

global stratification system

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Submission date: 03-Jun-2018 03:42PM (UTC-0700)

Submission ID: 971881578

File name: CONTENT1528065750151.docx (22.26K)

Word count: 881

Character count: 5122

Stratification in Russia

Grand Canyon University

Stratification and Inequality in a Diverse Society

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6/3/18

When Russia was the Soviet Union, it was an authoritative socialist country, isolated from capitalist countries. In the 1990s, Russia endured an extraordinary transformation from a communist dictatorship to multi-party democracy, from a centrally planned system to a market economy, and from a belligerent enemy of the west to a cooperative partner. The process of globalization can be understood as the interplay of technological, economic, and political changes, leading to new patterns of trade and investment in the world (Robert, 1997). After sixty years of self-sustaining socialism, the Russian entry to this global phenomenon was difficult. The post-communist transition transformed not only the country's economic and political systems but also the state-society articulation at large. If the disappointing economic results of the first decade of transformation are often understood as results of Russia's opening in the context of globalization, it also seems that it is globalization itself which enabled the Russian recent growth.

The social stratification of Russia was experienced through changes that were caused at the time when the nation was transitioning from socialism to capitalism. In the past, Soviet had come up with policies that were meant to minimize formation of different classes among its subjects. This was particularly put forward to have in control the effects that were to be produced by the competitiveness of the various classes in the rural economy in the country. In past Russia was believed to have been an egalitarian society that existed without insignificant differences (Robert, 1997). However, most analysts agreed that there existed more meaningful differences within the different strata that were exhibited by the Russian society. Since the introduction of the market reforms in Russia during the 1990s, the whole society and economy have both experienced several phenomena that had not been experienced in the past such as rising poverty, growing inequality within the nation's strata of the population, and an increase in the stratification and differentiation. These changes were also backed up by the emerging new social structure that was witnessed in the

1990s in contemporary urban Russia (Wagner, 2013). In specific, this transition was marked by the emerging classes by economic power, ownership of the economic resources, incomes and skills that were possessed by the different people within Russia's population. At the top of the stratification there existed the Oligarchs who were believed to have obtained enormous wealth and power. This was the people who started private businesses that in turn led them to have higher standards of living (Robert, 1997).

Some theoretical approaches were developed in the last fifteen years to describe the process of transition and its impact on stratification structure in post-Socialist societies. A study conducted in Russia called the Longitudinal Monitoring Survey (RLMS) from 1998 to 2003 analyzed the consequences of stratification changes. "The study concluded that individual factors, such as human capital, play a greater role in mobility changes in Russia today, than they used to play in the socialist times, and their importance is increasing with the development of the market economy" (Novozhilov, n.d.). The improved diversity between positions in the structure of social stratification is followed by a higher level of awareness of these differences among the individuals, contributing to the process of division formation. Growing socioeconomic diversity, along with the decline of living standards led to the social and economic decrease of some groups of the population and brought them to the edge of poverty, and economic deprivation. "These two major consequences of stratification change are causes for concern as they can hinder the prospects of future development in Russia by contributing to the increase in social tensions, the spread of chronic poverty and degradation of human capital at the bottom of the stratification structure" (Novozhilov, n.d.).

2 Globalization and economic polarization have affected both low income and high-income countries. In the poorest nations, people often die of starvation, while even in wealthy countries

like the U.S., jobs are lost to overseas factories. While economic development in low-income societies puts great demand on a country's resources, it is the hope of many that more technological change will lead to the creation of industrial societies where literacy and consciousness of the political process will ease levels of poverty and shorten the distance between the economic poles of wealthy and poor countries (Wagner, 2013).

In conclusion, Russia underwent a series of changes that moved the nation from socialism to capitalism. But, in the past before the 1990s, Russia had burned changes that could cause there to exist different classes among its subjects. However, there came a time when Russia went through changes that brought about competitiveness among its citizens although it had been against such. In the 1990s, the country went through changes that included: rising poverty, growing inequality within the nation's strata of the population, and an increase in the stratification and differentiation (Robert, 1997). These changes affected people regarding incomes that were earned by the workers and the standards of living among other changes.

References

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