

DECLARED INCOMES OF HEADS OF REGIONS AND INDICATORS OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF CONSTITUENT ENTITIES OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION IN THE VOLGA FEDERAL DISTRICT

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Abstract: The article explores the relationship between the dynamics and spatial distribution of income of the heads of regions in the Volga Federal District and such indicators as the great regional product, per capita income, average wages, and the rating and political status of the respective regions. Research for the article is consistent with the current approach to studies of political elites and the problems of income stratification in population. In any region the local elite is personified by its head, which corresponds to perception of an average local citizen. The sources of data for the article are Declarations of Income and Assets of the heads of regions and the members of their families, which are published on the official websites of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation in accordance with the requirements of Federal Law No. 273-FZ of 25.12.2008 "On Corruption Counteraction". The regional socio-economic indicators used in the article are official statistical data published by the Federal State Statistics Service of the Russian Federation. The declared annual incomes of the heads of regions of the Volga Federal District are considered in comparison with the income of an average citizen, based on the assumption that the "average person" presented in the Russian official statistics is not the poorest and the head of the region is not the richest person in the respective region. The time frame of the research is deliberately limited to the period of 2010–2015, as during the period the personal composition of the heads of regions of the Volga Federal District was comparatively stable. The methodological framework for comparing the declared annual incomes of senior regional officials with the selected socio-economic indicators of the regions involves methods of exploratory research and analysis, graphical and cartographic analysis, and techniques of statistical mathematics. The research findings show that both the dynamics and spatial distribution of personal incomes of the heads of regions demonstrates significant correlation with the per capita

income of the population in the regions. At the same time, the level of earned incomes (salaries) of the heads of regions and the formal administrative and political status of the respective regions show a very low correlation. The article describing the results of a study of officially reported, open information about personal incomes reveals the scope of differences in socio-economic status between the senior regional officials and the general public in their regions.

Keywords: declared annual income, gross regional product, per capita income, head of the region, Volga Federal District.

Introduction

Many scholars in Russia and abroad focus their research on political elites and the problems of income stratification in population. These subjects are often studied in their interrelation. In order to compare the incomes of people belonging to different social strata, scholars, as a rule, compare the average income of groups of people making up a certain share in the entire population, usually using decile (10%) or quartile (25%) coefficients. G. Auten, G. Gee and N. Turner (2013) compare changes in the US elite in the period from 1987 to 2010 with the income inequality between different groups of the US population and the vertical "intergenerational mobility" characteristics; J. Flemming and J. Micklewright (2000) consider changes in income distribution in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and in Russia in the post-socialist period; and D. Grusky (2001) focuses his study on the position of "upper class" representatives in status hierarchies. However, in Russia, which is historically prone to authoritarianism, the political elite, in the perception of an average citizen, is personified by one person: head of the state, head of the region or head of the municipal district. After Federal Law No. 273-FZ of 25.12.2008 "On Corruption Counteraction" came into force, the official websites of constituent entities of the Russian Federation began publishing Declarations of Income and Assets of the heads of regions, usually in the section "Corruption Counteraction". Item 6 of Article 8 of the current version of the Law contains a requirement to publish information "on income, property and property liabilities <...> on official websites in the information and telecommunication Internet network". In addition to information about income and property of the heads of regions, the Law requires providing and publishing the information on the income and property of some of their family members: their marital partners and minor children. Public access to the information about income and property of the heads of regions and their family members makes it possible to compare their standard of living with that of "average citizens", to analyse territorial differences in incomes of the heads of regions and their dependence on the region's ranking in the official political hierarchy or on its socio-economic situation.

We selected the Volga Federal District as the study object. Today this district is the centre of population density of Russia. The Constitution of the Russian Federation in its currently valid version of 1993 stipulates: "In relations with federal bodies of state authority all the constituent entities of the Russian Federation shall be equal" (RF Const., Ch. 1, Art.5, it. 4). The Volga Federal District comprises 14 constituent entities of the Russian Federation: 6 Republics, 1 Krai (territory) and 17 Oblasts (regions). In spite of the fact that there is no hierarchy of subordination among the constituent entities of the Russian Federation, they do not have equal political status. The Constitution of the Russian Federation, defining the status of republics as federal constituent entities, stipulates that they shall have their own constitutions, unlike territories and regions (RF

Const., Ch. 1, Art.5, it. 2). The difference in their political status is also reflected in the titles of their senior officials. In republics the title is "Head of the Republic" ("President" in the Republic of Tatarstan), in krais and oblasts — "Governor" (or "Head of the Administration", but not in the Volga Federal District). Therefore, the heads of regions of the Volga Federal District can be ranked on the hierarchical ladder according to their formal political status as follows: on the upper levels there is President of Tatarstan and Heads of other republics, and at the lower level there are Governors of oblasts.

In Russia, like in many other countries, political elites and problems of social inequality have been recurring subjects of scholarly interest. Emergence of social inequality and the specific features of this process are studied in the works by such Russian sociologists as L.A. Belyaeva (2018), N.M. Rimashevskaya and L.A. Migranova (2016); and M.K. Gorshkov and his co-authors (2013). In particular, O.I. Shkaratan (2009) explores ideas of etocratic nature of the Russian society ("power-property" system), and he defined this type of society as neo-etacratism. Back in the early 1990s, T.I. Zaslavskaya (1993) identified 4 main groups of social structure, including the ruling class ("nomenclature"). She wrote that the job position and departmental rankings would prevail over the professional and intellectual content of labour. In her later works, she describes the emergence of the Russian society differentiation into the "upper" and "lower" strata. Defining main classes (strata) of Russian society, N.E. Tikhonova (2014, 161) states that one of the determining factors for the social stratification is the power resource. The candidate's thesis by A.S. Egorov (2015), which is based on the works by G.K. Ashin (1995), O.V. Kryshtanovskaya (2005), Yu.A. Levada (2006). R.F. Turovsky (2004) and other scholars, considers geographical differences in efficacy of the regional elites of Russia. One of the criteria he uses for the integrated assessment of the performance of regional elites is "poverty rate" (Egorov, 2015). Unlike other scholars, we aim to identify the features of spatial distribution of the declared incomes of the heads of constituent entities of the Russian Federation, using the Volga Federal District as a case study. To achieve this, we analysed spatial and temporal changes in the annual declared incomes of the heads of constituent entities of the Russian Federation in the Volga Federal District, as well as their households; measured correlation between the personified declared annual incomes of the regional political elite with various regional socio-economic indicators (gross regional product, per capita income, average wages, rating and political status of the respective regions, and average household income). identified spatial and temporal variations in the gap between the personified declared annual incomes of the regional political elite and the income of an average citizen, based on the assumption that the "average person" presented in the Russian official statistics is not the poorest, and the head of the region is not the richest person in the region.

Materials and Methods

In our study, we use the information "on income, property and property liabilities" of the heads of regions of the Volga Federal District, which is published on the official websites of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation in accordance with the requirements of Federal Law "On Corruption Counteraction" and is summarised on Declarator.org website. The information about regional socio-economic indicators is based on the official statistical data published by the Federal State Statistics Service of the Russian Federation. The time frame of the research is deliberately limited to the 2010–2015 period, as during the period the composition of the heads of regions was comparatively stable in the Volga Federal District. In this respect, the year of the maximum stability was 2015, when there were no changes in the political elite of the

Volga Federal District. However, since the summer of 2016, a number of the heads of regions have resigned. The peak of resignations was in 2017, when the heads of regions stepped down in five constituent entities located in the Volga Federal District. Some of the resignations were accompanied by corruption scandals (N.Yu. Belykh in 2016; L.I. Markelov and A.V. Solovyov in 2017). Therefore, there are some doubts about the completeness of data in the published Declarations of Income and Assets of some senior regional officials. However, despite the fact that the property and income data presented in the Declarations sometimes seem to be only "a small visible part of the iceberg", they are detailed enough for comparing the standard of living of a particular head of regional administration with that of the average citizen and other heads of regions. When comparing the declared annual incomes of the heads of constituent entities of the Russian Federation with the selected socio-economic indicators of the regions, we use the methods of exploratory research and analysis, graphical and cartographic analysis, and techniques of statistical mathematics. In order to measure the correlation between the declared annual incomes of the heads of regions and the selected socio-economic indicators of their regions, we used the method of linear correlation. The correlation coefficient indicates the strength of linear relationship between two variables. For the purposes of this study, we use the following gradation of linear correlation magnitude: if the value is less than 0.3, the relationship is practically absent; 0.3–0.5 — weak; 0.5–0.7 — moderate; 0.7–1 — strong (Arkhipov, 2002, 26).

Results and Discussion

In the Volga Federal District, the heads of regions declared their annual incomes in the range from 1.798 million roubles (Governor of the Ulyanovsk Oblast) to 49.219 million roubles (Governor of the Nizhny Novgorod Oblast). (Deklarator.org, 2018). However, the Declaration provided by Governor of the Nizhny Novgorod Oblast states that he inherited over 37 million roubles, and his earned (job-related) income was only 3.751 million roubles. If we consider only the earned income in 2015, the Head of the Republic of Bashkortostan had the highest income of 7.642 million roubles (there is no reference to any other source of income in his Declaration). A relatively high incomes were also reported by the Head of the Udmurt Republic (including income from sale of real property), President of the Republic of Tatarstan and Governor of the Penza Oblast. Beside Governor of the Ulyanovsk Oblast. the lowest incomes were reported in the declarations for 2015 by Governors of the Kirov and Orenburg Oblasts. (Fig. 1).

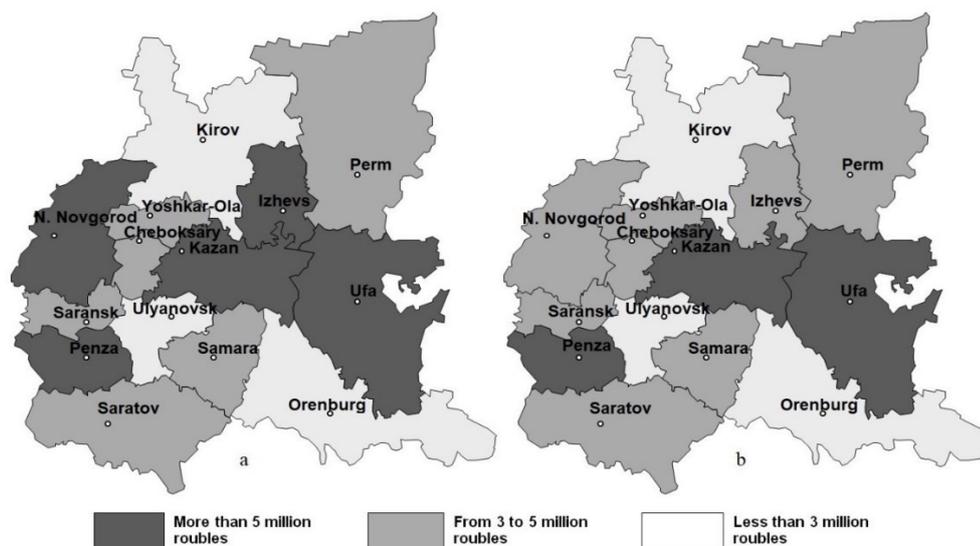


Figure 1. Declared Annual Income of Heads of Constituent Entities of the Russian Federation in the Volga Federal District (Declarator.org): a. Total income; b. Earned income (without revenues from other sources).

When comparing the incomes declared by the heads of regions of the Volga Federal District as earned from their primary jobs in 2015 with various socio-economic indicators of their regions, we can see certain relationships between them. The value of spatial correlation between the incomes earned by the heads of regions from their primary jobs and the values of gross regional product is 0.68. We cannot say that the relationship between these indicators is very strong, but it is still significant and shows that the higher the absolute value of the gross regional product is in a region of the Volga Federal District, the higher the salary its head earns. There is also positive correlation between the earned incomes of the President of Tatarstan, Heads of other Republics and Oblast Governors and the values of gross regional product per capita (0.63) and even the average salaries of doctors (0.66), teachers (0.58), academic staff of higher education institutions (0.61), employees of various organizations (0.67), and the per capita income of the population (0.53). The Foundation for Civil Society Development recently began publishing their "rating of efficacy of governors" (Foundation for Civil Society Development, 2015). With a specially developed methodology, their experts assign efficacy points, the sum of which determines Governor's position in the ranking. The strength of the correlation between the points scored by the heads of regions for 2014 and their salaries in 2015 is 0.60, which means that there is certain relationship between Governors' positions in the rating of efficacy and their earned incomes for the following year. At the same time, the degree of correlation between the level of earned incomes and the formal administrative and political status of the regions is rather low with the value of only 0.37.

If we compare the above-mentioned socio-economic indicators of the regions with the total declared incomes of the heads of regions rather than with their earned incomes, the strength of correlation is considerably lower, even negligible in some cases. Correlation with the absolute values of gross regional product is only 0.32; with the values of gross regional product per capita — 0.28; with the average salaries of doctors — 0.38, teachers — 0.45, academic staff of higher education institutions — 0.41, employees of various organizations — 0.39, per capita income of the population — 0.48; and with the points in the efficacy rating — 0.25. In 2015, the average per capita income of citizens in the regions of the Volga Federal District ranged from 0.8% (Nizhny Novgorod Oblast) to 15.2% (Ulyanovsk Oblast) of the annual income of the head of the respective region

(Deklarator.org, 2018; Federal State Statistics Service of the Russian Federation, 2016a; 2016b) (Fig. 2). Even in the Ulyanovsk Oblast, where the gap between the Governor's declared income and the income of an average citizen is the smallest in the Volga Federal District, Governor earns 6.5 times more than the average citizen.

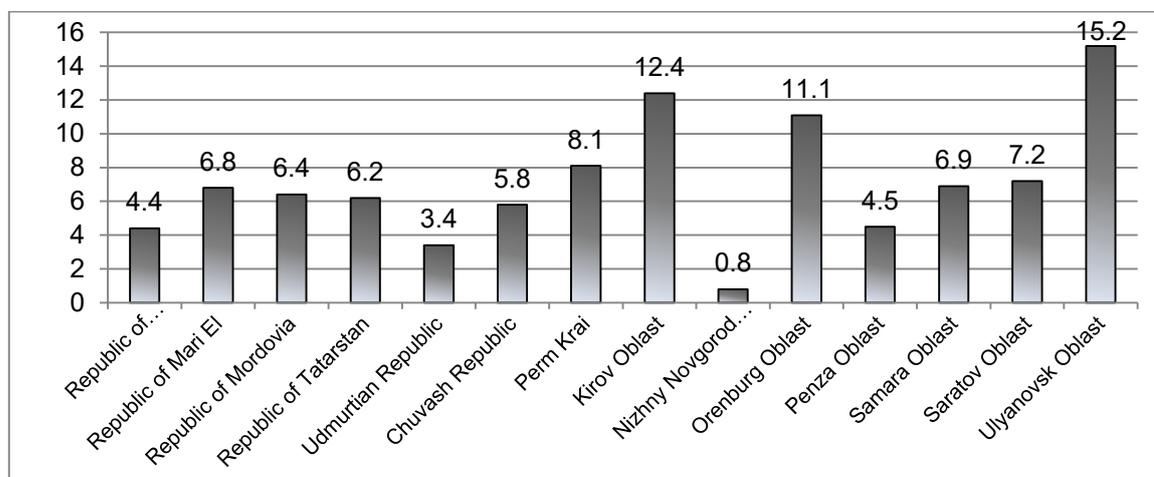


Figure 2. Ratio of Average Per Capita Income of Citizens in Regions of the Volga Federal District to Declared Incomes of Heads of Regions in 2015, %.

A certain pattern is revealed when comparing the territorial disparity between the declared incomes of the heads of federal constituent entities (Fig. 1) and their income ratio to the average per capita income of population (Fig. 3). Disparity between the income of the head of the region and the income of an average citizen is the largest in those regions where their heads had the highest income in 2015 (Nizhny Novgorod Oblast, Penza Oblast, Republic of Bashkortostan, and Udmurt Republic) and is comparatively small in those regions where the declared income of the heads of regional governments was not very high (Kirov, Ulyanovsk and Orenburg Oblasts). The only exception is the Republic of Tatarstan, in which President's high annual income is combined with a relatively high average per capita income (second highest in the Volga Federal District) and, therefore, difference between them is smaller than in the Nizhny Novgorod and Penza Oblasts, Republics of Bashkortostan and Udmurtia, and even smaller than in the Chuvash Republic. The Chuvash Republic ranks 12 out of 14 regions in the Volga Federal District in terms of average per capita income and ranks 8 in terms of income of the head of the region.

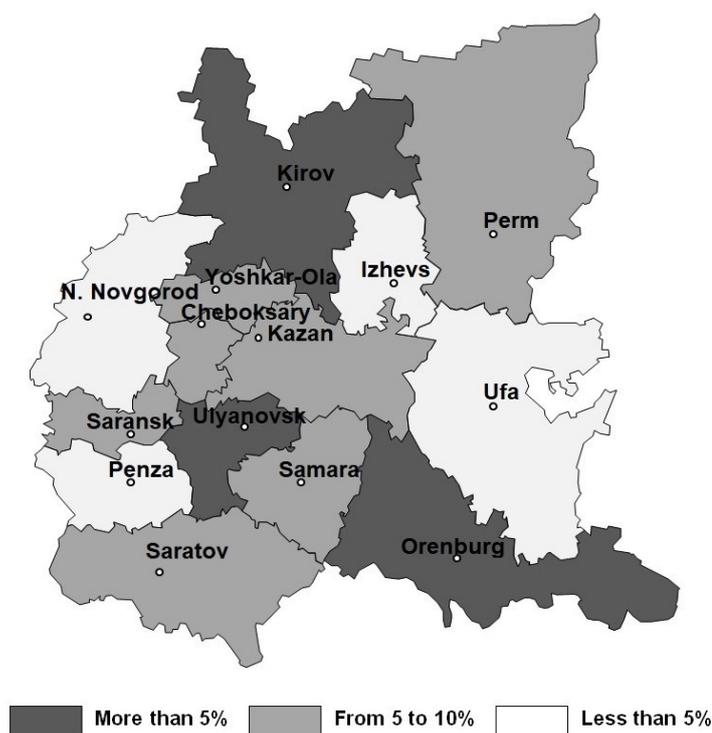


Figure 3. Ratio of Average Per Capita

Income of Citizens in Regions of the Volga Federal District to Declared Income of Heads of Regions in 2015, %.

We considered the dynamics of the annual declared incomes of the heads of regions in the Volga Federal District from 2010 to 2015 and found out that former Governor of the Nizhny Novgorod Oblast V.P. Shantsev had the highest average annual income of over 13 million roubles. In the ranking of average annual incomes, Governor of the Nizhny Novgorod Oblast is followed, though with a significant lag, by President of the Republic of Tatarstan (7.9 million roubles) and Head of the Republic of Bashkortostan (7.2 million roubles) (Tables 1, 2). As their published Declarations do not contain any references to other incomes, we can assume that their only income is their remuneration for performing functions of senior regional officials. The only exception is the income from selling a personal car declared by President of the Republic of Tatarstan in 2014; that was the year of the maximum President's declared income in the period of 2010-2015.

Table 1. Declared Incomes of Heads of Regions of the Volga Federal District in 2010-2015 (Declarator.org), RUB.

No.	Region	Year					
		2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
1	Republic of Bashkortostan	1123101 3.86	5617481.8 9	5510541. 93	6028165. 83	7686149. 88	7642892.0 7
2	Mari El Republic	1999259 .49	6981597.7 4	2196208. 72	2597845. 06	3244995. 12	3138000.8 4
3	Republic of Mordovia	1557965 .0*	2072811.1 2*	2395029. 0	2377197. 0	3199084. 41	3291820.4 7
4	Republic of Tatarstan	7433555	5858120	5798041. 64.	10869267 .82	11834620 .65	6067343.9 4

No.	Region	Year					
		2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
5	Udmurt Republic	3763909.14*	3569615.64*	3942164*	6140190.31	4958345	8697819
6	Chuvash Republic	2416050.96	2828133.46	3137847.56	3320210.55	3759997.65	3829798.47
7	Perm Krai	1900000*	n/a	3366231.43	3104186.85	4285071.62	4886108.93
8	Kirov Oblast	3717787.18	1854764.87	4155190.14	2089705.76	2250169.69	2164722.85
9	Nizhny Novgorod Oblast	5429120.42	5493472.45	5565322.13	6195087.90	8428048.07	49219917.82
10	Orenburg Oblast	1841807	2195003.99	2232576.5	2414103.74	3214038.82	2508335.05
11	Penza Oblast	n/a*	4063165*	4762526*	5186870.94*	6351400.52*	5572492.52
12	Samara Oblast	12632482*	9103884*	4139109.19	3485802.95	3287606.36	4663317.64
13	Saratov Oblast	n/a	n/a	3115306.96	2989982.49	3495152.45	3370521.80
14	Ulyanovsk Oblast	1712169.28	1798496.24	4646837.96	2320049.20	2605970.12	10870255.76

*Income of the previous head of the region,

Table 2. Main Indicators of Dynamics for Declared Incomes of Heads of Regions in the Volga Federal District (Kazakov et al., 2017).

No.	Region	Average annual income (RUB)	Coefficient of variation of declared income of head of region (%)	Coefficient of correlation between declared income of head of region and average per capita income of citizens in the region	Ratio of annual income of head of region to average per capita income of citizens in the region
1	Republic of Bashkortostan	7286041	29.67	-0.24	28
2	Mari El Republic	3359651	54.83	-0.16	21
3	Republic of Mordovia	2482318	26.78	0.96	15
4	Republic of Tatarstan	7976825	33.84	0.34	27
5	Udmurt Republic	5178674	38.11	0.88	24
6	Chuvash Republic	3215340	16.92	0.87	19
7	Perm Krai	3910400	21.08	0.90	12
8	Kirov Oblast	2705390	35.95	-0.43	14
9	Nizhny Novgorod Oblast	13388495	131.39	0.71	42
10	Orenburg Oblast	2400978	19.14	0.75	11
11	Penza Oblast	5187291	16.55	0.83	24
12	Samara Oblast	6218700	61.13	-0.92	17
13	Saratov Oblast	3242741	7.13	0.71	16

No.	Region	Average annual income (RUB)	Coefficient of variation of declared income of head of region (%)	Coefficient of correlation between declared income of head of region and average per capita income of citizens in the region	Ratio of annual income of head of region to average per capita income of citizens in the region
14	Ulyanovsk Oblast	3992296	88.53	0.66	19

The second group of senior regional officials with the average annual income of 4-7 million roubles includes Governors of the Samara and Penza Oblasts and Head of the Udmurt Republic. The heads of these constituent entities of the Russian Federation changed during the time frame of our study. In other regions of the Volga Federal District, senior regional officials had comparatively low average annual incomes of less than 4 million roubles per year. According to the published Declarations of Income and Assets, the lowest average annual incomes were recorded for Governor of the Kirov Oblast (2.7 million roubles), Head of the Republic of Mordovia (2.5 million roubles) and the Governor of the Orenburg Region (2.4 million roubles); none of them declared any other revenues in addition to the income earned for performing the functions of the senior regional official. The only exception was N.Yu. Belykh, former Governor of the Kirov Oblast, who had additional income in 2012 from sale of his private cars for the total amount of 2.3 million roubles.

Analysis of the coefficient of variation shows that the incomes of Governors of the Nizhny Novgorod, Ulyanovsk and Samara Oblasts and Head of the Mari El Republic demonstrated the highest volatility in the Volga Federal District (Table 2). The reasons for it were different in different regions. Governor of the Nizhny Novgorod Oblast received a large inheritance in 2015. Governor of the Ulyanovsk Oblast had additional income in 2015 from sale of his private property. In the Samara Oblast, Governor changed in 2012: V.V. Artyakov was replaced by N.I. Merkushin, and Artyakov's annual income was significantly higher than the income of his successor. The most stable annual income was declared by Governor of the Orenburg Oblast V.V. Radaev (coefficient of variation is a little more than 7%). Over the last four years of the studied time frame, his income has been an average of about 3.2 million roubles (there is no data on previous incomes, perhaps that is why his income seems so stable).

To compare the dynamics of incomes of the heads of regions and per capita incomes of the population of their regions, we calculated the coefficients of correlation between them. A significant positive correlation was identified for the majority of regions of the Volga Federal District (in the Republic of Mordovia, Perm Krai, Udmurt Republic, Chuvash Republic, Penza Oblast, Orenburg Oblast, Nizhny Novgorod Oblast, Saratov Oblast, and Ulyanovsk Oblast). In the Samara Oblast the relationship is very strong but it is an inverse correlation, which means that the growth of per capita incomes of the Samara Oblast population (and they were statistically growing) was accompanied by the decrease in Governor's income.

The Declarations of Income and Assets provided by the heads of region also contain the information on incomes of their close relatives: their marital partners and minor children. Minor children rarely contribute significant amounts to family income, but incomes of spouses and adult children can be considerable. In the Volga Federal District, the spouses of the heads of regions in 2015 had monetary incomes ranging from

15.4 thousand roubles (wife of Head of the Republic of Bashkortostan) to 256,552.9 thousand roubles (wife of President of the Republic of Tatarstan) (Deklarator.org, 2018). In the latter case, it was reported that 210.7 million roubles were inherited. Even if we do not take this amount into account, the wife of President of the Republic of Tatarstan still had the income of 45.8 million roubles, making her the biggest earner among spouses of the heads of regions in the Volga Federal District in 2015 (Republic of Tatarstan, 2018).

In the ranking of monetary incomes, the "first lady" of Tatarstan is followed by the wife of Governor of the Ulyanovsk Oblast with the income of 2.4 million roubles in 2015 (Ulyanovsk Oblast Governor and Government, 2018), and the wife of Governor of the Republic of Mordovia with the income of 1.4 million roubles (Republic of Mordovia, 2018). The Nizhny Novgorod and Kirov Oblasts and the Mari El Republic did not publish information on the incomes of the spouses of the heads of these constituent entities. In the Penza Oblast and the Chuvash Republic, the annual incomes of spouses of the heads of these constituent entities were more than two times higher than the average per capita income of citizens of these regions (Chuvash Republic, 2018). The spouses' incomes have been lower than the average per capita income of citizens in the Orenburg and Saratov Oblasts, and much lower — in the Republic of Bashkortostan (Fig. 4).

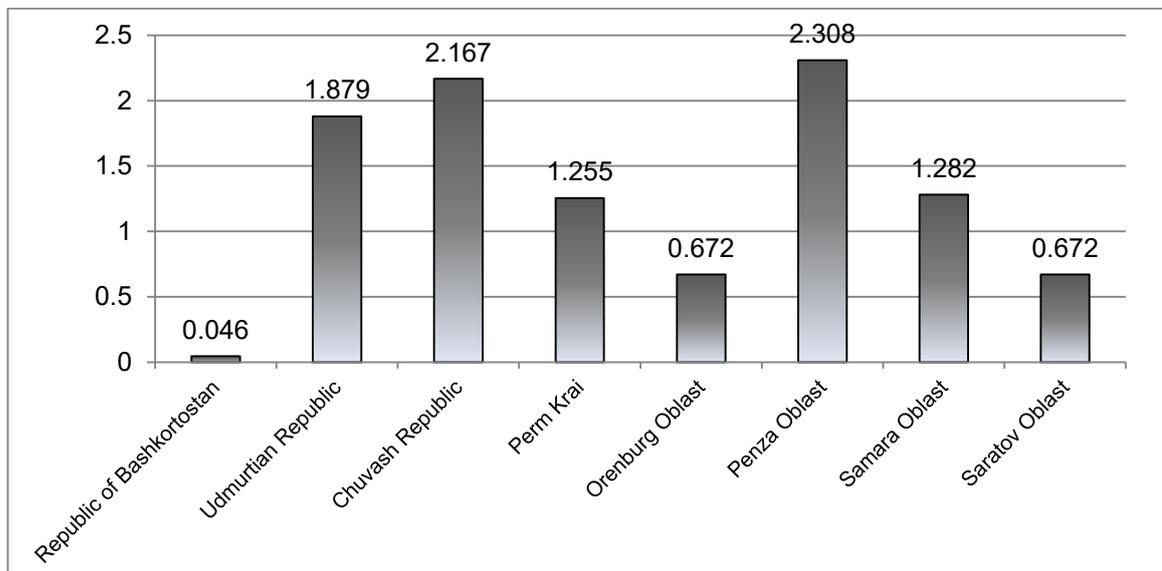


Figure 4. Ratio of Declared Incomes of Spouses of Heads of Some Regions of the Volga Federal District to Average Per Capita Income of Citizens in These Regions in 2015.

Due to their high incomes, the wives of President of the Republic of Tatarstan and Governor of the Ulyanovsk Oblast make the main contribution to their family incomes (97.7% and 57.3% respectively). A considerable contribution to the family income is made by the wife of Governor of the Republic of Mordovia, supplementing one third of the total family income. The spouses of the heads of other regions in the Volga Federal District contribute less than 10% to their family incomes (Fig. 5).

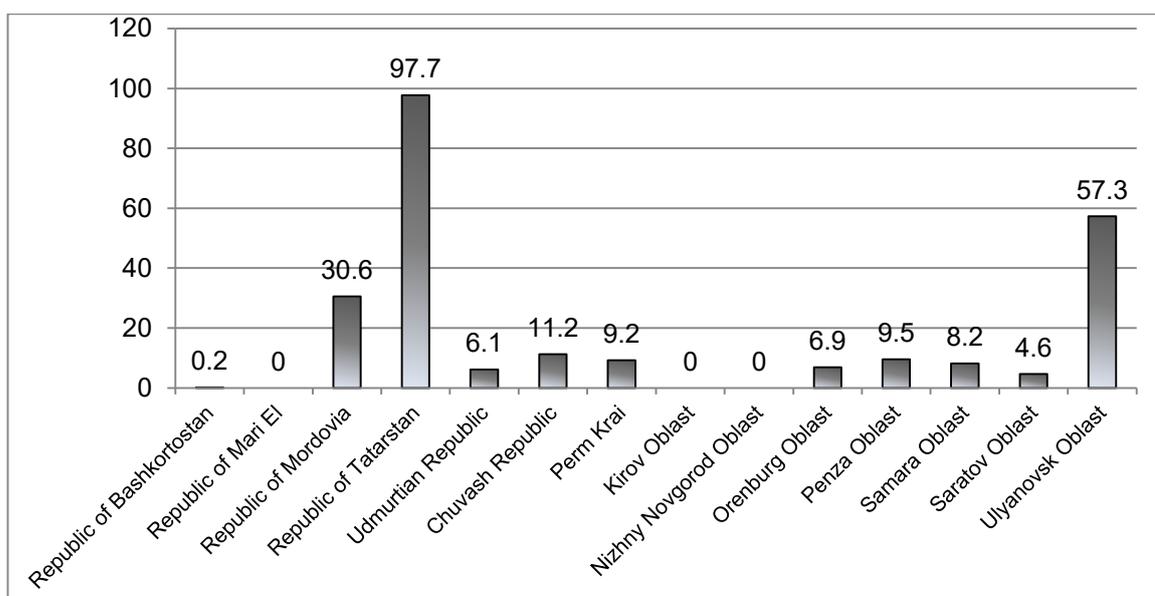


Figure 5. Share of Incomes of Spouses of Heads of Regions of the Volga Federal District in Their Family Incomes According to Declared Information for 2015, %

Among the family households of the heads of regions of the Volga Federal District, the highest incomes were declared for 2015 by the households of President of Tatarstan (262.6 million roubles), Governor of the Nizhny Novgorod Oblast (49.2 million roubles) and Head of the Udmurt Republic (9,2 million roubles). The lowest incomes were declared by the households of Governors of the Orenburg (2.7 million roubles) and Kirov (2.2 million roubles) Oblasts (Deklarator.org, 2018). Accordingly, it was in the Republic of Tatarstan and the Nizhny Novgorod Oblast that the largest gap was observed in 2015 between the household incomes of their heads and the incomes of ordinary residents, with difference by tenfolds in the Nizhny Novgorod Oblast, and by hundredfolds in the Republic of Tatarstan. In other regions, the income gap is measured in units (Fig. 6).

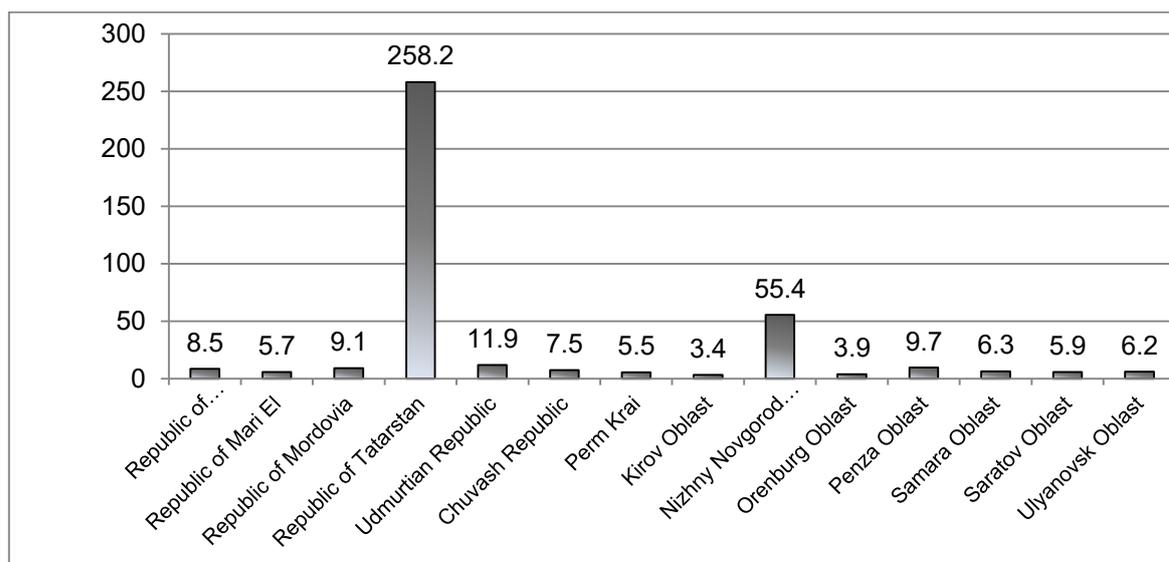


Figure 6. Ratio of Declared Incomes of Households of Heads of Regions of the Volga Federal District to Average Household Incomes in These Regions in 2015.

Conclusions

Thus, in 2010-2015 the highest average annual income among the heads of regions of the Volga Federal District was recorded in the Nizhny Novgorod Oblast and the Republics of Tatarstan and Bashkortostan. The lowest average annual income was recorded for Governor of the Orenburg Oblast. The excess of the annual income of the head of region over the annual average per capita monetary income of the region's population is very significant, especially in the Nizhny Novgorod Oblast and the Republics of Bashkortostan and Tatarstan. The incomes of the heads of regions are often unstable, as in some periods they have other revenues in addition to their earned incomes, such as incomes from the sale of property or inheritance. As a rule, both the dynamics and spatial distribution of personal incomes of the heads of regions demonstrates significant positive correlation with the per capita incomes of the population in the regions. The coefficient of spatial correlation between the earned incomes of the heads of regions and the values of gross regional product is 0.68, the values of gross regional product per capita — 0.63, average salaries of doctors — 0.66, teachers — 0.58, academic staff of higher education institutions — 0.61, and the per capita income of the population — 0.53. The strength of the correlation between the points scored by the heads of regions in the efficacy rating for 2014 and their salaries for 2015 is 0.60, which means that there is certain relationship between Governors' positions in the rating and their earned incomes for the following year. At the same time, the degree of correlation between the level of their earned incomes and the formal administrative and political status of the respective regions is only 0.37. Our study is partly affected by doubts about the completeness of Declarations of Income and Assets provided by senior officials. Some relatively recent scandals involving Governors of the Sakhalin and Kirov Oblasts and the Republics of Komi and Udmurtia confirm that there are some reasons for such doubts. Examining only officially declared incomes, we can observe transparent values of conformity/discrepancy between the levels of development of the regions and the declared incomes of the regional political elite of the Volga Federal District.

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