



**SOCIAL INEQUALITY AND WHY IT MATTERS FOR THE  
ECONOMIC AND DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT OF  
EUROPE AND ITS CITIZENS: POST-COMMUNIST  
CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE IN COMPARATIVE  
PERSPECTIVE**

**DELIVERABLE 2  
DESK RESEARCH**

**RUSSIA**

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## ***Introduction***

The desk research is devoted to the different images of social inequality in Russia. It should be mentioned that in Soviet period it was impossible to carry out any researches on inequality because of political reasons, and corresponding statistics figures are unavailable or non-reliable. But nevertheless the inequality existed and still exists. After the beginning of perestroika the social inequality became one of the acutest topics in contemporary Russia. The limitation of the report's size didn't let us to present a whole spectrum of problems connected with inequality; we are presenting only description of the main problems. Besides we decide not to include in the report far historical retrospective and begin our analysis from the period of "developed socialism".

### ***1. "Objective" indicators of social inequality***

In the very beginning we would like to mark the following peculiarity of the statistical data we have. Despite the abundance of the state statistics it is very difficult to make a comparative analysis of absolute indicators during the post-communist period of development of Russia. There are two reasons for it:

- the 1998 default changed the proportion of all cost parameters of the state statistics;
- the constant and significant growth of prices during that period of time demanded re-accounting of all cost parameters in the prices of 1991, but this data were rarely published and, as a rule, they are not available.

That's why we consider that it is more convenient for these brief comments to use percents and use absolute figures only sometimes.

Within three years after the beginning of radical economical reforms and cancellation of the state regulations of prices in 1991, a significant shift of the population to poor and low-income groups took place. The level of inequality in Russia (by the indicator of the concentration of incomes) grew two times higher than its pre-reform value. The gauge of poverty (i.e. the percentage of the population with the income lower than the minimum substitute) rapidly increased from the pre-reform value of 4% to 32-33% in 1992 (here and etc: Federal State Statistics Service of Russia, [www.gks.ru](http://www.gks.ru))

The statistics show that in rural regions the share of the population with less than subsistence-level income is 1.5 or more times higher than in urban areas. Cities with the population of one million people or more have 8% of all country's poor population. Towns with the population less than 20 0000 have 12%, and rural areas have 45% of the poor population of the whole country.

**Table 1.1 MAIN SOCIO-ECONOMIC INDICATORS  
OF LIVING STANDARD OF POPULATION**

	1992	1995	2000	2002	2003	2004	2005
Actual final consumption of households, bln. RUR (trln. RUR before 2000)	7.9	871.6	3813.5	6390.0	7709.6	9573.2	11975.7
percentage of GDP	42.8	61.1	52.3	59.3	58.0	57.2	56.0
percentage as of the previous year <sup>1)</sup>	97.3	97.4	105.9	107.7	106.7	109.9	109.6
per capita, RUR (thou. RUR -before 2000)	53	5874	26014	43976	53330	66563	83680
Average per capita money incomes of population, monthly' RUR (thou. RUR before 2000)	4.0	515.9	2281	3947	5170	6410	7938
Real disposable money incomes, percentage as of the previous year	52	85	112	111	115	110	109
Average accrued monthly wages, employed in the economy, RUR (thou. RUR before 2000)	6.0	472.4	2223.4	4360.3	5498.5	6739.5	8550.2
Real accrued wages of an employee, percentage as of the previous year	67	72	121	116	111	111	110
Average fixed pension size <sup>2)</sup> , RUR (thou. RUR before 2000)	1.6	188.1	694.3	1379	1637	1915	2364
Real fixed pension size <sup>2)</sup> , percentage as of the previous year	52	81	128	116	105	106	110
Subsistence minimum level <sup>3)</sup> (average per capita):							
RUR per month (thou. RUR before 2000)	1.9	264	1210	1808	2112	2376	...
In percent to previous year	...	305	120 <sup>4)</sup>	121	117	113	...
Correlation with subsistence minimum level <sup>5)</sup> , percent:							
of per capita money incomes	211	195	189	218	245	240.3	...
of average monthly accrued wage	281	159	168	222	239	263	...
of average fixed monthly pensions <sup>2)</sup>	119	101	76	100	102	106	...
Population with money incomes below subsistence minimum level:							
mln. Persons	49.3	36.5	42.3	35.6	29.3	25.2	...
percentage of the total population	33.5	24.8	29.0	24.6	20.3	17.6	...
percentage as of the previous year	...	110.9	84.9 <sup>4)</sup>	89.0	82.3	86.0	...
Deficit of money income of indigent population:							
bln. RUR (trln. RUR before 2000)	0.4	34.9	199.2	250.5	235.2	225.6	...
percentage of the total money incomes of population	5.9	3.9	5.0	3.7	2.6	2.1	...
Coefficient of funds (coefficient of differentiation of incomes), times	8.0	13.5	13.9	14.0	14.5	15.1	14.7
Ratio of resources concentration (Gini index)	28.9	38.7	39.5	39.7	40.3	40.9	40.5

1. in comparable prices. <sup>2)</sup> 1995-2001 - with compensation. <sup>3)</sup> Since 2000 according to changes of the norm-legal base and methodology for compilation of the size of subsistence minimum (see methodological guidelines page 99) the assessment published is based on data determined by the Government of the Russian Federation for I-IV quarters

of respective years. In 2005 the size of subsistence minimum was not determined due to expiration of the Federal Decree of November 20, 1999. №201-FZ "On consumer basket for the entire Russian Federation".<sup>4)</sup> By comparable methodology of subsistence minimum compilation.<sup>5)</sup> Respective socio-demographic group.  
Source: Federal State Statistics Service of Russia ([www.gks.ru](http://www.gks.ru))

In the last 15 years, however, some favourable changes in the financial position of the population of Russia have occurred. There are some tendencies among these changes:

- Growth of real and nominal wages. In 1992 the real accrued wage was only 67% from the previous year's level, but this tendency was broken (121%) in 2000, and from that moment it has been possible to observe a steady, although small, growth of the wage (111% in 2005).

- Some decrease of poverty in Russia. Let us compare: in 1992 the number of people with the living standard lower than the subsistence was 49.3 million (33.5% of the total population); in 2004 this number was 25.2 million (17.6% of the population).

- Changes in the poverty structure that was characteristic of Russia in the early and mid-1990s. During that time, different groups of population from the poorest strata (apart from the traditionally poor: single-parent families, families with many children, handicapped people, and elderly people) included families with three or even two children, as well as working people with low salaries and people having delays in payments. But from the beginning of 2000 the situation started to improve, because indebtedness of wage payments was reduced, and, correspondingly, the share of the working poor decreased.

It's possible to observe the main socio-economic indicators of living standard of population in the Table 1.1.

But the problem of social inequality and poverty is still acute enough.

We have to mention that the official statistics data on subsistence living standard and on the share of population living below this standard differs from estimations based on the data received by different social researchers – economists, sociologists, and statisticians – who carried out their own investigations. According to their opinions, the official statistics substantially underreport the corresponding figures. Besides, the official statistics did not manage to detect the 1998 crisis. According to their data, the subsistence living standard increased by 20%, while the real prices grew many times as much. Thus, the mass momentary impoverishment of the population was not mirrored in the official data for that year; the corresponding figures appeared in the statistics much later.

The declared 17.6% of the population living below the subsistence standard in 2004 is a significant figure, which demands substantial social payments to maintain a worthy

living standard of this category of people. But the state social support does not manage to provide for the needs of the poorest groups of population in proper time.

The average income of the population per capita during the period of 1992 – 1995 was only 2-2.5 times higher than the subsistence living standard. This means that the majority of the population can not make real savings for long-term needs, having to spend most part of the incomes on the maintenance of people' own physiological level and various payments.

While in 1991 (beginning of the economic reforms) the average monthly wage was 3.5 times higher than the subsistence living standard, in the end of 1990s it became only 1.7-1.8 times higher than the subsistence. Between 2004 and 2005 the situation began to improve somehow – the average salary of the working population was 2.6 of the subsistence standard. It was, however, only 302 US dollars.

**Table 1.2. AVERAGE MONTHLY NOMINAL ACCRUED WAGES OF EMPLOYEES OF ORGANIZATIONS**  
(In 1991 prices, in USA \$)

Years	Average monthly accrued wages in corresponding year's prices		Average monthly wages in 1991 prices, RUR	The ratio of average monthly wage and social payments to the minimum subsistence of employable population, %
	RUR <sup>1)</sup>	USA \$ (according to the average annual official rate)		
1991	548	...	548	335
1992	5995	22	369	299
1995	472392	103	246	179
2000	2223	79	238	172
2001	3240	111	286	204
2002	4360	139	332	226
2003	5498	179	368	244
2004	6740	234	407	264
2005	8550	302	447	...

1) In 2000 and later – in the standard of price established on January 1998.  
Source: Federal State Statistic Service of Russia.

The growth, to a certain degree, of the income of working citizens influenced the expenditure patterns of the households of Russia immediately. Foodstuff purchasing expenses decreased from 49.0% in 1995 to 33.2% in 2005. Correspondingly, consumption of other goods and services increased. The greatest growth was in expenses for purchasing motorcars (“automobile” boom of recent years) – from 2.0% in 1995 to 6.7% in 2005, and for purchasing furniture and household goods – from 3.6% in 1995 to 6.3% in 2005. But, because of the income shortage, there is no capitalization of resources — the growth of incomes is so insignificant that it can not influence the re-distribution of the households’ expenses significantly. The expenditures for different services increased mainly because of the growth in prices and tariffs of housing services and utilities. (See Table 1.3)

The coefficient of income differentiation increased from 8.0 in 1992 to 15.1 in 2004.

**Table 1.2. STRUCTURE OF MONEY INCOMES AND EXPENDITURES OF HOUSEHOLDS**

(according to materials of sample questionnaire of households budget; percent to the total)

	1980	1990	1995	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
<b>Money incomes – total</b>	<b>100</b>								
including:									
Income from entrepreneurial activities	2,2	3,7	16,4	15,4	12,6	11,9	12,0	11,7	11,6
Labour remuneration <sup>1)</sup>	79,8	76,4	62,8	62,8	64,6	65,8	63,9	65,0	63,4
Social transfers	15,1	14,7	13,1	13,8	15,2	15,2	14,1	12,8	12,8
Property incomes	1,3	2,5	6,5	6,8	5,7	5,2	7,8	8,3	10,3
Other incomes	1,6	2,7	1,2	1,2	1,9	1,9	2,2	2,2	1,9
<b>Consumption Expenditures – total</b>	<b>100</b>								
including:									
Purchasing of foodstuffs	36,1	31,5	49,0	47,6	45,9	41,7	37,7	36,0	33,2
Purchasing of alcohol beverages	5,4	5,0	2,5	2,5	2,4	2,2	2,2	2,1	1,9
Public catering	6,4	4,6	3,0	1,8	2,5	2,4	3,0	3,5	2,9
Purchasing of consumer goods	37,8	45,8	31,8	34,3	34,4	36,2	37,3	37,2	38,5
including:									
automobiles, motorcycle, etc	2,1	2,3	2,0	2,8	3,6	4,6	4,3	5,1	6,7
purchasing furniture and household goods	5,0	5,7	3,6	4,5	5,2	5,7	6,4	6,0	6,3
Expenses to different services	14,3	13,1	13,7	13,8	14,8	17,5	19,8	21,2	23,5
including:									
Housing and communal services	3,7	3,1	4,3	4,6	5,2	6,2	7,2	7,7	8,3

<sup>1)</sup> Including hidden (not registered officially) wages and salary.

Source: Federal State Statistics Service of Russia

There is a great differentiation in incomes in different branches of economy (kinds of social activities). (see Table 1.4 – branches with the lowest wages are selected by yellow colour, branches with highest wages – by blue). Starting from 1995, the lowest average wage is observed in agriculture, and the highest one is in mining and quarrying. The difference in the levels of wages in these branches grew constantly: in 1995 it was 1: 4.7, and in 2001 — already 1: 7.6. Only in 2002 this difference was a little reduced — 1: 6.9 in 2002 and 1: 6.5 in 2005.

By 2003 75% of all employees in agriculture received wages lower than the subsistence living standard; the same situation was in the sphere of culture (51.2%); in the sphere of education (41.4%); in the sphere of health care (38.8%) (Social Status and Living Standards..., p.152).

Apart from agriculture, the branches with the lowest wages are the following: manufacturing, health care and education. Only in 2005 the wage levels in the spheres of education and health care increased substantially, but still remained among the lowest ones.

Mining and quarrying of fuel-energy producing minerals, oil refining are traditionally the branches with the highest wages. In 2002 such kind of economic activity as financial intermediation became the branch with the highest level of wage, and up till now it became among the most high-paid branches.

Pensioners remain one of the poorest strata of population; neither rises in pensions nor pension-provision reforms have given any results so far, and no improvement in pensioners' living standards has been observed.

The average monthly pension has been practically on the level of subsistence living standard (only a little bit higher) during almost all period of reforms. In 1992 it was 119% of the subsistence living standard, and in 2000 it dropped to 76% of subsistence; in 2005 it became 106% of subsistence standard. (See Table 1.4)

The comparative growth of pensions with respect to average wage in the mid-1990s can only be explained by the low-level of average wage itself. In 1992 the average accrued pension was 26.0% of the average accrued monthly wage, in 1995-1998 it was about 37-39%, and in 2004 it became 28.4% of the accrued wage.

**Table 1.4. AVERAGE MONTHLY NOMINAL ACCRUED WAGES  
OF EMPLOYEES OF ORGANIZATIONS BY KINDS OF ECONOMIC  
ACTIVITIES  
(RUR)**

	1995	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
<b>Total</b>	<b>472.4</b>	<b>2223.4</b>	<b>3240.4</b>	<b>4360.3</b>	<b>5498.5</b>	<b>6739.5</b>	<b>8550.2</b>
agriculture, hunting and forestry	258.5	985.1	1434.6	1876.4	2339.8	3015.4	3653.5
fishing, fish farms	775.6	2845.6	3839.3	5031.3	5444.5	7084.9	10020.4
mining and quarrying	1110.3	5940.2	9099.2	11080.9	13912.4	16841.7	19953.8
mining and quarrying of energy producing materials	1226.8	6985.1	10905.4	13080.3	16135.5	19903.3	23608.8
mining and quarrying, except of energy producing materials	850.0	3999.5	5386.5	7035.0	9395.7	10876.6	13009.4
Manufacturing	458.4	2365.2	3446.6	4439.1	5603.4	6848.9	8504.0
manufacture of food products, including beverages and tobacco	502.8	2183.4	3126.7	4065.9	5026.7	6065.8	7493.8
manufacture of textile and textile products	277.3	1214.8	1764.8	2241.7	2803.0	3356.5	3995.9
manufacture of leather and leather products	232.7	1347.8	1986.1	2621.1	3230.0	3774.7	4800.1
manufacture of wood and wood products	401.2	1739.1	2310.3	2980.2	3754.8	4614.6	5876.4
manufacture of pulp, paper and paper products; publishing and printing	609.1	2736.6	4309.0	5480.2	6848.4	7892.0	9528.8
manufacture of coke, refined petroleum products	965.8	4916.3	7012.4	9625.3	11879.0	13729.3	20816.4
manufacture of chemicals, chemical products and man-made fibres	536.5	2754.6	3901.8	4899.5	6154.8	7682.7	9445.4
manufacture of rubber and plastic products	432.3	2140.4	3032.2	3957.1	4950.7	5956.8	6999.0
manufacture of other non-metallic mineral products	493.6	2182.0	3220.0	4134.2	5207.8	6422.4	7872.0
manufacture of basic metals and fabricated metal products	671.3	3854.9	5242.4	6285.2	7731.2	9196.8	10904.6
manufacture of machinery and equipment n.e.c.	379.4	1975.3	3073.5	4066.6	5169.7	6514.2	8299.0

	1995	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
manufacture of electrical, electronic and optical equipment	359.2	2003.6	2998.8	3815.7	5108.5	6431.7	7999.5
manufacture of transport equipment	492.4	2454.1	3664.6	5099.9	6365.0	7828.0	9221.5
manufacturing n.e.c.	327.3	2053.2	2738.2	3279.3	4045.2	5182.0	6305.9
electricity, gas and water supply	825.3	3156.5	4434.8	5869.4	7235.3	8641.8	10575.4
Construction	587.7	2639.8	3859.3	4806.9	6176.7	7304.7	8869.0
wholesale trade and commission trade; repair of motor vehicles, motorcycles; personal and household goods	341,3	1584,5	2294,9	3068,9	3974,2	4906,2	6213,6
hotels and restaurants	302,1	1640,0	2403,6	3039,3	3966,7	4737,3	6704,3
Transport and communication	716,4	3220,2	4304,2	5851,5	7471,3	9319,9	11436,3
Financial intermediation	705,3	5232,2	8885,2	13245,9	15561,2	17383,8	22335,9
real estate, renting and business activities	406,9	2456,7	3545,6	4677,1	6196,3	7795,4	6768,7
public administration and defence; compulsory social security	536,0	2712,1	3754,9	5200,4	6913,8	7898,6	10693,2
Education	308,7	1240,2	1833,0	2927,3	3386,6	4203,4	5477,9
health and social work	348,5	1333,3	1959,9	3141,3	3662,6	4612,0	5857,2
other community, social and personal service activities	500,5	1548,0	2311,7	3183,1	3920,3	4822,7	6325,0

Source: Federal State Statistics Service of Russia

## ***2. The state of existing knowledge of the main social causes and correlates of social inequality***

Social inequality — as differences in what is essential, important for the members of the given society (Ilyin, 2000) — is one of the crucial political and research issues. It arises most acutely in the form of polarization of wealth and poverty, which in itself becomes an objective social problem, i.e. a problem of scientific or political definition of the situation. Social inequality in society is expressed in the system of attributes or criteria of social differentiation, in the position of an individual or a social group in the social structure of

the society. The differential attributes take a certain position in the value system of the given social community.

## **2.1 Inequality and social structure.**

In the scientific papers and Communist Party documents of the 1970-1980s, existence of three kinds of inequality was admitted: between classes, between urban and rural areas, and between mental and physical work. The social policy of the state in the period of developed socialism was directed at elimination of all kinds of inequality and formation of a classless society with undeviating movement towards social homogeneity (Materials of the XXVI Congress of CPSU, 1981; Semenov,1977; Razvitoj sotsializm, 1977; Smirnov,1980, and others)

Investigations of social structure were always considered of special importance because changes in this sphere were seen as connected with the trends in the economical and political development of the country and with the declared levelling of social differences in the Soviet society. Although officially it was admitted that in Russia there were the “working class”, the “collective-farm peasantry” and the “streak” (intellectuals and mental-labour workers), in the scientific literature of those years a wide discussion about the social structure of the Soviet society took place (Amvrosov,1979; Kosolapov,1979; Rutkevich., 1982). The definitions of social structure were rather similar, but not coincident. Most researchers considered social structure as segmentation of the society into separate strata or groups distinguished by their position and relation to the mode of production. The main elements of social structure were identified as social communities: classes, nations, professional, demographic, territorial and political groups. Each of these constituents, in its turn, was a complex formation, having its inner strata and links (Blyahman L.S., Shkaratan , 1973; Rabochaya kniga sotsiologa,1983).

The main differential characteristics were related with social-economic heterogeneity of labour, as well as with social-cultural and extra-industrial activity and territorial differences (Val'tukh;1973; Sarkisyan, 1983; et al.). As the object of analysis was taken intergenerational mobility, both within the identified strata and outside them (Shkaratan,1978; Shkaratan, Filippov, Demidova,1980).

At the same time, investigations of the Soviet period that were carried out in towns of various types, with different kinds of population, revealed deep processes of differentiation within the social groups, caused not only by the different character of labour but also by

differences in education, peculiarities of consumption and mode of life (Fajnburg, 1968, 1971; Kogan, 1977)

The planning institutions of the state constantly needed reliable and specific information reflecting the real situation in the territorial communities (Borshchevskij, Shkaratan, Uspenskij, 1973; Aitov, 1982).

For example, the official data did not take into account a considerable group of people employed in the illegal “black economy” that combined work in the state sector with work at small-scale commodity enterprises (Koryakina, 1991). The real situation was that the diversity of economic entities, not acknowledged by the official authorities, existed de facto, and the social structure was much more colourful than its official portrait (Il'yin, 1991, Bystrova & Yeremicheva, 1992).

In the 1990s, criticism against the official standpoint of the trinomial segmentation of the society was expressed, which resulted in the transition to the stratification approach in the investigations of social structure. It entailed expansion of the list of the criteria of structure formation and, consequently, of the aspects of social inequality; such characteristics as character of property, income, volume of power, prestige, national peculiarities and other features were included into scientific consideration (Ryvkina, 1989, Radayev, 1991; Igithanyan, 1993; Radayev & Shkaratan, 1996 and others).

**Table 2.1. Trends of Social Stratification**  
(percentage of the total population)

Social groups	1985	1990	1994
Entrepreneurs, Businessmen	0.4	1.4	3.2
Top-managers, Officials	5.8	5.8	5.8
Managers	7.2	6.7	6.0
Highly skilled professionals (with academic degrees)	1.6	1.8	1.3
Professionals with higher education	21.4	20.0	18.8
Professionals with secondary vocational education	9.9	10.2	10.1
White-collar workers	3.4	3.1	3.6
Highly skilled workers	2.8	3.5	2.4
Skilled workers	34.3	32.3	29.4
Unskilled and semi-skilled workers	9.7	11.3	10.3
Engaged in housework	3.1	3.4	3.9
Unemployed	0.4	0.5	5.2

Source: Radaev & Shkaratan, 1996, p.310.

According to many researchers, during the transition to market economy only the intermediate, middle strata, “the middle class”, were able to represent the economically active group of the population and stimulate the flexibility and the dynamic character of the social structure. That is why it was so important to identify and investigate this stratum (“class”) in order to orient the social policy to its expeditious formation and development (Zaslavskaya 1997; Zaslavskaya, Gromova,1998; Golenkova,1998). Like in the Western scientific literature, there was a large dispersion in the ideas about the criteria of belonging of people to the “middle class”. (Ighithanyan,1993; Lapin,1993; Naumova,1995; Belyayeva,1998). Some researchers defined social characteristics of the middle class on the basis of income, property status, profession, education, etc. Other investigators proceeded from the principle of self-identification of an individual, that is, those persons were referred by them to the “middle class” who identified themselves as members of this group, regardless of the objective social-economic parameters. For Russia in the conditions of radical reforms the second approach proved to be more adequate. This was caused by the fact that those social groups which by the traditional criteria could be referred to the middle class turned out to be below the poverty line by their incomes, making a social group of “the new poor”. It was caused by the slump in the financing of state enterprises and serious difficulties in the formation of the private sector (Gordon,1994; Yaroshenko,1996).

Most researchers expressed the opinion that the new middle strata, of all others, got into the hardest situation. The state bodies had not created preconditions for levelling the start opportunities and consulting the interests of the most competent and active employees of different branches of the state employment sector (Kivinen,1994; Voronkov & Fomin, 1995 and others). The sharp deterioration of the financial situation stimulated departure of employees from the state sector to the private one and movement of many qualified specialists to the strata with a lower social status. Considerable part of the population became to be employed in the private or mixed sectors of economy. In the process of adaptation to the market mechanisms, professional groups that served the market functioning were developing, but, on the other hand, at the same time the professional groups connected with high technologies and scientific-engineering development of the country were marginalizing (Belyayeva, 1998; Zaslavskaya,2000). This especially considerably affected the employees of the military-industrial-complex (MIC) enterprises,

who in the Soviet period had differed from other groups not only by high incomes but also by a number of benefits and social privileges.

This social majority, being substantially different in social-professional traits, had one important feature. As a result of the transformation of the society, they all underwent “destratification”. This manifested itself in disappearing of the status and economic-position distinctions between most of the massive groups (Yadov,1994; Zaslavskaya,1999; Danilova,1997).

**Table 2.2 Size of different social strata<sup>1</sup>**

Social Stratum	Basic Sampling		Urban Sampling	
	Number of households	% of Sampling	Number of households	% of Sampling
Middle classes	710	19.1	804	30.4
including				
“core” of middle classes	274	6.9	343	12.9
“Semi-core” of middle classes	486	12.2	464	17.5
Classes lower than middle one	2792	70.2	1677	63.2
including				
“Periphery” of middle classes	1319	33.1	846	31.9
Classes lower than middle one without “periphery”	1473	37.0	831	31.3
Low classes	428	10.8	343	12.9

Source: Middle classes in Russia, 2003

The optimistic declarations of the authors of the reforms, stating that Russia has all preconditions for emergence of a new middle class in a sufficiently short time after the transition to the market economy, turned out to be erroneous. First of all, it was caused by the extremely low average aggregate income per capita in the country, and therefore the

<sup>1</sup> The data are based on a large-scale representative sociological survey which was carried out in November 2000 and covered 4,000 Russian households, representing 12 regions of Russia. The study was based on a sampling of the entire Russian population represented by individual households. At the same time, proceeding from the supposition that the middle classes are mostly concentrated in the urban milieu, an additional sampling representing the urban population was put together, the size of which totalled 1,625 households. Totally, the study encompassed 5,000 households. The authors considered the middle class as a social agglomeration characterized by a combination of features (wealth, occupation and self-identification). They made attempts to build a general stratification scheme of the Russian society, based on positioning of certain social groups with respect to the aggregate middle class. The so-called “core” of the middle class consisted of families where all the basic characteristics of middle class were present. The authors also distinguished the so-called “semi-core” of the middle class (those possessing two features of the middle class) and the “periphery” of middle class (those possessing only one relevant feature).

population owned only a small part of the national wealth (Aukutsionek, Zeltyn' & Morozov,1997).

Also, the activity of the state institutions that were in charge of forming the markets of work force, the market of capitals and the commodity market were negative. Such policy could not provide favourable conditions for development of the “old” middle strata that had existed in the small-scale-commodity set-up of the economy in the period of socialism. This policy only partially legalized the “black” industry and legitimized the activity of the social groups connected with it (Ispravnikov,1998; Klyamkin,2000, Yermicheva, 2001). Not less significant was the psychological unreadiness preparedness of the population of Russia to radical reforms. The negative attitude, which had been formed in the years of Soviet power, to individual labour activity and entrepreneurship, on the one hand, and parasitical expectations of social aid from the state, on the other, became obstacles for developing stable orientations of the population to business activity and aspiration to minimize social stratification (Shabanova,1999; Burovoj,1999; Shanin, 1999).

The further deepening of the social-economical crisis in the country, reflected in practically all economical indicators, — worsening of the situation in the sphere of productive industry, reduction of investments, decrease of the share of the population’s savings, etc, entailed increase of social tension in the society. Unemployment was growing. The proportion of poverty in the country increased. As the poverty line was officially accepted the level of so-called minimum of subsistence<sup>2</sup>, which actually provides only physical survival of an individual. From this it followed that 32 million people in Russia (22% of the population) received money incomes that did not even provide their physical survival (Yarygina, 1994;).

The harsh conditions of the market required from the people more weighed attitude not only towards the objective conditions and possibilities but also towards their own abilities, which determined their vertical or horizontal mobility, changes in their perception of both objective and subjective social statuses (Rimashevskaya, 1997;Golenkova ,1998;). In these economic conditions the researchers’ interest was primarily generated, on the one hand, by the groups of people who ventured to go into business and work in the private

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<sup>2</sup> In Russia, poverty is officially identified by one indicator only — average family income per capita. As the poverty indicator is considered the value of minimum subsistence, the method of calculation of which was for the first time established in November 1992. Up to 1988 the data on the minimum levels of the citizen’s incomes and the distribution of the population with respect to the level of average aggregate income per capita were secret. And the term “poverty” was used neither in theory nor in practice. As an operation term, the notion “lowly-provided” was used.

sector. (Entrepreneurship Assessed by Entrepreneurs,1991; Grishchenko, Novikova,1992; Afanas'ev,1993; Fetisov &Yakovlev 1994; Russian Banks Today...,1997 and others.)

On the other hand, those groups were also investigated which worked out peculiar survival strategies to retain their social status by all means (New Needs..., 1999; Everyday Life..., 2001). Those were groups characterized by high level of education and by income above average and high social status in the past. Representatives of this group demonstrated their interest in social transformations and willingness to get actively involved in market relations. However, expectations of only a relatively small part of the population were justified: they managed to realize their abilities and achieve substantial improvement of their material well-being. For the major part of the population transition to low-income groups has been more typical, as a result of which the possibilities of their fulfilment in the professional and consumptive spheres seriously suffered (Muzdybayev,1998; Kivinen, 2001 and others).

Adaptive behaviour of individuals and small groups — families and small working teams — played an important role in the stratification process and in changes of the social structure. (Employment and Behaviour...,1999). The choice between a successful or ineffectual life strategy became a significant mechanism of the move of the person and his/her family into a certain social stratum. Some researches even consider the effectiveness of adaptation as a peculiar basis for distinction of social groups; as criteria of successful adaptation they take into account not only achievement of an “objectively” sufficient social position but also some indicators of subjective satisfaction. (Shabanova,1998 ; Zaslavskaya, 1999; Levada,1993).

Not only the structure of family incomes but also the structure of expenditures is an important factor of social inequality. Extreme stratification of the population by these parameters was one of the results of the reforms. Social inequality of different groups of the population manifested itself in all spheres of everyday life. While for the minor part of the population new opportunities opened up in the spheres of nutrition, consumption, rest, leisure and accessibility of paid services in education and health care, for the majority their main efforts were focused on retaining their former living standards or elementary survival

The high social cost of the ongoing transformations manifested itself in an increase of the proportions of poverty, as well as in its amplification and in changes of its social configuration. Among the poor became to appear not only traditionally socially-vulnerable individuals and their families but also formerly socially-safe citizens — pensioners, employees of stagnant branches, and even many employees of the state budget sphere, the

well being of which directly depended on the state policy of pay for work (Radaev, 2000; Petrova, 2001). Since the state did not disclaim its obligations to support a deserved living standard of its citizens, the question came up of the criteria and methods of identifying real poverty that required aid from the state bodies (Volchkova & Minina, 1990; Ovcharova, Turuntsev &, Korchagina, 1998; Poverty..., 1998; Davidova, 2003). As the purpose of discussing this question giving “addressed social aid” to the neediest was declared, but it was in the situation where the total volume of the state obligations exceeded the volume of the existing resources. In practice, for this purpose a complicated bureaucratic structure was built, which created almost insurmountable barriers for receiving the aid.

Contemporary researchers agree that in a transitional period it is difficult to identify and describe individual social communities, strata and even major homogeneous social-professional groups, since the boundaries of these formations are extremely indistinct, in view of a more or less long-term perspective they cannot be considered as sufficiently stable and definite (Toshchenko, 2000, Golofast, 2004) In this situation, conversion to the micro-level of investigating the everyday life of certain groups, families and individuals using high-quality technologies is quite justified.

Development of the private sector of employment not only was determined by the formation of new market relations, it also stimulated new kinds of employment and expanded the set of alternative professions. A characteristic phenomenon of that time became “multiple employment”: simultaneous combination of jobs with different levels of qualification. In the conditions of a developing market and deepening of division of labour and professionalization, such notion as profession loses its traditional definiteness and becomes to be identified as a variable indicator.

The deepening of division of labour determines diversity in serving labour and new forms of its organization that are typical for small enterprises. Of primary importance in the formation of social strata becomes not ownership of property but the complex of professional skills and strategies and access to the resources of governance. Therefore the main types of social inequality are formed on the labour market.

## **2.2 Inequality on the labour market**

A specific kind of inequality appears on the labour market — it is social-professional inequality. Positions of individuals in the transforming social structure and changes of these positions depend on the resources of individuals and their shortcomings on the labour market.

Both Russian and Western researchers also note such characteristic of the contemporary labour market of Russia as inertia, which, on the one hand, mitigates social consequences of the economic crisis, but, on the other hand, impedes moving of workers from ineffective spheres and sectors of economy to more effective ones, which is an indispensable prerequisite for structural transformation of economy (Clark, 2001; Kapelyushnikov, 2001).

In the Soviet period, large-scale studies of the sphere of production and labour relations revealed existence of essential distinctions in the character of labour, as well as in the context of labour and job conditions of the workers of different enterprises. It was also noted that these parameters depended on the branch of economy and were affected by regional differences.

Investigations of labour motivation, context of labour, job conditions, values and orientations of workers revealed noticeable distinctions between strata of the working class. The social heterogeneity of labour was determined by differences in wages, job conditions and job organisation, physical and psychological hardness, prestige and social significance of labour (Davydov, 1962; Labour Working Class, 1965; A Man and his Work, 1967; Gordon, Nazimova, 1985).

Further complex investigations of various aspects of the Soviet individual's life showed that in the Soviet society a so-called status system of wages had been formed, characterized with absolute domination of the production sphere and the emphasis on the development of heavy and defence industries. The main principle of the wage system was maintenance of elementary subsistence. At the same time, the wage of individual workers more considerably depended on the branch in which they were employed than on the efficiency of their own work.

The 1990s surge of the researchers' interest to the problems of inequality in the life conditions and wages of different groups of the population was caused, first of all, by intensive development of the private sector of employment. Social inequality in those years deepened not only due to belonging of the enterprises to different branches of industry but also because of different forms of enterprise ownership. Workers of one and the same professions and qualifications could receive different wages at state-owned and privately-owned enterprises (Sociology of Labour..., 1992; Magun, 1996; Temnitskij, 2005).

**Table 2.3. AVERAGE MONTHLY NOMINAL ACCRUED WAGES IN  
DIFFERENT BRANCHES OF ECONOMY  
(RUR)**

	1960	1970	1980	1986
National Economy, total	80,6	122,0	168,9	195,6
Industry:	91,6	133,3	185,4	215,7
<i>Including</i>				
electricity	89,1	138,2	190,2	216,6
fuel producing industries	151,8	201,0	271,7	317,8
metallurgy	126,3	167,7	231,0	264,5
mechanical Engineering industry	92,8	134,4	187,5	219,0
chemistry-forest complex	88,2	135,8	188,1	219,2
building materials industry	85,9	138,2	180,2	210,6
Light industry	65,5	103,3	149,9	170,4
Agriculture	53,8	100,9	149,2	194,0
Agrarian-industrial complex	73,3	119,0	167,2	194,0
<i>including</i>				
meat and dairy industry	67,1	112,0	157,6	182,8
fish industry	137,5	222,2	296,9	353,7
Transport	87,0	136,7	199,9	228,1
Communication	62,7	96,8	145,8	164,0
Building	93,0	149,9	202,3	244,6
Trade	58,9	95,1	138,2	152,9
Health Care	58,9	92,0	126,8	134,9
Education	72,3	108,1	135,9	155,7
Science	110,7	139,5	179,5	208,2
Public administration	86,4	124,5	159,6	176,5

Source: National Economy of the USSR over 70 years, 1987, page 143.

Investigations of the new numerous group of unemployed, studies of their life situations and the ways they cope with the circumstances are important part of the studies of the labour market (Demin, 2000; Hotkina, 2000; Klopov, Gordon, 2000; Udal'tsova at al., 2003; Tikhonova, 1998; Gimpel'son, Magun, 1994; Dyomin, 2002; Chetvernina, 2002; Zhidkova, 2001; Monusova, 2001, and others). The life situation of the representatives of this group is very hard — first of all, because the status of unemployed is new and unaccustomed for the people of Russia. In the Soviet time, work was not only one of the main guaranteed rights, but also the main duty of the people; neglecting this duty could entail serious social sanctions, sometimes up to criminal prosecution. Besides, in the Soviet period a substantial part of social transfers and other forms of social support of the population were distributed through places of employment. And, finally, the work

collective traditionally was the base for the networks of social support; therefore loss of job also meant sharp reduction in material, moral, emotional and psychological resources. The table 2.4 consists of some indicators of unemployment in Russia during transforming period.

**Table 2.4 NUMBER OF UNEMPLOYED**

	1992	1995	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
	<b>According to the results of the Sample survey on employment<sup>1)</sup></b>							
Total number of unemployed, thou. persons	3888.6	6684.3	7059.1	6287.9	6154.7	5683.3	5775.2	5208.3
	<b>In accordance with the data of the Federal Labour and Employment Service (end of year)</b>							
Number of unemployed registered by government employment offices, thou. persons	577.7	2327.0	1037.0	1122.7	1499.7	1638.9	1920.3	1830.1
Ratio of number of unemployed registered by government employment offices to total number of unemployed, percent	14.9	34.7	14.8	17.8	24.4	28.7	33.3	35.1

<sup>1)</sup> Data for 1992, 1995 are given as of the end of October; for 2000 - 2005 as of the end of November.

<sup>2)</sup> Since 2002 - including Chechen Republic.

Source: Federal State Statistics Service of Russia

The significance of the motives of survival, as well as of provision of a sufficient income increases because of the difficult and unstable situation on the contemporary labour market in Russia. In this connection, some researchers note such characteristic feature of the Russian Federation labour market as relative attractiveness of the secondary labour market and even informal employment, since exactly these forms of employment, not bringing any additional employment benefits to the workers, provide higher and often more regular wages as compared with the primary labour market (Sinyavskaya, 2005).

Informal economy becomes another factor of new social inequality. While for some people it facilitates their successive entry to the market, for others it impedes their adaptation to market relations. But, as a result, in both groups is formed a distorted idea of a full-scale market, social-economical freedom and social-economical pay for reforms. The degree of so-called "non-legal freedom" (Shabanova, 1999) can be considered as a symbolic resource that determines using the economic and human capital.

In the conditions that shadow employment becomes an important means of survival of almost all categories of the population, fixed indicators of income and wealth become more and more relative.

### **2.3. Inequality in education**

Education is a relatively independent subsystem of the vital activity of society that exercises a number of functions regarding the society, its individual subsystems and all levels of social organization. Methodologically, in the Soviet — and later in the post-Soviet — sociology the questions connected with social inequality in education were raised and studied in the framework of sociology of education.

In the Soviet era, education (as well as labour) was not only a right, but also a duty of the citizens. The interest of the state to the social issues of education was determined by the fact that education was a means of the social policy of the state. Despite the declaration of equal and accessible education it was the main factor of social differentiation in the Soviet society. Its level and quality played a significant role in social mobility of the population.

Initially, studies in the sphere of education were connected with investigations of professional inclination, choice of occupation and life course of representatives of different groups of the youth. Later, researchers began to investigate prestigiousness of professions, factors of social, professional and territorial mobility, efficiency of receiving professional skills at school, problems of professional orientation, etc. (Shubkin, Artemov, Moskalenko, Buzukova, Kalmyk, 1964; Titmaa, 1975; Chernovolenko, Ossovskij, Paniotto, 1979, and others). Whether it was intentionally or not, the received data and the conclusions made on the basis of these investigations made possible to reveal existence of inequality in the sphere of education, of both natural and social character.

Analysis of the materials of mass surveys of youth made possible to find out that the social status of parents significantly affects life orientations of the children and their choice of profession; it also determines certain social transitions. Children from families in which the parents have more prestigious or intellectual-labour professions tend to keep the same status also for themselves. Children from families of a lower social status, in which the parents have professions of less creative character, tend to change their status and move to a higher status level.

In 1970–1980s, with the development of sociology of education in the USSR, the range of the problems touched upon in this sphere of sociology considerably increased. As a result of investigations of life paths of students it was found out that there was certain

social differentiation in receiving general secondary education. In the highest school class mainly children of parents with qualified professions and high education stay; the dropout rate continuously grows after receiving compulsory 8-year education.

Besides, social inequality in the Soviet period manifested itself in the uneven process of assignment (*raspredeleniye*) of graduated teachers-specialists between urban and rural schools. Moreover, the majority of the young people who graduated from higher-educational institutions stayed around the locations of those institutions, in major cities. Few graduates from big institutes settled in the rural areas and distant regions, and this situation contributed to reproduction of social differentiation in the field of education between big cities and province. (Konstantinovskij, Shubkin, 1977).

And although in these investigations there were no direct attacks against the dominating ideology and many of these studies were substantially politicized and ideologically loyal, the received results, however, turned out to be rather critical towards the image of the Soviet society that had been formed and the educational system existing in it. Acute contradictions aspirations and needs were revealed, as well as inequality of chances for receiving education, significant differences between social groups in their attitude to professions and in opportunities for receiving some profession or other. As a matter of fact, it became clear that life chances under socialism are not equal for all members of the society at all (Filippov, 1976; Kogan, 1969 and others).

In the second half of 1980s a revival of sociology of education took place in the USSR, as the ideological limits were eliminated and there were no themes closed for investigation any longer. It was in this period that researchers directed attention to the existing inequalities in the sphere of education. In the framework of exploring the condition and possible ways of reforming the educational system in the USSR the investigators discovered that higher school was becoming an institute of amplifying social inequality. Accessibility of high quality education was more and more determined by the social status of the family.

With the transition to the market economy the sphere of education transformed, and commercialization of education became one of its main features. As a result, in contemporary Russia there is a multilevel structure of providing educational services — the governmental sector of free and paid education and a non-governmental sector, which is mainly paid. Here it is possible to observe different models of interrelations between family and the state: from paternalistic expectations to complete inclusion in the system of

market relations with individual responsibilities for this choice (Konstantinovskij, 1999; 2000).

Education became a factor of reproduction of social inequality in the society because receiving educational services is determined by the capital of the family, consisting of different groups of resources – financial, social, and cultural. Different educational institutions (special schools, prestigious institutes, paid elite institutions) create and re-create social inequality, reproduce latent mechanisms of access to power, ownership, and social networks.

Informal practices in this field become a factor of new social inequality; for some people they determine faster entry to the market and social advancement in the new conditions, while for others they, contrariwise, hamper their adaptation to the new social environment.

The mechanisms of social mobility in the contemporary conditions are closely connected with the character, volume and type of the received education, both basic and advanced, which changes its meaning from a means of fixation of the status rank to a determinant of the volume of a symbolic capital (Konstantinovskij, 1999; 2000; Magun, 1993; Cherednichenko, Shubkin, 1985). Thus, the system of education has become the key factor in the strategies of provisioning continuity and social mobility in high level (elite) strata.

The educational level significantly influences the persons' behavioural strategies in the spheres of labour, consumption, leisure, etc.

In the sphere of labour, education serves as an indicator of competence, suitability, and, therefore, success. In the sphere of consumption and leisure the level of education determines corresponding forms of behaviour and the content of non-labour forms of activity.

#### **2.4. Inequality in the sphere of health care**

In the years of Socialism, no inequality in the sphere of health care was fixed, since it was supposed that the finances necessary for treatment of the population were transferred to the medical institutions through the Social Consumption Fund (which was ratified by the planning bodies of the country as a part of the State Budget). Like in the sphere of education, equal accessibility of medical services for all strata of the society was declared. However, inequality took place, but it was hidden or latent. It manifested itself, first of all, in the existence of a network of different polyclinics or other kinds of medical institutions of departmental subordination. It determined the quality of equipment provision of these

institutions and was completely dependent on the economic condition of the branch to which they belonged. To get many of them only was possible either if one worked at an enterprise of this branch or through good connections. Paid forms of treatment existed, but in a very limited volume controlled by the state. Treatment in prestigious and well-equipped institutions guaranteed high quality and a wide range of the received services, as well as the level of comfort that often significantly differed from that of the ordinary municipal health-care institutions. (Yavorskaya-Smirnova, Romanov,2005; Panova, Rusinova, 2005).

In the Soviet period, considerable experience of studies on the problems of health care was accumulated, reflected widely enough in the works of the country's researchers. One of the main directions was social-economic analysis of health from the viewpoint of wealth — reproduction and assessment of the real conditions of individual groups of population differing in their health level. Such aspect of the research allowed revealing a typological differentiation of the population with respect to a combination of certain parameters of wealth and the degree of health. An important result of this analysis was revealing a strong correlation between wealth level and individual/group health and the dependence of low health potential on insufficient characteristics of life conditions (Novgorodtsev,1975; Kudryavtseva,1982; Rusinova, Braun, Panova ,2003)

Correlating such data with the social-demographic characteristics of families and individuals (their belonging to certain social groups or demographic types reflecting the stages of the individual's and family's life cycle) allowed to reveal differentiation of the population with respect to possessing resources for health depending on their social status or demographic structure (Bednyj, 1979;Complex Social-Hygienic Studies, 1983). Not a less important factor is education, which determines the culture of behaviour concerning health and lifestyle. Education opens the opportunity of choosing better and safer working conditions. Some authors study health in its interconnection with structural factors (occupation, level of income, place of living), considering that they affect health much stronger than the mode of life (smoking, drinking alcohol, physical exercise and sports, body weight). The impact of the radical social-economic reforms and “shock therapy” of the early 1990s on the country populations' health was negative. (Woman, Man, Family in Russia...,2001; Nazarova, 2005). The social-psychological tension and the sharp decline of the living standards of almost all population groups resulted in growing death and sickness rate (Subjective and Objective Estimations ...,1998; Inequality and Death Rate in Russia,2000). The dynamics of these processes is demonstrated in Tables: 2.5; 2.6.

**Table 2.5. LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH**  
(number of years)

Years	Total population			Urban population			Rural population		
	Total	Male	Females	Total	Male	Females	Total	Male	Females
1896-1897 (by 50 provinces (gubernia) of European Russia)	30,54	29,43	31,69	29,77	27,62	32,24	30,63	29,66	31,66
1926-1927 (by European part of RSFSR)	42,93	40,23	45,61	43,92	40,37	47,50	42,86	40,39	45,30
1958-1959	67,91	62,99	71,45	67,92	63,03	71,48	67,84	62,86	71,30
1961-1962	68,75	63,78	72,38	68,69	63,86	72,48	68,62	63,40	72,33
1965-1966	69,50	64,32	73,41	69,44	64,59	73,14	69,14	63,32	73,49
1970-1971	68,93	63,21	73,55	68,51	63,76	73,47	68,13	61,78	73,39
1975-1976	68,13	62,32	73,03	68,75	63,41	73,22	66,14	58,85	72,38
1980-1981	67,61	61,53	73,09	68,09	62,39	73,18	66,02	59,30	72,47
1985-1986	69,26	63,83	73,99	69,61	64,46	74,00	67,86	61,76	73,55
1990	69,19	63,73	74,30	69,55	64,31	74,34	67,97	62,03	73,95
1991	68,92	63,37	74,19	69,30	63,95	74,25	67,67	61,68	73,79
1992	67,80	61,91	73,66	68,10	62,35	73,72	66,79	60,63	73,33
1993	65,09	58,81	71,84	65,34	59,12	71,92	64,28	57,95	71,50
1994	63,91	57,48	71,12	64,13	57,70	71,20	63,24	56,85	70,83
1995	64,52	58,12	71,59	64,70	58,30	71,64	63,99	57,64	71,40
1996	65,80	59,62	72,40	66,21	60,06	72,62	64,62	58,42	71,76
1997	66,77	60,90	72,87	67,32	61,51	73,18	65,25	59,27	71,98
1998	67,07	61,22	73,13	67,54	61,75	73,38	65,75	59,80	72,41
1999	65,92	59,87	72,40	66,34	60,31	72,62	64,73	58,68	71,74
2000	65,37	59,07	72,29	65,71	59,38	72,48	64,44	58,25	71,73
2001	65,23	58,92	72,17	65,57	59,23	72,37	64,25	58,07	71,57
2002	64,95	58,68	71,90	65,40	59,09	72,18	63,68	57,54	71,09
2003	64,85	58,55	71,84	65,35	59,00	72,18	63,42	57,29	70,86
2004	65,27	58,89	72,30	65,81	59,38	72,65	63,76	57,55	71,27

Source: Federal Statistic Service of Russia

## 2.6. DEATH RATES BY MAIN CLASSES OF DEATH

(deaths per 100 000 population)

	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
<b>Total deaths by all causes</b>	<b>867,6</b>	<b>976,0</b>	<b>1099,5</b>	<b>1131,9</b>	<b>1119,1</b>	<b>1497,7</b>	<b>1416,9</b>	<b>1373,7</b>	<b>1357,4</b>	<b>1467,9</b>	<b>1529,0</b>	<b>1555,7</b>	<b>1617,2</b>	<b>1636,5</b>	<b>1596,0</b>
of which:															
infectious and parasitic diseases	24,0	21,5	20,6	17,2	12,1	20,7	21,3	20,5	19,0	24,4	24,9	24,3	25,6	25,9	25,7
neoplasm	147,3	155,8	163,5	175,5	194,4	203,0	200,1	201,4	201,9	204,3	204,7	202,9	203,1	202,5	201,7
diseases of circulatory system	412,3	491,9	579,5	633,9	618,7	790,7	757,8	749,8	746,8	813,1	846,1	864,6	907,0	927,5	895,4
diseases of respiratory system	87,2	92,7	92,1	79,5	59,5	73,9	67,7	63,6	57,0	64,7	70,2	65,5	70,0	70,5	64,6
diseases of digestive system	23,2	25,3	30,0	30,3	28,7	46,1	42,1	39,2	38,0	41,8	44,4	47,9	52,4	56,8	59,3
accidents, poisonings and injuries	125,4	142,4	165,0	137,6	134,0	236,8	209,1	187,4	187,0	205,5	219,0	228,8	235,3	233,6	227,5

Source: Federal Statistic Service of Russia

## 2.7. POPULATION MORBIDITY BY MAIN DISEASE CLASSES in 2000-2004

(patients registered with the diagnosis set for the first time)

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
	<b>Per 1000 population</b>				
<b>All diseases</b>	<b>730.5</b>	<b>719.7</b>	<b>740.1</b>	<b>748.6</b>	<b>744.9</b>
<i>of which:</i>					
infectious and parasitic diseases	44.3	43.8	41.2	37.7	38.6
malignant neoplasm	8.4	8.5	9.0	9.0	9.6
diseases of the endocrine system, digestion disorders, disorders of metabolism and immunity	3.8	3.9	5.1	4.4	4.5
blood diseases and other hematogenic disturbances	8.5	8.9	10.7	9.6	9.9
diseases of nervous systems	15.3	15.0	15.6	15.2	15.6
diseases of eyes and adnexa	31.9	32.4	33.5	32.9	34.1
diseases of ears and mastoid	21.9	22.3	22.9	22.5	23.9
blood circulation disorders	17.1	18.0	19.5	20.6	22.1
respiratory organs diseases	317.2	296.8	298.2	310.6	294.0
digestive disorders	32.3	33.4	35.7	35.3	35.6
skin infections and underskin fat	44.0	45.3	46.9	47.1	49.0
osteomuscular and connecting tissue disorders	30.6	31.6	35.1	33.6	34.2
urogenital diseases	37.6	38.8	40.8	42.1	45.7
complications of pregnancy, puerperal and afternatal period <sup>1)</sup>	52.9	55.1	60.2	63.3	62.4
congenital anomalies (defect of growth)	1.5	1.5	1.7	1.6	1.7
injuries and poisonings and other caused by external affects	86.2	87.7	89.2	89.9	90.0

1) Estimated per 1000 women aged 15-49.

Source: Federal Statistic Service of Russia.

The transition to market economy substantially changed the structure and the degree of accessibility of medical services, which was determined by large-scale commercialization of the health care sphere. This process was accompanied by a sharp rise of the prices for all kinds of services provided by both private and state-owned medical institutions. It resulted, first of all, in growth of social inequality of different groups of the population, reduction in accessibility of high-quality medical service and deterioration of the objective indicators of the population health on the whole (Iskortseva, 2005) (see Table 2.7).

## **2.5. Investigations of inequality in the sphere of consumption**

The sphere of consumption is one of the most important cross-sections of social inequality, and the complex of stable characteristics of the consumptive behaviour of a group determines its position in the social space or a social structure. Consumption, satisfying the material and spiritual needs, consumptive behaviour — these topics have always been an object of investigations and heated discussions among researchers and political writers both in the Soviet and post-Soviet periods.

In the 1970-1980s it was traditional to investigate objective regularities of consumption in different social groups. By means of statistical methods the volume and structure of consumption were measured, which, in their turn, were determined primarily by the material living standard of the population. A significant place in the investigations of consumption was given to consumption-and-demand modelling based on the budgets of individual families (Lejzman,1966)<sup>3</sup>.

The population's consumption was always considered one of the main constituents of the Soviet mode of life, the attention being focused on the proportion between the individual and collective consumption (Tolstyh,1975). In those years the concept of mode of life was introduced, determined not only by the individual's professional position but also by his/her social-demographic characteristics, marital status, education, everyday life. The strata were identified which were distinguished by the character of culture in the broad sociological sense of this concept, including the complex of life conditions, norms, traditions and knowledge which directly determined the individual's behaviour (Strumilin,1957; Gordon& Klopov, 1971,1972; Gordon, Klopov &Onikov,1997 et al).

Also, discussions were caused by the new concept of "lifestyle". It was defined as manifestation of individual features in the work activity, in the choice of the circle of

communication, in the ways of self-expression, in the specifics of consuming goods and services, in the organization of the proximate social and cultural environment, in using free time (Zhilina & Frolova, 1969; Rappoport,1987).

The social-economical transformations in the life of the society of Russia in the period of 1990s caused substantial changes in the consumption sphere. In the contemporary investigations of this sphere two main tendencies have manifested themselves. Some investigators, as before, focused their attention on the economic and social inequality of the contemporary society and on the transformations of its social structure. Exactly through the individual's behaviour on the labour market and the consumption market the researchers defined his affiliation with a class, stratum or social group. These authors relate the diversity of life styles and the forms of consumptive behaviour with a certain position of individuals in the social structure (Radayev, Shkaratan,1996).

Other authors see social inequality as dissimilarity, or dissimilitude, and, ultimately, as pluralisation and individualization of lifestyles, forms of life and patterns of consumptive behaviour, etc. (Ionin, 1996; Golofast, 1996).

This approach became widely acknowledged among the investigators of everyday reality. It was connected, first of all, with investigating the part of the population which practiced non-traditional and multifarious forms of consumption and followed European standards. Against the background of the vast majority of the population in the country who had to care about their surviving in the conditions of the deep crisis, the "demonstrative" behaviour in the sphere of consumption, being formed in the years of perestroika, was an indicator of the extreme stratification of the population and contributed to even stronger social tension in the society on the whole. (Poretskina, 1999; Volchkova,2000)

The supporters of this paradigm believed that the diversity of life forms, modes and styles are of exclusively cultural origin and cannot be reduced to class or strata differences. As an example, emergence of such groups as "the new Russians" and "the new poor" can be indicated (Ivanov,2000; Yericheva, 2001 and others ).

New differentiating factors include not only variety of forms in receiving education, medical care and different services, leisure and acquisition of food products and durable

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<sup>3</sup> Similar procedures are also applied at the present time in calculating the so-called "consumptive basket", that is, the minimum of subsistence for lowly-provided groups of population.

goods, but also their quality (Volchkova, Minina, 2001; Poretskina, 2001; Ivanov, 2001, Il'yin, 2001).

All this is becoming an indicator of assimilating new lifestyles. The basis of the existing differences in the consumptive behaviour of both rich and poor population is the character of using life resources, including time and financial, material and intellectual resources — the whole range of social-cultural and ascriptive characteristics (Toshchenko, 2000; Aleshina, 1999; Muzdybayev, 1998).

## **2.6. Territorial inequality**

Territorial inequality is connected with non-uniform distribution of the population — both among regions and among different types of inhabited localities. The urban/rural inequality is one of significant differences which were acknowledged by Soviet social scientists. (Mezhevich, 1979; Yanitskij, 1975) They supposed (following K. Marx) that the reason of this inequality was, first of all, in the fundamental difference between industrial and agricultural labour, meaning that industrial labour is complex, structured and amenable to processes of organization and reorganization, whereas agricultural labour is relatively ceaseless, resistant to external organizing influence and dependent on climatic conditions. The limited number of job places in rural settlements was also connected also with underdevelopment of infrastructure.

Sample surveys of the population of different territorial areas showed specific distinctions in the way of life of city residents (Gordon, Klopov, 1972, Kagan, 1977 and others). and village inhabitants (Staroverov, 1978; Ryvkina, 1979; Zaslavskaya, Goncharenko, Muchnik, 1977). These distinctions were determined by different levels of the infrastructure development, life conditions, working conditions and other factors. The Soviet government tried to reduce the gap between the city and the village in the industrial, socio-cultural and everyday-life spheres through the process of collectivization of the state and the cooperative ownership. Agro-industrial complexes were created, but they did not lead to integration processes. (Moskovchenko, 1983).

Levels of accessibility in the spheres of education and infrastructural provision, possibilities of leisure activities, standards of living, and improvement of living areas remained proportional to the sizes of the cities, as well as to their locations. This differentiation between peripheral towns, rural settlements and big cities still exist today.

During the transition to the market economy these disadvantages of rural life turned out to be serious hindrances limiting the range of possibilities for using new opportunities of adaptation by the rural population. These circumstances deepened the gap between

urban and rural areas and led an essential part of the rural population into stagnant poverty and exclusion. (Fadeyeva, 2003; Rodionova, 2000; Yaroshenko, 2004)

**Table 2.8. NUMBER OF RURAL UNEMPLOYED**

	1992	1995	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
	<b>According to the results of the Sample survey on employment<sup>1)</sup></b>							
Total number of unemployed, thou. persons	3888.6	6684.3	7059.1	6287.9	6154.7	5683.3	5775.2	5208.3
out of them, rural residents								
thou. persons	639.2	1396.2	1894.7	1834.6	1939.8	1870.9	1876.6	1956.6
percent	16.4	20.9	26.8	29.2	31.5	32.9	32.5	37.6
	<b>In accordance with the data of the Federal Labour and Employment Service (end of year)</b>							
Number of unemployed registered by government employment offices, thou. Persons	577.7	2327.0	1037.0	1122.7	1499.7	1638.9	1920.3	1830.1
out of them, rural residents								
thou. Persons	101.7	671.7	325.3	388.1	603.0	732.8	890.8	891.2
Percent	17.6	28.9	31.4	34.6	40.2	44.7	46.4	48.7

Source: Federal State Statistical Service of Russia.

The differences between the regions of the country are another settlement-determined disproportion. Despite of the Soviet propaganda and its ideas of uniformity of the country development, it was obvious that different territories of the Soviet Union had different levels of development. Therefore the problems of territorial development were the objects of different social disciplines, including sociology, and investigations in this field were supported by official authorities. (Ryvkina, 1989; Bojko, 1973; Social and National, 1973; Kahk, 1974)

The rural population was often the object of investigations of the social-territorial structure, and studies of regional inequality were mainly devoted to comparing the development of rural settlements and to the regional aspect of the inequality between the city and the village.

Starting from the beginning of 1980s, a large number of studies of socio-regional (territorial) and national distinctions were carried out. Indexes of socio-economical typology of regions began to be developed. Differences between regions were studied in the aspects of transformations of social structure, trajectories of social mobility, demographic and socio-cultural constituents (Sotsial'no-territorial'naya struktura goroda i

sela, 1982). The conclusion was made that social inequality of regional groups of population is conditioned by the very fact of residence in the concrete territory. The socio-territorial structure of the society, regional peculiarities and the resulting regional inequality depend on the system of administration accepted in the society. Solving the problems of regional inequality demanded an analysis of corresponding administrative and political decisions. (Zaslavskaya, Belenkij, Borodkin, 1980; Zaslavskaya, Fedoseyev, Trotskovkij, 1985; Fedoseyev, 1986). It was found out that the territorial structure of the society was maintained in a permanent condition for over 20 years. On the one hand, it helped to keep the stability of this structure, but, on the other hand, it increased the inequality of regions.

In the 1990s the relations between the centre and regions worsened, and in this connection a renaissance of regional investigations begun both in the economy and in the sociology of Russia. It became clear that macroeconomic parameters of the national economy were determined by processes which take place on regional levels, especially in the conditions of market relations in such a spatially heterogeneous country as Russia (Krapchan (Kirdina),1989; Minakir,2002; Nefedova, 2003), and the territorial constituent of social differences only strengthens the socio-economical differentiation in the society.

**Table 2.9. Average accrued monthly wages by regions, RUR**

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
<b>Russian Federation</b>	5995	58663	220351	472392	790210	950205	1051.5	1522.6	2223.4	3240.4	4360.3	5498.5	6739.5	8554.9
<b>Central Federal district (okrug)</b>							1009	1532.4	2173	3265.9	4432.6	5872.8	7276.3	9621.8
<b>Moscow region</b>	4815.3	48411	194982	415292	732747	927352	1036.1	1579.8	2269.3	3450	4802.6	6071.2	7399.2	9557.7
<b>Tambov region</b>	4122.9	40941	136968	288109	470858	554683	612.7	882.9	1234.5	1760.5	2554.6	3303.6	4081.4	5008.5
<b>Moscow</b>	5940.9	63497	325532	584084	962458	1249454	1522.3	2355.5	3229.3	4924.2	6388.4	8611.6	10634	14424.6
<b>North West Federal district (okrug)</b>							1166.2	1721.9	2531.5	3655.1	5067.9	6143.7	7518.1	9487.2
<b>Nenets Autonomous Area</b>			352609	739218	1339980	1731426	2021	2813.3	5065.9	9225.9	12626.8	15918.3	19024.7	23016.8
<b>Pskov Region</b>	4082.6	40675	146003	309871	542976	632028	710	1001.8	1470.7	2069.9	2919.5	3762	4542.6	5734.5
<b>St. Petersburg</b>	4859.5	50988	212197	443213	781255	1036938	1147.9	1687.3	2511.5	3695.3	5434.7	6467.5	7931.1	10133.9
<b>South Federal district (okrug)</b>							694.5	1006.6	1481	2159.2	2974.4	3699.2	4648.4	5800.3
<b>Republic of Ingushetia</b>				233468	394472	502513	612.8	780.2	1243.6	1758.2	2729.2	3576	4002.8	5448.9
<b>Republic of Daghestan</b>	2570.8	32720	108351	172053	303719	364467	387.3	502.2	878.7	1171.9	1834.3	2409.2	3000.1	3659.8
<b>Krasnodar Territory</b>	4896.4	45031	157207	324629	567803	680011	800.3	1191.2	1697.6	2495.3	3365.4	4033.1	5155.3	6462.3
<b>Privolzhsky (Volga) Federal district (okrug)</b>							858.6	1231.1	1783	2562.5	3412.1	4235.3	5149.9	6473.3
<b>Republic of Marii El</b>	3733.7	36029	124246	254402	408271	517585	588.8	857.4	1164.8	1656.9	2401.5	3105.8	3783.7	4938.2

**Table 2.9. Average accrued monthly wages by regions, RUR**

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
<b>Komi-Permyak Autonomous Area</b>			124171	265036	444555	511116	582.2	814	1180.2	1608.1	2389	2846.2	3536.3	4595
<b>Samara Region</b>	6197.9	63568	231562	531350	911051	1075141	1160.7	1622.9	2214	3157.3	4228	5138.9	6275.9	7764.9
<b>Urals Federal district (okrug)</b>							1555.4	2193.3	3486.5	5168.6	6588.6	8085.7	9692.5	11679.5
<b>Kurgan Region</b>	4629	47155	158784	339374	570074	700380	754	1019.4	1461.9	2064.3	2892.3	3664.6	4538.4	5691.5
<b>Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Area</b>			826834	1758819	3066712	3660142	4100.5	5804.8	8964.7	12577.1	15876.2	20027.2	23890.2	27534.1
<b>Siberian Federal district (okrug)</b>							1129.5	1559.5	2269.6	3190.8	4309.5	5325.3	6507.8	8109.7
<b>Taymir (Dolgano-Nenets) Autonomous Area</b>			597548	1369555	2291293	2449202	2597.1	3496.9	7004.2	9670.1	11650.3	14263.9	15872.7	20334.3
<b>Ust-Ordyn Buryat Autonomous Area</b>			157020	330354	511410	552247	603.9	796.8	1058.4	1444.7	2293	2754.1	3443.9	4415.6
<b>Far East Federal district (okrug)</b>							1631.9	2297.3	3113.6	4298	5979.1	7554.7	9115.2	11507.9
<b>Jewish Autonomous Region</b>	6093.9	69333	251911	497603	785853	890154	1082	1469.4	1982.4	2790.3	4203.9	5409.8	6513.8	8190.2
<b>Chukotka Autonomous Area</b>	17602.3	197252	815171	1681363	2508684	2816313	3274.1	4235.8	5686.5	8215.5	13501.7	17270.7	18618.2	23314.4

Source: Federal State Statistics Service of Russia ([www.gks.ru](http://www.gks.ru))

**Table 2.10. Selected indicators of economical development and living standards of population by regions**

Regions	GRP per capita (to the average for RF, taking into account the differences in cost of living)		Correlation with subsistence minimum level, percent of per capita money incomes, %			Population with money incomes below subsistence minimum level, percentage of the total population, %		Sample survey on employment *, %	
	2002 г.	2004 г.	1998 г.	2003 г.	2005 г.	2003 г.	2005 г.	2003 г.	2005 г.
Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Area	5,52	5,22	326	497	405	8	8,9	5,5	7,4
Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Area	4,55	6,17	282	460	416	11	8,2	9,4	8,2
Tyumen Region	3,56	1,50	335	н.д.	316	13	17,8	8,3	5,5
Moscow	2,26	1,72	575	647	597	20	13,2	1,3	0,9
Chukotka Autonomous Area	1,23	1,35	94	137	-	28	28,1	4,8	4,8
Republic of Tatarstan	1,22	1,24	160	280	287	20	13,5	6,7	6,6
St. Petersburg	1,12	1,02	179	303	380	17	10,1	4,1	2,5
Samara Region	1,04	0,99	202	296	297	23	17,9	4,4	5
Moscow Region	0,84	0,77	122	217	224	25	18,8	4,3	3,6
Krasnodar Territory	0,75	0,65	132	226	200	30	26,8	10,1	7,6
Taimyr Autonomous Area	0,66	0,60	97	204	194	25	23,2	6,9	11,9
Tambov Region	0,59	0,60	121	247	238	23	17,3	9,1	8
Pskov Region	0,57	0,57	101	196	209	26	19,3	8,1	5,6
Ust-Ordyn Buryat Autonomous Area	0,49	0,39	87	79	78	83	76,1	10,9	12,2
Jewish Autonomous Region	0,47	0,54	89	176	179	36	28,4	6,5	8
Republic of Marii El	0,45	0,50	97	147	145	49	40,1	12,2	9,4
Komi-Permyak Autonomous Area	0,40	0,34	69	108	101	64	54,9	10	17,2
Republic of Daghestan	0,33	0,34	71	143	217	53	22,1	20,1	25
Republic of Ingushetia	0,13	0,14	63	84	106	83	61,3	53,1	61,2

\* According to returns of Sample survey on employment, calculated (based by ILO)

Source: "Social Atlas of Regions of Russia"/Independent Institute for Social Policy.

(<http://atlas.socpol.ru/about/index.shtml>)

The shift from the planning mechanisms of regulation of the regional development to the market ones increased the differences between the regions with deficit of resources and those with abundance of resources. Some regions went along the path of self-

development, while in others tendencies of degradation became dominant. Multiple investigations of different aspects of regional development and inequalities resulting from this process were carried out in that period. Estimations of territorial inequality were made with respect to incomes, employment, health conditions, educational levels, and provision of the basis services to the population of different territories.

Particular attention was paid to regional problems of poverty, as well as to gender and generation differences in mechanisms of adaptation to new conditions, and to methods of complex estimations of social development of regions. (Zubarevich, 2003; Beliaeva, 2006). Processes of globalization in the transitional period were studied as well. An introduction of the socio-psychological component in the analysis showed that the problem of non-uniformity of socio-economic development of the regions becomes even more complicated due to regional peculiarities of the population's mentality. (Davydova, 1997).

**Table 2.11. The level of inequality in different regions of Russia (by coefficient Gini)**

High			
1998 r.		2002 r.	
Regions	Coefficient Gini	Regions	Coefficient Gini
Samara Region	0,46	Moscow	0,50
Krasnoyarsk Territory	0,46	Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Area	0,50
Republic of Bashkortostan	0,45	Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Area	0,50
Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Area	0,45	Samara Region	0,44
Republic of Tatarstan	0,44	Republic of Tatarstan	0,43
Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Area	0,44	Krasnoyarsk Territory	0,41
Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)	0,43		
Moscow	0,43		
Low level of inequality			
1998 r.		2002 r.	
Regions	Coefficient Gini	Regions	Coefficient Gini
Republic of Marii El	0,3	Republic of Marii El	0,35
Vladimir Region	0,3	Republic of Daghestan	0,33
Leningrad Region	0,29	Komi-Permyak Autonomous Area	0,33
Aginsk Buryat Autonomous Area	0,29	Republic of Ingushetia	0,31
Republic of Kalmykia	0,29	Buryat Autonomous Area	0,20
Kaliningrad Region	0,27		
Ivanovo Region	0,21		

Source: Uroven' zhizni naselenija regionov Rossii, 1999, N 9, pp.24-25; 2003, N 3, p.6.

## **2.7. Investigations of ethno-social inequality**

Ethno-social stratification as one of cross-sections of the Soviet society was a phenomenon typical for all poly-ethnic societies. There is a large variety of factors that determine inequality of ethnic communities. The social differences inherent in the Soviet-society in the ethnic aspect were caused by the social-sectoral and social-territorial stratification, being its indirect consequence. Thus, the ethnoses connected with agriculture, remained in their social development behind the industrially developed ones. The peoples populating the distant and hard-to-reach regions were certainly in a worse position than those living in the central regions, near the administrative and industrial centres (Pokshishevskij, 1980; Yuhneva,1984; Ginzburg,1986).

The state machinery attempted to regulate national relations. However, the administrative policy only deepened the ethno-social stratification. The main criterion underlying the differentiation of the social policy concerning different ethnoses was the place of the ethnoses on the scale of political loyalty (Social and National, 1973; Kiseleva,1993).

The policy of the centre was that, starting from 1930s, ethnic Russians occupied leading positions. The political elite of the country was staffed by almost exclusively ethnic Russians.

In forming the inner cadre policy in the Union republics and Autonomous republics the main offices were occupied by representatives of the local ethnoses. Their representatives had decisive superiority in selecting the leading cadres, admitting to higher educational institutions, etc., which was a manifestation of discrimination of the ethnic-Russian population in these republics (Il'jin,1991)

The latent multiyear cross-ethnic conflict was a negative consequence of the national policy of Stalin's resettlement of peoples. The civil rights of representatives of these ethnoses were drastically restricted: fixed attachment to a certain territory, prohibition against studying the native language, liquidation of native-language schools, newspapers and publishing houses, etc., limitations in receiving higher education and occupying responsible posts. Preventive measures concerning these peoples as potentially disloyal to the existing regime put them in the position of inferior people.

After the XX Congress of CPSU the process of partial restoration of the rights of the repressed peoples began. However, a number of them have not received the right to return to their homeland yet. Up to the present day these problems remain a cause of cross-ethnic conflicts (Social Conflicts ...,1993; Zdravomyslov,1996;1997).

One of the victims of ethnic discrimination was the Jews. In late 1970s an opportunity opened up for mass emigration of Jews from the USSR. It sharply increased the political anti-Semitism, which manifested itself in restrictions on admitting Jews to work in the MIC and other state institutions and on studying in many institutions of higher education. Cases of manifestation of anti-Semitic moods appear also at the present time (Levada,1995; Malashenko,1999).

The position of the Russian ethnos became very contradictory. It was considered by the ruling elite as the main basis of the multi-ethnic state, the guarantor of its stability. Based on these considerations, migration of highly qualified cadres to the territories of other Union republics was stimulated. This process was followed by enormous social cost. The rise of the economically retarded national outskirts actually turned, first of all, into devastation of ethnic-Russian rural areas. It resulted in the absurd situation: the position of the people which represented the parent state became socially worse than that of the peoples of national outskirts. All this became certainly reflected in cross-ethnic relations and emergence of nationalistic moods — first of all, on the everyday-life level, in the social life of the citizens of Russia (Skvortsov,1998; Multiculturalism and Transformation..., 2002; Malahov,2002)

The studies of ethnic (national) differences in the scientific literature of the late 1970s and early 1980s were connected with investigations of the processes of urbanization and migration of rural population to the cities. (Mezhevich,1979; Yanitskij, 1987) Although cross-ethnic differences were not acknowledged officially, any observations and surveys detected considerable differences in the mode of life, as well as ethnical specifics of the urban population of the country. Ethnical diversity manifested itself in the everyday forms of behaviour of the ethnos members in all spheres of their life activity.). Problems of overcoming the regional, ethnic and cultural differences were the main object of the empirical research of that period (Ethno-Social Urban Problems, 1986; Social-Cultural Character of the Soviet Nations,1986 and others).

Theoretical debates in the sphere of cross-ethnic relations became very keen in the 1990s.

At the present time, ethnicity is a more significant factor of the social life than before, which is connected with the growth of cross-ethnic conflicts. Like in the West, in the literature of Russia several general approaches to investigating the essence of ethnicity, and, correspondingly, the nature of the ethnic conflict, can be indicated. These are such approaches as primordialist, modernist (constructionist), instrumentalist and the relativist

theory. (Drobizheva, Aklayev and others,1996; Tishkov, 1997; Drobizheva, Kuznetsov, 2000.)

In the social-science literature in Russia the primordialist approach is more widespread. The modernist approach has not yet been commonly accepted, although it might be more productive for interpretation of ethnic-based social inequality (Zdravomyslov,1998)

Ethnicity is often seen as a political and economical resource, an important factor of distribution of power and wealth, and, consequently, as a factor of cross-ethnic inequality (Skvortsov,1998).

The instrumentalist approach to ethnical identity as to a symbolic and real capital allowed to make a number of important inferences and observations, especially in the sphere of economical and social relations, as well as in the sphere of politics, cross-language and cross-ethnic contacts (Guboglo, 1993; Social identification of the individual, 1993; Values and Symbols of National Self-Awareness,1994; Ozhiganov,1998) In these investigations ethnicity was considered as a specific resource that facilitates inclusion in a certain network or, contrariwise, as a marker that limits access to certain resources (Constructing the Ethnicity. ..., 1998).

The scientific polemics which developed around the problems of ethnicity and cross-ethnic relations could have remained an issue of only scientific debates for many more years, if it were not for an outburst of racist ideas and practices of discrimination of different categories of population in our country and over the world. Many contemporary researches see their task in initiating a discussion about the situation of so-called “unintentional racism” emerging in our society and responsible for reproduction of ethnic intolerance in Russia. Discussion of the problems of “modern racism” is a burning issue, being especially important in the context of the struggle, being expanded today, against “extremism” and “illegal migration” (Racism....2002).

## **2.8. Gender inequality**

Gender inequality is another dimension of social disparity. The Soviet Union, as well as other Socialist countries, was proud of its achievements in the sphere of gender equality. The mass media created the image of the Soviet woman who attained imposing success in different fields of activity, including the masculine ones. It was statistically expressed in the increase of women’s educational level and growth of their proportion in the professions with high educational requirements. (National Economy..., 1987) But as a matter of fact the contract of “working mother” (Temkina, Rotkirh, 2002) was the common

practice, resulting in a double burden to women, and the studies of time budgets showed an overburden on women, especially in the families with children. (Artemov, 1999; Patrushev, 1998)

**Table 2.12 NUMBER OF UNEMPLOYED WOMEN**

	1992	1995	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
	<b>According to the results of the Sample survey on employment<sup>1)</sup></b>							
Total number of unemployed, thou. persons	3888.6	6684.3	7059.1	6287.9	6154.7	5683.3	5775.2	5208.3
Out of them, women								
thou. persons	1852.9	3071.7	3314.2	2910.2	2866.3	2675.9	2873.2	2406.9
percent	47.6	46.0	46.9	41.5	46.6	47.1	49.8	46.2
	<b>In accordance with the data of the Federal Labour and Employment Service (end of year)</b>							
Number of unemployed registered by government employment offices, thou. persons	577.7	2327.0	1037.0	1122.7	1499.7	1638.9	1920.3	1830.1
Out of them, women								
thou. persons	417.0	1454.7	714.8	763.2	1012.6	1106.2	1272.6	1199.5
percent	72.2	62.5	68.9	68.0	67.5	67.5	66.3	65.5

Source: Federal State Statistic Service of Russia.

The transition to market relations complicated the situation of women on the labour market to a great extent. This complication was caused by two reasons. Firstly, it took place due to their deficient competitiveness on the labour market, which was the outcome of the combining the professional and maternal duties. The second reason of worsening women's positions on the labour market was that the labour legislation imposed additional social obligations to women on the employers. As a result, women lost many of previously achieved position, often becoming unemployed. (see, table 2.12) And, furthermore, the most serious economical difficulties were experienced by the branches where women dominated (Rzhanitsyna, 2000; Roshchin, 2005).

Gender studies in Russia became more active after the falling of the Iron Curtain. At that time active assimilation of Western feminist conceptions took place (Mezentseva, 2000), and many empirical investigations were carried out, ordered by gender centres and commissions, under their aegis. The main objects of these studies were, on the one hand, women's positions on the labour market (Antonchenkova, 2004; Mal'tseva, Roshchin, 2006; Baskakova, Mezentseva, 1996; Bezdenezhnyh, Vejher, 1996; Evdokimova, 2006;

Hotkina, 1998), and, on the other hand, women’s activity in housework (Gruzdeva, 1994; Barsukova, Radaev, 2000). Like in the Western scientific literature, some researchers focus on gender discrimination in employment, payment, promotion and dismissal and also in distribution of household duties within the family (Yaroshenko, 2001; Rzhantsyna, 2000; Hotkina, 2000; Yurkinen-Pakkasvirta, 1999; Zdravomyslova, 1994; Roshchin, 2005). Others emphasize the “otherness” of women, noting both their weaknesses and strengths, manifesting themselves especially brightly in business and management. (Prokofeva et al., 2000; Chirikova, 2000; Kalinina, 2000).

**Table 2.13 Growth of wage in branches with prevailing work force of a certain sex (October, 1999)**

	Average monthly wage, RUR	% of average monthly wage in 1998
Branches with prevailing male work force		
Oil industry	6325	231
Gas industry	7472	170
Coal mining	3089	155
Construction	2026	151
Branches with prevailing female work force		
Wholesale and retail trade, catering, intermediates, marketing	1343	145
Health-care, physical training, compulsory social security	1028	147
Education	967	144
Culture and art	957	147

Source: Rzhantsyna, 2000, p.50.

### **3. Social inequality and national political culture**

In the national discourse of Russia the problem of social inequality is especially acute, being expressed extremely emotionally — both in the linguistic and behavioural forms. This is connected with the long and turbulent history of Russia.

The problem of poverty and humiliation that is imposed by it is, for example, graphically described in the Russian classical literature. Impressive examples can be found in the novels “Poor Folk” and “The Humiliated and Aggrieved” by F.M. Dostoevsky, as well as in the novels by I.S. Turgenev, plays by A.N. Ostrovsky, short stories by

A..N. Chekhov, verses by N.A. Nekrasov, and in many other works of the Russian literature.

It should be noticed, however, that in the Russian public discourse the proprietary stratification was not the predominant one; in the foreground was inequality based on governance relations: the relations between “masters” on the one part and “servants” on the other part. This was caused by serfdom that until 1861 had been in force for several centuries, granting the owner of the land large powers over the peasants who were “assigned” to this land. In these conditions, where the power of the “masters” was practically not limited by any formal rules, the reaction on the part of the subordinates sometimes took the form of “the Russian riot, senseless and merciless”. In this situation freedom as the possibility for self-expression limited by the interests of the surrounding people was substituted by “breaking loose” without responsibility and limitations.

Another dimension of inequality was the state-official hierarchy. However, despite the advanced development of the bureaucratic structure, the tradition of perceiving bureaucracy as an integrate impersonal structure was not strongly developed in the Russian discourse. In many respects it was connected with the fact that the Russian bureaucracy never became an impersonal structure acting in conformity with universal rules (according to Weber), but, on the contrary, turned out to be an instrument of realization of local power relations. Correspondingly, the Russian culture, too, turned out to be very sensible to the “Table of Ranks”, introduced by Peter I, which ranged all officials in accordance with a 14-class scale. In the mass consciousness, the officials of the highest ranks belonged to the category of “masters”, girt with almost unlimited power over the subordinates, while the officials of the lower ranks were perceived as “servant”, “dependent” people, standing on the lowest levels of the social hierarchy.

In 1917, radical egalitarianism became the main ideology of the Russian revolution and the principle of activity of the new Soviet government. The slogan “Who was nothing will be everything” was turned into reality almost literally, the new authorities of Russia considered any signs of inequality (even if this inequality was based on the individual’s abilities or his very persistent efforts) as suspicious, disloyal and calling for urgent measures for “levelling”. The work of N. Berdyaev “Philosophy of Inequality” (Berdyaev, 1990) was a reaction to such “practices of levelling”; in this work the author sharply denounced the fallaciousness of egalitarianism and insisted on the natural matter of social inequality and the significant social role of aristocracy. The latter, having received,

by succession, certain privileges, also should have assumed a mission to care about public benefit.

During the Soviet period the egalitarian directives, initially supported by the great majority of the population, became of more and more formal character, and their effect was more and more confined to the sphere of public activity, contributing to formation of classical “doublethink” (according to G. Orwell).

In 70 years of the Soviet power a specific type of “the Soviet person” was formed, to the study of this phenomenon a special series of investigations of VTSIOM was devoted (Levada, 2000) The researchers characterized “the Soviet person” as an “adapted”, “discontent”, “sly” and “having limitations”, the last definition referring to the level and the framework of ambitions of the Soviet individual. According to this investigation, the majority of the population sees as “normal” the income that is 3-4 times higher than the real one; and this indicator (the proportion of the “normal” and real income) — although it fluctuates, depending on the economical situation — is, nevertheless, surprisingly stable.

However, limitations were found not only in ambitions but also in willingness to work with strenuous effort. The investigation revealed the stability of mindset oriented to rather small but guaranteed earnings which turn out to be noticeably more preferable than well-paid but strenuous job or the risk of managing one’s own business. Both in May 1994 and March 1999 relatively small guaranteed earnings would have been chosen by 60% of the respondents. This is how emerged a vicious circle of unrealized possibilities, “guarantee”-oriented mindsets and willingness to be content with very little, inherent in the “homo soveticus” type of person.

Such traits of the Soviet person generated contradictions in his consciousness and behaviour when, in the next period of the history of Russia, the anti-egalitarian ideology came to the foreground. However, the logic of political struggle led to oversimplification of the anti-egalitarian ideas to the level of slogans, like it had formerly happened to the egalitarianism ones. And the 1990s social transformation went on under the slogans of rejection of “equality in squalor”. A long-time experience of imposing the egalitarian ideology resulted in rejecting this ideology by many, and now, as a result, according to some researches, the majority of the population perceives a 10-fold gap between the incomes of different groups as quite normal (Tihonova, Davydova, 2005).

In the contemporary discourse (Golovlyanitsyna, 2005) proprietary’ inequalities predominate over the power-related ones: the frequency of using property categories in the mass media is considerably higher than that of stratification categories identified by other

indicators. The only exception is the more elusive category of “middle class”, which is used in various contexts (such as economical, political, marketing contexts, etc.) with different (and often non-overlapping) nuances of meaning.

The data of current opinion polls allow us to say that today, too, the attitude of the population towards the rich and to towards the poor turns out to be very contradictory.

The attitude of the citizens of Russia towards our well-off compatriots is still determined by the conviction that “all large private means have been gained in a dishonest way”. Negligibly small is the proportion of those who consider that our oligarchs have been able to earn their capitals by righteous labour. For example, only 3% of the respondents think so about Mikhail Khodorkovsky’s capital, and the situation of other oligarchs is not better.

In answering the question about the traits characteristic to some people or other, such feature as greed is ascribed to the rich by 32% of the Russian citizens polled, disrespect to the law — by 26%, dishonesty — by 21%, indifference to the fate of their country — by 19%, moral obduracy — by 18%. But at the same time the polled people note their being initiative and their energy (30%), good education (21%), professionalism (19%), and industry (17%). Thus, the respondents consider the rich people gifted and energetic, but using these traits to pursue their own egoistic purposes.

The attitude to the poor also becomes more complicated. They are ascribed such traits as kindness (31%), being law-abiding (28%), having conscience (19%), patriotism (12%). But at the same time the respondents talk about their laziness (22%), passivity, inertia (21%), low level of education (16%), non-professionalism (12%).

From this the researchers conclude that today’s citizens of Russia ascribe to their rich compatriots positive professional qualities and negative personal traits of character, and, contrariwise, to the poor they ascribe positive personal traits of character and negative professional qualities (Fedorov, 2007).

The demonstrative consumption by the rich makes its contribution to the sharpening of the perception of proprietary inequality. According to one of the VTSIOM’s opinion polls, the great majority (86% against 9%) agree with the opinion that every person has the right to spend his money taking his own choice. But if the same statement is worded sharper as “rich people needn’t feel embarrassed about their richness”, then only 59% of the respondents agree with it, and 27% disagree. Only 35% hold to the opinion that the behaviour of the rich people is their private business in which both neither the society nor the state should interfere, and 56% disagree with this proposition. The public opinion is

inclined to the conviction that “to spend money like water” when there are many poor people in the country is immoral and unacceptable (this is the opinion of 67%, and the opinion of 22% is rather dissenting than similar). (To follow in Kurshavel..., 2007).

#### ***4. Social inequality and the national party system***

Inequality in the political life of the country can be considered in two aspects. Firstly, it is inequality of the members of the society in access to the resources of the state power in the process of creating or supporting the parties to which they give their preference or the parties themselves. Secondly, it is inequality of the parties on the election arena. The main period of political transformation in Russia is dated by many leading political scientists in the country as the timespan of 1989 – 1996. This period is directly connected with the formation of the new national party system, meant to be the conductor of the main ideas of the reforms being realized.

Over 70 years of the Soviet period there was a one-party system in the USSR. The state power was completely in the hands of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Only after perestroika a multiparty system began to be formed in Russia; it may be said that it is still at the stage of being formed. Elections have not become a mechanism of power change. The results of elections did not entail change of the government, and change in separate aspects of the political course of the government were not connected with the event of coming to the parliament of some party or other. The existing election mechanism is free as regards access of voters and candidates to participation in elections but it is not fair in the aspect of equal conditions of electoral campaigns. Active formation of a party system with one dominating party, which is actually exempted from direct competitive struggle for the electorate, is being formed. This was the aim of the recent decision to exclude the line “against everybody” in the voting bulletin.

At present, most political parties of Russia do not represent the interests of any more or less numerous groups of population, as it is customary all over the world. Analysis of the lists participants of the State Duma elections shows that the party system has not been formed in Russia yet. The list of participants cardinally changes with every new election campaign. The list of alliances and blocks of the parties elected in the Duma also changes. In every election some of the parties represented in the parliament turn out to be “overboard”, replaced by one or more new ones. Only two parties (CPRF and LDPR) have kept their places in all four Dumas.

At the present stage the most numerous party is “United Russia” — the party of state power, created in 2001 for maintaining the policy implemented by the President with using the so-called administrative resource.

Many small parties are created with the main purpose to provide access to the state power resources for small groups of businessmen who sponsor their political activity. Moreover, many parties not only follow short-term goals but also do not exist for a long time. They appear, unite with other parties in political blocks and terminate their existence, not having had time to remain in the voters’ memory. Now in Russia 17 political parties are officially registered.

The legislative 7% barrier for gaining seats in the State Duma (and the corresponding norms concerning many regional parliaments) restricts the activity of such day-fly parties, but, on the other hand, it “gives the green light” in the elections and guarantees majority in legislative bodies to the parties created by means of the administrative resource. Even in the acting State Duma (which was elected on December 7, 2003) only two parties of four are relatively stable: these are the Communist Party of the Russian Federation and the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia. The United Russia party had been organized not long before the last elections and the Motherland party was registered as “an electoral block” in the time of the election campaign and by today has already terminated its existence transformed into a new political party Fair Russia: Motherland – Pensioners – Life. And, as the public-opinion polls point out, exactly these four parties have chances to gain seats in the next State Duma. According to sociological polls (carried out by VTSIOM), the United Russia now has about 40%, CPRF – 7-8%, LDPR and the Fair Russia (FR) have 5% each, and other parties —the Yabloko, the Union of Right Forces (URF), etc. — have 1-2% or less. It can be said that now the Russian political discourse is determined by these four parties and two liberal parties, the Union of Right Forces and the Yabloko (both of them did not overcome the 7% barrier in the last elections and, as opinion polls show, do not have much chance to it in next elections either),

All parties, both in their election campaigns and in party programme documents, emphasise the problems of social inequality. On the one hand, these problems are the most acute in the society, and, on the other hand, they are the most “winning” in the aspect of attracting the electorate.

Below is given a brief analysis of the party programme of the main parties with respect to their attitude towards social inequality.

The United Russia (UR) is the most numerous party, the so-called party of the state power. In the party documents, the UR proclaims the principles of social quality on the basis of “maximum expansion of the strata of proprietors and economically independent people who provide for themselves. Anyone who cannot independently provide for himself should not be abandoned by the society”. Among the UR’s slogans there is a slogan of struggle against poverty, “first of all, with the poverty of the working population”. “Extricating as many people as possible from below the poverty line” is considered by the UR “the main task of the social, regional and budget policy”. According to the UR, social aid should be provided only to those who really need it, but this aid should be sufficient. The UR advocates rising social payments, including pensions, to the level not lower than the minimum subsistence.

The CPRF traditionally stands on the extreme left egalitarian position. Among the main goals proclaimed are “equality based on liberation of labour, on liquidation of both exploitation of man by man and all kinds of social parasitism”. One of the measures proposed by the CPRF for achieving its goals is “introducing a progressive taxation for the citizens having super high incomes and especially large personal property”.

The Fair Russia, having united there parties, also proclaims, among its purpose, struggle against social inequality, since it, “along with corruption, lawlessness, voluntarism, threatens national security”. The anti-inequality measures are not so radical: “repudiation of the disgraceful minimum wage being lower than the minimum subsistence”. Besides, among the demands set forth by this party is complete control, by the society, of the income from selling natural resources, deprivatization and nationalization of the corresponding branches.

The LDPR, like the CPRF and the FR, advocates introduction of progressive taxation, setting the level of minimum wages, pensions and allowances not lower than the minimum subsistence. Among its slogans are such as “overcoming of the social and proprietary inequality — not founded by anything, — the differentiation of incomes that does not contribute to the stability of the society”. Although the LDPR proclaims participation of women in representative organs of the state power and governance and levelling pay for women’s work with that for men’s work, its ideologists consider the maternity function as the priority for women.

The Yabloko’s programme also has statements concerning inequality. This party considers that “Justice demands that we strive not only for equal rights for citizens, but also for equal opportunities so that the individual can realize his/her abilities. Justice

should also guarantee a worthy existence for the less fortunate”. Summarizing the outcome of radical reforms, the programme states that abrupt social stratification has taken place in the society. As its aim the Yabloko sees “society of equal opportunities, based on the principles of social justice and social solidarity of the strong and the weak”. The social policy should be aimed at balancing the most drastic income differences by creating dependable systems of mandatory state insurance; combating poverty by reducing blatant social stratification.

The URF stands on the right flank; in the programme documents of this party much less attention is given to the problem of inequality than in the programmes of other parties. The position of this party is that “only a liberal market economy can ensure dynamic accumulation and fair distribution of public wealth”.

From the aforesaid it can be seen that programme declarations of different parties do not differ much from each other and the theme of social inequality is one of the most popular among the topics of election campaigns. It is, first of all, connected with the fact that all parties are in principle oriented to the voting electorate, that is, to those 30% who participate in voting regularly (in Russia these are mainly pensioners, state-budget sphere employees, village residents). From this the social — however, most often populist — orientation of the parties’ electoral-campaign programmes follows.

## ***5. National mechanisms for mitigation of social inequality***

### **5.1 The Role of the State in Social Protection**

The mitigation of social inequality is one of important aims of social policy in contemporary society. But, as it follows, for example, from the President’s Annual Addresses to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, social inequality as such is not acknowledged as the high priority problem of the Russian government. Only the aim of reduction of the number of people with less than subsistence-level incomes is declared as an important task assigned to the government. The problem of social justice occurs in the connection with the necessity of reforms in the social sphere — first of all, in education and health-care.

The government acts proceeding from the premise that only economic growth can provide a genuinely reliable foundation for long-term solutions of social problems, including struggle against poverty. Thus, it is admitted that the state’s key role in the economy is protection of economic freedom, ensuring equality in conditions of competition.

It is supposed that prosperity of every individual should be determined by his/her labor, abilities, qualifications, and effort. Everyone has the right to dispose of what he/she has earned at will. But, on the other hand, it is acknowledged that the Russian state, if it wants to be just, must help its impoverished citizens and those that cannot work – the disabled, pensioners and orphans. These people must live a worthy life and the basic benefits must be accessible to them.

The system of social protection is an important and probably the most difficult object to be reformed during the transition period. And now social protection in Russia is still heavily dominated by the Soviet inheritance.

First of all, in the Soviet system the distinction between rewards for labour (wages) and transfers for welfare purposes — which is essential to a market economy — was blurred, the enterprises being used as direct instruments of social policy. And when market-oriented enterprises stopped to provide local infrastructure and services in the new, such as health-caring and education, local authorities had to take on responsibility for the public benefits previously financed by enterprises. But the problem is that they often do not have enough incomes for these purposes.

Secondly, a characteristic feature of the Russian system of social protection is fragmentation of funding sources and responsibilities. A certain role is played by federal extrabudgetary funds (the number of them varied during the transforming period), several ministries, and lower levels of the government. The main federal extrabudgetary funds are the Pension Fund, the Social Insurance Fund, the Federal and the Regional Funds of Compulsory Medical Insurance.

Now it is already acknowledged that a policy of general state paternalism is economically impossible and politically inexpedient today. Rejecting this policy is dictated both by the need for the most effective use of financial resources and by aspiration to create stimuli for development, to liberate human potential, and to make people responsible for themselves and for the well-being of their families. But at the same time it is admitted that the current system of social support, based on non-addressed social benefits and privileges, is organized in such way that it scatters state funds and allows rich people to enjoy social benefits at the expense of the poor.

The Federal State Statistic Service (Goskomstat) regularly publishes the “general amount of social payments”, which includes pensions, scholarships and different benefits regardless of the source of payment.

**Table 2.14. General amount of social payment**

	1992	1995	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Bln. RUR (Trln. RUR in 1992 and 1995)	1.0	119.5	551.1	808.3	1040.5	1253.4	1407.4
Percentage of GDP	5.3	7.5	7.5	9.0	9.6	9.5	8.4
Percentage of average per capita money incomes of population	14.3	13.1	13.8	15.2	15.2	14.1	12.9

Source: Federal State Statistic Service of Russia

Now the government strives to reduce excessive social obligations in order to be able to fulfill the ones that will remain. The reform of the pension system, as well as the systems of education and health care purpose exactly this aim. The social benefits and guaranties for the poor people are, however, very modest.

**Table 2.15. THE BASIC SOCIAL GUARANTEES ESTABLISHED BY LAW OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION**  
(data for 1 January of the corresponding year)

	1992	1995	2000	2002	2003	2004	2005
Subsistence minimum level (average per capita), RUR per month (thou. RUR before 2000)	1.9	264	1210	1808	2112	2376	...
Minimum wages (annual average), RUR (thou. RUR before 2000)	0.7	42.5	107.8	400.0	487.5	600.0	746.7
Real minimum wages, as percentage of the previous year	41.5	81.4	106.9	138.2	107.2	111.0	110.4
Tariff rate of 1st grade STG for budget-paid employees (with additional payments; annual average), RUR (thou. RUR before 2000)	1.8	58.5	126.5	450.0	487.5	600.0	746.7
Real size of tariff rate, 1st grade STG, as percentage of the previous year	-	71.5	99.8	148.1	95.3	111.0	110.4
Base part of the old-age retiring pension <sup>1)</sup> RUR per month				450	522,4	598,0	660,0
Lump-sum allowance upon birth of a child, RUR				4500	4500	4500	6000
Monthly allowance for the period of child care until the child's age of 1.5 years, RUR per month				500	500	500	500
Minimum scholarship for students of the state municipal higher-education institutions, RUR per month:				200	200	400	400
Minimum stipend for students of primary- and secondary-level vocational schools, RUR per month				70	70	140	140

1) Before 2002 minimum pension, without compensation

Source: Federal State Statistic Service of Russia

The reduction of social obligations has a side effect of high significance. The average public-sector wage (since it is formed on the basis of the low rate of the first-category tariff) is considerably lower than the average wage in the country on the whole; moreover, the level of real wages in this sector is still lower than it was at the end of the 1980s. Of the 18 common-tariff-grid rates, 12 are lower than the minimum subsistence. In other words, most employees of budget-funded organisations are faced with a very high risk of getting below the poverty line.

The situation actually is that the mechanism of wages organization in the state-budget sector contributes to escalation of poverty. The working poor often are among recipients of social transfers for the deprived (“lowly-provided”) strata of the population. Among such transfers are allowances for children, partial compensation for utility payments and lump-sum social aid.

It can be said that in today’s conditions using the mechanism of redistribution of incomes through social transfers is far from sufficient. At the present time the taxation on individual income is flat-rate. The question is raised recurrently about introducing progressive taxation, which was applied from early 1990s to 2001 (in 2001 a new tax code was adopted), but the usual reaction to it is apprehension that it will mainly entail various kinds of income concealment.

According to some researchers (Shkaratan, 2001), the main problem of today’s Russia is discrepancy between the declared social policy and the real one. It is declared that social policy is directed at development of human potential, support of the poor and creation of numerous middle strata. But in fact the state policy facilitates redistribution of property in the interests of the state-power groups, provides aid to the poor that is sufficient for maintaining a relative degree of social stability and hampers development of middle strata that might become the basis of civil society restricting the possibilities of uncontrolled administration of the country’s resources by the elite groups.

## **5.2 Non-governmental mechanisms for the amelioration of social inequality**

A means of mitigation, which is independent from the state and developed traditionally, is charity. In pre-revolutionary Russia, charity was widely developed. Thousands of charitable organizations of various legal forms worked; church charity was practiced; charity of private citizens manifested itself actively. However, in the Soviet Union it actually ceased to exist; the state gradually monopolized all spheres of activity, including the social one. Charitable activity of church and religious organizations was completely prohibited. The word “charity” itself acquired a negative meaning. For

example, the word “philanthropy” is defined in the Dictionary of Foreign Words , published in 1954, as “...charity, one of the ways in which bourgeoisie disguises its parasitism and its exploitative essence, by means of hypocritical, humiliating “help to the poor” with the purpose of distracting them from the class struggle” (Dictionary..., 1954)

Revival of charity began in 1990s. In 1995 the Law “On Charitable Activity and Charitable Organizations” was adopted, which stated that finance support to the needy may be provided by non-governmental organizations (NGOs), business structures and foreign citizens. The revival of the social phenomenon of charity was connected with a number of circumstances. On the one hand, the state significantly reduced its functions in regulation and development of the social sphere. On the other hand, in the process of transition to market relations the population encountered a substantially greater amount of risks against which the people had to insulate themselves by their own efforts. When the state social patronage weakened, the necessity of external participation in the support of the social sphere grew severely. The state system of the social protection was created only in 1993. Before this, actually only non-governmental organizations worked. Therefore, due to the contemporary socio-economic situation, charity in Russia is of distinctly social-protecting character.

For example, considerably active is the activity of non-commercial organizations (NCOs) which is directed at reduction of gender inequality. This activity is facilitated by two-sided support: on the one hand, women’s NCOs are supported by Western women’s NCOs and actively use their wide experience. On the other hand, different international organization (UNO, ILO, etc) impel the state structures to collaborate actively with women’s NGOs in the sphere of life improvement. This collaboration takes place both in the form of joint events and as development, and — which is the most important — realization of specific programmes that can be considered steps on the way of the achievement of gender quality.

The 2006 was announced Charity Year in Russia. However, as sociological studies show, most Russian citizens — not only common citizens but also businessmen — are not willing to participate in charitable activity. The main reasons for this unwillingness are in absence of favourable conditions for charity development. Common people apprehend that their money will go “not to the right address”, while for businessmen tax benefits, accepted all over the world, are absent, and there are a lot of bureaucratic hindrances to documenting any donations. Besides, numerous publications in the mass media discredit different charitable funds and NCOs, overplaying certain examples. Most of the

contemporary non-profit funds and aid-providing societies are volunteers, carrying the cross of aid.

However, it can be heard from many officials that it is necessary to cooperate with NGOs: the Citizen's Forum was created, as well as the Public Chamber. The state sector has adopted many principles from the third sector — for example, national projects and pilot projects. However, according to NCO leaders, the problem is that if the state power initiates any project, then it both heads it and controls it. Up to now it is not the civil society that controls the state but it is the state that controls the civil society.

NCOs are the main agents of charity in Russia. At present, about 300, 000 are acting in Russia, and the third sector already occupies a statistically significant part of GNP — a little more than 2 million roubles. Interaction of the state power and NPOs is perfecting: laws of such interaction have been adopted in 55 subjects of the Russian Federation. In these laws the principles of interaction, as well as specific principles of interaction with the state, are described: social orders, social grants, public councils, advisory councils, legislative initiatives, public expertise.

A very important problem connected with charity is the information vacuum around NCOs. For the regional mass media their activity is, as a rule, not news-breaking. In the information area, human-rights protecting and ecological NCOs, which, indeed, make 10% of all NCOs, are the most noticeable. The problem is that most people do not know that the rest 90% are social NCOs, i.e. NCOs which provide various services to the population. There are many functions that are fulfilled by NCOs much more efficiently than by the state: these are social support of the most vulnerable groups of population (children, disabled, and the elderly); aid to victims of political repressions and refugees; maternity care; protection of natural environment, protection of animals, and others. NCOs is the instrument by means of which the society receives important information and support from other persons, including citizens, the state and business.

However, in the last years decrease of the number NCOs has been observed. Charitable organizations actually were equated with commercial ones, and many of them had to cease their activity. Until 2002, companies could direct to charity up to 5% of their revenues, these expenditures decreasing the taxable base. Now companies may donate money only from their net income. Only those companies can be exempted from profits tax which donate money in one of three directions: for culture, for science or for health care. However they can receive this benefit only after the corresponding ministry will include

them in the list of companies that are exempted from the tax. It is obvious that the system of tax benefits for charity is very poorly developed in Russia.

In 2006, amendments to the Law on Non-Commercial Organizations were adopted. Requirements to annual reports, which should include data on the programmes being realized and money expenditures, were considerably toughened. The process of getting NCOs registered became more complicated, especially for NCOs the founders of which include physical or juridical persons that are not citizens of the Russian Federation. Apart from this, offices and branches of foreign organizations will have to submit reports about their activity quarterly, and every autumn they will have to submit a plan of their activity in the Russian Federation. A special organ, Federal Registration Service, has been created for registration of NCOs and collecting data about them. State officials have been given more possibilities for stopping NCOs' activity and liquidate the organizations the activity of which is not pleasing to them. First of all it concerns human-rights protecting and ecological organizations, which receive most of their funding from abroad, and, consequently, their activity will be the on\object of the closest attention of state officers. By the end of November only 20% foreign NCOs in Russia were re-registered or registered.

From early 1990s the situation was that the main part of the money that was directed to charity in Russia came neither from business nor from private donations but in the form of grants from foreign charitable and non-profit organizations. However, at the present time the state has set the course for graduate replacement of the NGOs financing from foreign sources. The state aspires to the situation that 90% of NGOs funding be on the part of the state bodies. According to many analysts, in this situation NGOs will be even more dependent on the state power.

As to charity investigations, the researchers are much less interested in its contemporary aspects (quantitatively expressed, this interest is approximately 4 times lower) than in the historical ones (Chikadze, 2002). In the scientific discourse there is no uniform conception of charity, its role, its subjects, etc. (Fomin, Chikadze, 1999; Gurvich, Fomin, 2001) Contemporary research is most often descriptive and publicistic rather than scientific and analytical. The research, as a rule, touch upon charitable organizations acting in the socio-protection sphere. The authors usually focus on separate aspects of the charity process (Alekseyeva, 1995; Gorodetskaya, 1996, 1997; Zelikova, Fomin, 1996; Radayev, 1993 et others), and many sides of the phenomenon remain unexplored. There are almost no investigations of religious charity. For example, although in 2000 the Congress named

“Christianity and the Problems of Charity”, there are no materials on this problem in the secular literature.

The question of the population’s attitude towards charity is regularly tracked by public opinion polls, which, however, are unlikely to explain what the population really means by “charity”. Almost unexplored is also the activity of foreign grant-providing funds that are play an important role both in development of the charitable process and in formation of the third sector organization in Russia; nor has been investigated the efficiency of charitable activity, criteria for its estimation have not been worked out either.

***Conclusion. The main sources of uncertainty in current data and knowledge regarding the characteristics and causes of social inequality***

The uncertainty in the current data and knowledge, connected with the characteristics and reasons of social inequality, is caused by various factors.

First of all, they are shortcomings of the Soviet statistics – both its incompleteness and its unreliability.

The key concept of equality in the Soviet Union was providing even the poorest with a minimum subsistence. Therefore, nominal earnings were not allowed to diverge significantly from the average and prices were fixed at rather low levels. In practice, however, the declared principle of egalitarian distribution was not realized because of deficit in the majority of consumer goods. Welfare was rather a consequence of access to resources than a consequence of high wage. Individuals who lacked such access were forced to pay much higher black market prices. The so-called “nomenklatura” received salaries that were usually quite modest, but their practically unlimited access to very cheap or free goods and services placed them at the top of the social ladder.

Access to basic goods, including food and services, housing, kindergartens, sanatorium vouchers was often provided through the work place. There was a high positive correlation between the size of the enterprise (as measured by the number of employees) and the provision of benefits. Besides, the employees of the heavy industry sector constantly were relatively privileged in comparison with the employees of other sectors. We can conclude, therefore, that in the Soviet period neither cash incomes nor expenditures could be accurate indicators of actual well-being. These indicators have probably become more meaningful after the price liberalization, although somewhere the rudimentary system of subsidizing goods and services through the place of work remains to exist.

Besides, reliable information on vulnerable groups of the population was never collected. The official survey systems presented misleading profiles of need. The Family Budget Survey, which was enterprise-based (and biased toward established and larger enterprises) and confined to full-time workers plus some small groups of pensioners, was not representative and tended to exclude groups with a marginal position in the work force. The resulting picture of the population's wealth was misleading — apparently, underestimating the real extent of poverty.

After the beginning of the transformation, the system of statistical indicators was considerably modified, taking into account domestic and international experience and recommendations of international economic organizations. This reorganization provided much more reliable data, but these data are, unfortunately, incompatible with the earlier ones.

To make a comparative analysis of the absolute indicators for the post-Communist period of development of Russia is very difficult as well, despite the abundance of the state statistics. This difficulty is caused by two factors:

- the 1998 default drastically changed the proportion of all cost parameters of the state statistics;
- the constant and significant growth of prices during that period of time demands re-accounting of all cost parameters in the prices of 1991, but such data have been rarely published and, as a rule, they are not available.

And, finally, it should be indicated that the dynamic changes in the economic life on both the macro- and micro-levels, the constant emergence of new phenomena and new processes require constant correcting of the system of indicators, as a result of which the problem of data comparison in monitoring research becomes practically unsolvable. Besides, in the conditions of Russia much is contributed to the data uncertainty by the significant escalation of the informal sector of economy, which is difficult to monitor and analyze. The fuzziness of the boundaries between formal and informal practices and the diversity of combinations of these practices requires elaboration of new investigating approaches and new indicators of social inequality.

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