

# LEGAL CLINICS IN RUSSIA: UNPACKING THE MOTIVATIONS FOR STUDENTS TO PARTICIPATE

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## INTRODUCTION

Legal clinics have become commonplace at law schools in the United States.<sup>1</sup> They are less frequently encountered elsewhere, especially in countries that have a civil law legal heritage.<sup>2</sup> For many years, Russia was no exception.<sup>3</sup> However, as elsewhere,

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1. Sean Arthurs, *Clinical Legal Education in the United States: Emerging Trends, Challenges and Opportunities*, in KEY DIRECTIONS IN LEGAL EDUCATION: NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES 109, 112 (Emma Jones & Fiona Cownie eds., 2020).

2. See Barbara Preložnjak, *Clinical Legal Education in Croatia – From Providing Legal Assistance to the Poor to Practical Education of Students*, 19 INT'L J. CLINICAL LEGAL EDUC. 373, 373 (2013) (noting that clinical education has a long history in common law countries, while countries with the European legal system have only recently looked to clinical education).

3. El'mira Atagimova, *Rol' iuridicheskikh klinik v sisteme okazaniia besplatnoi iuridicheskoi pomoshchi Rossiiskoi Federatsii: istoriia i sovremennost'* [The Role of Legal

this began to change in recent decades. In this article, I explore the evolution of legal clinics in Russia and dig into the motivations for contemporary Russian law students to participate. This question of why law students opt to participate in clinics has not been explored much in general, in fact, it has been entirely neglected regarding countries with wobbling democratic or authoritarian political systems. This article begins to fill that gap.

The emergence of clinics in Russia is not surprising, given that the societal shortcomings that gave rise to clinics in the United States are no less prevalent in Russia.<sup>4</sup> As a general rule, clinics are designed to alleviate the inability of the poor or legally illiterate to seek redress for legal problems. Russians have long been reticent to pursue their claims in courts and other formal institutions.<sup>5</sup> They prefer to handle their problems through informal connections or non-official channels. The low levels of legal literacy, especially among vulnerable populations, only compound the problem. As one Russian commentator notes, solving “even the simplest [legal] task . . . becomes an impossible task.”<sup>6</sup> Pro bono clinics staffed by students, who are closely supervised by faculty, provide a low-barrier mechanism that has proved appealing.

Law school based clinics help socialize students as to the importance of enhancing access to justice.<sup>7</sup> On a practical level, the hands-on training students receive when working at clinics builds their confidence. It also serves the interest of the legal profession and has the potential to build cohorts of lawyers who

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*Clinics in the System of Providing Free Medical Assistance in the Russian Federation: History and Present Day*], MONITORING PRAVOPRIMENENIYA [MONITORING ENFORCEMENT], Oct. 2021, at 11, 13.

4. Atagimova, *supra* note 3, at 11; Arthurs, *supra* note 1, at 111, 113.

5. Kathryn Hendley, *To Go To Court or Not? The Evolution of Disputes in Russia*, in A SOCIOLOGY OF JUSTICE IN RUSSIA 40, 63 (Marina Kurkchiyan & Agnieszka Kubal eds., 2018).

6. Atagimova, *supra* note 3, at 11.

7. LYDIA BLEASDALE ET AL., *Law Clinics: What, Why and How?*, in THE CLINICAL LEGAL EDUCATION HANDBOOK 7, 8 (Linden Thomas & Nick Johnson eds., 2020); Colleen F. Shanahan et al., *Measuring Law School Clinics*, 92 TUL. LAW REV. 547, 552–553, 557 (2018); Francina Cantatore et al., *Defining Clinical Legal Education: Parallels in Practice*, 1 AUSTRALIAN J. CLINICAL EDUC. 1, 4–5 (2016).

are capable and willing to engage in pro bono work.<sup>8</sup> Russian law firms not only share an ambivalence toward or, perhaps more accurately, superficial commitment to pro bono work exhibited by law firms in the U.S.,<sup>9</sup> they also share the frustrations of their U.S. counterparts with respect to the tendency of law school graduates to emerge with deep theoretical knowledge of the law but a dearth of practical skills.<sup>10</sup>

In Part Two of the article, I flesh out the twists and turns in the development of legal clinics in Russia. Although my emphasis is on the post-Soviet era, I tease out the sparks of interest in earlier periods. After a burst of interest in clinics in the 1990s, their numbers receded as funding became unstable.<sup>11</sup> A 2011 law that increased the state's responsibility for providing free legal assistance to vulnerable populations and identified clinics as a means of achieving this goal gave rise to a resurgence of the clinical movement.<sup>12</sup> In Part Three, I investigate the operations of present-day Russian legal clinics through a systematic study of their websites. In Part Four, I exploit a 2016 survey of Russian

8. Francina Cantatore, *Pro Bono in Law Schools: Tracking the Effect of Pro Bono Service in an Australian University Law Clinic*, 27 INT'L J. LEGAL EDUC. 101, 103 (2020).

9. Multiple studies and discussions have examined the self-interested motivations underlying engagement in pro-bono work for U.S. and Russian practitioners. See e.g., Anton Kazun, *Institutional Determinants for Representation of Indigent Defendants: Evidence from Russia*, 46 REV. CENT. & E. EUR. LAW 265, 268 (2021); DMITRY SHABELNIKOV, ORG. FOR SEC. & COOP. IN EUR., *THE LEGAL PROFESSION IN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION* 15, 17–18 (2008); Deborah L. Rhode, *Pro Bono in Principle and in Practice*, 53 J. LEGAL EDUC. 413, 415 (2003).

10. Nikolay A. Dmitrik, *Antikiniki kak format konstruktivnogo iuridicheskogo obrazovaniia* [*Anticynics as a Format for Constructive Legal Education*], ZAKON [LAW], Jan. 2023, at 31–44; Kathryn Hendley, *Rethinking the Role of Personal Connections in the Russian Labor Market: Getting a Job as a Law Graduate in Russia*, 37 POST-SOVIET AFFS. 242, 251 (2021); William M. Sullivan, *After Ten Years: The Carnegie Report and Contemporary Legal Education*, 14 UNIV. ST. THOMAS L. J. 331, 332 (2018).

11. See Kathryn Hendley, *A Profile of Russian Law Students: A Comparison of Full-Time Versus Correspondence Students*, 67 J. LEGAL EDUC. 1005, 1019 (2018) (noting that “clinics were funded by grants... [and] some lasted only as long as this money held out, but others took root”).

12. Federal'nyi Zakon RF O besplatnoi iuridicheskii pomoshchi v Rossiiskoi Federatsii [Federal Law of the Russian Federation on Free Legal Aid in the Russian Federation], ROSSIISKAIA GAZETA [ROS. GAZ.], Nov. 23, 2011, No. 263, [https://www.consultant.ru/document/cons\\_doc\\_LAW\\_121887/](https://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_121887/) [hereinafter Free Legal Aid in the Russian Federation].

law students to uncover what factors serve as incentives for them to participate in clinics. This analysis reveals that student involvement in clinics is driven by a desire to maximize their chances in the job market. By working at clinics, students gain the practical skills that make them appealing to employers.<sup>13</sup> This represents the first effort to understand why students in authoritarian countries opt to participate in clinics. The results suggest that their motivations are similar to students elsewhere – namely, to give themselves a leg up in terms of getting a job.

## II. THE EVOLUTION OF LEGAL CLINICS IN RUSSIA

Legal education in Russia follows a pattern familiar throughout continental Europe. Students pursue law as undergraduates and are entitled to practice law upon graduating with a bachelor's degree.<sup>14</sup> No further study or degrees are required.<sup>15</sup> Depending on the specialty pursued, an internship and/or exam demonstrating competency may be required to be licensed.<sup>16</sup>

The curriculum in Russian law school is tightly controlled by the state,<sup>17</sup> complicating the introduction of new initiatives.

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13. See Hendley, *supra* note 10, at 253 (discussing the competitive advantage conferred by clinic work in the job market).

14. The introduction of bachelors' degrees, requiring four years of study, was an innovation that came with Russia's 2003 entry into the Bologna process, a program designed to standardize post-secondary education across Europe. See PETER B. MAGGS ET AL., LAW AND LEGAL SYSTEM OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION 1, 203–04 (2020); Anatoly Kapustin, *The Bologna Process: Practical Steps for Russian Law Schools*, 35 INT'L J. LEGAL INFO. 245, 256–57 (2007). Prior to that, law students studied for five years to receive degrees as a specialist. See LOGAN ROBINSON, AN AMERICAN IN LENINGRAD 11, 26 (1982). In 2022, in the wake of the Russian incursion into Ukraine and its disengagement from Europe, Russia announced its intention to withdraw from the Bologna system. See Andrey Starodubtsev, *Russia Quits the Bologna System: What It Means and Why International Academic Career is Still Possible*, HIGHER SCHOOL OF ECON. ST. PETERSBURG (July 25, 2022), <https://spb.hse.ru/en/news/703048906.html>. The impact on the types of law degrees that will be available in Russia is unclear.

15. Starodubtsev, *supra* note 14.

16. Hendley, *supra* note 11, at 1019.

17. Federal'nyi gosudarstvennyi obrazovatel'nyi standard vysshego obrazovaniia – bakalariiat po napravleniiu podgotovki 40.03.01 Iurisprudentsiia [Federal State Educational Standard of Higher Education – Bachelor's Degree in Training 40.03.01 Jurisprudence] 2020, No. 1011, Item 1.10 [hereinafter Federal State Educational

Lecturing has long been, and continues to be, the most common pedagogical approach.<sup>18</sup> Similar observations have been made with respect to other countries with a socialist heritage.<sup>19</sup> During the Soviet period, the shortages of textbooks made this a pragmatic choice.<sup>20</sup> However, it gave rise to a lackadaisical attitude among students. After spending a year as an exchange student at the law faculty at Leningrad State University in the early 1980s, Logan Robinson wrote in his memoir that, during class, “[m]any [students] read papers or punched at their neighbors and talked.”<sup>21</sup> Students were rewarded for their ability to memorize key code sections and recite their professors’ lectures back to them during oral exams.<sup>22</sup> Critical thinking was not encouraged and could even prove dangerous.<sup>23</sup>

Furthermore, even when the political climate relaxed, allowing reforms, law professors proved to be resistant. During the Gorbachev era, the most prestigious law faculties, such as those of Moscow State University and Leningrad State University, proved to be the most conservative.<sup>24</sup> When visiting Russian law faculties in 1998, an American CLE expert observed that the lecture method “still predominate[d],” despite being “both ineffective and boring.”<sup>25</sup> Students did not push back and instead welcomed a system that expected little from them.

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Standard of Higher Education]; Elena A. Bogdanova, *Objectives of Russian Law Schools Today: What Is the Ideal Jurist?*, 26 INT’L J. LEGAL PRO. 295, 320 (2019); John M. Burnam, *The Role of Clinical Legal Education in Developing the Rule of Law in Russia*, 2 WYO. L. REV. 89, 102 (2002).

18. Maggs et al., *supra* note 14 at 208; Burnam, *supra* note 17, at 102; Lawrence M. Grosberg, *Clinical Education in Russia: ‘Da and Nyet’*, 7 CLINICAL L. REV. 469, 477 (2001).

19. Similar criticisms have been made about Chinese and Hungarian law schools. See Yanman Cai, *Global Climate Legal Education and International Partnerships: A Chinese Legal Educator’s Perspective*, 26 MD. J. INT’L L. 159, 162 (2011); Renáta Kálmán, *Legal Clinic as an Exotic Phenomenon in Hungary*, 28 INT’L J. CLINICAL LEGAL EDUC. 230, 231 (2020).

20. ROBINSON, *supra* note 14, at 36.

21. *Id.* at 37.

22. *Id.* at 45; DAVID H. LEMPERT, *DAILY LIFE IN A CRUMBLING EMPIRE: THE ABSORPTION OF RUSSIA INTO THE WORLD ECONOMY* 793 (Colum. Univ. Press 1996).

23. ROBINSON, *supra* note 14, at 46; Burnam, *supra* note 17, at 102.

24. Grosberg, *supra* note 18, at 482–83.

25. Burnam, *supra* note 17, at 102.

Based on this, it might be reasonable to conclude that the bureaucrats who designed the Russian legal educational system saw no value in hands-on training. In reality, during both the Soviet and post-Soviet period, every law student was and is required to complete an internship.<sup>26</sup> Students were and are farmed out to a variety of professional settings, including judges' chambers, the offices of prosecutors and defense attorneys, as well as in-house legal departments of industrial enterprises.<sup>27</sup> That being said, while the goal of educating students about how the legal system actually works was noble, the lack of oversight rendered the experience meaningless for most.<sup>28</sup> Following the introduction of market incentives consequent to the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, lawyers grew weary of having to train graduates in the basics of how to practice law.<sup>29</sup> Much like their Western counterparts,<sup>30</sup> Russian employers sought out graduates who were ready to hit the ground running.

On the flip side, law students realized they needed real-life skills to get a well-paying job. Rather than trying to jump start the existing internship system,<sup>31</sup> the go-getters opted to seek part-time work in law offices with the hope of transitioning into a full-time job upon graduation. In a 2016 survey of Russian law students, almost eighty percent of part-time students worked as compared to only forty-one percent of full-time students, less than half of whom worked in the legal field.<sup>32</sup> When the sample was narrowed down to students who had secured jobs as lawyers upon graduation, the value of prior experience became evident. More

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26. Grosberg, *supra* note 18, at 483.

27. *Id.*; LEMPERT, *supra* note 22, at 931–32.

28. Alexander Straka, Graduate Rsch. Assistant, Wis.-Russ. Project, Russian Law Students Beyond the Classroom: Assessing the Breadth, Perceived Satisfaction, and Value of Participating in Experiential Learning Opportunities, Paper Presentation at the Young Scholars Conference, Univ. of Wis.-Madison (July 27, 2018); Dmitry Maleshin, *The Crisis of Russian Legal Education in Comparative Perspective*, 66 J. LEGAL EDUC. 289, 306 (2017); Grosberg, *supra* note 18, at 484.

29. Hendley, *supra* note 10, at 251.

30. Sullivan, *supra* note 10, at 338.

31. The internship system of the Soviet era lumbers on. In a 2016 survey of law students, ninety-six percent had completed this graduation requirement. Hendley, *supra* note 10, at 251.

32. Hendley, *supra* note 11, at 1021.

than fifty percent of part-time students secured jobs as compared to less than a third of full-time students. Almost a third had worked in law-related jobs as students.<sup>33</sup>

With only one exception, clinics were not part of the effort to train lawyers in the Soviet era.<sup>34</sup> An exhaustive review of the literature on clinical legal education ("CLE") in Russia reveals a brief experiment with clinics at Leningrad State University in the early 1960s. The then-dean, Aleksei Koralev, took inspiration from the spirit of reform that was ushered in with Khrushchev's efforts at de-Stalinization and relaxation in the sphere of culture<sup>35</sup> and introduced wide-ranging changes to the curriculum. These included new textbooks, a shift away from lecture-based courses to seminars, and the opening of a legal services center that served the public.<sup>36</sup> In addition to increasing the accessibility of the legal system to the general public, the clinic also aimed to give students practical experience.<sup>37</sup> Sadly, much like Khrushchev's overall reforms, this experiment was short-lived. When Kovalev was purged in 1963 as part of a crack-down on reformers within the law faculty, the clinic ceased to operate.<sup>38</sup>

The dissolution of the Soviet Union in late 1991 opened the door to greater interaction between Russian legal academics and their Western counterparts. Thanks to a sister-state relationship established in 1989 between Vermont and the Republic of Karelia—located in a heavily forested part of northeastern Russia—a delegation from the law faculty at Petrozavodsk State University, located in the capital of Karelia, visited Vermont Law School in 1993.<sup>39</sup> What most intrigued the Russians were the clinics. Thus, over the next few years, the Vermont clinical faculty

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33. "It comes as no surprise that a majority of *zaochniki* had jobs upon graduation, compared to just thirty percent of full-time students." See *id.* at 1014.

34. Bogdanova, *supra* note 17, at 295.

35. WILLIAM TAUBMAN, KHRUSHCHEV: THE MAN AND HIS ERA 448 (2003).

36. LEMPERT, *supra* note 22, at 527–29.

37. *Id.* at 527–28.

38. *Id.* at 529.

39. James C. May, *Creating Russia's First Law School Clinic*, 23 VT. B.J. & LEGAL DIG. 43 (Aug. 1997).

worked closely with the leadership of the Petrozavodsk law faculty to create post-Soviet Russia's first legal clinic.<sup>40</sup>

The Russians were keen on making the clinical experience qualitatively different from pre-existing internships by building in closer supervision. This also served to assuage the concerns of local prosecutors who "were clearly wary of having hordes of law students loosed on the courts unsupervised."<sup>41</sup> The clinic opened in November 1995 and took on a wide variety of civil claims.<sup>42</sup> By February 1996, twenty-four students were working at the clinic on a part-time basis and five faculty members (including one former justice of the Karelian Supreme Court) were actively supervising their work.<sup>43</sup> Although the clinic received some financial support from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), it still had to rely on paying clients to make ends meet.<sup>44</sup>

The interest in clinics was not limited to Petrozavodsk. When the Central and East European Law Initiative (CEELI) of the American Bar Association brought fifteen Russian law professors to the United States in the mid-1990s, "the consensus of the participating Russians at the conclusion of their visits was that what was new and different for them was clinical education. That is what they wanted to learn more about, not simply traditional methods of teaching."<sup>45</sup> As CEELI continued its work in Russia during the 1990s, almost all of the legal education experts dispatched were specialists in CLE.<sup>46</sup> The success of the Petrozavodsk clinic spurred interest from other Russian law faculties.<sup>47</sup> The initial burst of enthusiasm for clinics in the mid-1990s was followed by a "boom" period between 1998 and 2001.<sup>48</sup> Training sessions and workshops were numerous. By

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40. *Id.* at 43, 47.

41. *Id.* at 44.

42. *Id.* at 44, 45.

43. *Id.* at 45.

44. *Id.*

45. Grosberg, *supra* note 18, at 476.

46. *Id.* at 477.

47. Mariana Barbec-Rostas et al., *Clinical Legal Education in Central and Eastern Europe: Selected Case Studies*, in *THE GLOBAL CLINICAL MOVEMENT: EDUCATING LAWYERS FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE* 52, 64 (Frank S. Bloch ed., 2011).

48. *Id.*

2002, there were estimated to be over a hundred legal clinics in Russia.<sup>49</sup>

However, establishing a stable funding stream has always been a challenge in countries seeking to introduce clinics,<sup>50</sup> and Russia was no exception. In these early years – from 1995-2011 – Russian clinics were constantly scrambling for funding.<sup>51</sup> Start-up capital was mostly provided by sources outside Russia who were committed to the larger goal of institutionalizing the rule of law. These included governmental institutions such as USAID (from which CEELI received most of its funding) and the European Union, as well as private funders such as the Open Society Foundation, the MacArthur Foundation, and the Ford Foundation.<sup>52</sup> These funders saw their support as seed money, given with the expectation that the recipients would eventually find long term funding elsewhere.<sup>53</sup> By 2002, grants were drying up and a number of clinics had to close.<sup>54</sup> For the most part, law faculty leaders did not bemoan these shutdowns because

49. *Id.*

50. See e.g., Mizanie Abate Tadesse, *Road Map to Revamping Clinical Education for Pedagogical and Social Justice Missions: Lessons from Ethiopia*, 72 J. LEGAL EDUC. 176, 177, 184, 187–89 (2022–23) (Ethiopia); Kálmán, *supra* note 19, at 231–33, 243, 250–52 (Hungary); Cai, *supra* note 19, at 170–71 (China); Barbec-Rostas et al., *supra* note 47, at 54–56, 63–65 (overview of Eastern Europe); Yvonne Dausab, *Access to Justice: The Use of International Law Clinics to Advance the Case for Vulnerable Members of Society*, 26 MD. J. INT'L L. 8, 13–14 (2011) (South Africa).

51. See generally Alina Kislova, *The Barriers to the CLE Practice in Russia, in Comparison Light with the European Union and the United Kingdom*, 30 INT'L J. CLINICAL LEGAL EDUC. 147, 148–50 (2023); John M. Burman, *The Role of Clinical Legal Education in Developing the Rule of Law in Russia*, 2 WYO. L. REV. 89, 109 (2002); Barbec-Rostas et al., *supra* note 47, at 65.

52. Atagimova, *supra* note 3, at 4; Katarzyna Wazyriská-Finck, *Poland as the Success Story of Clinical Legal Education in Central and Eastern Europe: Achievements, Setbacks, and Ongoing Challenges*, in REINVENTING LEGAL EDUCATION: HOW CLINICAL EDUCATION IS REFORMING THE TEACHING AND PRACTICE OF LAW IN EUROPE 44, 44–47 (Alberto Alemanno & Lamin Khadar eds., 2018); Barbec-Rostas et al., *supra* note 47, at 54–55, 60, 62, 64; Burnam, *supra* note 17, at 91–92, 112, 116.

53. See Barbec-Rostas et al., *supra* note 47, at 55–56, 64–65 (highlighting how funders viewed these projects as short-term endeavors and as such offered funding in the form of grants to merely jump-start the clinics, not sustain them).

54. Barbec-Rostas et al., *supra* note 47, at 64–65.

they viewed clinics as peripheral to their mission of educating students about the letter of the law.<sup>55</sup>

Although the Russian government and the host educational institutions (state and private schools) tolerated the development of legal clinics, the precarious finances of both systems left them unable to provide steady funding.<sup>56</sup> The Soviet-era model for higher education, in which universities' budgets were funded by the state and students received stipends to attend, proved unsustainable by the 1990s.<sup>57</sup> Further complicating their situation was the competition that arose as the restrictions to entering the educational marketplace evaporated in the chaos of the 1990s.<sup>58</sup> The increased interest in studying law gave rise to a dramatic growth in the number of institutions providing legal education.<sup>59</sup> To compensate, legacy universities opened their doors to tuition-paying students, as did newly-created private universities.<sup>60</sup> All of this uncertainty left the management of Russian law faculties with little excess capital to fund new initiatives, such as clinics.

The passage of a law in 2011 that significantly expanded state funding for legal assistance created a lifeline for clinics.<sup>61</sup> The post-Soviet Russian Constitution guaranteed citizens the "right to qualified legal assistance."<sup>62</sup> It further contemplated that this assistance might be free when statutes so provided.<sup>63</sup> Initially, the language of the Constitution limited this right to criminal cases.<sup>64</sup>

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55. *Id.* at 54.

56. *See id.* at 64–65 (discussing how increased regulation and low-interest in the social mission of universities, in conjunction with a withdrawal of foreign funding, negatively impacted legal clinics' sustainability).

57. *Id.* at 54, 59, 63, 66–67.

58. Maleshin, *supra* note 28, at 295.

59. *Id.* at 296.

60. For an overview of the crises facing Russian legal education in the post-Soviet era, *see generally* Maleshin, *supra* note 28, at 289–90; MAGGS ET AL., *supra* note 14, at 203; Olga Shepelova and Asmik Novikova, *The Quality of Legal Education in Russia: The Stereotypes and the Real Problems*, 2 RUSS. L. J. 106, 107 (2014); Lisa A. Granik, *Legal Education in Post-Soviet Russia and Ukraine*, 72 OR. L. REV. 963, 963–64 (1993).

61. Free Legal Aid in the Russian Federation, *supra* note 12.

62. CONST. OF THE RUSSIAN FED'N., 1993, art. 48, <http://www.constitution.ru/en/10003000-01.htm>.

63. *Id.*

64. *Id.*

The 2011 law, however, authorized free legal assistance in civil cases to those deemed to be vulnerable,<sup>65</sup> including: low income individuals, the disabled, veterans, orphans, the elderly, psychiatric care patients, the legally incompetent, and people impacted by emergencies.<sup>66</sup> Most helpful to the clinical movement was a provision that opened the door to having this assistance be dispensed by student-staffed legal clinics that were structural units of higher education institutions.<sup>67</sup> Indeed, the statute clarified that “[l]egal clinics can provide free legal assistance in the form of legal advice in oral and written form, drawing up statements, complaints, petitions and other legal documents.”<sup>68</sup>

Over the subsequent decade, legal clinics, funded by the state, came to occupy a “prominent place” in the institutional framework for providing free legal assistance.<sup>69</sup> By 2021, there were estimated to be more than 300 clinics that had reportedly handled over 36,000 cases.<sup>70</sup> The growth of clinics, however, should not be taken to imply that Russian law faculties have forsaken the emphasis on doctrine in favor of practical training. Rather, it reflects a grudging recognition that providing free legal assistance to vulnerable populations is now a part of their obligation. As a Russian commentator notes, “[t]he legal clinic is not only the socio-legal institution that improves the level of legal literacy of the population, but also an important resource for teaching law students practical skills.”<sup>71</sup> Thus, in addition to learning how to draft complaints and complete other technical legal tasks, students also grew better at communicating effectively and working as part of a team, which taught them to tolerate differences between themselves and their colleagues.<sup>72</sup> These skills, as expected, elevated their standing as they entered the job market upon graduation.

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65. Atagimova, *supra* note 3, at 12; CONST. OF THE RUSSIAN FED’N, art. 20; Free Legal Aid in the Russian Federation, *supra* note 12.

66. *Id.*

67. *Id.* arts. 22–23.

68. *Id.* art. 23, part 4.

69. Atagimova, *supra* note 3, at 12.

70. *Id.*

71. *Id.*

72. *Id.*

In Russia, as elsewhere, legal clinics must take account of the political environment in which they are embedded. As Russia inches towards greater authoritarianism, challenging governmental policy has become more perilous.<sup>73</sup> As a result, the propensity of legal clinics to militate for social change that is often observed in the West is notably absent in Russia.<sup>74</sup> This has caused one Western observer to argue, "I have reached the conclusion that CLE in Russia cannot fully exploit its mission and reach its objectives."<sup>75</sup> Her contention is based largely on Russia's well-documented lack of commitment to human rights.<sup>76</sup> While no one would disagree that Russia's human rights record speaks for itself,<sup>78</sup> it is important to recognize that the goal of the 2011 law was not to empower and fund lawsuits aimed at enhancing social justice by forcing the state to live up to the obligations it assumed under domestic human rights laws, but something more modest. The law aimed to address citizens', especially those in vulnerable groups, access to justice when confronted by mundane legal problems.<sup>79</sup>

This review of the secondary literature has provided a valuable window into the twists and turns in the history of clinics in Russia. The initial burst of enthusiasm for CLEs in the 1990s could not be sustained.<sup>80</sup> The precise reasons for this are unknown and likely vary depending on the prevailing conditions of the various law faculties. No doubt, the lack of stable funding and the stubborn resistance of faculty to the less formal teaching style

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73. See generally Alexei Navalny, *Patriot: A Memoir* (Arch Tait trans., Alfred A. Knopf 2024).

74. Lusine Hovhannisian, *Teaching Human Rights to Advance Social Justice in Russia*, 104 PROC. ANN. MEETING AM. SOC'Y INT'L L. 92, 93 (2010).

75. Kislova, *supra* note 51, at 147.

76. See Tadesse, *supra* note 50, at 185, 199 (arguing that CLEs in Ethiopia are also failing to meet their goals due to lack of organization, funding, and advocacy opportunities for students).

77. See generally Kislova, *supra* note 51.

78. See e.g., MARY MCAULEY, HUMAN RIGHTS IN RUSSIA: CITIZENS AND THE STATE FROM PERESTROIKA TO PUTIN 1 (2015). Public opinion polling reveals only weak support for human rights among ordinary Russians. See Theodore P. Gerber, *Public Opinion on Human Rights in Putin-era Russia: Continuities, Changes, and Sources of Variation*, 16 J. OF HUM. RTS. 314, 316–17 (2017).

79. Free Legal Aid in the Russian Federation, *supra* note 12.

80. Hovhannisian, *supra* note 74, at 93.

required for CLEs played a role. It is hardly surprising, then, that the resurgence of clinics came about only when the government endorsed them as a solution to the problem of providing free legal assistance according to the law.

What is notably missing from the secondary literature are empirical studies based on field work of how Russian clinics currently operate or operated in the past on a day-to-day basis. Along similar lines, we know little about what sorts of students participate in these clinics.

### III. THE DAY-TO-DAY OPERATIONS OF RUSSIAN CLINICS

Gaining insight into the realities of legal clinics in Russia proved difficult. Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, it became almost impossible for American scholars to carry out field work in Russia.<sup>81</sup> This is in addition to the fact that in-person research had been out of the question for the several years preceding the invasion due to the restrictions posed by the pandemic.<sup>82</sup> These difficulties forced me to be more creative.

I was able to gain insight into the organization and activities of Russian legal clinics through the website of the Moscow-based Center for the Development of Legal Clinics (CDLC).<sup>83</sup> The CDLC is a non-commercial organization created by the "enthusiasts of clinical legal education,]"<sup>84</sup> and its creation in 2011 was no accident. This is the year in which the law authorizing greater access to free legal services for vulnerable Russians was passed, which galvanized the practice of CLE in Russia.<sup>85</sup> In addition to operating as a clinic whose volunteers provide legal assistance to petitioners via email, the CDLC holds training sessions and

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81. Wilfred Chan, *How Russian Studies Is Grappling with the War in Ukraine*, CARNEGIE CORP. N.Y. (May 3, 2024), <https://www.carnegie.org/our-work/article/how-russian-studies-is-grappling-with-the-war-in-ukraine/>.

82. Ekaterina Minaeva & Larisa Taradina, *Internationalization in Russian Universities During the Pandemic of COVID-19: Lessons for Succeeding in the New Reality*, 76 HIGHER EDUC. Q. 293, 296–98 (2022).

83. See generally TSENTR RAZVITIYA IURIDICHESKIKH KLINIK [CTR. FOR DEV. OF LEGAL CLINICS], <http://www.codolc.com>.

84. *Id.*

85. O BESPLATNOI IURIDICHESKII POMOSHCHI, *supra* note 12.

seminars on various aspects of clinics for its partners.<sup>86</sup> As of July 2024, 113 legal clinics spread out across Russia are affiliated with the CDLC.<sup>87</sup> The CDLC's website includes links to the websites of these affiliated clinics.

Working with an undergraduate student who is fluent in Russian, we studied the websites of the clinics who have partnered with the CDLC.<sup>88</sup> This review provided information that would otherwise have eluded me. At the same time, the picture that emerged was unfortunately incomplete. Far from all Russian legal clinics have joined in the activities of the CDLC. As of 2020, the number of Russian clinics was estimated to be over 300.<sup>89</sup> The CDLC's list included only 115.<sup>90</sup> The quality of, and the information provided by, the affiliated clinics' websites was not consistent. Moreover, almost a quarter of these websites were not accessible in the United States. Following the 2022 invasion, many Russian websites became impossible to access outside of Russia.<sup>91</sup> No doubt, some of these websites contain information that the Russian government believes to be proprietary. As is often the case, especially in authoritarian contexts, authorities opted to deny contact rather than risk the ire (or retaliation) of the Kremlin.<sup>92</sup> No clinic wanted to take the risk of being declared

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86. The CDLC conducted eleven events for its members during 2023. See TSENTR RAZVITIYA IURIDICHESKIKH KLINIK [CTR. FOR DEV. OF LEGAL CLINICS], OTCHET O DEIATEL'NOSTI: IIUN' 2021 - OKTIABR' 2023 [ACTIVITY REPORT: JUNE 2021–OCTOBER 2023] 17–20 (2023).

87. See generally *Vuzy-partnery Tsentra* [Institutions of Higher Education-Partners of the Center], TSENTR RAZVITIYA IURIDICHESKIKH KLINIK [CTR. FOR DEV. OF LEGAL CLINICS], [https://codolc.com/urkliniki\\_partnery/](https://codolc.com/urkliniki_partnery/).

88. Due to fear of repercussions in their home country, this student asked to remain anonymous. See e.g., HUM. RTS. WATCH, WORLD REP. 2024: EVENTS OF 2023 517–18 (discussing Russian authorities' increased prosecution of individuals for foreign contacts).

89. Atagimova, *supra* note 3, at 12.

90. CTR. FOR DEV. LEGAL CLINICS, *supra* note 83.

91. See generally *Russia Has Blocked 138K Websites Since Ukraine Invasion, Prosecutor Says*, MOSCOW TIMES (Aug. 8, 2022), <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2022/08/08/russia-has-blocked-138k-websites-since-ukraine-invasion-prosecutor-says-a78532>.

92. See generally Anton Troianovski & Valeriya Safronova, *Russia Takes Censorship to New Extremes, Stifling War Coverage*, N.Y. TIMES (Mar. 4, 2022), <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/04/world/europe/russia-censorship-media-crackdown.html> (documenting the Kremlin's orchestrated efforts to criminalize and control media narratives).

a foreign agent or an undesirable organization.<sup>93</sup> However, to date, our findings show no clinic has been so targeted.

The clinics for which we were able to review websites were not distributed evenly across the Russian Federation. The following information is reported from our analysis of the clinic websites reviewed. Around a third were located in the Central Federal Region, and half of those were in Moscow. The Volga Federal Region, located to the south of Moscow along the Volga River, had seventeen percent of clinics. The Ural Federal Region

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93. In 2012, Russia passed a law (which has now been amended multiple times) that labeled organizations that received funding from outside of the country as foreign agents. O VNESENII IZMENENII V OTEL'NYE ZAKONODATEL'NYE AKTY ROSSIISKOI FEDERATSII V CHASTI REGULIROVANIA DEIATEL'NOSTI NEKOMMERCHESKIKH ORGANIZATSII VYPONIAUSHCHIKH FUNKTSII INOSTRANNOGO AGENTA [ON AMENDMENTS TO THE LEGISLATIVE ACTS OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION REGARDING THE REGULATION OF THE ACTIVITIES OF NON-COMMERCIAL ORGANIZATIONS IMPLEMENTING THE FUNCTIONS OF FOREIGN AGENTS], No. 121-FZ, July 18, 2012, [https://www.consultant.ru/document/cons\\_doc\\_LAW\\_132900/](https://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_132900/). See generally *Inostrannye agenty v Rossiiskom zakonodatel'stve. Istoriia statusa i ego primeneniye* [Foreign Agents in Russian Legislation. History of their Status and Its Application], TASS, Sept. 12, 2024, <https://tass.ru/info/18731205>. This law has been used as a cudgel to break the spirit of civil society, and a wide variety of organizations, including Memorial, a human rights organization awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2022, and the Levada Center, an independent public opinion polling organization, have been so labeled. See Valerie Hopkins, *Trying to Blur Memories of the Gulag, Russia Targets a Rights Group*, N.Y. TIMES (Nov. 21, 2021), <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/22/world/europe/russia-memorial-prosecution.html>; Alec Luhn, *Russia's Leading Independent Pollster Declared 'Foreign Agent'*, GUARDIAN (Sept. 6, 2016), <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/sep/06/united-russia-levada-centre-pollster-foreign-agent>. Efforts to fight back against the labels have come to naught in the Russian domestic courts. See Ellen Barry, *As 'Foreign Agent' Law Takes Effect in Russia, Human Rights Groups Vow to Defy It*, N.Y. TIMES (Nov. 21, 2012), <https://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/22/world/europe/rights-groups-in-russia-reject-foreign-agent-label.html>. However, while Russia was a member of the Council of Europe, affected organizations appealed successfully to the European Court of Human Rights, although their victories remained largely symbolic. See *Strasbourg Court Finds Russia's 'Foreign Agent' Law Unlawful*, MEDIA DEF. (June 16, 2022), <https://www.mediadefence.org/news/strasbourg-court-finds-russias-foreign-agent-law-unlawful/>. The criteria for being labeled a foreign agent is vague, thereby giving the Kremlin a great deal of discretion. For example, Vladimir Kara-Murza, a human rights activist, was originally convicted of treason due to his anti-war activities before taking part in an August 2024 exchange deal between Russia and the West. He penned an essay in which he argued that anyone who opposes Putin can be labeled as a foreign agent. See Vladimir Kara-Murza, *I Am Not a Foreign Agent*, WASH. POST (June 24, 2024), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2024/06/24/russia-putin-stalin-foreign-agent/>

had eleven percent, with half located in Ekaterinburg, the largest city in this region. None of the other federal regions had over ten percent of the clinics; some had only a few. The oldest partnering clinic was founded at the State Academic University for the Humanities in Moscow in 1994, and the most recently established clinic was founded at Don State Technical University in Rostov-na-Donu in 2019.<sup>94</sup> Almost thirty percent of the clinics that provided information about their creation were founded after 2011.

There were a number of common features among the clinics we studied. All the clinics are embedded in law faculties (*fakul'tety*). Although Kislova<sup>95</sup> bemoans the lack of funding, the websites reveal that all but two clinics are directed by faculty members, which reflects a level of institutional commitment that was absent in the 1990s.<sup>96</sup> The website analysis indicates that all are united in their mission to assist vulnerable populations, especially those who cannot afford to retain their own lawyers. All but one law faculty oversees only one clinic.<sup>97</sup> Most clinics have only one physical location, although Kazan Innovative University has established offices in several cities in the Republic of Tatarstan, and Novgorod State University and Siberian Federal University in Krasnoyarsk have offices in multiple locations.<sup>98</sup>

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94. As discussed in Part 1, the literature typically identifies the clinic at Petrozavodsk State University as the first legal clinic created in post-Soviet Russia. See e.g., Atagimova, *supra* note 3, at 13; Wazyriski-Finck, *supra* note 52, at 46; Burnam, *supra* note 17, at 91; Jane M. Picker & Sidney Picker, Jr., *Educating Russia's Future Lawyers – Any Role for the United States?*, 33 VAND. J. TRANSNAT'L L. 17, 60 (2000); May, *supra* note 40, at 44–45. Unfortunately, the website for the clinic, which is also affiliated with the CDLC, is not accessible.

95. Kislova, *supra* note 51, at 148–49.

96. Studies of efforts to jumpstart clinics in countries where they are absent note that law schools often resist committing their own resources to the effort and prefer to rely on external funding. These studies also note that clinics tend to flail when led by non-faculty members. See e.g., Tadesse, *supra* note 50, at 188–90; Cai, *supra* note 19, at 170–71.

97. The exception is the Ural State Law University, located in Sverdlovsk. It houses five clinics, which are attached to different departments. By contrast, in the U.S., the median number of law clinics per school is seven. See ROBERT R. KUEHN ET AL., CTR. FOR STUDY APPLIED LEGAL EDUC., 2022–23 SURVEY OF APPLIED LEGAL EDUCATION 6 (2023).

98. See generally *SibFU History*, SIBERIAN FED. UNIV., <https://www.sfu-kras.ru/en/about/history> (last visited Jan. 22, 2025).

According to the websites, over eighty percent of the consultations carried out by the Novgorod clinic have taken place at their offices at the district court.<sup>99</sup> Clinics have generally limited themselves to providing advice in civil matters.<sup>100</sup> However, a few—around twenty percent—are willing to provide help to criminal defendants and crime victims as well.

Given that the study of law is an undergraduate enterprise, it is hardly surprising that legal clinics are generally staffed by undergraduate students. Two-thirds of the partnering clinics that provide information about their staffing limit clinic participation to undergraduates, who are typically in their final two years of study. Several of the most well-respected law faculties with robust graduate programs, such as the Higher School of Economics, the Moscow Academy of Law named for O.E. Kutafun, and Saratov State Law Academy, also allow graduate students to participate.<sup>101</sup>

The analysis also indicates that the means of communicating with potential clients is similar across the board. Almost all partnering clinics – around ninety-two percent – allow petitioners to use the social platform Telegram to reach them. A slightly smaller number – around eighty-eight percent – are open to communications via phone or email. As this suggests, both oral and written petitions are permitted. Attitudes towards remote consultations are less clear. Only sixty percent provide this information, and they all expectedly allow remote consultations. Most partnering clinics are open for around fourteen hours per

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99. See generally *Iuridicheskaia klinika* [Legal Clinic], UNIVERSITET LOBACHEVSKOGO IURIDICHESKII FAKUL'TET [LOBACHEVSKY UNIV. L. FACULTY], <https://law.unn.ru/yuridicheskaya-klinika/> (last visited Jan. 22, 2025).

100. See generally T.V. Hudoikina, *Current Status and Development Prospects of Legal Clinics In Russia*, 19 EUR. RSCH. STUD. 211, 218 (2016).

101. See e.g., *O Studencheskom pravovom biuro* [About the Student Legal Office], NIU VSHE-NIZHNYI NOVGOROD [HSE UNIV. NIZHNY NOVGOROD], <https://nnov.hse.ru/lawbur/about> (last visited, Jan. 24, 2024); *Zametki o nashei iuridicheskoi klinike* [Notes About Our Legal Clinic], MOSKOVSKII GOSUDARSTVENNYI UNIVERSITET [MOSCOW STATE UNIV.] (July 6, 2021), [https://www.law.msu.ru/news/zametki\\_o\\_nashey\\_yuridicheskoy\\_klinike\\_2021-07-06-5678](https://www.law.msu.ru/news/zametki_o_nashey_yuridicheskoy_klinike_2021-07-06-5678); *Iuridicheskaia klinika* (Legal Clinic), ASTRAKHANSKII FILIAL SARATOVSKOI GOSUDARSTVENNOI IURIDICHESKOY AKADEMII (ASTRAKHAN BRANCH OF THE SARATOV STATE L. ACAD.), <http://af.ssla.ru/text/4#судентам> (last visited, Jan. 21, 2024).

week spread over several days while a few are open for forty hours per week, but these are exceptions.

#### IV. A PORTRAIT OF STUDENTS WHO PARTICIPATE IN RUSSIAN CLINICS

To gain insight into the students who populate the clinics, I analyzed the data from a survey of 2,176 Russian law students on the cusp of graduation in 2016. In addition to a wealth of questions about their reasons for studying law and their attitudes about the legal system, I asked a series of questions about their experiences as law students. One such question asked whether they had participated in a clinic. My analysis focused on the factors that are positively associated with clinic participation.

Table 1 provides an overview of the population surveyed. Law faculties served as the unit of analysis. Russian interviewers fanned out across Russia to conduct in-person interviews with students.<sup>102</sup> The survey included 103 questions, some of which had multiple parts. The choice of the 167 law faculties included was stratified based on their level of prestige and funding source (public or private). Two distinct types of law students were sampled: full time students and students studying via correspondence. As Table 1 demonstrates, they are remarkably different.<sup>103</sup> Full time students tend to matriculate immediately after finishing high school, as their mean age of 22 at graduation confirms. They are more likely to be the children of college graduates and to be able to count on their parents to cover their expenses while attending law school.<sup>104</sup> Correspondence students, known as *zaochniki*, are a different breed.<sup>105</sup> Their program does not require them to attend classes on a regular basis. Instead,

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102. The Russian scholars with whom I collaborated on the survey have asked not to be identified by name due to concerns about repercussions for accepting funding from foreign sources. The National Science Foundation provided funding for the survey.

103. Hendley, *supra* note 11, at 1012–13.

104. *Infra* Table 1.

105. Correspondence study was introduced in the early Soviet era in order to boost the ranks of legal professionals. It remained popular in the post-Soviet period. In 2014, a majority of those studying law were *zaochniki*. See Hendley, *supra* note 11. In 2020, the Ministry of Education promulgated regulations that largely eliminated this option. Federal State Educational Standard of Higher Education, *supra* note 17.

they master the material on their own and come to campus several times a year for exams.<sup>106</sup> They are older with a mean age of 28. A majority work full-time while in law school and pay their own way. As compared to full-time students, *zaochniki* tend to come from families with fewer financial resources and are more likely to attend the private law faculties that have sprung up in the post-Soviet era.<sup>107</sup> For the most part, these institutions have looser criteria for entry than do the older state-funded law faculties.<sup>108</sup>

*Table 1: Summary statistics for respondents gathered from a 2016 survey of graduating Russian law students. Unless otherwise indicated, results presented as percentages of each sample, not including those who did not respond.*

|                                            | Full Time Students | Correspondence Students |
|--------------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| Total number                               | 1557               | 619                     |
| Participated in clinics                    | 28.7               | 12.1                    |
| Mean age                                   | 22.1               | 28.1                    |
| Activities before studying law             |                    |                         |
| High school                                | 92.1               | 34.7                    |
| Studied in different department            | 2.1                | 9.6                     |
| Member of work force                       | 5.8                | 55.7                    |
| Means of paying for legal education        |                    |                         |
| Stipend from the state                     | 35.8               | 8.3                     |
| Parents                                    | 55.3               | 20.5                    |
| Self                                       | 6.8                | 69.2                    |
| Type of institution                        |                    |                         |
| Law faculty at classical university        | 33.5               | 17.5                    |
| Law faculty at specialized legal institute | 24.2               | 36.8                    |
| Law faculty at humanitarian university     | 18.1               | 22.7                    |

106. Hendley, *supra* note 11, at 1008.

107. *Infra* Table 1.

108. *See generally* Hendley, *supra* note 11.

|                                                                                                  | Full Time Students | Correspondence Students |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| Law faculty at technical university                                                              | 13.4               | 12.9                    |
| Law faculty at departmental institution                                                          | 10.8               | 9.1                     |
| Family's financial situation                                                                     |                    |                         |
| Poor: family had trouble covering the cost of basic necessities                                  | 13.6               | 16.4                    |
| Lower middle class: family had enough money for essentials, but had to save for big-ticket items | 33.2               | 45                      |
| Higher middle-class: family could buy big-ticket items, but not cars                             | 37.7               | 25.1                    |
| Rich: family had no financial worries                                                            | 15.5               | 13.5                    |
| Both parents are university graduates                                                            | 43.6               | 24.4                    |
| Respondents' location                                                                            |                    |                         |
| Moscow                                                                                           | 24.7               | 10.2                    |
| St. Petersburg                                                                                   | 7.5                | 2.4                     |
| Other European regions                                                                           | 39.9               | 15.2                    |
| Siberia and the Far East                                                                         | 11.7               | 58.1                    |
| Urals                                                                                            | 11.5               | 11.3                    |
| North Caucasus                                                                                   | 4.7                | 2.8                     |
| Gender                                                                                           |                    |                         |
| Female                                                                                           | 64                 | 37.3                    |
| Male                                                                                             | 36                 | 62.7                    |

My analysis of the secondary literature led me to expect that participation in clinics would not be as common as it is in the U.S.<sup>109</sup> Table 1 documents this: 29 percent of full time Russians law students joined a clinic while only 12 percent of correspondence students did so. The remainder of the article is devoted to explaining this finding.

*Motivation for Studying Law.* Under Russian law, clinics are obligated to provide free legal assistance to those who cannot pay

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109. A survey fielded in the 2022-23 academic year revealed that the median participation rate in clinics for U.S. law students was 45 percent. KUEHN ET AL., *supra* note 97, at 13.

or are otherwise disadvantaged.<sup>110</sup> Given that, it is reasonable to assume that students who are more committed to helping people individually and/or contributing to improving society would be more likely to volunteer to work at clinics. The survey included a question that asked students to assess the importance of various goals on their decision to study law on a scale from 1 to 4, with higher scores indicating greater importance. Students entering law school are often uncertain of their goals. By graduation, they are better able to answer this question, even if it may not perfectly reflect their feelings at the moment of matriculation. As Table 2 indicates, respondents reflected on five possible goals. As a general matter, Russian students opt for law because they want to be successful; however, this goal does not have a significant effect on their likelihood of participating in a clinic. At first glance, Table 2 suggests that the goals of wanting to help people and to change or improve society drive behavior. Among full time students, those who are more dedicated to these goals are more likely to have participated in a clinic. This effect is not present for correspondence students, which makes sense, given that *zaochniki* are older and less idealistic. They have come to the law faculty to advance in their current career, not to change the world.<sup>111</sup>

*Table 2: Comparison of mean responses for reasons to study law gathered from a 2016 survey of Russian law graduates with response options of 1-4 where higher scores indicate greater importance.*

|                                     | Full Time Students     |                               | Correspondence Students |                               |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
|                                     | Participated in Clinic | Did Not Participate in Clinic | Participated in Clinic  | Did Not Participate in Clinic |
| Desire to change or improve society | 3.2                    | 3.0***                        | 3.1                     | 3.0                           |

110. See Free Legal Aid in the Russian Federation, *supra* note 12; see Federal Law on Free Legal Aid in the Russian Federation, 2011, No. 324-FZ, art. 11 (2011).

111. *Infra* Table 2.

|                                               | Full Time Students     |                               | Correspondence Students |                               |
|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
|                                               | Participated in Clinic | Did Not Participate in Clinic | Participated in Clinic  | Did Not Participate in Clinic |
| Desire to provide legal help to people        | 3.2                    | 3.3**                         | 3.3                     | 3.1                           |
| Desire to have intellectually fulfilling work | 2.6                    | 2.6                           | 2.5                     | 2.6                           |
| Desire to become successful or rich           | 3.5                    | 3.5                           | 3.3                     | 3.5                           |
| Desire to fulfill the wishes of my family     | 2.3                    | 2.3                           | 2.7                     | 2.2***                        |

\*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$

Although intuitively appealing, the strength of this factor is limited. When included it in a multivariate regression analysis, its significance dissipates. Table 3 includes the variable that measures the importance of the goal of pursuing social change. When I substitute the variable for commitment to helping people, the result is the same.<sup>112</sup> Neither variable is significant. Put differently, the importance of motivation pales in comparison to other explanatory variables.

*Table 3: Logistic regression model - odds ratios for having participated in clinics for full time students and correspondence students. Odds ratios that are greater than 1 reflect a positive association with clinic participation. Odds ratios that are less than 1 reflect a negative association with clinic participation. The standard deviation is present parenthetically.*

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112. The high level of correlation (0.44) made it imprudent to include both in the regression. *Infra* Table 3.

| Explanatory variables                                                     | Full Time<br>Students | Correspondence<br>Students |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| Goal for studying law was to improve society                              | 1.105<br>(0.0812)     | 0.980<br>(0.164)           |
| Initiative (independently found law-related internship or job as student) | 2.165***<br>(0.269)   | 3.014***<br>(0.858)        |
| Secured job upon graduation                                               | 1.402**<br>(0.195)    |                            |
| Family from lower middle class                                            | 1.391**<br>(0.181)    | 1.103<br>(0.311)           |
| Parents attended university                                               | 1.344**<br>(0.168)    | 1.384<br>(0.417)           |
| Plans to take <i>advokat</i> exam                                         | 1.111<br>(0.166)      | 3.693***<br>(1.188)        |
| Prior participation in courts                                             | 1.594***<br>(0.234)   | 1.652*<br>(0.475)          |
| Trust in Russian courts                                                   | 1.046**<br>(0.0214)   | 1.020<br>(0.0434)          |
| Attended classical law faculty                                            | 0.607***<br>(0.0858)  | 0.869<br>(0.367)           |
| Moscow                                                                    | 0.393***<br>(0.0630)  | 2.161**<br>(0.846)         |
| Age                                                                       | 0.873**<br>(0.0526)   | 1.014<br>(0.0214)          |
| Women                                                                     | 1.239*<br>(0.159)     | 0.744<br>(0.205)           |
| Constant                                                                  | 1.349<br>(1.927)      | 0.0404***<br>(0.0438)      |
| Observations                                                              | 1,472                 | 587                        |

\*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$

The lack of predictive power for the desire to improve society is less surprising when we consider the context. As I argued earlier, Russian clinics do not see themselves as agents of social change.<sup>113</sup> They are, instead, devoted to solving the quotidian problems of the downtrodden.<sup>114</sup> Additionally, the respondents' interpretation of changing or improving society ran counter to what outsiders might expect. Those who ranked this goal as critical to their decision to study law were more likely to have supported the outcome in highly politicized cases,<sup>115</sup> such as the prosecution of Pussy Riot<sup>116</sup> and Aleksei Navalny.<sup>117</sup> In other words, these students are not champions of liberal democracy; they are staunch supporters of Putin. This makes more sense when we remember that, for many of the respondents, Putin, who has held power since 2000, is the only leader of Russia they have known.<sup>118</sup>

*Individual Initiative.* Both in Russia and elsewhere, working at a clinic is a good way to gain the practical skills desired by employers. Given that it is a voluntary activity in almost all Russian law faculties,<sup>119</sup> we might fairly assume that those who opted to participate have more ambition and initiative than their classmates who do not. While assessing respondents' personal qualities can be difficult, the survey included a module of

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113. *Supra* Part 1, at 9.

114. *Id.*

115. Kathryn Hendley, *Evaluating the Prospects for Young Lawyers to Remake Putin's Russia*, 1 RUSS. POL. 450, 450, 460 (2016).

116. *Id.* at 470. For background on the activities and prosecution of the punk rock group, Pussy Riot, see MASHA GESSEN, WORDS WILL BREAK CEMENT: THE PASSION OF PUSSY RIOT (2014).

117. *Id.* at 470–71. For background on Navalny, see ALEXEI NAVALNY, PATRIOT: A MEMOIR (2024).

118. See *id.*; see also The Associated Press, *Key Events of Vladimir Putin's 24 Years in power in Russia*, AP NEWS (May 7, 2024), <https://apnews.com/article/putin-russia-president-inauguration-timeline-413e4d80b14c7b4113f1abe576e4a5c2>.

119. See Kathryn Hendley, *Rethinking the role of personal connections in the Russian labor market: getting a job as a law graduate in Russia*, 37 POST-SOVIET AFFS. 242, 253 (2021). The review of the websites of the clinics that are partners of the revealed only one law faculty, namely Volgograd State University, that requires all students to participate in clinics. See *Iuridicheskaja klinika* [Legal Clinic], VOLGOGRADSKOGO GOSUDARSTVENNOGO UNIVERSITETA [VOLGOGRAD STATE UNIV.], <https://volsu.ru/struct/institutes/philsocandlaw/lawclinic/> (last visited Mar. 29, 2025).

questions that provide insight into their character. Respondents were asked whether they held a part-time job as a student and about their participation in various types of internships. As expected, virtually all students confirmed their involvement in the mandatory internships organized by the law faculties.<sup>120</sup> More revealing is whether they found a job or an internship on their own. I created a variable that isolated respondents who had engaged in these activities as a proxy for showing initiative (*Initiative*). About a third of the full sample had engaged in this sort of behavior, thereby demonstrating more initiative than others. This sort of initiative was more likely to be present among full time students (36.2 percent) than for correspondence students (26.5 percent). As I previously noted, most *zaochniki* worked full time while studying and, as a result, were unlikely to take on an additional internship or part-time job.

This *initiative* variable is a strong predictor of participation in clinics.<sup>121</sup> While 28.7 percent of full time students joined clinics, among this group that sought out experiential opportunities outside the law faculty, the percentage jumped to 40.4 percent.<sup>122</sup> A similar trend is visible among correspondence students with an increase from 12.1 percent for the full sample to 22.2 percent for this subgroup.<sup>123</sup> This strong relationship is confirmed as statistically significant by the regression analysis in Table 3. For both full time and correspondence students, the odds of participating in a clinic are over twice as great if they have taken the initiative to find an internship or job.

Another marker of initiative, at least among full time students, is having secured a job upon graduation. Among full time students, there is a statistically significant relationship between clinic participation and having a post-graduation job.<sup>124</sup>

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120. See *id.* at Table 1 (showing through statistical dataset 96.2% of students completed mandatory internship).

121. Hendley, *supra* note 119, at 253.

122. See *id.* at 252; see also *infra* Table 1.

123. See *infra* Table 1.

124. Although this question was also asked of correspondence students, the difference in their reality complicates the interpretation of their answers. Recall that most of these students worked throughout their years at the law faculty and may never have been interested in finding a law-related job. For these reasons, this variable was not included in the regression analysis for correspondence students. See Table 3.

In contrast to the *initiative* variable, which served to spur clinic involvement, the causal arrow runs the other way for this variable. Arguably, clinic experience makes students more appealing to prospective employers, easing their way into securing a job. A quarter of full-time students surveyed reported having a post-graduation job, which rose to more than 36 percent when narrowed to respondents with clinical experience.<sup>125</sup> This serves as confirmation that having clinical experience makes law graduates more appealing to employers.

*Family Background.* Self-motivation may also be driven by family circumstances. Students who come from families that lack the financial resources and connections of wealthier families may seek out alternate ways of demonstrating their worth to potential employers.<sup>126</sup> With the introduction of market incentives, law firms have been paying ever more attention to applicants' experience.<sup>127</sup> Well-connected rich students are better able to get internships at law firms,<sup>128</sup> while working at a clinic is a way for less well-connected students to gain practical skills.

Table 4 confirms this narrative, particularly for full time students. These younger students have yet to truly establish themselves on their own and, consequently, are more dependent on their parents. Correspondence students, by contrast, are older and already have jobs. For them, family background is not a robust predictor of clinic involvement.<sup>129</sup> Among full time students, coming from modest means is a robust predictor. This is especially noticeable for respondents from the lower middle class where their families had enough for essentials but had to save for big-ticket items. A third of those in this category participated in clinics. The regression analysis substantiates this finding: the odds of having joined a clinic were over 40 percent for respondents who had lower middle-class origins.

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125. See Hendley, *supra* note 119; see *infra* Table 1.

126. *Id.* at 251–51 (explaining that work experience is highly valued by employers and thus, many respondents sought out court experience through jobs, internships, or clinics).

127. See *id.* at 250–51.

128. For an explanation regarding the tendency for parents in legal markets to mobilize own personal networks to help their children, see *id.* at 248.

129. See *infra* Table 3.

*Table 4: Family resources of respondents gathered from a 2016 survey of Russian graduating law students and reported as percentages.*

|                                                                                                 | Full Time Students**   |                               | Correspondence Students |                               |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
|                                                                                                 | Participated in Clinic | Did Not Participate in Clinic | Participated in Clinic  | Did Not Participate in Clinic |
| Poor: family had trouble covering the cost of basic necessities                                 | 27.2                   | 72.8                          | 15.2                    | 84.8                          |
| Lower middle class: family had enough money for essentials but had to save for big-ticket items | 33.6                   | 66.4                          | 10.9                    | 89.1                          |
| Higher middle-class: family could buy big-ticket items but not cars                             | 25.1                   | 74.9                          | 11.7                    | 88.2                          |
| Rich: family had no financial worries                                                           | 25.7                   | 74.3                          | 7.8                     | 92.2                          |

\*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$

*Career Plans.* Unlike the U.S., Russia does not have a unitary legal profession.<sup>130</sup> Instead, upon graduation, young lawyers pursue one of many paths, each of which is governed by its own norms.<sup>131</sup> Most have no entry requirement other than a university degree in law.<sup>132</sup> Those interested in becoming judges, notaries, or

130. Hendley, *supra* note 119, at 244.

131. EKATERINA MOISEEVA & TIMUR BOCHAROV, RUSSIA: CHALLENGES OF THE MARKET AND BOUNDARY WORK 331–52 (Richard L. Abel et al. eds., 220); Kathryn Hendley, *Mapping the Career Preferences of Russian Law Graduates*, 25 INT'L J. OF THE LEGAL PRO. 261 (2018).

132. These include prosecutors, criminal investigators, corporate lawyers, in-house lawyers, lawyers who work within the state bureaucracy, and jack-of-all-trade lawyers in private practice. Lawyers in this last category can represent individuals and businesses

*advokaty* must complete an internship and pass an exam to verify their competence.<sup>133</sup> Respondents were asked to indicate their likely career path. Initially, when I included all options, this seemed to be a weak predictor – it was not statistically significant for either full time or correspondence students.

When I narrowed my focus, an intriguing story emerged. Given that most of Russia's clinics are focused on helping people prevail in court, I hypothesized that a desire to become a litigator would be associated with an interest in clinics. The specialty that is most associated with litigation is the *advokatura*.<sup>134</sup> *Advokaty* have a monopoly on representing criminal defendants.<sup>135</sup> Though *advokaty* also have the right to practice transactional law, they tend to spend most of their time in court.<sup>136</sup> I was able to identify the respondents most likely to become litigators by asking them whether they planned to take the qualifying exam at some point. As Table 5 shows, among both full time and correspondence students, those who plan to become *advokaty* were more likely to participate in a clinic. For both groups, the result is statistically significant, though it is more robust for correspondence students. For that group, the result holds up in the regression analysis.<sup>137</sup> Correspondence students who aspire to a career in the *advokatura* are almost four times more likely to have joined a clinic.<sup>138</sup> As to full time students, the significance of this variable falls away when put into the mix with other possible explanatory variables.<sup>139</sup>

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in all disputes both in court and elsewhere other than criminal cases. See generally Hendley, *supra* note 119 at 263-267; see also THE CONSTITUTION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION Dec. 12, 1993, art. 48 (showing that only *advokaty* can represent criminal defendants).

133. See generally Hendley, *supra* note 119, at 264, 266-67.

134. See PAMELA A. JORDAN, DEFENDING RIGHTS IN RUSSIA: LAWYERS, THE STATE AND LEGAL REFORM IN THE POST-SOVIET ERA (Univ. of B.C. Press ed., 2005).

135. Hendley, *supra* note 119, at 264; Constitution RF, art. 48.

136. Hendley, *supra* note 119, at 263-64.

137. See *infra* Table 3.

138. *Id.*

139. *Id.*

*Table 5: Responses to question about whether respondents planned to take exam to become an advokat gathered as part of a 2016 survey of graduating Russian law students with results reported as percentages.*

|                            | Full Time Students**   |                               | Correspondence Students*** |                               |
|----------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
|                            | Participated in Clinic | Did Not Participate in Clinic | Participated in Clinic     | Did Not Participate in Clinic |
| Plans to take advokat exam | 33.4                   | 66.6                          | 27.7                       | 72.3                          |
| No plans to take exam      | 27.4                   | 72.6                          | 9.6                        | 90.3                          |

\*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$

*Prior Court Experience and Trust in Courts.* Russian clinics' heavy emphasis on training students to be competent in a court setting led me to wonder whether prior experience in court might prompt a greater willingness to participate in clinics. Going to court is not the typical path for resolving disputes for Russians.<sup>140</sup> Like their counterparts elsewhere, they prefer to find solutions through informal negotiations. Litigation is regarded as an option to be pursued only when all other avenues fail.<sup>141</sup> Thus, it follows that only a minority of respondents—22 percent of full-time students and 27 percent of correspondence students—had participated in a court case prior to entering the law faculty.<sup>142</sup>

Table 6 documents the relationship between court experience and subsequent clinic involvement. For both full time and correspondence students, this familiarity serves as a strong predictor. Among the former, the percentage of clinic participation rises to 38 percent for court veterans compared to 29 percent for the full sample. Along similar lines, the percentage of *zaochniki* who participated in clinics is 20 percent for court

140. See generally Kathryn Hendley, *To Go to Court or Not? The Evolution of Disputes in Russia*, in *A SOCIOLOGY OF JUSTICE IN RUSSIA* (Marina Kurkchian & Agnieszka Kubal eds., 2018).

141. *Id.*

142. See *infra* Table 3.

veterans compared to 12 percent for the full sample. When this variable is included in multivariate regressions, its statistical significance persists only for the full-time cohort.<sup>143</sup>

*Table 6: Responses to question about whether respondents had experience as litigant in court gathered as part of a 2016 survey of graduating Russian law students with results reported as percentages.*

|                                          | Full Time Students***  |                               | Correspondence Students*** |                               |
|------------------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
|                                          | Participated in Clinic | Did Not Participate in Clinic | Participated in Clinic     | Did Not Participate in Clinic |
| Respondent had prior court experience    | 38                     | 62                            | 20.3                       | 79.7                          |
| Respondent had no prior court experience | 26                     | 74                            | 9.1                        | 90.9                          |

\*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$

The greater willingness of court veterans to participate with clinics raises the question of their overall attitude towards the Russian courts. The survey included a wealth of questions about courts. These included queries about respondents' perception of corruption levels and the potential barriers to using the courts.<sup>144</sup> For most of these variables, there was no meaningful difference between the responses of clinic veterans and others. What turned out to be most helpful was a module of questions about respondents' level of trust in various courts, including trial<sup>145</sup> and appellate courts.<sup>146</sup> I combined these questions to create a scale that ran from 0 to 20, with higher scores reflecting greater trust

143. *Id.*

144. These included the cost of filing a complaint, the cost of hiring a lawyer, delays associated with litigating, and difficulties with implementing decisions.

145. Justice of the peace courts, district courts, and *arbitrazh* courts.

146. The Russian Supreme Court and the Russian Constitutional Court.

(*trust in courts*). Among full time students, the mean response for clinic participants (15.3) was higher than for those who opted out (14.8). This difference is statistically significant and holds up in the multivariate regression analysis (Table 3). Among *zaochniki*, the difference in mean responses for these two groups is not significant.

While this tells us that full time students who joined clinics had greater trust in the courts, we cannot know whether that trust arose through their litigation experience that predated their matriculation or whether it evolved through their work with the clinic.

*Institutional Characteristics and Location.* During the Soviet era, the study of law was concentrated primarily at law faculties that were part of larger, full-service universities often referred to as classical universities.<sup>147</sup> Complementing these were a handful of stand-alone institutes that concentrated solely on legal education as well as institutions affiliated with law-related governmental departments such as the Ministry of Internal Affairs or the prosecutorial service. With the increase in popularity of law as a profession and the opening of the market for post-secondary education to all comers, law faculties have sprouted in unlikely venues. These include humanitarian-oriented universities that previously did not educate lawyers as well as an odd assortment of technical institutions that opened law faculties in an effort to capitalize on the interest in law.<sup>148</sup> Unsurprisingly, the quality of instruction varies widely.

The extent to which students participated in clinics in these five categories of institutions of legal education—classical, specialized law, departmental, humanitarian, technical—is set forth in Table 7. Of these, the most prestigious are undoubtedly the classical and specialized law institutions. Yet we see that the likelihood of participating in a clinic is lower for both full time and

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147. See Maleshin, *supra* note 28, at 307.

148. See, e.g., Hendley, *supra* 11, at n. 10, 1008–09; MAGGS ET AL., *supra* note 14, at 211 (commenting that “[p]ractically every manner of specialized institute seems to have opened a law department – from the Moscow State University of Geodesics and Mapmaking to the State Academy of Oil and Gas . . .”).

correspondence students.<sup>149</sup> The statistical significance of this finding holds up in the multi-variate regression analysis only for full time students. Table 3 documents that the odds of joining a clinic were almost 50 percent less for respondents who attended classical universities. This makes sense when viewed in light of clinics as a way to secure a job after graduation. Students at these well-respected classical universities are viewed more favorably and have an easier time getting a job than do graduates of humanitarian and technical universities.<sup>150</sup> As a result, we would expect that students at these lower prestige institutions are more likely to participate in clinics as a way of obtaining external validation of their skills. While that expectation does not pan out for humanitarian universities, the data confirms this for technical universities, which makes sense given that they 'scrape the bottom of the barrel' in terms of perceived quality.

*Table 7: Information on type of law faculty attended by respondents and their geographic location with results reported as percentages.*

|                                            | Full Time Students***  |                               | Correspondence Students** |                               |
|--------------------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
|                                            | Participated in Clinic | Did Not Participate in Clinic | Participated in Clinic    | Did Not Participate in Clinic |
| Type of law faculty:                       |                        |                               |                           |                               |
| Law faculty at classical university        | 24.4                   | 75.6                          | 10.3                      | 89.7                          |
| Law faculty at specialized legal institute | 28.2                   | 71.2                          | 11.1                      | 88.9                          |

149. See *infra* Table 7.

150. See generally Hendley, *supra* note 11, at 1007–10.

|                                         | Full Time Students***  |                               | Correspondence Students** |                               |
|-----------------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
|                                         | Participated in Clinic | Did Not Participate in Clinic | Participated in Clinic    | Did Not Participate in Clinic |
| Law faculty at humanitarian university  | 16.5                   | 83.5                          | 15.9                      | 84.1                          |
| Law faculty at technical university     | 41.7                   | 58.3                          | 17.7                      | 82.3                          |
| Law faculty at departmental institution | 46.4                   | 53.6                          | 1.8                       | 98.2                          |

|                      | Full Time Students***  |                               | Correspondence Students* |                               |
|----------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
|                      | Participated in Clinic | Did Not Participate in Clinic | Participated in Clinic   | Did Not Participate in Clinic |
| Geographic location: |                        |                               |                          |                               |
| Moscow               | 17.7                   | 82.3                          | 21.3                     | 78.7                          |
| St. Petersburg       | 41                     | 59                            | 6.7                      | 93.3                          |
| European regions     | 30.9                   | 69.1                          | 13                       | 87                            |
| Siberia and Far East | 19.8                   | 80.2                          | 8.7                      | 93.3                          |
| Urals                | 44.9                   | 55.1                          | 5.8                      | 94.2                          |
| North Caucasus       | 30                     | 70                            | 5.8                      | 94.2                          |

\*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$

Table 7 also lays out the participation rate in clinics geographically. The results differ dramatically depending on whether the respondent is a full time or correspondence student. As to the former, the rate of participation is generally higher outside of Moscow.<sup>151</sup> At first glance, this seems odd—Moscow has a higher concentration of law firms and other employment opportunities than anywhere else in Russia.<sup>152</sup> It might seem that Moscow-based students would be seeking out any and all opportunities to improve their chances of getting a job upon graduation. This premise holds but rather than giving rise to unusually high levels of participation in clinics, it has resulted in more of these students holding down law-related jobs while studying than elsewhere.<sup>153</sup> As a result, they have neither the time nor the interest in spending time at clinics. Outside Moscow, fewer students have jobs and, as a result, they are more likely to flock to clinics to gain practical skills that will impress potential employers.

A different pattern emerges for correspondence students. Caution is warranted when interpreting these data because the numbers are low. For example, in several regions (St. Petersburg, Siberia and Far East, North Caucasus, and Urals), there were less than 10 correspondence students who had been involved with clinics. Even so, it is intriguing that Moscow-based correspondence students are more likely than those studying outside Moscow to participate in clinics.<sup>154</sup> The explanation may lie in the very nature of correspondence education. As was noted earlier, these students do not attend classes regularly. Their place of residence is often quite remote from the law faculty, rendering participation in clinics literally impossible.<sup>155</sup> But correspondence students attending law faculties in Moscow are more likely to live

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151. The exception is Siberia and the Far East, where the rate of participation is lower than in Moscow.

152. See Hendley, *supra* note 10, at 248.

153. Among full time students, 42 percent had a law-related job. For those studying at law faculties in Moscow, this percentage was 54. *Id.* at 245.

154. See *infra* Table 7.

155. *Id.*

in the hinterlands.<sup>156</sup> This makes it possible for them to join in clinic activities.

## V. SUMMING UP

CLE is a relatively recent innovation for Russia. Legal education has long been, and continues to be, dominated by an emphasis on theory over practice.<sup>157</sup> Internships that embedded upper-level students with practicing lawyers across the professional spectrum have always been part of the curriculum but, in the words of a former vice dean of the highly respected law faculty at Moscow State University, they are a “formality” that “seldom provide skills for practical work.”<sup>158</sup> Students themselves feel this neglect. When asked to assess their level of satisfaction with their theoretical preparation and their practical preparation on a four-point scale with higher scores reflecting greater satisfaction, the mean score for the former (3.34) was noticeably higher than for the latter (2.94).<sup>159</sup> Prospective employers have also expressed their dissatisfaction with the lack of preparedness of law graduates.<sup>160</sup>

Clinics were not created in Russia to solve this problem. Indeed, during the first burst of enthusiasm in the 1990s, law firms existed only in a nascent form.<sup>161</sup> They lacked power or influence. Instead, the initial impetus came from Russian faculty members who emerged from tours of Western law schools with a particular fascination for CLE.<sup>162</sup> It was unlike anything they had seen before. A determined minority of Russian law professors partnered with American clinicians to create the first clinics.<sup>163</sup> A lack of institutional support caused the movement to founder. The necessary support lagged until 2011, when the Russian state acknowledged its obligation to provide free legal assistance to

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156. See *infra* Table 1, Table 7; see also Hendley, *supra* note 11, at 1010.

157. Maleshin, *supra* note 28, at 206

158. *Id.*

159. Hendley, *supra* note 10, at App. A.

160. *Id.* at 251.

161. Pamela Jordan, *The Russian advokatura (bar) and the state in the 1990s*, 50 EUROPE-ASIA STUDIES, 765, 772 (1998).

162. See generally May, *supra* note 39, at 43.

163. Bogdanova, *supra* note 17, at 300.

vulnerable citizens and called on law faculties to operationalize this through clinics.<sup>164</sup>

Clinics are now a fairly common feature in Russian law faculties. With support from the state, law faculties have dedicated resources to clinics; almost all clinic directors are faculty members. Even so, CLE remains peripheral. Almost nowhere in Russia is it mandatory for graduation.

Whether this might change in the future is unclear. The analysis of the 2016 survey provides reason for hope. The data shows that students who participate in clinics receive a concrete benefit in terms of greater competitiveness on the job market. As that reality percolates through the Russian legal community, it is possible that support for expanding CLE, and even making it part of the standard curriculum, will grow.

At the same time, Russian clinics have a very different profile from established clinics elsewhere that are charged with remedying inequality and unfairness.<sup>165</sup> By contrast, the mission for Russian clinics is not to energize students to fight social injustice, but to school them in how to help disadvantaged Russians solve their mundane legal problems.<sup>166</sup> In doing so, these students gain essential practical skills that will serve them well as they begin to service paying clients. Although the analysis of the 2016 survey suggests that altruism does not drive Russian law students' participation in clinics, their experiences nonetheless fill a critical gap by providing access to competent legal advice for Russians who would otherwise fall through the cracks.

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164. Project on Free Civil Legal Aid and Assistance For Vulnerable Groups in the Russian Federation, Russian Federation Federal Law (2011), No. 324-FZ (RUS).

165. See generally Folakemi Ajagunna & Ibijoke Byron, *Clinical Legal Education and Social Justice: Assessing the Impact on Students in a Law Clinic in Nigeria*, 31 INT'L J. OF CLINICAL LEGAL EDUC. 44, 46 (2024).

166. See Burnam, *supra* note 17, at 108.