia is a transcontinental country in Eastern Europe and North Asia. Russia's territory is the largest in the world, bordering 16 sovereign countries, including Ukraine and Belarus. The capital of Russia is Moscow. The population of Russia is 144.4 million ([World Bank, 2020b](#)).

Ukraine is the largest country of those ones whose territories lie entirely in Europe and the second largest on the European continent after Russia. Ukraine borders on Belarus in the north, Poland, Slovakia and Hungary in the west, Romania and Moldova in the southwest, Russia in the east and northeast. The capital of Ukraine is Kyiv. The population of Ukraine is 44.3 million ([World Bank, 2020c](#)).

History

The geographical neighborhood has led to close ties among the countries throughout their history. At the same time, the situation of Belarus and Ukraine was radically different from Russia which played a dominating role for centuries. Their territories in different periods were part of other states, mainly tsarist Russia and the USSR. Until 1991, neither Belarus nor Ukraine had real political sovereignty, except during a brief period in 1917–1921. After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Belarus, Russia and Ukraine became independent states.

Politics

In 1991, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Belarus, Russia and Ukraine signed an agreement on the establishment of a regional international formation, the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), which was joined by most former Soviet republics. The goal of the organization was political, economic and cultural cooperation and integration ([CIS Executive Committee, 1991](#)).

In 1999, Russia and Belarus signed the Treaty on the Union State of Russia and Belarus establishing a confederate union of the Russian Federation and the Republic of Belarus with a gradually organized single political, economic, military, customs and currency, legal, humanitarian and cultural space.

In 2014, after Russia's aggressive actions against Ukraine and the non-support of Ukraine's sovereignty by other CIS member states, Ukraine had announced the beginning of the procedure for leaving the CIS and in 2018 withdrew from this structure. Ukraine is currently revising the legal acts it concluded within the CIS.

In 2014, Ukraine and the EU concluded an Association Agreement, which provides for the gradual rapprochement of the Parties, based on common values and close privileged ties, as well as deepening Ukraine's ties with EU policies and its participation in programs and agencies of the European Union ([Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2015b](#)).

Belarus, Russia and Ukraine are members of the United Nations. Together with the Soviet Union, the Byelorussian SSR and the Ukrainian SSR became founding members of the United Nations in 1945 ([United Nations, 2015c](#)).

Table 1. GDP and GDP Per Capita of Belarus, Russia and Ukraine (2020).

GDP and GDP per capita	Belarus	Russian Federation	Ukraine
GDP, current \$ billion	60.26	1.48 trillion	155.5
GDP per capita, current \$	6,424.2	11,126.7	3,724.9

Source: World Bank (2022a, 2022b, 2022c, 2022d, 2022e, 2022f).

Economy

According to the 2019 UN World Economic Situation and Prospects classification Belarus, Russia and Ukraine are placed in the “Economies in transition” group. As for their level of development as measured by per capita gross national income Belarus and Russia are in the group of the countries with upper-middle-income while Ukraine is in the lower-middle-income group (UN/DESA, 2019). A comparison of economic development rates of the countries in the format of GDP is shown in Table 1.

According to the 2019 UNDP Human Development Report, Belarus and Russia are in the group of countries with very high Human Development Index (HDI) and Ukraine is in the group with high HDI (Table 2).

COMMON SOVIET EDUCATION BACKGROUND

The USSR, which included Belarus, Russia and Ukraine, since its formation in 1922, viewed education as a tool for overcoming the country’s economic backwardness to ensure the victory of communism on the world stage. To this end, the USSR began structural reforms of education within the framework of the communist doctrine. The priorities of the reforms were as follows:

- separation of education from the church and its transformation into an instrument of translating the Soviet ideology and indoctrinating the population; and
- providing wide access to education to the privileged in the USSR segments of the population, that is, workers and peasants in order to eliminate their illiteracy to provide industrialization and increase the country’s military power.

Table 2. Human Development Index of Belarus, Russia and Ukraine.

HDI and its Components	Belarus	Russian Federation	Ukraine
HDI (value), 2018	0.817	0.824	0.750
Life expectancy at birth (years), 2018	74.6	72.4	72.0
Expected years of schooling (years), 2018	15.4	15.5	15.1
Mean years of schooling (years), 2018	12.3	12.0	11.3
Gross national income per capita (2011 PPP \$), 2018	17,039	25,036	7,994
Gross national income per capita rank minus HDI rank, 2018	18	2	25
HDI rank, 2018	50	49	88

Source: UNDP (2019).

All the private schools were closed, and free compulsory general and polytechnical education for children under 17 years was introduced. A system of preschool education was formed to involve women in the development of the country's economy. Universities and institutions of higher education were focused on the reception of workers and peasants.

The principles laid down in the first years of the Communist rule formed a model of Soviet education, which was as follow:

- ideological, that is, it developed within the framework of the communist doctrine;
- rigidly centralized with the vertical organization of education subordinated to Communist party bodies;
- unified, that is, a unified curriculum provided the translation of the same knowledge to students in all republics, cities and villages of the USSR;
- theoretically based and focused on the translation of encyclopedic knowledge to youth with an emphasis on natural sciences; and
- closed from the world. Under the conditions of the Iron Curtain, there was a very limited access to educational innovations from other countries. One of the consequences of the closed nature of education in the USSR was the low level of foreign language proficiency. The dominance of grammar and translation methods of teaching foreign languages, lack of communication with native speakers and unavailability of original textbooks led to the lack of the ability to speak a foreign language and motivation to learn it among graduates of schools and institutions of higher education.

Objectively, the country's need for an efficient economy required the creation of a single language space, the official language of which became Russian throughout the USSR. In the most periods of the USSR's existence, the Russian language became an instrument of the state policy for the Russification of the population in the member republics.

Thus, in view of the common history Belarus, Russia and Ukraine have inherited almost identical models of education in 1991.

FORMATION OF NATIONAL EDUCATION SYSTEMS AFTER INDEPENDENCE

After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Belarus, Russia and Ukraine began to form national education systems. This process started with the creation of a legal framework. The adopted Constitutions (Belarus, 1994; Russia, 1993; Ukraine, 1996) and the basic laws "On Education" (Belarus, 1991; Russia, 1992; Ukraine, 1991) defined principles of the state policy in the field of education and tasks of national education, its structure, approaches to the organization and structuring of educational content, governing models, principles of funding, rights and responsibilities of all stakeholders.

The laws proclaimed the equality of conditions for everyone's access to education, its continuity, diversity and variability, independence of education from political parties, secular nature of education, humanism, democracy and the priority of universal values. It envisaged the functioning of private educational institutions as a part of funding differentiation. New types of educational institutions were created, that is, colleges, lyceums and gymnasiums at the level of secondary education as well as faculties and specialties in higher education institutions. The laws provided for the introduction of educational standards guaranteeing a mandatory minimum level of education for all and requirements for the education level of graduates.

De-communication of education began: the curricula of the humanities, especially history, were reformed. Disciplines devoted to the study of the basics of communist ideology, the history of the Communist Party, etc. were derived from the curricula.

In Belarus and Ukraine, their national revival was proclaimed as a strategic guideline for the development of education. In the Concept of Education and Upbringing in Belarus (1993), national-cultural revival (study of the state language, national history, literature and traditions) was proclaimed as one of the fundamental foundations of Belarusian education ([Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus, 1993](#)).

In the State National Program "Education" ("Ukraine of the 21st century") (1993), the national orientation of education was recognized as one of the principles of education ([Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, 1993](#)).

In Russia, the preservation and development of a single educational space, in view of the multi-ethnic nature of the state, were among the priorities for the development of education in the Federal Program for the Development of Education (2000) ([State Duma, 2007](#)).

Modern education in Belarus, Russia and Ukraine meets national interests and develops in accordance with political guidelines and economic requirements. This determines distinctive features of the education system in each country.

The education system in the Republic of Belarus is centralized. According to the current Education Code, the state management of education is carried out by the President of the Republic of Belarus, the Government of the Republic of Belarus and state bodies subordinate to the President (*Kodeks Respubliki Belarus' ob Obrazovanii No. 243-Z ot 13.01.2011*).

Transformations in education in this country are of evolutionary nature being designed to preserve the stability of the educational space and the integrity of the national education system. The official documents declare that the education system is being improved and the nature of transformations is planned, which is ensured by the approval of state programs for the development of education. The state program for the development of the education system of the Republic of Belarus for 2016–2020 provides funding from the state budget for a system of measures to improve national education ([Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus, 2016](#)).

Russia's desire for world leadership turns national education into a strategic resource. The National Doctrine of Education Development (2000) declared the

restoration of Russia's status in the world community as a great power in the field of education, culture and science to be a strategic goal of education development for the period up to 2025 ([Government of the Russian Federation, 2000](#)).

In view of the multi-ethnic nature of the Russian Federation, the architecture of governance is multilevel in this country. Education issues are jointly managed by the Federation's center and its subjects. The main legal document governing relations in the system is the Federal Law "On Education in the Russian Federation" (2012). At the level of the federation subjects regional laws and other legal acts on education may be adopted, which complement the federation's legal domain, taking into account local peculiarities ([Government of the Russian Federation, 2014](#)).

It is declared that the main strategy for the development of education in Russia is the modernization of the educational system based on the preservation of national values and traditions with due account of world trends ([President of Russia, 2018](#)).

The country's participation in a number of global initiatives (PISA, TIMSS, PIRLS, Bologna Process) makes education policy evidence-based.

Close interstate relations between Russia and Belarus contribute to the rapprochement of the two countries' educational systems. In 1992, the CIS countries signed an Agreement on Cooperation in Education, which guarantees the recognition of state documents on secondary, vocational, secondary special, higher education, retraining, degrees and academic titles in the territories of the member states as well as the conducting of joint research and exchange of information on education development ([CIS Executive Committee, 1992](#)).

In 2017, the Resolution of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union of Belarus and Russia approved the priorities for further development of the Union State for 2018–2020, including the one of forming a common educational space. Increasing the academic mobility of students, teachers and researchers; further convergence of the education systems of Belarus and Russia; introduction of a mechanism for joint accreditation of higher education institutions (education programs) were among the tasks (Standing Committee of the Union State, 2017).

Ukraine's signing of the Association Agreement with the EU (2014) necessitated a radical reform of Ukrainian education in order to synchronize it with the European standards. The Agreement provides for the convergence of higher education systems under the Bologna Process; deepening cooperation between higher education institutions; activating the mobility of students and educators. The Agreement also provides for the intensified exchange of information, practices and expertise for the development of vocational and secondary education, distance and lifelong learning ([Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2015b](#)).

For fulfilling its obligations, Ukraine has begun updating its legislation. The new Laws of Ukraine "On Higher Education" (2014), "On Education" (2017), "On Complete General Secondary Education" (2020) focus on Ukraine's integration into the European educational space ([Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2014, 2017, 2020](#)). Reforms are implemented at all levels of education and relate to governance, structure, organization, content and quality assurance.

Within the framework of the Agreement between Ukraine and the EU, Ukraine has become an associate member of the EU 2020 Framework Program for Research and Innovation “Horizon” (2014–2020) ([Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2015a](#)).

Education in Belarus, Russia and Ukraine is considered an important resource for the countries’ development. This is evidenced by the percentage of GDP for education, which is at the level of the developed countries in Europe and the world ([Table 3](#)).

Countries support the implementation of the global goals of education development by signing such documents as the UN Millennium Development Goals (2000) and the Sustainable Development Goals (2015). The key imperatives of the international organizations (UN, UNESCO, OECD), that is, the “quality of education,” “equal access to education” and “lifelong learning” have become the goals of the educational policy in Belarus, Russia and Ukraine. SDG 4 “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” is represented in the national legislation ([United Nations, 2015b](#)).

A high level of literacy in three countries is the achievement of national education systems.

EDUCATION IN BELARUS, RUSSIA AND UKRAINE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE GLOBALIZATION AND EUROPEANIZATION

Globalization (as a process of global economic, political and cultural integration/unification) and Europeanization (as a process of economic, political and cultural integration/unification within the EU borders and in Europe as a result of general EU regulation) are supranational factors contributing to education development in Belarus, Russia and Ukraine.

The reform of the secondary education “New Ukrainian School,” started after the adoption of the Law “On Education” (2017) is aimed at building a school of an innovative format. The law introduces a 12-year training period (4 + 5 + 3), which is in line with the practice of most European countries ([Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2017](#)).

The European vector of school education reform in this country can be traced to the aspect of the introduction of cycles. The Law “On Education” (2017) stipulates that the educational process at the levels of primary and basic secondary

Table 3. Government Expenditure on Education by Belarus, Russia and Ukraine.

	Belarus	Russian Federation	Ukraine
Government expenditure on education in % of GDP (2017)	4.8%	4.7%	5.4%

Source: [World Bank \(2017\)](#).