

Internationalisation of Social Sciences and Humanities – Challenges for Russia?

Global SSH Workshop

“The internationalisation of Social Sciences in a global comparative perspective – Challenges for SSH research and research policies: Regional perspectives – Competencies - Institutions”

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Experiences in transnational research projects and perspectives for future transnational research between the EU, NIS and China

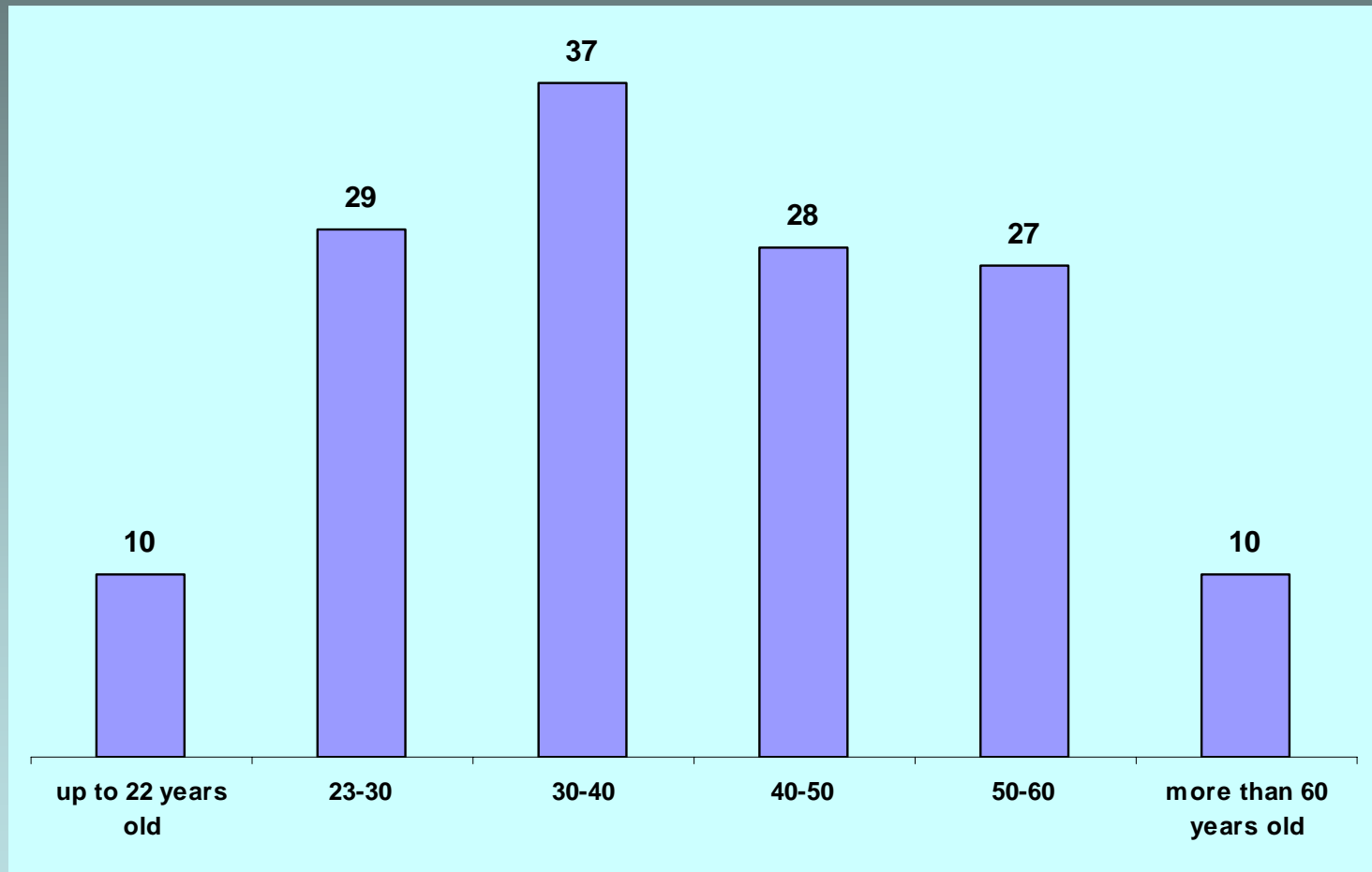
- Questionnaire to researchers and survey work in Russia;
- Regional Group Discussions;
- Contribution to the interregional discussion and joint results on “Prospectives for future transnational research between the EU, NIS and China”

General characteristics of the sample

GlobalSSH questionnaires were sent purposively to almost 300 addresses

- 142 filled questionnaires were received:
 - 127 of all respondents work in the universities or other higher education institutions;
 - 13 respondents work in research organisations;
 - 5 respondents work in the organisations of other types.
- From 142 respondents, 74 are women and 66 are men (2 are not identified)
- 109 respondents have a scientific degree of Candidate of Sciences (68) or Doctor of Sciences (41)

Distribution of respondents by age

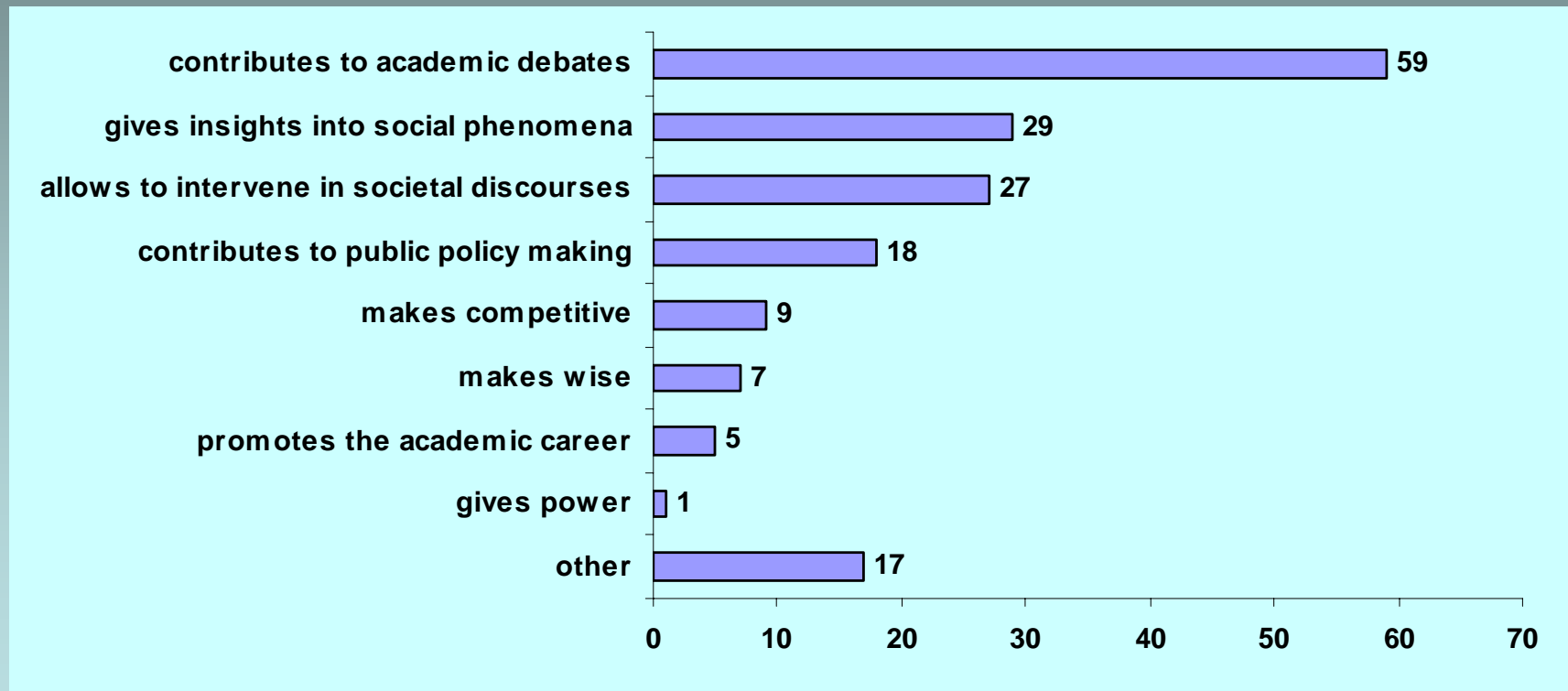


Lingua franca competencies

- 96 respondents know, at least, 1 foreign language;
 - 30 respondents know 2 foreign languages;
 - 7 respondents know 3 foreign languages;
 - 2 respondents know 4 foreign languages.
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- English – 120
 - German – 25
 - French – 22
 - Other – 23

Objectives of knowledge creation:

To create new knowledge through social science research activities...



International activity (IA)

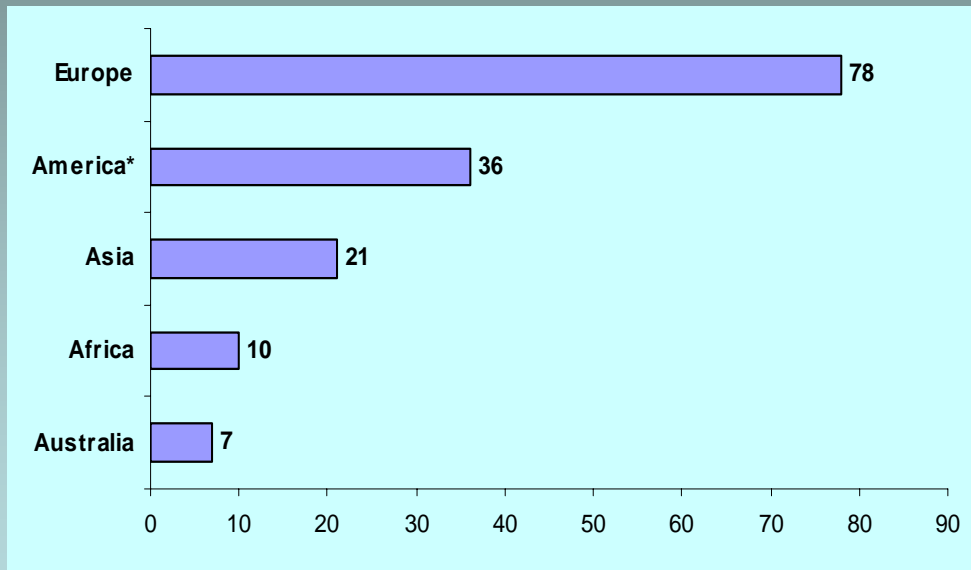
- 109 respondents (77%) are engaged in IA (82% of men and 72% of women)
- Ranking of forms of international activity:
 - 1 – international conferences (99% of those engaged in IA)
 - 2 – transnational research activities (70%)
 - 3 – publishing in foreign languages (64%)
 - 4 – study visits in foreign countries (49%)
 - 5 – international scholarship (39%)
 - 6 – international exchange programmes (38%)
 - 7 – other (15%)

Specific motivations for transnational research activities:

- learning from others – 56
- matching with internationalisation – 26
- intellectual curiosity – 15
- promoting one's academic career – 14
- other - 12

Russian transnational researchers are focused on the developed world

By continent of study:



* USA – 29 responses from 36

By foreign partner:

Germany – 35%

USA – 28%

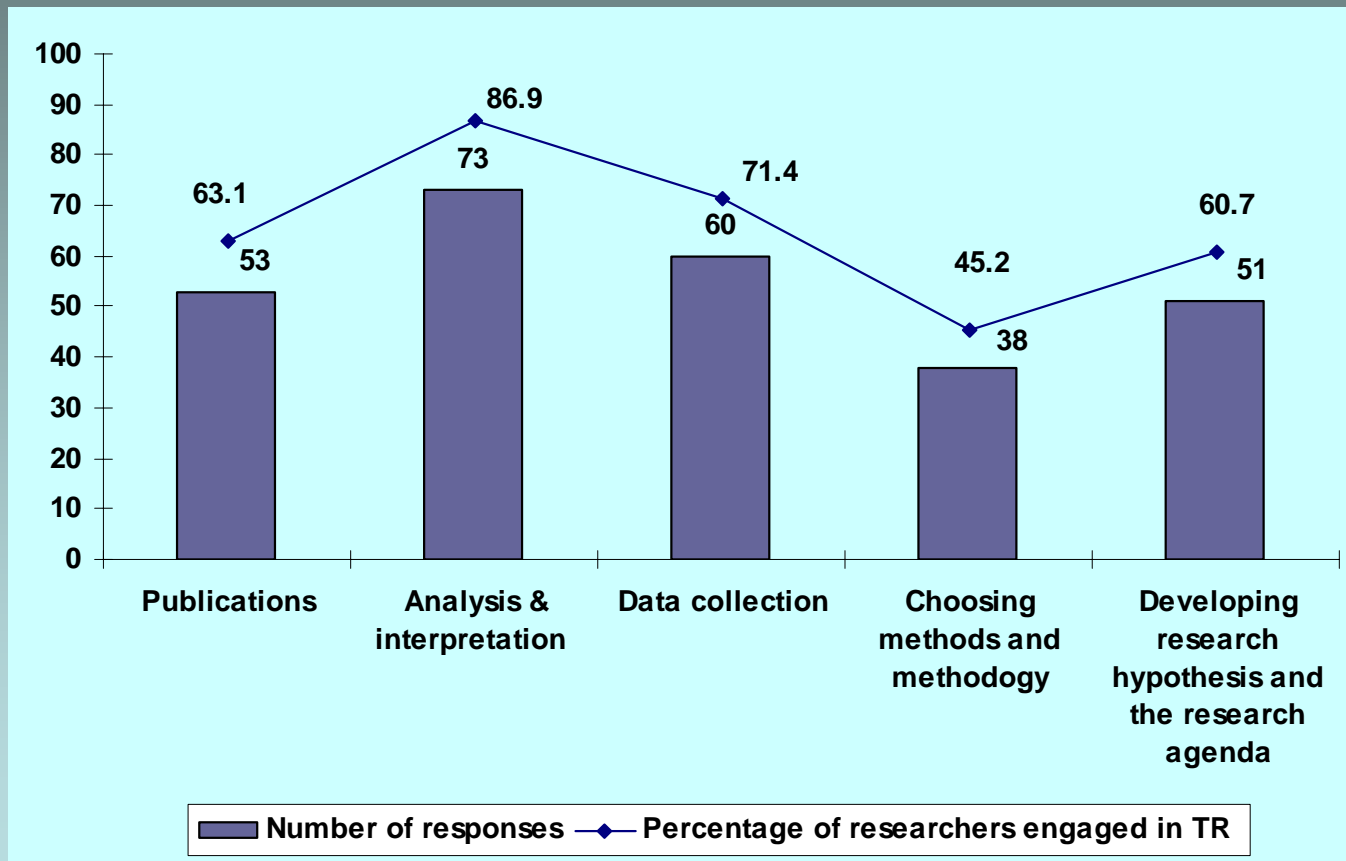
France – 24%

Switzerland, Italy, & UK – 13%

Ukraine – 11%

Poland – 9%

Russian researchers in transnational projects by type of activity



Agenda of the discussion:

- 1) **general conceptions of knowledge in Russia, their application to SSH knowledge produced by Russian scholars, and policies for production and promotion of SSH knowledge in contemporary Russia;**
- 2) **internationalisation of social sciences, its specific features in Russia as regards motivations, expectations, practices, and challenges for Russian scholars to participate in transnational research;**
- 3) **political practices and challenges responding to internationalisation of SSH, perspectives of transnational collaboration of Russian researchers with other parts of the world;**
- 4) **main messages and learned lessons of the discussion.**

Factors prevailing in 1990s and the beginning of the 2000s and affecting SSH:

- shortage in financing SSH research;
- mimicry of knowledge production by a part of social science community instead of producing a new knowledge by the means of absorbing Western experiences and new opportunities appeared after the dissolution of the former Soviet Union;
- expensiveness of serious empirical research and also lack of financing of fundamental reflections in social sciences.

In the current situation in SSH, the experts detected:

- Dispersion of the social science academic community;
- Lack of a good quality level of scientific expertise and of infrastructure providing enough funding for social science research;
- Predominance of small research projects and of practical applications, depending on conjuncture of current needs, in social knowledge productions;
- A certain tension between a need of new ideas and paradigms, on the one hand, and poor conditions for knowledge productions (mentioned above), on the other hand;
- A deficiency in fundamental reflections about the changing society in Russia.

In the international aspect:

- The problem of *lingua franca*: A very minor part of Russian social scientists (of a middle age and the elder generation) is able to communicate with their colleagues abroad in foreign languages.
- The lack of availability of collaborative programmes and mechanisms which allow Russian scientists to invite foreign colleagues to carry out joint research.

In history:

- Medieval history (the French Medieval society, the Italian Medieval society, the Renaissance period, and the Early Absolutism in England)
- Russian history of different periods (Medieval, and the Tsarist Russia, the Soviet Russia)
- access to Russian archives through collaboration with Russian historians
- international relations of different Soviet periods

In philosophy:

- **philosophical reflections about artificial intelligence and its applications in different fields of science**
- **bio-ethics**
- **medical ethics in the part of knowledge based systems or expert systems**

In economics:

- different aspects of Russian economy in projects of international organisations (OECD, IMF, WB) and translational corporations, heavily investing in R&D
- competitiveness
- emerging sectors of the economy (e.g. services)
- corporate sector of the Russian economy
- innovations and the issues of creation of National Innovation System
- economics of agriculture

In sociology and political science:

- demographic trends
- migration (labour migration, trends in global migration)
- research on corruption and bribery
- social policy issues (poverty, the effects of governmental social policy in transition, social marginalisation in big cities)
- youth, xenophobia and extremism
- environmental issues

Specific fields of the humanities:

- Semiotics
- Linguistics
- Cultural anthropology
- Cultural studies (the Soviet cinema, theatre, and poetry; European theatre and cinema; American cinema and the Hollywood)

- To summarize the brief study, done in this project, only one thing could be said definitely: SSH perspective and their internationalisation in Russia are very unclear.
- Although different mechanisms of SSH support, both institutional and individual, were developed in the last 15 years, SSH community remains amorphous and very much divided by different “clubs of interest”.
- SSH agenda mostly responds to the momentary demand and conjuncture rather than to fundamental societal problems.
- However I suspect that this is not only the Russian specific situation.

Thank you!