

COLLECTIVE SOCIAL RIGHTS AND THEIR SOCIAL FUNCTIONS IN RUSSIA

Ildar Zulkarnay
Rusya Bilimler Akademisi

Ellen Rosskam
Massachusetts Üniversitesi

ABSTRACT

Changes in the Russian government's application of "guaranteed equal social rights in access to high and higher education" in Russia have resulted in important negative social consequences. The Russian Constitution contains fundamental laws and principles prescribing equal rights in access to education for all citizens. These guaranteed social rights however, are not applied equally across the country's population, resulting in some groups benefiting from social advantages while others suffer from disadvantages. While unequal access to higher education existed during the Soviet period it did not create as many social problems as it does today. In the USSR, higher education was free, a public service provided by the State, with universities providing students with free accommodation and stipends, sufficient to cover the cost of travel to cities where students could attend university. This system was destroyed by the neo-liberal reforms in Russia introduced during the 1990s following the collapse of the USSR.

Keywords: social rights, access to high and higher education, ethnic minorities, rights to keep ethnic languages and cultures.

This paper is part of a work-in-progress for a book chapter on this subject.

Introduction

Widely known among the Russian population, the Russian Federation's Law on "Education" establishes the right of every citizen to receive education, provided (for free) by the State. With regard to higher education, the State guarantees citizens access to free higher education on a competitive basis with the condition that the individual is pursuing that level of education level for the first time. Those who developed this legislation, debated it and then voted for or against it invested a different meaning in the term "accessible", or, at the very minimum, understood the different sides of the term "accessible." In its narrow sense accessibility implies the absence of specific legislative restrictions, which legislators under the USSR were aware took place in different countries and at different periods, targeting particular nationalities, ethnic groups or castes (as in India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, for example). Where a national consensus or the political will of authorities has led to free universal access to higher education, then it should follow that the abolition of any restrictive laws which are discriminatory in nature should suffice in achieving this desired outcome.

It appears, however, that this goal is very difficult to achieve and reality reveals a quite different picture from that which often is initially declared and desired. For example, following the legislative removal of all racial segregation restrictions on African Americans' access to schooling in the United States, white,

federal authorities resorted to the use of armed force to control the public expression of “collective voice.” This example highlights the need for a broad understanding of the term “accessibility,” one that includes the absence of institutional barriers, such as traditions or covert resistance. “Accessibility” must also be understood to recognize and redress objectively existing physical barriers, such as the geographical remoteness of potential consumers of services from their places of production.

Eliminating or at least leveling barriers is necessary to implement a policy of universal access to higher education. In the Russian Federation, the financing and provision of management services to higher education is the prerogative of the federal government. This paper attempts to identify indicators of the State’s regional policies through an analysis of inter-regional differences in the federally mandated universal access to higher education.

Methods

The extent of the challenge faced by Russia’s federal government in implementing this constitutional right provided to all Russian citizens may reflect, to a great extent, the actual costs to the federal level for higher education in the regions. Attempts to identify data on actual costs to the federal level were not successful due to limitations in data availability. The budgets for various key areas of federal spending are posted on the website www.minfin.ru as well as budgets of regions (sub-national units of the Russian Federation). The budgets for federal spending contain data on the financing of higher education in the Russian Federation. However these data are provided in terms of costs to regional budgets rather than as overall federal costs related to an individual region. Such data are, of course, also of interest, but not in terms of analyzing the federal policy. Attempts to obtain such data from the Russian Federation’s Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Education of Russia were also unsuccessful due to limitations in data availability.

Given these limitations in the available data, in order to assess the regional policy of the federal level we chose another indicator: the number of students per 10,000 residents among the population of the Russian Federation, using existing statistical compilations [1, 2]. The data we use do not specify the numbers of students enrolled on budgetary and extra budgetary bases. In this connection the question is raised as to how far this indicator can be used as a proxy measure for federal spending in the regions?

Additional research would be required to arrive at accurate answers for this issue, but for the purposes of the analysis in this article we will give a positive answer to this question, based on two arguments. First, the bulk of State university students are enrolled on a budgetary basis (universities also have the right to enroll students on an extra-budgetary basis). Secondly, the percentage of extra-budgetary activities of individual institutions of higher learning varies, but not very widely, and when averaged over individual regions, the variation of the proportion of extra students in the regions is even smaller. Taking this extra share of students among all students of State universities as a constant value for all regions, we can assume that the index number of students per 10,000 inhabitants among the population of the Russian Federation is a fairly reliable equivalent for per capita federal spending on higher education in the regions. Thus, the basis of our calculations to assess the affordability of higher education will be used measure of the number of students in the region per 10,000 residents:

$$N_i^{per\ capita} = \frac{N_i^{students}}{N_i^{citizens}} * 10000 \quad (1)$$

where $N_i^{students}$, $N_i^{citizens}$, respectively, refers to the number of students and residents in the region i.

Based on this index, for the purpose of the present analysis, we expected several indicators. One of the major indicators identified is the ratio of the maximum availability of student places to the minimum availability among the subjects of the Russian Federation calculated as:

$$I_{min}^{max} = \frac{N_{max}^{per\ capita}}{N_{min}^{per\ capita}} \quad (2)$$

Where $N_{max}^{per\ capita}$ refers to the number of students per 10,000 inhabitants in the subject of the federation with a maximum value of this indicator among all regions, and where $N_{min}^{per\ capita}$ refers to the

number of students per 10,000 inhabitants among the population of the Russian Federation, with a minimum value of this indicator among all regions.

Calculating this ratio revealed a limitation due to the fact that in the early 1990s in some regions the federal level did not offer services for higher education. For example, statistical analysis showed that this indicator equals zero for the Leningrad region. This finding is probably due to the fact that in Soviet times it was considered inappropriate to place higher education in towns of the regions that were close to the centers of higher education. The city of Leningrad, located in the middle of the Leningrad region, was already saturated with institutions of higher education. Accordingly $N_{\min}^{\text{per capita}}=0$ and the index (2) is impossible to calculate for that particular region. In this context, to evaluate the minimum limits for the provision of student places, we also used the average of the provision of student places on the ten regions with the minimum values, including zero:

$$N_{10 \min}^{\text{per capita}} = \frac{\sum_{j=1}^{10} N_{j \min}^{\text{per capita}}}{10} \quad (3)$$

On this basis, the index was calculated as

$$I_{10 \min}^{\max} = \frac{N_{\max}^{\text{per capita}}}{N_{10 \min}^{\text{per capita}}} \quad (4)$$

having the same meaning as the index I_{\min}^{\max} but avoiding the limitation mentioned above.

If one builds all regions by descending indicators, then it is interesting to note the findings of the ratio of average values of this indicator for the upper half of the list to the average of this indicator for regions of the lower half of the list:

$$I_{2 \text{ HALF}}^{\text{HALF}} = \frac{\frac{\sum_{j=1}^{N_{\text{HALF}}} N_{j \max}^{\text{per capita}}}{N_{\text{HALF}}}}{\frac{\sum_{l=1}^{N_{\text{HALF}}} N_{l \min}^{\text{per capita}}}{N_{\text{HALF}}}} \quad (5)$$

Here N_{HALF} equals half of the total number of subjects of the Russian Federation, in general, different for different years, since the number of subjects of the Federation changed; and $N_{j \max}^{\text{per capita}}$ equals the number of students per 10,000 inhabitants in the region j from the top of the list of regions, with i having the greatest value of this indicator; and where $N_{j \min}^{\text{per capita}}$ equals the number of students per 10,000 inhabitants in the region l from the bottom of the list of regions, therefore having the smallest value of this indicator.

We also calculated decile ratios and Gini coefficients by regions. Given that the absolute value of the grouping variable changes over time, this leads to a change in the value of intervals. In this regard, the analysis of the dynamics of inter-regional differentiation in access to higher education is important in order to analyze data between groups of regions, for example, between 10% of the regions in which the greatest amount of access to higher education and 10% with the least access. In this paper we have examined the relationship between the latter and the first deciles.

Discussion

Inter-regional inequality: Public sector

Significant territorial unevenness in providing services of higher education in per capita terms is found through analysis of the Gini coefficient. To calculate this factor, we used the indicator of the number of students in State universities in regions. For all regions, we have ranked and grouped into decile groups by number of students per 10,000 inhabitants in subject ($N_i^{\text{per capita}}$). In calculating the Gini coefficient we used two groups.

TABLE 1 PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Country	Canada	United States	Russia				
Years	1998-1999	2007	1990	1995	2000	2005	2007
Gini coefficient	0.114	0.051	0.246	0.208	0.210	0,189	0.191
I_{\min}^{\max}	6.25	2.07	-	-	-	-	77
$I_{10\min}^{\max}$	-	-	43	12	10	6	6
Decile coefficient	-	-	43	38	35	23	17
$I_{2\text{HALF}}^{1\text{HALF}}$	1.94	1.17	2.4	2.1	1.9	1.7	1.6

To reveal the dynamics of regional differentiation in accessibility to higher education in Russia statistical data for the period of 1990-2007 have been used. As we can see from Table 1, from 1990-2007 there was a downward trend in inter-regional differentiations between those regions provided with the most in universal access to higher education, and those provided with the least in terms of services, per capita. This trend is revealed by all the factors and indices, with the only exception being I_{\min}^{\max} , a value which was possible to calculate only for the year 2007, due to the limitations discussed above, i.e. the existence of regions with a zero number of student places. Notwithstanding this limitation, a statistically valid proxy measure was used: the coefficient $I_{10\min}^{\max}$, which fell from 43 in 1990 to 6 in 2007. A significant reduction in inter-regional differentiation is evidenced also by the decile ratio (from 43 in 1990 to 17 in 2007), the coefficient $I_{2\text{HALF}}^{1\text{HALF}}$ (from 2.4 in 1990 to 1.6 in 2007), and the Gini coefficient by region (from 0.246 in 1990 to 0.191 in 2007).

In this context, the question arises whether these findings are evidence of the existence of and implementation of the regional policy of the federal level aimed at equalizing the provision of services across the country. Our analysis leads us to conclude that the answer to this question is negative. We draw this conclusion based on the sum total of the following four explanations.

First, the general public has not been informed about the presence of such a federal program aimed at equalizing the provision of and access to higher education services across the country. Of equal importance, federal authorities have not even articulated an understanding of the existence of this problem of unequal access, believing, apparently, that the presence of the constitutional provision is equivalent to the realization of the principle of equal access.

Secondly, despite a general trend towards alignment between 1990 and 2007, locally this downward trend was not sustainable. For example, in 2007, there was a slight increase in the Gini coefficient for “regions”, from 0.181 to 0.191.

Thirdly, notwithstanding the fact that the inter-regional differentiation in access to higher education has been reduced it still remains significant. The high degree of uneven provision of services by region is demonstrated by the indicator I_{\min}^{\max} , which reveals a difference of 77 in the provision of student places per 10,000 population among regions even in 2007. The different and highly unequal degree of accessibility to higher education services between the regions becomes even more evident when analyzing the distribution of the number of students by decile groups. This analysis reveals that in 1990, close to 20% (18.7%) of the total number of students enrolled in State universities belonged to the last decile groups, which included only the Moscow region, while the first three decile groups, consisting of 65 regions, represented 43% of the total student population. In contrast, in 2007, the last decile group, which included slightly over 10% of the whole population of Russia, accounted for 22% of students matriculating in institutions of higher education. This demonstrates a high degree of inequality in access to higher education between the regions, which again

confirms the thesis that the federal law on universal and equal access to higher education has not been implemented, and regional policies have not rectified these inequalities.

Finally, a comparison of Russia with the United States and Canada by Gini coefficient and other indicators shows that even after substantial equalization occurred in Russia between 1990-2007, the inequality of higher education service provision in Russia is still much higher than that found in countries comparable to the Russian Federation in terms of size and diversity of population and regions. The decentralized system of financing higher education in the United States, where the role of the State and corporations is prominent, provides a fairly high level of uniformity of these services across regions of the United States. Indeed, the difference between the states having the highest and those having the lowest number of students in the USA is only 2 times, and in Canada 6 times for its provinces and territories (see index I_{\min}^{\max} in Table 1).

In the U.S., the rate $I_{2\text{HALF}}^{\text{HALF}}$ is 1.17, which is significantly below the same indicator for Russia. In Canada the rate $I_{2\text{HALF}}^{\text{HALF}}$ is 1.94, indicating that inequality in access to higher education is much higher in Canada than in the United States. This finding, however, is mainly affected by the Northwest Territories and Yukon province, both of which have very small populations, more specifically two orders of magnitude lower than the populations of other Canadian provinces. For example, in the Northwest Territories there are 42,000 inhabitants but only 269 students, a ratio of 0.006, indicating a low availability of higher education services in the region.

However, it is clear that increasing the number of institutions of higher education in Canada's northern states of the Northwest Territories and Yukon province would not increase the accessibility of education services due to the small populations in those regions. In addition, because the populations of these two regions are dispersed and the geographical size of the regions is great, it is much easier for people to go to southern regions of Canada for higher education. Support from the State facilitates this movement. Based on this reasoning, it is logical to drop these two regions when assessing the degree of uniformity of service provision of higher education in the country. After making this statistical adjustment, the indicator for equality/inequality in access to higher education Canada becomes 1.5. These findings allow us to conclude that both the U.S. and Canada, as large countries with a federal system, have implemented much more effective regional policies in the field of access to higher education compared to the Russian Federation.

This comparison of Russia with the United States and Canada shows that Russia has not been developing an effective regional policy aimed at improving access to public higher education services, despite the fact that the basic functions of both funding and management of universities are concentrated at the federal level, not at the regional level.

Thus, the general tendency toward the equalization of universal access to higher educational services across the Russian Federation would appear to be a phenomenon *not* due to the presence of a federal program which exists only on paper and not in reality, but due to other causes. We would posit that in actuality, the following four main causal factors are at work in Russia, and that these factors are the catalysts for any real improvements achieved in equalizing universal access, recognizing that gross inequality continues to exist:

- a) increased and strengthened regional pressure on the federal level for the development of services within the sub-national territories;
- b) funding additional higher education services from regional budgets in order to increase the number of student places in the territories of the sub-national unit of the federation;
- c) increased effort by individual universities to increase the number of student places through the development of "commercial acceptance"¹; and
- d) a growth in the natural market process, whereby universities open branches in other regions to develop new markets.

It would appear that the last three reasons are the most significant. In 1990 tuition-based and private education did not exist. As such, students did not have to pay for higher education services; they studied only on a budgetary basis in the State universities of Russia. It is our view that any reductions in inter-regional differentiation in the years following 1990 and the collapse of the USSR can be explained by the fact that during the introduction of neo-liberal reforms the public universities captured an opportunity to raise extra-

¹ "Commercial acceptance" refers to tuition-based education, which in turn has introduced a different and broad set of problems contributing to unequal access based on family means, and which serves to create an entrenched class-based system of access to higher education. Additionally, "commercial acceptance" would appear to be a mechanism for the commodification of higher education; it already has led to the marketization of higher education.

budgetary funds, allowing for the additional intake of students on an extra-budgetary basis.² These extra-budgetary funds have, in turn, enabled many universities to open branches in the regions where the demand for higher education previously and consistently exceeded the supply. As a result, access to higher education services has increased, albeit inequality of access persists.

In addition, the post-1990 neo-liberal reforms resulted in the State offering opportunities to create a private sector in higher professional education. This action can indeed be regarded as an outcome of regional policy implementation driven at and by the federal level, but is not clearly related to any policy of alignment, or equalization, since such policies could lead to both increased and reduced regional disparities in access to public higher education. In this regard, we assessed the effects of de-regulation, which facilitated the growth of the private sector in higher education.

Inter-regional inequality: Public or private?

For this purpose, we analyzed inter-regional imbalances in the amount of higher education services provided by the private sector, in per capita terms. The analysis was performed using the same pattern as that used in the analysis of inter-regional differentiations in the delivery of higher education services by the State.

The dynamics of the Gini coefficient “by regions” for the period 1990-2007 reveals a steady downward trend, indicating a decrease in the amount of differentiation of services of higher education between the regions. These findings are presented in Table 2. Other coefficients introduced in this study indicate an alignment of inter-regional differences in access to services of higher education on a commercial basis.

TABLE 2: PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Year	1995	2000	2005	2007
Gini coefficient	0.406	0.359	0.297	0.297
I_{10min}^{max}		795	44	38
I_{min}^{max}	-	-	-	-
Decile coefficient	93	24	19	18
I_{2HALF}^{1HALF}	390	5.9	3.3	3.1

As shown in Tables 1 and 2, the Gini coefficient in the public sector is below the Gini coefficient in the private sector of higher education. This finding indicates that the State provision of higher education across the regions is more even than the provision of higher education from the private sector. The reason for this distinction in the early 1990s was that the private universities developed primarily in regions with high effective demand, such as Moscow and St. Petersburg - the regions that also have a high concentration of private wealth accumulated after the introduction of neo-liberal reforms post 1990. At the end of the 1990s and since then, the private sector has developed mostly in regions with low public sector provision, because the demand for higher education previously and consistently exceeded the supply. Rapid growth of the private sector in such regions created a bit of balance with the private sector development in Moscow and reduced inter-regional differentiation in this share.

Based on the analysis of inter-regional differentiation in the volume of services of higher education provided both by the State and by the private sector, we can draw the following conclusions:

² The extra-budgetary basis refers to funds separate from those provided by the federal level.

1. In general, inter-regional differentiation in the volume of services of higher education – those provided both by the State and by the private sector – diminished between 1990 and 2007. Notwithstanding, inter-regional differentiation is still considerable when compared with that found in the United States and Canada.

2. However, inter-regional differentiation in the volume of services of higher education is higher in the private sector of higher education compared with the degree of inequality found to persist in the public sector. The private sector of higher education services has received intensive development in those regions that exhibit the least amount of services of higher education provided by the public sector. Together these factors lead to an increase in social inequality in population-wide access to higher education services.

3. At the same time, the non-State, or private sector also has evolved in areas where there is already a high level of provision of educational services by the State, among these being Moscow. This development is explained by the fact that such areas have a greater proportion of people able to pay private tuition than in the regions.

4. The observed inter-regional differentiation in the volume or availability of services of higher education - those provided by both the State and by the private sector – is, in our view, a result of the federal level's passive policies towards the regions. Indeed, we observe that such differentiation is the result of the complete absence of a specific policy for State-provided higher education services at the regional levels.

Inequality of access: An ethnic phenomenon?

Given that Russia is a multi-ethnic country, it is of noteworthy interest to explore inter-ethnic accessibility to higher education services. Russia is administratively and regionally divided into two main categories. One category includes the “ethnic republics,” such as the Republic of Tatarstan or the Republic of Bashkortostan. The other category includes administrative districts of Russia, called “oblast” and “kray.” The majority (approximately 80%) of the population of Russia is ethnic Russian.³ Non-Russians are located primarily in the ethnic republics and autonomous regions, but also are found in other regions and territories where they make up the ethnic minorities of those particular regions and territories. Concurrently, Russians (not ethnic Russians) also constitute a significant proportion of the population of the ethnic republics. All of these factors complicate any analysis of the question of whether equal access to higher education is found among ethnic minorities.

For the purposes of our analysis we make the following assumptions: Since people of non-Russian ethnic background are a minority in all non-ethnic districts and constitute a very small percentage of the population of all non-ethnic districts (on average 7 per cent across all non-ethnic districts), we assume that higher education services in non-ethnic districts mostly characterize accessibility to these goods for ethnic Russians rather than for non-Russian ethnicities/minorities, such as Tatars, Bashkirs, Chechens.

In general, non-ethnic Russians are concentrated in the ethnic republics (for example, non-ethnic Russians account for up to 60% of the population of Tatarstan, which is an ethnic republic). Although ethnic Russians may make up considerable proportions of the population of the ethnic republics, we assume that the saturation of student places in the ethnic republics reflects the access of ethnic minorities of Russia to higher education services.

To test the hypothesis of whether ethnic Russians have any advantage in access to higher education compared with non-ethnic Russians, we have treated all non-ethnic districts as one entity, which we denote as “Russia without republics.” Within this category we include the general population and students of all regions of the Russian Federation with the exception of the ethnic republics.

Having ordered all ethnic republics together with the artificial category named “Russia without the republics,” in the order of increasing number of students per 10,000 population (Table 3), we are able to make some interesting observations and conclusions. First of all, the unevenness of accessibility to services of higher education among the combined population of the ethnic republics is striking: the ratio of the maximum to the minimum of number of student places per 10,000 inhabitants across the ethnic republics was 1 to 4 in 1990 and 1 to 3 in 2007. Once more, this finding indicates that the principle of universal access to higher education has not been implemented, this time measured by access to higher education by ethnic minorities, even when taking into account the non-ethnic Russian populations of the ethnic republics.

³ In this article the terms “ethnic Russians” and “ethnic Russian population” refer to those who belong to purely Russian ethnicity. The terms “non-ethnic Russians,” “non-ethnic Russian population,” and “ethnic minorities in Russia” refer to people who are Russian citizens but who also belong to other ethnicities that are not purely Russian, for example Tatars, Chechens, and Bashkirs.

However, it should be noted that this gap has decreased during the post-Soviet period. The decrease in this gap may be a result of pressures from those republics which had the least provision of these services, such as pressures levied by Sakha (Yakutia), Komi, and Tuva, who were very active in lobbying for the development of education services in their territories after neo-liberal reforms started in the 1990s.

TABLE 3 NUMBER OF STUDENTS PER 10,000 POPULATION IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN THE ETHNIC REPUBLICS FOR 1990 AND 2007

	Republic	1990		Republic	2007
1	Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)	0.007	1	Republic of Ingushetia	0.016
2	Republic of Komi	0.008	2	Republic of Tuva	0.018
3	Republic of Tuva	0.009	3	Altai Republic	0.023
4	Karachay-Cherkessia Republic	0.001	4	Republic of Chechnya	0.025
5	Republic of Khakassia	0.011	5	Kabardino-Balkar Republic	0.028
6	Republic of Chechnya	0.012	6	Republic of Karelia	0.031
7	Republic of Adygea	0.012	7	Republic of Komi	0.032
8	Republic of Karelia	0.013	8	Republic of Kalmykia	0.033
9	Republic of Bashkortostan	0.013	9	Republic of Mari El	0.035
10	Altai Republic	0.014	10	Republic of Bashkortostan	0.036
11	Republic of Ingushetia	0.014	11	Karachay-Cherkessia Republic	0.036
12	Republic of Chuvashia	0.014	12	Republic of Khakassia	0.036
13	Dagestan Republic	0.015	13	Dagestan Republic	0.039
14	Udmurt Republic	0.015	14	Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)	0.040
15	Republic of Kalmykia	0.015	15	Republic of North Ossetia - Alania	0.042
16	Kabardino-Balkar Republic	0.016	16	Republic of Adygea	0.044
17	Republic of Tatarstan	0.019	17	Udmurt Republic	0.044
18	Republic of Buryatia	0.020	18	Republic of Buryatia	0.044
19	Russia (without Republics)	0.020	19	Republic of Tatarstan	0.044
20	Republic of Mari El	0.020	20	Russia (without Republics)	0.045
21	Republic of Mordovia	0.023	21	Republic of Mordovia	0.048
22	Republic of North Ossetia - Alania	0.029	22	Republic of Chuvashia	0.052

In Soviet times, a great deal of attention was paid to accelerating the development of the non-ethnic Russians because many of them were less developed compared to ethnic Russians. This unequal development

was the result of restrictions that existed in Tsarist Russia prior to the 1917 Revolution. Despite the extra attention paid during Soviet times however, “Russia without republics” still appears to have enjoyed a greater degree of provision of higher education services than most of the ethnic republics, in both 1990 and 2007 (see Table 3). This finding suggests that most areas with dense settlements of ethnic Russians are more secure in their number of available places for students than most areas where there are significant proportions of non-ethnic Russians. We can, thus, conclude that in spite of the 70-year history of the Soviet policy designed to ensure equal access to higher education for all citizens, ethnic Russians have continued to maintain greater access to higher education than non-ethnic Russians.

Interestingly, some republics nevertheless have appeared to remain ahead of the artificially collapsed category called “Russia without the republics.” This finding leads us to posit that the population of these republics has greater access to higher education than even the ethnic Russians, on average, in Russia. In 1990 the republics of Mari El, Mordovia, and North Ossetia -Alania remained ahead of the category “Russia without the republics,” while in 2007 the republics of Mordovia and Chuvashia remained ahead. It is noteworthy that none of these republics had any great economic, scientific and technical potential, nor large populations or large geographic areas, such as those found in Tatarstan and Bashkortostan. For example, the populations of the republics of Mari El, Mordovia, North Ossetia - Alania, Mordovia and Chuvashia vary from 0.7 million to 1.2 million people, whereas 3.7 and 4.1 million people live in Tatarstan and Bashkortostan, respectively.

The same study was conducted for the private sector, the results of which showed that the ethnic republics have more students enrolled on a commercial basis than “Russia without the republics” has in per capita terms (Table 4).

TABLE 4 NUMBER OF STUDENTS PER 10,000 POPULATION IN PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN THE ETHNIC REPUBLICS

	Republic	1995		Republic	2007
1	Republic of Ingushetia	0	1	Altai Republic	0.003
2	Republic of Tuva	0	2	Republic of Kalmykia	0.004
3	Altai Republic	0	3	Republic of Tuva	0.006
4	Republic of Chechnya	0	4	Republic of Chechnya	0.006
5	Kabardino-Balkaria	0	5	Republic of Adygea	0.007
6	Republic of Karelia	0	6	Karachay-Cherkessia	0.007
7	Republic of Komi	0	7	Russia (without Republics)	0.008
8	Republic of Kalmykia	0	8	Republic of Khakassia	0.009
9	Republic of Bashkortostan	0	9	Republic of Mari El	0.010
10	Karachay-Cherkessia	0	10	Republic of North Ossetia	0.010
11	Republic of North Ossetia	0	11	Republic of Ingushetia	0.010
12	Republic of Adygea	0	12	Republic of Mordovia	0.011

13	Udmurt Republic	0	13	Republic of Karelia	0.012
14	Republic of Buryatia	0	14	Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)	0.013
15	Republic of Chuvashia	0	15	Kabardino-Balkaria	0.016
16	Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)	0.0003	16	Republic of Buryatia	0.016
17	Republic of Mordovia	0.0005	17	Republic of Komi	0.017
18	Republic of Tatarstan	0.0006	18	Republic of Chuvashia	0.024
19	Republic of Mari El	0.0008	19	Udmurt Republic	0.027
20	Republic of Khakassia	0.0011	20	Dagestan Republic	0.039
21	Russia (without Republics)			Republic of Bashkortostan	0.052
22	Dagestan Republic	0.0025	22	Republic of Tatarstan	0.064

Conclusions

These findings reveal that in 2007, only 6 republics of the total 21 had fewer students in per capita terms, compared with the artificially created category “Russia without republics.” Also in 2007 the private sector’s presence in education in “Russia without republics” was 6.5 times less than that found in the Republic of Bashkortostan and 8 times less than in the Republic of Tatarstan, in per capita terms. It would thus appear that the non-State, i.e. private sector of higher education has developed more in the ethnic republics than in the non-ethnic “Russian” regions. From this finding we may conclude that the non-Russian population of Russia is compelled to a greater degree than the ethnic Russian population to rely on their own wallets than on the State to obtain higher education. In fact, this finding is not surprising because, as shown in Table 3, the populations of the ethnic republics have been disadvantaged in the amount and availability of publicly-provided higher education services compared to non-ethnic regions. Inhabitants of the ethnic republics have been, therefore, directly and negatively impacted by policies generated at the federal level.

Our analysis of inter-regional differentiation in the provision of higher education services allows us to conclude that the regional policy for higher education does not fulfill the requirements proscribed by the law on “Education” in terms of assuring implementation of the principle of universal access to higher education for all citizens of the Russian Federation, regardless of the region or territory in which they live. Violation of the principles embedded in this law is manifested in the significant differences in the availability of these essential public services for the populations of different areas of the country. In addition, different ethnic groups exhibit significant variation in access to State-provided higher education services. Where equal access to higher education for all ethnicities does not exist, the ethnic Russian population has, in general, an advantage in access to publicly funded higher education compared to most ethnic minorities in Russia.

Regional disparities in higher education existed in the USSR and were even more pronounced than they are now. During the Soviet period however, there were some central policies that had leveled to a considerable extent the effects of these imbalances. First, during the planning and financing of institutions of higher education the Soviet government accorded importance to the development of dormitories for students. This system was particularly developed in the universities located in Moscow and St. Petersburg. During the neo-liberal reforms of the 1990s State funding for dormitories imploded. This funding was reduced both in absolute and relative terms, relative to the total number of student places. Secondly, in the Soviet period there

was a program for training citizens of ethnic minorities. To comply with this federal program, metropolitan universities allocated a quota for admission of applicants from the ethnic republics. As a result of neo-liberal reforms in Russia, this program also ceased to exist.

A final and fundamental conclusion to be drawn from the analyses presented in this article is the following: violation of the principle of universal access to higher education is not necessarily the result of faulty or malicious regional policies at the federal level. The failure to achieve universal access is a result of a lack of sound regional policies, the goals of which need to be achievement of universal access to State-provided higher education for all areas of the country, and for all ethnic groups in the Russian Federation.

References:

1. Regions of Russia. Socio-economic indicators, 2008: P32 Rosstat, 999 p.
2. Federal State Statistics Service of the Russian Federation:
http://www.gks.ru/bgd/regl/b08_11/IssWWW.exe/Stg/d01/08-10.htm