THE OXFORD ENCYCLOPEDIA OF
RACE, ETHNICITY, AND COMMUNICATION

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EDUCATION AND ETHNICITY IN CONTEMPORARY RUSSIA

INTRODUCTION

Ethnicity (*etnichnost'*) is a crucial element of public life in Russia. This article focuses on it as a factor in educational policy and practice. Society reproduces its identity through education. Therefore, ethnicity in education may be considered from organic, constructivist, and relativistic perspectives in the definition of a national society. Can a nation be viewed as an absolute given, a single organic entity with common interests? Or is it a political construct used by the state to mobilize society to address the problems it has identified? The relativist theory accepts ethnic pluralism, recognizing individual languages and cultures as contributing to a civil nation and state.

This article considers state educational policy as a system of measures aimed at ensuring fundamental rights and freedoms and considering the interests of the individual, groups, society as a whole, and the state regarding the content, quality, and relevance of education. First, education both reflects and shapes social relations in economics, politics, ideology, culture, the public sphere, and everyday private life. The result is a complex and fluid context that affects specific situations in education. Second, there are formal and informal structures through which educational programs and curricula are developed, delivered, and assessed. These include humanitarian and social educational projects intended to resolve or at least mitigate the problems of ethnic politics and interethnic relations. Third, there are individual students, their families, and their teachers, from different ethnic groups.

Ethnicity in education is thus found at various levels and in different contexts. There is the macrolevel of state ideology, public policy, public opinion, and mass media; the mesolevel of educational institutions and local communities; and the microlevel of personal experience and self-identification. These levels are interconnected and must resolve existing contradictions, but this happens in diverse ways. In a democratic society, these problems are discussed and resolved through dialogue and the participation of all stakeholders. In a state with authoritarian traditions, such as Russia , contradictions are hidden, and the role of civil society in their actualization and resolution is insignificant. Problems arise related to the implementation of ethnic interests. This is the chief reason the question of ethnicity in education is so acute.

These tensions explain why in Russian language and literature the idea of "nation" (*natzia*) is expressed in diverse ways. First, the idea of the nation refers to an *ethnos* when, together with social and demographic characteristics, an ethnic differentiation from others is accepted. Second, it refers to co-citizenship, a political association of citizens of a given state. In the early 21st century, cultural diversity and equal participation of people in public life regardless of ethnicity or nationality are recognized.[1] Yet, among politicians and in the mass consciousness, calls continue for the "strengthening of the unity of the Russian nation" by which is meant an ethnicity (Drobizheva, 2020). The term "people" has similar meanings, but to a greater extent it is used as a historical and sociocultural community, and in scientific literature, it is used to a lesser extent as an operational definition.

In addition, there are differences in the definition of ethnic groups in relation to the inhabited territory and to one another. An ethnic group is an ambiguous term for distinct types of subethnic communities that are not reducible to a nation or people. An example of an ethnic group is an ethnic minority. An ethnic minority usually refers to a part of the representatives of a certain ethnic community living in an alien environment outside the boundaries of traditional settlement and continuing to preserve their identity, language, and culture. Because ethnic Russians constitute a demographic majority in Russia, we refer to the term "ethnic minority" for all non-Russian ethnic groups in Russia.

"Indigenous peoples sparse in number" (fewer than 50,000 people) constitute an exceptional group of ethnic minorities. These include, first of all, the Indigenous peoples of the North, Siberia, and the Far East. These peoples preserve their traditional way of life, economy, and crafts, and ethnic self-identity, which in the early 21st century are threatened by large industrial companies ousting them from their places of traditional residence. Unfortunately, the state, through its information policy and legal decisions, limits the representation and protection of such peoples' interests and rights. Moreover, state policy toward Indigenous peoples will increasingly be irrelevant, contradictory, and impulsive.

A separate set of problems emerges from the relationship of ethnically related Slavic peoples—Russians, Belarusians, and Ukrainians. The peculiarity is that all three peoples were perceived as part of the "great Russian nation" and were never considered ethnic minorities. Such relations have always had significant importance in state policy because they had the potential to develop a civil rather than an imperial nation. The nature of this relationship is now one of dispute and open warfare.

At the macrolevel, ethnic political and thus educational policies dominate. This emphasizes the status of ethnic groups, national and international norms in interethnic relations, the goals and methods of constructing ethnic/national identity, and the role of public institutions (Drobizheva, 2016; Gorshkov & Tikhonova, 2005). Such an educational policy views ethnic and racial issues in terms of the participation of minorities in formal educational systems and the potential role of education in reducing discrimination and xenophobia in civil society.

At the mesolevel, the key problems are the peculiarities of ethnic culture and social organization; the interethnic interaction in local communities; and the realization of ethnic cultural interests through everyday life, social resources, and the media. Ethnicity is expressed not so much through political projects and nationalist rhetoric as in everyday encounters, common-sense knowledge, cultural idioms, cognitive schemas, interactional cues, discursive frames, organizational routines, social networks, and institutional forms (Brubaker, 2004, p. 2).

Informal learning and what has been described in the Russian context as a new *popular education* is important here (Morgan et al., 2019a, pp. 6–18). This article examines how priorities in education are perceived by local communities and by ethnic groups. This is where contradictions and conflicts are found and where forms of interaction between ethnic groups and the educational ideas they express are sought (Arefiev, 2014; Morgan et al., 2019b). Nonformal education is also important in interethnic communication, the use of symbols, and sustaining traditions (Trofimova, 2019).

At the microlevel, there are the educational experience and strategies of individuals and their families, and their self-identification with ethnic groups, society, and the state. Individuals from minority groups may also employ ethnic options in how they affirm, reject, or take creative agency in the stereotypes associated with their group. Ethnicity allows people to feel part of a community but does not necessarily constrict individual life choices, and this alternative may be found through education. This article focuses on how at each level such issues affect educational policy and practice in Russia.

INTERETHNIC RELATIONS AND STATE EDUCATIONAL POLICY

The Historical Context. These problems are found throughout the history of Russia with its competing traditional and modernizing projects. The Russian state was formed at the end of the 15th century as a consequence of the unification of several Russian principalities, the population of which comprised the Russian ethnic core. Over the following centuries, Russia expanded its borders, taking in first near and then distant territories together with the local populations. Some territories, especially important in terms of resources, trade, and defense, were the object of clashes with neighboring states and were annexed to Russia through conquest. Others were incorporated through peaceful agreements with local elites over trade, settlement, and exploitation of natural resources. By the end of the 19th century, the Russian Empire (1721–1917) covered a vast territory of more than 22 million km², with a population of approximately 130 million people speaking more than 140 languages. We cannot speak unequivocally about the deliberate suppression of national cultures and languages, but the Russian-speaking public administration, business, and education system gradually ousted other national languages from the public sphere.

The government of territories with Indigenous populations was formalized in the legislation *Ustav ob upravlenii inorodtsev* ["Charter on the government of foreigners"], developed in 1822 by Mikhail Speransky.[2] This divided people according to nationality and class, and many provisions were valid until the October Revolution of 1917. The politician Pyotr Struve expressed the ethnic policy of the Tsarist government in his article *Velikaya Rossiya i Svyataya Rus'* ["Great Russia and Holy Russia"] (Struve, 1914).[3] He called Russia a national imperial state and saw the country's future in the gradual Russification of Indigenous people who were incorporated (Struve, 1914). It should be recognized that this was an era in which radical educational change took place in Central Asia. The Tsarist empire was by no means just a machine for repression but also promoted new forms of secular modernity. This was to be reinforced later by the centralism of the Soviet period (Hosking, 1997, p. 388).

Territories that were inhabited by Belarusians and by Ukrainians at the beginning of the 20th century were part of the Russian Empire as seven western provinces—Grodno, Minsk,

Mogilev, Kyiv, Vitebsk, Volyn, Podolsk. Any attempts to strengthen external influence were perceived painfully and jealously. First was the influence of neighboring Poland and the Roman Catholic Church. To oppose this, the Tsarist government introduced several measures aimed at expanding the use of the Russian language, supporting Russian teachers, prohibiting the secret teaching of the Polish language, and strengthening control over the activities of Catholic priests. Here, Russia's aim was clear: to simultaneously preserve the unity of the East Slavic peoples and keep vast territories in the region.

After the October Revolution of 1917, the Soviet state used multiethnicity to strengthen its power throughout the country, including territories inhabited by Belarusians and by Ukrainians (Lenin, 1951). Joseph Stalin said in *Marksism i natsional'nyy vopros* ["Marxism and the National Question"], first published in 1913, "Social democracy must agitate and influence nations in such a way that nations organize themselves in the greatest accordance with the interests of the proletariat" (Stalin, 1946, p. 356).[4] The key decision was the creation of national subjects of the federation—national republics (both as part of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic [RSFSR] and as part of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics [USSR]), that gave the ethnic minorities equality in the state and the right to self-determination and self-government.[5] At the same time, open ethnic separatism was suppressed.[6] Despite the differences of opinion, there was an official view about the contrast between ethnic processes and policies in the USSR and in the capitalist countries. One of the most authoritative Soviet scientists confirmed the official position that, for the first time in human history , one of the most acute and complex issues, the national question, was successfully resolved in the USSR (Bromley, 1983, p. 3).

On the collapse of the Soviet Union in December 1991, the former union republics within the USSR became independent and formed the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). In Ukraine and Belarus, theories have developed that deny the trinity of the Russian people. These are consistent with the goals of state-building, nationhood, and legitimizing national elites. In Russia, on the contrary, the idea of the unity of Russians, Ukrainians, and Belarusians has intensified and is now integral to its foreign policy doctrine and activities. President Putin has repeatedly and explicitly asserted this (Putin, 2021). His politicized tendentious analysis of the historical past became the ideological basis for the so-called special military operation in Ukraine on February 24, 2022. It is a return to the problem that Tsarist Russia could not solve: to maintain imperial influence to the detriment of the formation of a civil nation within Russia, as evidenced by the support for this aggression by the majority of Russians.

Former national republics within the RSFSR, together with the territorial-administrative units, comprise the Russian Federation. These historical events, both imperial and soviet, remain matters of acute debate about what Russia was and is in the early 21st century—an empire, a nation-state, or neither. At the intersection of these lines, an indefinite and ambivalent official discourse is created, balancing civil and ethnic concepts of statehood (Hutchings & Tolz, 2016, pp. 299–300).

The Russian Federation.   Contemporary Russia has evolved as a large multinational polity. It is a federal state, consisting constitutionally of 85 subjects of the Russian Federation, including 3 federal cities (Moscow, St. Petersburg, Sevastopol, the last of these in disputed Crimea), 56 regions (*oblasts*), 9 territories (*krais*), 4 autonomous districts (*okrugs*), 1 autonomous

region (*oblast*), and 22 national republics. The republic as a part of the Russian Federation is one of the varieties of equal subjects of the Russian Federation. The republics are characterized in the *Constitution of the Russian Federation* as states, but this does not concede state sovereignty. It reflects only certain features of their constitutional and legal status associated with factors of a historical, national, and other nature. Republics adopt their constitutions and have the right to establish their state languages, and also have governmental capitals. The republics occupy 28.55% of the territory of Russia, comprising 18% of the population. The majority of republics were formerly 16 Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republics, parts of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic. These were national-state units, in contrast with administrative-territorial units. The *State Census* (2010) lists more than 180 nationalities in the Russian Federation (Rosstat, 2010, p. 73).

About 80% of citizens are ethnic Russians settled unevenly throughout the country. For example, in the North Caucasian republics of Chechnya, Dagestan, and Ingushetia, Russians are less than 5% of the population. The largest percentage of Russians (82%) is in the Republic of Karelia in northwestern Russia. The titular ethnic population is the majority in some republics, for example in the North Caucasus; in others, such as Khakassia, Komi, and again Karelia, it is in a minority; in other republics such as Mari El, Mordovia, and Tatarstan, the titular ethnos is found equally with Russians. Most ethnic groups do not have a national-state unit (see Figure 1).

Such territorial settlement of nationalities, different national-territorial statuses, and the accompanying interests of ethnic elites make interethnic relations in Russia open to conflict. This reflected the complexity of the 1990s, while the conflict in Chechnya and other parts of the Caucasus continues to affect ethnic relations throughout the Russian Federation (Tishkov, 2004, p. XVI). In the 1990s, the Russian state was too weak to regulate interethnic relations. The key political question was how to maintain Russia as a cohesive state (Morgan et al., 2019b).

On the collapse of the Soviet Union, millions of people, especially ethnic Russians, migrated from the CIS to the new Russian Federation because of its higher living standards, and quality of education.[7] In the early 21st century, Russia ranks fourth among countries attracting international migrants (after the United States, Germany, and Saudi Arabia), but also ranks fourth (after India, Mexico, and China) among those with the largest number of emigrants (IOM, 2019, p. 26). Most immigrants came to Russia from neighboring countries. Studies show that the ethnicity of most migrants corresponds to the titular nationality of the country of origin, but, as we have noted, a significant proportion (11.5%) identify as Russians (Mukomel, 2017, pp. 71–72). These are from Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and Belarus. The majority of migrants from Ukraine are Russians (56.3%).

There are two competing perspectives on state nationalities policy. On the one hand, there is the development of cultural and ethnic diversity. On the other, there is the strengthening of the common identity of the multinational people of Russia (State Duma, 2019a, p. 9). These do not contradict each other necessarily, but in political practice they can have different meanings. For example, it is argued that the promotion of diversity is an artificial interference in an otherwise organic process; it is only necessary to support the state's legal rights and obligations.

An extreme view was taken by the late Vladimir Zhirinovsky, then deputy to the State Duma (Parliament) of the Russian Federation, and leader of the Liberal Democratic Party. He
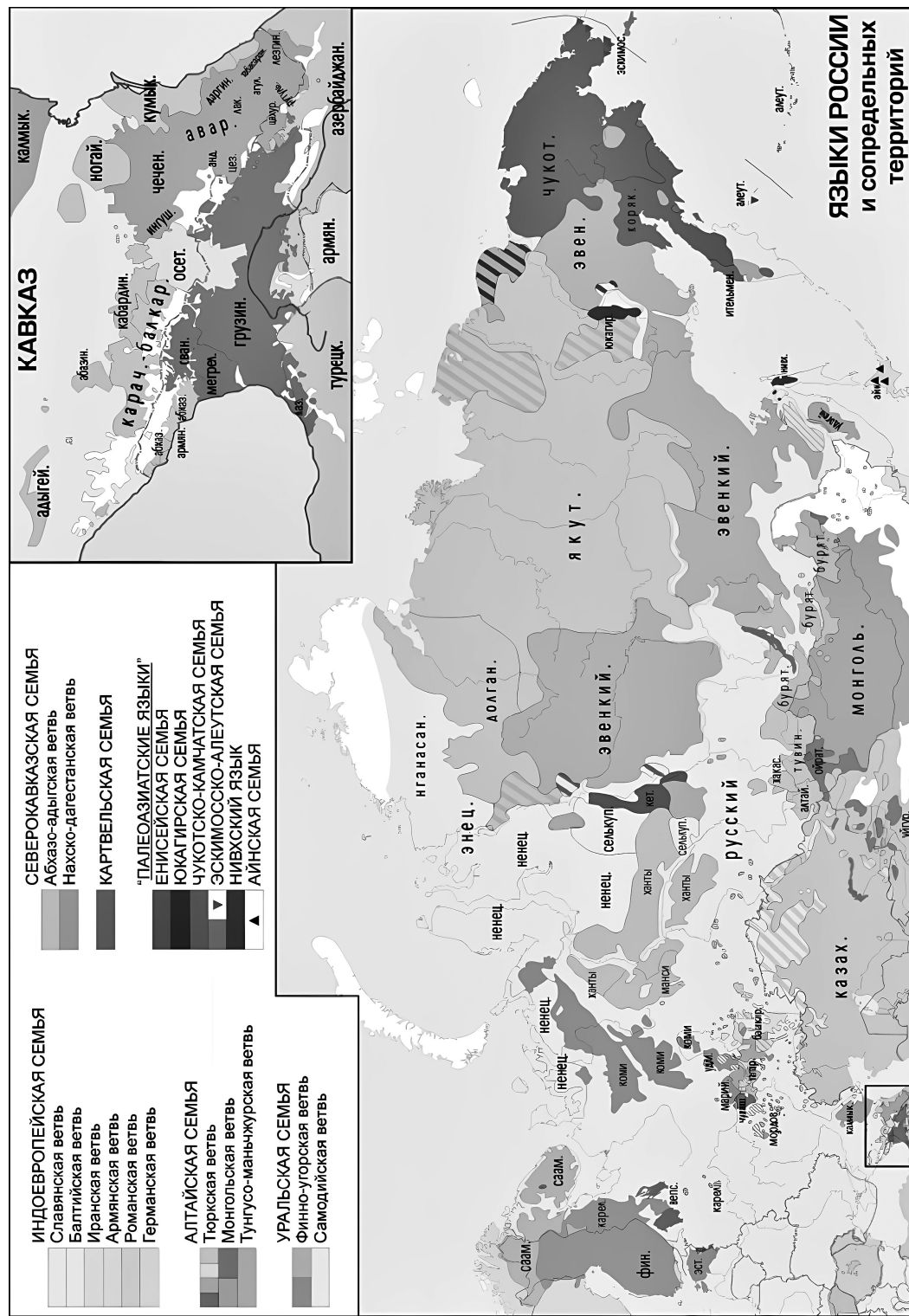
Figure 1. Map of languages spoken in Russia.
Source: Koryakov, 2019.

believed that support for minority languages would lead to a narrowing of the Russian cultural space, which can lead to the erosion of the state and its common values (State Duma, 2019b, p. 18). By contrast, State Duma deputies from the national republics are concerned about the decline of minority languages, language norms for use in education and public life, and their significance in contemporary society (Tishkov, 2016, p. 75). These points of view correspond to the assimilation and multicultural models of national politics, each of which resonates with Russian society. In practice, multiculturalism (i.e., equality of different cultures within one country without complete assimilation) coexists with ethnic intolerance. This is a legacy of both Tsarist and Soviet Russia and is found in the early 21st century. In contemporary Russia, neither of these models can be accepted positively or unambiguously: the multicultural model evokes criticism from the majority, and the assimilation model does not satisfy ethnic minorities, primarily those peoples for whom Russia is a country of origin.

Media in Ethnic Minorities' Languages.　The ethnic situation is reflected in the media space. The list of 136,253 media registered with the Federal Service for Supervision of Communications, Information Technology, and Mass Media (Roskomnadzor) includes 1,204 publications in the languages of the native peoples of Russia, excluding Russian. These include print (newspapers and magazines), television, radio, and online media in Cyrillic.[8] The most widespread are newspapers, which make up almost half of the reviewed media, followed by TV broadcasts (19%), radio broadcasts (15%), online media (10%), and magazines (8%). Most of the media is published in Tatar (328 or 22%). Next in terms of prevalence are the media in the Bashkir, Yakut, Chuvash, and Chechen languages (Table 1).

Circumstances are limiting the influence of ethnic languages media—territorial, audience, publisher foundation, and thematic. The size of the ethnic group and the territory of its settlement, and its national-state status outstrip the number of ethnic language media. For example, there are media in the Tatar language in Bashkortostan, Mari El, and Udmurtia, and also in regions of Orenburg, Samara, Nizhny Novgorod, and Ulyanovsk. On the contrary, the media in the languages of the peoples of Dagestan or the peoples sparse in number of Siberia and the Far North are limited territorially.

Another circumstance concerns the target audience. The interest in reaching the widest audience determines the use of Russian, not ethnic languages. For this reason, federal news, business, advertising, fashion, and leisure use Russian, while local news uses the language of ethnic minorities. This is related to the peculiarities of the media foundation. Russian-language media are more often published by state and private publishers, and ethnic languages media by municipalities, although there are exceptions, for example, some state media in Tatarstan, Bashkortostan, and Chuvashia. Scientific publications in ethnic languages are exceedingly rare; we found only seven scientific journals in Kalmyk, Mari, Crimean Tatar, Ossetian, Udmurt and Chuvash.

The role of ethnic media is noticeably greater when it comes to confessional audiences and territories with ethnic overlap. For example, the Tatar language is the most common in Islamic media, which is addressed to Muslims over a vast territory. In the North Caucasus, densely populated by different ethnic groups, the media use the Dargin, Lezghin, and Avar languages. This differs from the territories of the Far North and the Far East, where the common language is Russian.

Table 1. Mass Media in the Languages of the Ethnic Minority Peoples of Russia

Languages	Number of media	Languages	Number of media	Languages	Number of media
Tatar	328	Kabardian	17	Dolgan	3
Bashkir	91	Laksky	15	Agulsky	2
Yakut	78	Erzyan	15	Koryaksky	2
Chuvash	66	Ingush	14	Nanaysky	2
Chechen	43	Tabasaran	14	Selkup	2
Mari	36	Altaic	12	Tatsky	2
Tuvinian	34	Nenets	12	Uigur	2
Ossetian	31	Karachaevsky	11	Tsakhurskiy	2
Udmurt	31	Nogai	10	Evensky	2
Avar	28	Khakass	9	Eskimo	2
Buryat	28	Evenki	9	Abkhazian	1
Crimean Tatar	27	Chukotka	7	Gagauz	1
Darginsky	26	Abaza	6	Gorno-Mari	1
Lezginsky	25	Khanty	5	Karelian	1
Kumyk	24	Circassian	5	Larsky	1
Komi-Permyatskiy	22	Hebrew	4	Nganasan	1
Moksha	20	Yiddish	4	Rutulsky	1
Adyghe	19	Kabardino-Circassian	4	Talysh	1
Balkarian	18	Mansiysk	4	Enetsky	1
Kalmyk	18	Yukagirsky	4	Total	**1204**

Source: *Roskomnadzor* (2020), List of names of registered media (https://rkn.gov.ru/mass-communications/reestr/media/).

In general, ethnic media are focused on local topics and ethnic communities. It is also worth noting a significant reduction in recent years in the number of private ethnic media on social and political topics. This suggests that the state took control of the ethnic media space to limit the spread of independent views and prevent centrifugal and opposition aspirations. Some ethnic groups, with the status of republics, see themselves as subjects able to articulate their interests through the media and reproduce their ethnicity through education and the

younger generation. Small ethnic groups feel themselves to be objects of state policy and do not have the opportunity to widely articulate and promote their interests. Of course, social networks are more open to discussion and expression of critical and oppositional views, but they have an unequal representation of ethnic groups and topics inherent in traditional media (Bodrunova et al., 2017).

ETHNICITY IN FORMAL EDUCATION

Ethnicity in Schools.   Ethnicity in Russian education became a more important issue in the late 1980s and 1990s. In all national republics, the ethnic factor grew, a kind of "ethnic revenge," that may be assessed ambiguously. On the one hand, although the Soviet Union had been claimed as encouraging ethnic identity, what followed was seen as the recovery of ethnic dignity and self-esteem in the context of democratization and humanization of society. On the other, the politicization of ethnicity threatened to enhance the interests of the titular nation to the detriment of other nationalities. These trends manifested themselves in educational, linguistic, cultural, youth, and personnel recruitment policies.

In the 1990s, elites promoted ethnic education actively. National schools and classes were opened in the republics, and educational programs with ethnic components were developed. For example, the Finno-Ugric national school at Petrozavodsk, the Republic of Karelia, opened on September 1, 1994. The school's website states this was according to the framework of the right of each nationality to learn its language—Karelian, Vepsian, and Finnish. The school is defined as an innovative educational institution designed to prepare young people as the future intellectual elite of the republic. The school's website is, ironically, only in Russian.[9]

The transition to a systematic ethnic education policy took place after 2000. It is primarily about a regional (national-regional) component in the state standard of general education of the first generation (*Gosudarstvennyy standart obshchego obrazovaniya*). Schools can now spend 10%–15% of the timetable studying the national language and literature, local history, geography, and culture. Language laws were adopted, and regional (national-regional) components of the state education standard developed into federal laws. The intention was to sustain national languages, material, spiritual culture, and traditions, and to maintain ethnic identity. However, this policy was accompanied by conflict, public debate, and litigation about discrimination and injustice in education, including student clothing, ethnic and religious attributes, culturally specific food, and behavior preferences (Tishkov & Stepanov, 2016, p. 5).

Since 2007, the Russian Federation Government has focused on developing a single educational space instead of diversity (*Federal'nyy zakon*, 2007). The Unified State Examination was introduced in 2008 and may be taken in Russian only (*Prikaz*, 2008). There is also a compulsory examination in the Russian language. This contributed to a reduction in the use of languages of ethnic minorities in the classrooms, as teachers, students, and their parents were pragmatic about preparation for the acquisition of formal credentials. As a result, between 2002 and 2010 the number of schools teaching minority languages fell by a third (Tishkov & Stepanov, 2016, p. 11).

However, the status of ethnic minority languages as languages of instruction does vary throughout Russia. Several factors should be considered: the regional policy of the state, the influence of the regional ethnic elite, the cohesion of the local community, and the interests of

stakeholders in the educational process. We see all this, for example, in the case of the Turkic languages. Teaching through the titular languages has declined in the national republics in European Russia—in Tatarstan, Bashkortostan, and Chuvashia. This is explained by the ethnically mixed population of the republics which led to objections to the compulsory study of the titular language in schools. In the Chechen Republic and the disputed Republic of Crimea, the number of schoolchildren studying through the Chechen and Crimean Tatar languages, respectively, has increased, which is an outcome of the policy of the federal center. The number of schoolchildren studying other languages, including Russian, is the result of urbanization, migration, and other demographic trends.

As Table 2 shows, 96% of schoolchildren study only through the medium of Russian, about 0.9% only in the languages of national minorities, and about 3% in bilingual schools with the study of subjects, in a foreign language, except for the Russian language and literature.[10] There are 423 urban and 1,099 rural schools in which ethnic minority languages are studied optionally or through voluntary study circles.

National minority languages are used widely for instruction in villages. This is not surprising, as in the national republics ethnic minorities are often rural, while the cities are multicultural and multiethnic. However, knowledge of ethnic minorities' languages may be an advantage for subsequent studies and work. In 2014, an analysis of the language needs of high school students indicated an interest in using native languages in their careers, primarily because of the possibility of employment in the state sector. These included 15% of those studying Finno-Ugric languages, 33% of students of Turkic languages, 20% of those studying the languages of Dagestan, and 40% of those studying Chechen and Ingush languages (Artemenko, 2015). This suggests that educational systems should support the interest of students and create conditions for the practice-oriented study of ethnic minority languages.

Despite the weakening of a state mechanism for the implementation of ethnocultural educational opportunities, the needs and aspirations of the national minorities continue to be manifested actively. A growing number of people want to learn about folk culture, history, traditional economic activities, and social life. It is noteworthy that schools teaching in the language of national minorities are state public schools. The realization of rights to education in a national minority language is

Table 2. State Schools and Students Who Study Russian and the Languages of Ethnic Minorities (2016)

Languages	Schools		Students	
	Cities	*Villages*	*Cities*	*Villages*
Russian language	15,258	25,982	10,259,617	3,321,459
Languages of ethnic minorities	67	1665	26,563	96,723
Russian and languages of ethnic minorities (bilingual schools)	257	1773	191,464	249,852
Total	15,582	29,420	10,477,644	3,668,034

Source: Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation (2016–2020) and Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation (2016).

seen as the task of the state, not society. Nongovernmental organizations, voluntary associations, and local communities have not, so far at least, established such schools.

Ethnic education from below is difficult for several interrelated reasons. First, the maintenance of such schools is expensive; weak local self-government and centralized redistribution of resources doom local communities to complete dependence on regional authorities, and those, in turn, on the federal center. An example is the territorial-neighboring communities of the Indigenous peoples of the North, sparse in numbers, and more concerned with maintaining traditional forms of economy and life. Second, a weak civil society, tightening control over the activities of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and the paradoxical growth of state authority over humanitarian activities limited ethnic educational opportunities. The apogee of this policy was the adoption of the law on educational activities (*Federal'nyy zakon*, 2021), that came into force on June 1, 2021. This prohibits the use of educational activities for

> inciting social, racial, national, or religious hatred, for agitation promoting exclusivity, superiority or inferiority of citizens based on social, racial, national, religious, or linguistic affiliation, their attitude to religion, including through the reporting of inaccurate information about the historical, national, religious, and cultural traditions of peoples.

In general, this may be welcomed, but the domination of the state in the public sphere opens up the possibility of assessing the activities of NGOs not on scientific or humanitarian principles, but according to the degree of loyalty to the state. In such conditions, NGOs themselves are guided by activities that follow the state ideology.

Another option is cooperation between the state and traditional Russian religious confessions. Two new subjects were introduced into the educational program of the general education school: in 2012 for fourth grade, "Fundamentals of Religious Cultures and Secular Ethics" (*Osnovy religioznykh kul'tur i svetskoy etiki*), and in 2015 for fifth through ninth grades, "Fundamentals of Spiritual and Moral Culture of the Peoples of Russia" (*Osnovy dukhovno-nravstvennoy kul'tury narodov Rossii*). Formally, the task is to acquaint students with the basics of Orthodox, Muslim, Buddhist, and Jewish cultures; cultures of the peoples of Russia; and secular ethics.

In terms of teaching the basics of Orthodox culture, some researchers have called them quasi-religious, noting the overlap between secular and Sunday Orthodox schools (Ladykowska & Tocheva, 2013, pp. 58–59). It is more accurately aimed at the formation of loyalty to the state and the strengthening of state nationalism, the main component of which is adherence to traditional values. This is one reason for the frustration of students, parents, and teachers. When studying *Fundamentals of Religious Cultures and Secular Ethics* in the 2017–2018 academic year, secular ethics was chosen by 41% of students, 39% chose Orthodox culture, 16% world religions, 4% Islamic culture, and less than 1% Jewish and Buddhist culture (*Osnovy*, 2018).

Migrants in Education.   Education plays an important role in migration policy (Mukomel & Kliucharev, 2008). There are three aspects: first, the education of migrants and the host population as a means of preventing conflict; second, education's contribution to the integration of migrants and as a first step to naturalization; and third, education contributes to the employment selection of migrants and is an elevator for upward social mobility. The key problems for

interethnic interactions in education are those experienced by migrant families. Migrants migrate to wealthy regions to find jobs, but they are marginalized by the local population.

The problem is not only that labor migrants have a lower level of education than Russians. They are initially recruited for unskilled work that does not require their knowledge and skills. According to Mukomel (2017), only 22% of former healthcare workers continue as such in Russia, and only 8.5% of educational workers. Former doctors, teachers, and other specialists go into trade and become workers, builders, nannies, nurses, and housekeepers. One reason is that migrants take whatever jobs they can find. But there is also a structural problem in that some jobs, in financial services such as banking and insurance for example, not only require specialized qualifications but also a Russian passport and registration at the place of residence. This is justified by the low legal culture of job seekers and the competition for employment in legally sensitive sectors.

The younger the migrant children, the more adapted they are to school and society, as they have a fresher and more open educational and social experience (Rumbaut, 2004). Research shows that there are differences in structural conditions between Russia, Europe (Morgan & White, 2015), and the United States (Quillian, 2014). The relative absence of spatial segregation of migrants in Russian cities, and the *de facto* inclusiveness of Russian schools regarding migrant children and "visible minorities" are examples of this (Tenisheva & Alexandrov, 2017). However, studies show that in recent years locally resident parents have come to perceive such institutions negatively as "migrant schools," which have pupils from diverse ethnic backgrounds (Demintseva, 2020).

For example, Moscow is one of the most attractive Russian cities for migrants because of the availability of work, social guarantees, and the amenities of metropolitan life. According to the data (Aleksandrov et al., 2015; Demintseva, 2020; Tenisheva & Alexandrov, 2017), about 60,000 migrant children study in schools in Moscow (6.1% of schoolchildren in the capital). In some classes, non-Slavic nationalities make up from 10% to 16%, or three to four pupils per class. Most are from Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia, children of internal migrants from Dagestan, and immigrants from Central Asia. The integration of migrant children is considered to be a problem for the migrants themselves to resolve. Public policy has not yet provided an integrated system with an appropriate strategy and planning to address this.

Ethnicity in Higher Education.   Higher education is not always available, usually for socioeconomic reasons. Young people are required to work because of the low economic status of their families. They are also prepared insufficiently for admission to universities. Formal education is even less accessible to the 25–45 age group. There are informal education courses for migrants, often provided free of charge by public organizations. These offer the Russian language and the basics of Russian law, culture, and history. Although such courses are helpful, they do not provide professional or vocational qualifications. The public education system rarely provides such opportunities for migrants, forcing migrants into low-paid nonprofessional work and contributing to inequalities in the labor market. The children of migrants who grew up and were educated in Russia have a much greater chance of integrating into Russian society than their parents who came to work (Varshaver et al., 2017).

As the monitoring (2014–2018) of the Institute of Sociology, Russian Academy of Sciences, shows, the assessments of Russians and non-Russian citizens of their educational prospects are slightly different (see Figure 2).
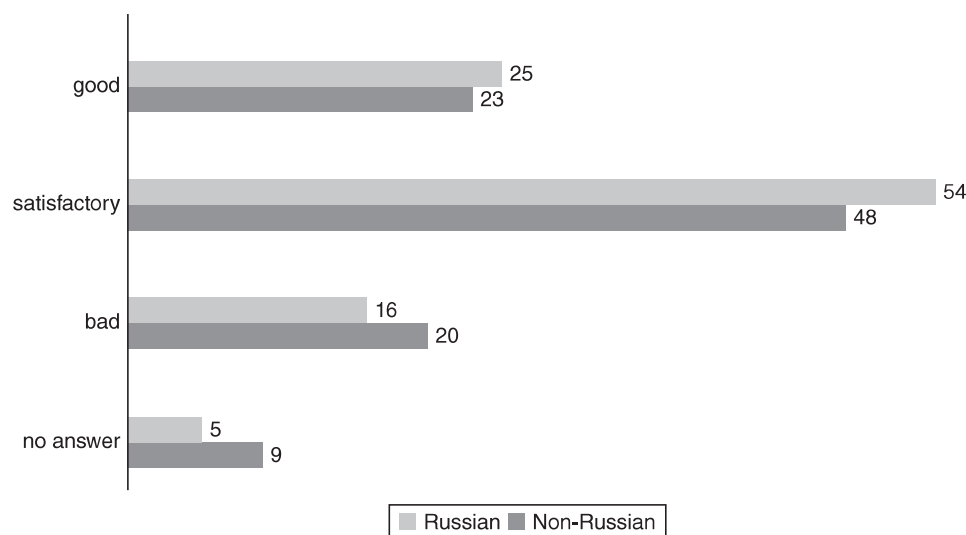
Figure 2. Opportunity to obtain education and necessary knowledge, %.
Source: Database of monitoring results [2014–2018]. Author's archive.

The explanation of this difference is complex. In 2019, there were 724 educational institutions of higher education in Russia, with 4,245,885 students (Table 3).

The number of places available at universities nationally matches about a third of Russian youth aged 17–25, but the situation differs from region to region (Gromov et al., 2016, p. 9). In the Central Federal District, where there are no national territories, the proportion of young people in this age group in 2020 was 7.7%. In the North Caucasian Federal District, it was 11.6% (Rosstat, 2020). There are also differences in the proportions of rural and urban youth. In the Central Federal District, the proportion of rural youth in this age group is 20%, and in the North Caucasian Federal District, 53% (Rosstat, 2020). The greater numbers of rural youth at an educational level below that of urban youth explains the low numbers from the region at university.

The greatest provision of university places is in Central Russia, in those regions, or *oblasts* with a population that is predominantly Russian—Moscow and the Moscow region; the

Table 3. Universities and Students in Russia, 2020

Subjects of the Russian Federation	Educational organizations of higher education			Students
	Total	State and municipal	Private	
Oblasts and *krais*	610	421	189	3,421,460
National republics	100	76	24	627,873
Total in Russian Federation	710	497	213	4,049,333

Source: Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation (2019).

Kursk region; St. Petersburg, a city of federal significance; and the Leningrad region.[11] In the national republics, the greatest provision is in Tatarstan, Mordovia, and Udmurtia. Of the national republics in the eastern part of the country, the greatest provision of university places for youth is in Buryatia (30%). The lowest provision is in the republics of the North Caucasus (15%–18%), and in the Yamalo-Nenets and Chukotka Autonomous Okrugs (10%). The Nenets Autonomous Okrug does not have a university.

In the national republics of the European part of the Russian Federation, Russians are in the majority (Karelia, Komi, Mordovia, and Udmurtia) or from a quarter to a half (Bashkortostan, Mari El, Tatarstan, and Chuvashia). Each of these regions has a university and is in relative proximity to university cities (Moscow, St. Petersburg, Nizhny Novgorod, and Kursk); an extensive transport network, universal command of Russian, and a common culture make the educational situation favorable for students and academics regardless of nationality.

Another aspect of inequality is the standard of education.[12] The best of the national republics according to ratings are the Republic of Tatarstan (16th) and the Republic of Bashkortostan (21st). The worst performers are the republics of the North Caucasus (52nd) and South Siberia (82nd; Gromov et al., 2016, pp. 13–16). This is related to the financial resources required for higher education according to these indicators: the price of an educational service (price per year of study; expenses for food, accommodation, and materials for training), the population's ability to pay, and government support (grants, student loans, and taxes). There are sharp differences among regions. Considering the cost of education, housing costs, household expenses, and incomes of the population, the most affordable is higher education in St. Petersburg, and in Tatarstan among the national republics. Most national republics are toward the bottom of the rankings, where the low cost of education is matched by the low incomes of the population (Gromov et al., 2016, pp. 13–16).

Thus, objective inequality is the main obstacle to obtaining a quality higher education for ethnic minorities. There is a bias toward supporting the titular nation in national regions with a historical experience of statehood, such as Tatarstan and Bashkortostan, and in the republics, depending on the policy followed by the federal center.[13] In national regions without any experience of historical statehood, where state subjectivity was formed only during the Soviet period, and local attitudes remain strong, the problem of youth access to higher education is difficult objectively. But political factors can be effective. In rural areas the number of students fell from 7 million to 4.1 million between 2005 and 2019, but occasionally it has grown, for example, in the Chechen Republic from 25,000 to 35,000 (Rosstat, 2020). The Chechen Republic is the only region in the North Caucasus where this is so, although the availability of higher education is an urgent problem for all North Caucasian republics.

Such a differentiated policy toward regions solves local problems but may aggravate educational inequality more generally, provoking interethnic conflicts, especially where groups from different cultures are in close contact. The privileges of certain regions are transferred to the local population which is perceived negatively by the population of the country as a whole. An example is the Rostov *oblast* bordering the North Caucasus. A study of interethnic relations at Rostov University showed that good academic performance strengthens interethnic tolerance, while poor academic performance is accompanied by the mobilization of ethnic and confessional identity, primarily among students from the republics of the North Caucasus (Abrosimov et al., 2013).

Formally, free higher education is available to all ethnic groups and regions. However, structural inequality, unequal regional opportunities, weak civil society, commercialization of higher education, and the absence of special federal programs for higher education for ethnic minorities limit this accessibility. Higher education and academic degrees in the early 21st century are the result of the efforts of young people themselves and their families.

Ethnicity and Vocational Education and Training (VET).   Vocational education and training in the Russian educational system are both *nachal'noye professional'noye obrazovaniye* (initial vocational education and training) and *sredneye professional'noye obrazovaniye* (secondary vocational education). Initial and secondary vocational education is for local youth and is rarely the target of educational migrations. Migrant families see vocational schools and colleges as substitutes when higher education is not available.

Secondary vocational education is included in the scope of activities of the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation. According to its data in 2020, there were 3,273 educational institutions of secondary vocational education in Russia, where 3,336,323 students studied; in the national republics, this amounted to 587 educational institutions and 645,778 students, that is, 18% and 19% respectively (Ministry of Education, 2020).[14] In some regions with a high proportion of young people in the population, there is an insufficient number of vocational schools. The republics of the North Caucasus are losing people due to migration to other regions of Russia. It is an outflow territory with a lack of jobs and young people leaving. According to official statistics (Rosstat, 2019), in 2018, unemployment in Russia was 4.8%, with the lowest in Moscow (1.2%), compared with the North Caucasian republics (14%), with the highest in the Republic of Ingushetia (26.3%). High unemployment devalues professional education in the regions.

In *oblasts* and national republics of European Russia, the employment of higher education graduates can be 80% and more (Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation, 2016). The most favorable situation is found in regions with high production potential and living standards. The lowest proportion of employed graduates is again in the republics of the North Caucasus. Thus, young people in remote national territories have the least access to quality education and this limits their opportunities and mobility as workers, both territorially and professionally. Public consultation could play an important role in solving these problems, but this is virtually absent from the media.

ETHNICITY, NONFORMAL EDUCATION, LIFELONG LEARNING, AND NEW POPULAR EDUCATION

Formal education systems are agencies through which states achieve ideological and hegemonic goals. Formal education may be provided privately, that is, separately from the state, but it is regulated and licensed by it. It is characterized by institutional instruction, approved curricula, length of the course, and award of credentials. However, there are other ways for individuals to acquire knowledge and skills. These do not depend on formal structures, nor do they lead to credentials. Instead, such learning is voluntary and determined by the specific needs of the individual or group. The role of nonformal education in interethnic communications is due to its sensitivity to the local environment and the needs of the local population, its

greater availability, flexibility in the ways of organization and the educational programs, and wide participation of nonprofit organizations and volunteers. Nonformal education can focus on the problems of ethnic discrimination, the elimination of illiteracy in a particular area, the social integration of ethnic groups, and other problems that, for ideological or political reasons, are ignored by formal institutions.

We focus on *lyubitel'skoye narodnoye iskusstvo* (amateur folk culture), provided by voluntary associations, clubs, and other NGOs. These are islands of informal learning, contributing to the maintenance of local knowledge and what may be described as a "cultural ecology." This is crucial to maintaining the social identity, self-esteem, and civic self-confidence of local populations and ethnic minorities in contemporary Russia (Morgan & Kliucharev, 2013).

For example, a *new popular education* (Morgan et al., 2019b) is a significant element of amateur folk culture among all ages, and in all regions and settlements. It combines theoretical education with practical learning activities focused according to the creative genre—choir, folk song, theater, folk dance, the plastic arts, language, and folk literature. This is accompanied by the study of local history and popular traditions through classes, reading, visits, and performances, which formal education provides only rarely.[15] A study of amateur folk-culture collectives shows that most participants welcomed opportunities for self-expression and self-realization through creativity (58%), the acquisition of new knowledge and skills (48%), and enrichment with a variety of knowledge and life experience (39%).[16]

Most collectives were formed between 1980 and 2000, but there are exceptional examples, one of which was formed in 1915, and another in 1935. The average number of participants is 30–35 people, with most participating for 5–10 years. Gender is not significant in motivation. However, males are more interested in the results of their activities, in acquiring knowledge and skills, while women welcome the social communication of classes, different from the daily routine. For young people, opportunities for self-expression and skill development are particularly important. Almost a third of respondents had engaged in amateur folk-culture collectives since childhood, which speaks to the great role of the family and traditions. Most participants came to the collectives on the advice of friends, relatives, and acquaintances or in search of like-minded people. The respondents associate creative activity not with public success, but with the opportunity to participate in social life, which indicates the importance of collective values in the activities of voluntary associations. This suggests that amateur folk culture contributes to the harmonization of social relations and the development of an inclusive social environment. Participants also show a positive attitude toward the cultures of people of other ethnicities and nationalities.

The importance of amateur folk culture is seen in local communities. Collectives are involved, as a rule, in local mass public events, contributing to an atmosphere of openness, friendliness, and recognition. Indeed, one can say that they enable a *popular education* that forms and sustains the cultural space of local communities, drawing on a combination of folk traditions, local knowledge, and a concern for the contemporary needs of the population and its local environment. The problems of local cultures are many and various, including earning a living, the environment, lifestyles, community decision-making, and dealing with local and external authorities. The popular informal communication and learning described are crucial to the civic competence of the Russian population.

THE HISTORICAL EXPERIENCE OF COEXISTENCE AND INTERETHNIC PEACE

In national republics, the nature of interethnic relations is influenced by the relationship between the titular nations and the Russians. The positive experience of social interaction in a multinational environment is an important factor in interethnic communication acquired through informal learning. An example is the *Privolzhskiy federal'nyy okrug* (the Volga Federal District), one of the most multinational regions with 14 federal subjects, including six national republics: Bashkortostan, Mari El, Mordovia, Tatarstan, Udmurtia, and Chuvashia. Stable interethnic relations in the region are based on the historical experience of the coexistence of ethnic groups, including economic, domestic, cultural, and linguistic contacts. In *oblasts* and national republics, ethnic patterns have developed that do not coincide with the administrative boundaries. There are no pronounced and persistent ethnic prejudices in the region. This has curriculum implications for both formal and informal education.

Similarly, in other regions with a historical cohabitation of different peoples, local governments use national holidays to establish social harmony and trust. For example, in the republics of the Volga Federal District and adjacent regions, these holidays are Tatar *Sabantuy, Navruz*, Mari *Peledysh Payrem*, Chuvash *Akatui*, Mordovian *Rasken Ozks, Velen Ozks*, and Udmurtian *Gerber*. Such common holidays encourage good neighborliness, friendliness, and mutual understanding (Trofimova, 2014). Such knowledge of the traditions and culture of peoples contributes to the peaceful settlement of minor everyday conflicts, focusing on the real interests of people. This is evidenced by the study of interethnic relations in the Republic of Mari El which comprises Mari (42%), Russian (45%), Tatar (5%), and other nationalities (8%; Zeleneyeva et al., 2019).

Analysis of the data showed that most people in Mari El (86%) believe that interethnic communications in the republic were satisfactory. Forty-two percent said they were citizens both of Russia and Mari El. Thirty-one percent identified only with the Russian Federation, and 1.4% only with their ethnic group. Ethnicity was quite significant for the respondents, but they were tolerant in dealing with other people, but not about long-term and close relationships such as marriage (Figure 3).

Some differences depend on gender, education level, and nationality. Ethnicity is more significant for Tatars than for Russians, Mari, and other nationalities, which is explained by the peculiarities of confessional affiliation. Ethnicity is also more important for women, in comparison with men. Finally, the higher the education of the respondents, the more tolerant they were likely to be of people of other nationalities.

The respondents also considered it important to know the language, culture, and traditions of people of other nationalities. When asked about the difficulties in communicating with people of a different nationality, the respondents more often noted a lack of knowledge of the language and culture of other ethnic groups. Ignorance of other languages was noted by 28% of the respondents and 11% complained of others not knowing their language. This is typical of multicultural regions with neighboring ethnic communities that strive simultaneously to preserve their ethnic identity and yet communicate with others. Ethnic languages media unite the local ethnic communities, but to understand the role they play in interethnic communications, additional research is required.
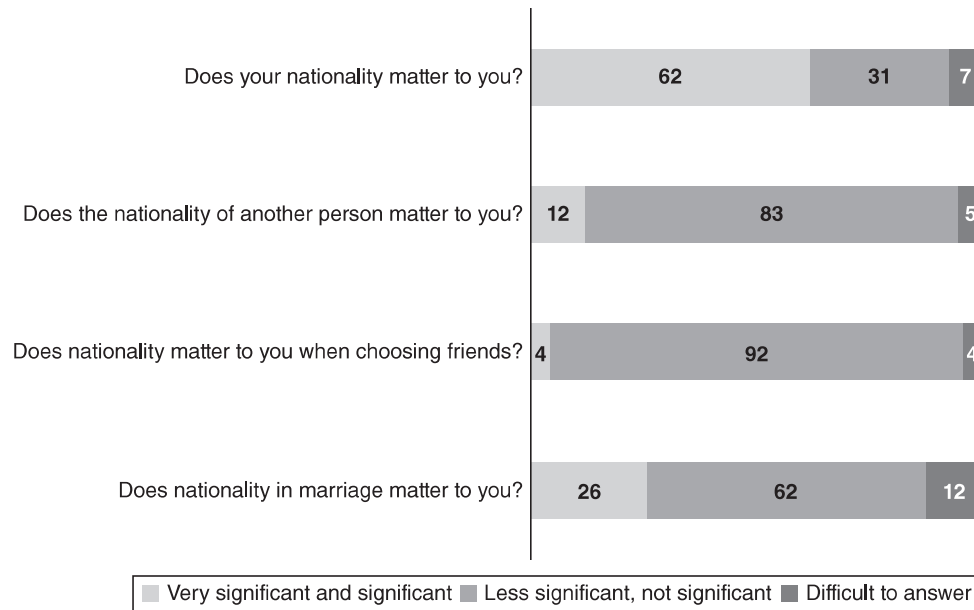
Does your nationality matter to you?	62	31	7
Does the nationality of another person matter to you?	12	83	5
Does nationality matter to you when choosing friends?	4	92	4
Does nationality in marriage matter to you?	26	62	12

■ Very significant and significant ■ Less significant, not significant ■ Difficult to answer

Figure 3. Individual aspects of interethnic communications in the Republic Mari El, %.
Source: Zeleneyeva et al., 2019, pp. 9–10.

CONCLUSION

In general, the political and legal aspects of ethnicity in Russian education are found at the macrolevel and the problems of intercultural communication at the meso- and microlevels. Such problems are related to tolerance, interethnic mutual respect, acculturation, and sustaining meaningfully the cultures of national minorities and ethnic media. However, in the post-Soviet period, there was a deepening of economic inequalities that influenced the perception of ethnicity in education, also through the media. This continues to manifest itself in different ways depending on the ethnic, confessional, age, and settlement composition of the population, the general level of education, and the specifics of the educational environment. Ethnicity in education differs according to the context of national-territorial and administrative-territorial entities, which is also found in the ethnic media. The problem of ethnicity in education is changing. In recent times, especially in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, the spatial segregation of ethnic groups has become more common, while residents have come to perceive some institutions as "migrant schools" as these have pupils from diverse ethnic backgrounds.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, is not the focus of this article, although it provides important context. It has affected interethnic relations dramatically, and brought tension and aggression into everyday life, social networks, media, and educational spaces. Imperialist in conception, it has aroused bitter enmities, the consequences of which are likely to be long-lasting. In such circumstances, the role of the media, including language, education, thematic content, local communities, and civil society will be crucial. This requires further objective academic research in the Russian Federation as a whole, among ethnic groups, in

individual regions, among its Slavic neighbors, and in the international context. This will be very difficult in current circumstances.

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NOTES

1. The use of the term "ethnicity" has a more neutral connotation and became widespread after the collapse of the USSR. The term "nationality" has its roots in the USSR, where such a column was mandatory in Soviet passports. There is also a peculiarity in the use of the words *rossiiskii* as a citizenship and *russkii* as an ethnos, which are translated into English in the same way as "Russian."

2. "Foreigners" here means "not Russians"; Mikhail Speransky (1772–1839), count, Russian statesman, Siberian governor general in 1819–1821.

3. Pyotr (or Peter) Struve (1870–1944), Russian politician and public figure, Deputy of the 2nd State Duma (1907), editor of the journal "Russkaya Mysl."

4. Joseph Vissionarivitch Stalin (1878–1953). Commissar for Nationalities in the government of the RSFSR, 1917–1924. General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (1922–1953) and Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union (1941–1953).

5. The national republics were formed in accordance with the compact residence of the largest ethnic groups, which gave the name to these republics, and the ethnic groups themselves began to be called the titular nation. This term was used officially until 2010. Here we use it not in legal terms, but in a historical and cultural meaning.

6. There is a vast historiography on this period. A recent example is Thomas (2018), an excellent account of how Soviet policy affected nomads.

7. But not from the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, which are now members of the European Union.

8. The Cyrillic alphabet is approved as a single graphic basis for the alphabet of the languages of all the republics of Russia.

9. See Srednyaya obshcheobrazovatel'naya finno-ugorskaya shkola [Secondary general education Finno-Ugric school] (http://fusch.ru/).

10. The bilingual schools provide in-depth tuition in a foreign language (English, German, and others); Russian is used only in the study of the Russian language and literature.

11. Note the retention of the Soviet name.

12. As an indicator of the quality of education in the region, the proportion of university students in the region enrolled in the first year with an average score of the Unified State Examination of 70% and above is used. It is assumed that the standard achieved by entrants is an indication of institutional quality.

13. This is partly why educational migration outside the national republics is characteristic of Russian youth (Amogolonova et al., 2008).
14. The Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation (shortly the Ministry of Education, or the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation) is the federal executive body of Russia, which existed in 2004–2018. It ceased to exist due to the division into two departments: the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation and the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation.
15. See also Donahue and Habeck (2011).
16. Such groups continue to call themselves "collectives," which is an echo of the Soviet period. Research database "Prospects for the development and popularization of amateur culture" (2019) and "Amateur creative collectives in a new reality" (2020). Author's archive.

Irina N. Trofimova and W. John Morgan

MULTICULTURALISM, ETHNICITY, AND PRISONS: RUSSIA, GEORGIA, AND ESTONIA

INTRODUCTION

In Western jurisdictions, race and ethnicity occupy a prominent place in discussions about penal policy. In the United States, the focus is on the disproportionate imprisonment of Black people and Latinx associated with the expansion of the prison population from the 1970s. Questions about why this came about, and with what consequences, have shaped theorization about the treatment of ethnic and racial minorities by the criminal justice system. The prominent sociologist Loic Wacquant has been particularly influential in the United States. His research focuses on the reproduction of marginality in the United States through systems of ethnoracial domination, where prison replaces welfare as a means of regulating poor urban populations. In so doing, he modifies and extends Michel Foucault's seminal work on penality in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, published in English in 1977. In Europe, the focus of attention has been on the impact of in-migration from the Global South, associated with the post-World War II dissolution of European empires, on previously "homogenous" prison populations. The events of 9/11 pushed race and religion right to the top of the policy, research, and media agenda as moral panic spread regarding the role prisons played in Islamic radicalization. The same concern reordered the agenda in American penal sociology, the treatment of prisoners in Guantanamo eclipsing southside Chicago as the symbol of 21st-century American penality.

Taking 9/11 as a starting point, there are many similarities between the official and popular concerns driving penal policy in relation to ethnic or racial minorities in the Russian Federation, as in the United States and postcolonial Europe. The prison as a site of Islamic radicalization is certainly a common concern in Russia and other post-Soviet states. Like their Western counterparts, the prison systems across the region run the gauntlet of public censure when a former prisoner is implicated in a terrorist act. The policies designed to counter this threat have a familiar ring about them. They range from subjecting prisoners convicted of terrorist offenses to regimes of extreme harshness to desist interventions for rank-and-file prisoners in order to reduce their vulnerability to recruitment to a terrorist cause. Taking a historical