



# **The regime change and social inequality**

## **Educational and job careers in the Soviet and post-Soviet Era**

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**Ph.D. thesis defence on 14<sup>th</sup> April, 2016**

### **Abstract**

The collapse of the Soviet Union and subsequent rapid shifts in economic, political, and social institutional arrangements – labeled here as a “regime change” – offer a unique opportunity to explore how patterns of social inequality vary across broader institutional contexts and over time. How the stratification order between different social groups has changed in the aftermath of the regime change in Russia is a central question I raise in this thesis. In contrast to prior research, I draw on a life-course perspective and address several rather untouched aspects of social inequalities in Soviet and post-Soviet societies and investigate them in terms of school-to-work and work-to-school transitions in the earlier and later life courses. Empirically, I employ powerful longitudinal data from the Education and Employment Survey for Russia (EES) linked to the Russian Gender and Generation Survey (GGS), which cover life trajectories in a time-frame between 1965 and 2005. Compared with previous studies, that data enable me to utilize a much larger observation window to scrutinize long-term consequence of the regime change in Russia.

First, I tackle social inequality in terms of horizontal gender differences and vertical gender inequalities upon labor market entry. My findings reveal that despite proclaimed equality principles, the school-to-work transition was by no means gender-neutral in Soviet Russia, with women facing a net vertical disadvantage in job authority. This inequality has increased even more since the collapse of the Soviet Union, particularly due to worsening chances for female entrants. Second, I explore inequality of adult-educational opportunity due to initial educational level and occupational position. My results suggest that selective participation in adult education might lessen or exacerbate inequality of adult-educational opportunity depending on type of adult education and analyzed group of participants. Nonetheless, the collapse of the Soviet Union has contributed to inequality of adult-educational opportunity, thereby strengthening the exacerbation effects of adult education on social inequalities. Third, I investigate whether participation in adult education may improve career opportunities, thereby mitigating social inequalities that emerged in the earlier life course. My findings show that adult education either benefits all participants or those who are already advantaged. Overall, the results point to a mechanism of persistence or reinforcement of social inequalities. Furthermore, returns to

adult education have decreased or been not offset since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Finally, throughout my thesis I put a particular focus on gender. Altogether, my findings unravel noteworthy gender inequalities arising in the initial career stages. These initial (dis-)advantages cumulate over men's and women's life courses, thereby contributing to overall social inequality in Russia, and specifically during the post-Soviet period. I conclude that the regime change was accompanied by a widening of pre-existing social distances and an effective amplification of the Russian society's stratification order.



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## **Bio**

**Yuliya Kosyakova** is post-doctoral researcher at the Institute for Employment Research, the Research Institute of the Federal Employment Agency, Nuremberg, Germany. Before taking this position, she was a member of the comparative Life Course and Inequality Research Center at the Department of Social and Political Science in the European University Institute, and part of the research team on the ERC-funded international comparative research project 'Education as a Lifelong Process – Comparing Educational Trajectories in Modern Societies' (eduLIFE). Her research deals with labor market and employment research, migration and refugee research, post-socialist societies particularly Russia, international comparison, institutional change, social stratification, gender inequality, social inequality of educational opportunities, life course research, and adult education. Results of her research were published in internationally reputed journals. She holds a Master of Science degree in European Economic Studies from the University of Bamberg.