FROM THE SOVIET SCIENTIFIC SYSTEM TO

Russian academic involvement in the war against Ukraine

Super normal science and the post Soviet academic community

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Expert Communities and War
Involvement, Responsibility, and the Failure to Investigate Long Term Consequences

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02

The paradox of continuous loyalty

The doctrine changes

The academic role remains

Soviet state Marxism Leninism	authority defines truth	**Loyal academic representative**
Independent Ukraine National academic framework	new authority same role	**Loyal academic representative**
Russian occupation Russian state narrative	new sovereign same loyalty	**Loyal academic representative**

A change of sovereignty reveals a stable structure of dependence

03 Research question and working hypothesis

"How can a scientific community preserve its institutions and professional identity while replacing its fundamental assumptions in response to state power?"

Research question

Working hypothesis

The stable element is dependence on the state as the source of legitimate reality, permitted questions, and responsible conclusions.

04

Super normal science

Scientific form remains

- **Degrees and titles**
- Journals and citations
- Conferences and councils
- Research plans

STATE

defines acceptable problems and conclusions

Direction of cognition changes

Normal science

Researchers solve problems inside a disciplinary paradigm.

Super normal science

The political center authorizes the picture that research must reproduce.

Distinct from post normal science

The concept concerns institutional dependence, not decision making under uncertainty.

05

The academic community as a company of performers

THE STATE	ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS	RESEARCHERS
supplies the score	**distribute the parts**	**translate the script into scientific language**

The performance may be sincere

Chekhov's The Darling helps explain how each new worldview can become authentic without resolving the previous contradiction.

The analytical category is adaptation, not betrayal

06

Negative selection reproduces the academic type

1

Autonomous question

The researcher separates state claims from evidence.

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2

Organizational pressure

Disagreement becomes a professional or personal problem.

›

3

Exclusion

The institution marginalizes the source of autonomous questions.

›

4

Reproduction

Loyal adaptation becomes the normal career strategy.

Result

Technical competence can remain high while collective capacity for autonomous problem formulation declines.

07

Russia and Ukraine as a comparative test

COMMON INSTITUTIONAL INHERITANCE

Post Soviet hierarchy, administrative dependence, and weak autonomy

RUSSIA

Aggressive state project

The state demands geographical legitimation, expert support, and public institutional loyalty.

UKRAINE

Weaker ideological score

The state historically imposes a less coherent and less compulsory script on academic institutions.

Similar academic structures can produce different political conduct under different states

08

Nikolai Bagrov as a visible case

Late Soviet period

Senior party and state positions in Crimea

›

Independent Ukraine

Rector of TNU 1999–2014
Hero of Ukraine 2007
Academician of NASU 2010

›

Russian system

President of Crimean Federal University from January 2015
Public support for annexation by April 2015

Analytical value

The case makes continuity of the loyal academic role visible across incompatible sovereign and ideological systems.

The case does not establish motives or prove the scale of the pattern by itself

The Russian Geographical Society after 2009

2009 Institutional remobilization of Russian geography

Vladimir Putin

Chair of the newly created Board of Trustees
Prime Minister in 2009

Sergei Shoigu

President of the Society from November 2009
Minister of Emergency Situations at the time

Academic geography

Scientific Council connects the Society to RAN and leading university geographers

State and corporate power

Presidential administration, ministries, banks, energy and infrastructure companies

The structure demonstrates integration into the highest levels of power

It does not by itself prove preparation of a specific military operation

Geographical expertise and territorial expansion

1

Established

The state and academic geography became institutionally connected before the annexation of Crimea.

2

Supported interpretation

Research from 2009–2013 developed concepts of post Soviet borders compatible with later territorial revision.

3

Unverified stronger claim

The 2013 study formed a concrete plan for occupation. The primary text and institutional use still require verification.

Defensible conclusion

Russian geographical expertise produced concepts and spatial models compatible with territorial expansion.

Conclusions and question for discussion

1 **The Soviet system formed an academic type whose loyalty attaches to the current producer of authoritative reality.**

2 **Negative selection reduces the collective capacity to formulate questions that the state has not requested.**

3 **Russian academic involvement in the war represents one political realization of a broader post Soviet institutional type.**

QUESTION FOR DISCUSSION

How much of the difference between Russian and Ukrainian academic conduct comes from their states, and how much from the remaining internal autonomy of academic organizations?