



# YOUTH AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION IN RUSSIA

A SCOPING STUDY FOR  
THE WORLD BANK

Charlie Walker

# Youth and Social Exclusion in Russia: a Scoping Study for the World Bank

Charlie Walker

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Published by TANI Moscow

Suggested citation: Walker, Charlie (2018) *Youth and Social Exclusion in Russia: a Scoping Study for the World Bank*, Moscow: TANI

# Recognition

This report was prepared for a World Bank project entitled *Social Inclusion and Regional Disparity in the Russian Federation* (project P161014). The project, which was conducted during 2017, was led by a World Bank team managed by Stavros George Stavrou (Senior Social Development Specialist), and included contributions from Anthony Finn, Jennifer Shkabatur, Larisa Kosova, Charlie Walker, Christopher Gerry, Elena Omelchenko, Guzel Sabirova, and Yana Krupets.

The results of the research, and this report, were presented at the Russian branch of the International Bank of Reconstruction and Development (World Bank) in 2017 and at the 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the Higher School of Economics in Moscow in 2018.

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## 1. Introduction

In Soviet Russia, all aspects of young people's transitions to adulthood were to a greater or lesser extent structured by some form of state intervention or provision, as well as by an ideological framework that positioned young people, like all people, as a 'resource' (Walker 2011). Thus, most young people progressed through an education system that was closely integrated with the economy, after which they were expected to pursue careers within the professions in which they were qualified, and in the jobs to which they were sent. Housing and accommodation were similarly allocated by state agencies, both as a form of social provision and as a means of controlling young people's movements. This system of state-managed youth transitions was far from being 'total', as young people and their families were often able to find ways around the impositions of the planning system, or forced to compensate for its deficiencies. However, it ensured that the inclusion of the majority of young people into the social and economic life of the country was difficult to avoid. According to its ideological imperatives, it was only those who were seen as being 'unproductive' – young people with mental and physical disabilities – who were socially excluded, as the state consigned them to isolated residential homes (Russell and Iarskaia-Smirnova 2014: 6).

In the post-Soviet period, the replacement of state planning systems with a range of often dysfunctional markets—of education, labor and housing—has exposed a much broader segment of the youth population to forms of social exclusion. Young people now are much more dependent on their families than on the state. In the context of massive social and economic dislocation and the widespread poverty this has caused, many young people struggle to make successful transitions into independent adult lives, and are exposed to a range of risks—such as involvement in crime and drug use, or homelessness—which have been magnified in the post-Soviet period. Meanwhile, a range of institutions—forms of state care for the disabled and social orphans, the criminal justice system—appear still to be driven by the ideological position that some young people are more 'problem' than 'resource', or at least to lack the resources to break away from this approach, and are thus treated in a way that both embeds and reproduces forms of social exclusion.

This summary report provides an overview of forms of social exclusion experienced by young people in contemporary Russia, as well as existing and potential measures to combat them. It begins with the United Nations (2010) definition of social exclusion as "the involuntary exclusion of individuals and groups from society's political, economic and societal processes, which prevents their full participation in the society in which they live." However, the focus of this report will be on the material and economic dimensions of social inclusion/exclusion central to young people's transitions to adulthood—education and training, employment, housing and welfare—rather than political matters such as the rights of sexual and ethnic minorities. The report first sets out the extent to which young people as a group may be seen to be disadvantaged compared to the wider population in relation to economic indicators such as unemployment, wage insecurity and poverty. It then focuses on a number of sub-groups of young people who face a range of disadvantages in making transitions to adulthood and are most likely to be among those classified as NEET (not in education, employment or training) or as otherwise economically excluded (among the working poor, for example). As will be seen, the risk of a young person becoming excluded from worthwhile forms of education, secure forms of employment with stable remuneration, housing, prospects for geographical mobility, and health and welfare services, are to a large extent shaped by their social characteristics – class, gender and spatial location, and, in the case of economic migrants, nationality and race/ethnicity. In addition, 'strands' of young people's transitions to adulthood such as living in social care, becoming involved in drug use, homelessness or involvement in crime—which themselves are in most cases shaped by their social characteristics and background—bring young people into contact with state institutions which can and do magnify their risks of social exclusion. At the moderate end of the spectrum, then, social exclusion may only have singular dimensions, such as unemployment or working poverty, exposure to which results from risks attached to a young person's social characteristics and their social circumstances, and

may only be temporary. At the extreme end of the spectrum, where multiple forms of exclusion are experienced simultaneously, social exclusion may better be understood as resulting from a process of 'cumulative disadvantage'. In such cases young people are disproportionately exposed to risk to the extent that 'different aspects of deprivation become mutually reinforcing over time, leading to a downward spiral in which the individual comes to have neither the economic nor the social resources needed to participate in their society' (Gallie and Paugam 2000: 370). The latter section of the report sets out some of the measures being taken to promote the inclusion of the groups discussed by both state and non-state actors, as well as identifying gaps for policy intervention. Given the range of young people covered and institutions involved in shaping their life chances, the scope for policy improvement and development is enormous.

## 2. Youth unemployment, precariousness and inactivity – Russia in perspective

Youth unemployment grew significantly across OECD countries following the global economic crisis beginning in 2007. Labor force participation rates among 15-29 year olds declined 4.6% between 2007 and 2012, amounting to a loss of 7.5 million jobs (Carcillo et al. 2015: 7). This increase in youth unemployment is reflected in the growth of young people recorded as NEET, which now stands at 18% of 16-29 year olds (ibid), while the proportion of young people living in poverty has reached 26%. All of these indicators illustrate that young people constitute a peripheral group in the labor markets of most advanced countries, with less choice than older workers over what employment they take up, where to take up employment, or of the terms of their employment. Principally, youth's peripheral labor market position stems from both the lower level and different quality of young people's human capital – that is, while labor market entrants possess educational qualifications, they lack generic and job-specific work experience, through which the human capital acquired through education is made productive (Carmeci and Mauro 2003).

The experience of young people in Russia over the past decade has broadly mirrored that in OECD countries in terms of their position comparative to older workers, with young people bearing the brunt of Russia's most recent economic crises (2007-09 and 2013-present). For example, youth employment fell by 10% between 2008 and 2009 compared to 1.2% for adults over the same period (ILO 2014: viii). In 2014, the unemployment rate for 20-24 year olds in Russia stood at 12.5% compared with 5.2% for the working-age population as a whole (Rosstat 2015: 78). Since 2001, the unemployment rate of 15-24 year olds has consistently been over twice that of adults, and reached 3.3 times the adult rate in 2012 (ILO 2014: 31). Such differentials partly reflect the fact that young people are disproportionately represented in those sectors most affected by the crises, namely manufacturing, construction and other service industries, all of which contracted 13.5-20% during the crisis of 2008-9 (ILO 2014: viii). Since young people remain concentrated in these sectors, they are likely to have been affected in a similar way by the recent crisis of 2014-17.

As well as the sectoral and occupational distribution of youth employment, young people have been more vulnerable to layoffs because of the terms on which they tend to be hired. A number of studies have pointed to a clear duality between formal (first-tier) and informal (second tier) employment in the Russian labor market, with those in the latter segment having only partial or no protection against unemployment and illness (Gimpelson and Zudina, 2011; Lehmann and Zaiceva 2013). While definitions of informal employment vary, they include those employed on a verbal contract, workers in informal (unregistered) enterprises, unregistered self-employed workers, and those receiving part of their salary as 'envelope' wages. All measures indicate that young people, especially the low-educated, are among those most likely to be employed on an informal basis. One study found 50.9% of youth to be employed informally (26.9% working in informal enterprises and 24% working informally in formal enterprises) (Elder et al. 2015: 37). Similarly, Kapeliushnikov et al. (2012) calculate that, while representing 17.1% of the labor force, young people constituted 24.4% of those employed informally in 2012.

Such high levels of informality result from the nature of employment protection legislation (EPL) in Russia, as well as its widespread non-enforcement. As Gimpelson et al. (2010) argue, since the 1990s, Russian EPL has offered a high level of ‘paper protection’ to all workers with the costs of dismissing employees being the same across length of tenure, so that newcomers have been as costly to fire as established employees. However, monitoring and enforcing such rules has been close to impossible in practice, especially in the context of widespread corruption, the lack of tradition of the rule of law, the weakness of institutions enforcing labor contracts, and the weak bargaining power of workers, especially in times of high unemployment (Gimpelson et al 2010). As well as the weak enforcement of EPL, young people in Russia have been affected by the liberalization of rules governing temporary employment, whose reform has allowed employers legally to bypass the restrictions attached to short-tenure workers (ILO 2014 xii). Together, weak enforcement of EPL and its liberalization at the margins perpetuate the precarious position of young people in the labor market, not only making them more likely than older workers to be dismissed, but also making it less likely that employers will invest training resources in them, and also reducing their access to unemployment benefits, a large proportion of which are insurance-based.

The location of many young people in Russia in a second-tier labor market makes them less protected from unemployment than older workers. This reflects the relationship between youth and adult unemployment elsewhere. Overall youth unemployment is relatively low in Russia compared with OECD countries, as is the number of young people classified as NEET. With regard to the growth of NEET youth, in 2015 14% of 15-29 year olds in Russia were classified as NEET, just below the OECD average of 14.5% (OECD 2017 – see table 1). The constitution of the NEET subgroup is similar to that in OECD countries, with 40% of the 15-24 year old group unemployed (5.3% of all youth) and 60% economically inactive (7.7%) (Varshavskaya 2016: 33 – see table 2). Also similar to OECD patterns is the age breakdown of NEET youth, with 20-25 year olds making up the majority at 80.9% of the NEET group (17.4% of all 20-24 year olds), and 15-19 year olds 19.1% (6.3% of all 15-19 year olds). The NEET group contains a range of indicators of youth disadvantage that will be addressed in more detail below, namely: 55.9% of NEET youth have only secondary or incomplete secondary education; rural youth are more highly represented amongst NEET youth (33.9%) than amongst those studying (22%) or working (25.1%); 7.4% of NEET youth have a physical or mental health problem, 93% of whom have no work experience, and 88.5% of whom have no higher than secondary education. With regard to gender, Russia follows the international pattern of having a significantly larger number of young women than young men who are classified as NEET. Amongst 15-29 year-olds, 18.7% of young women were NEET in 2015 compared to 9.6% of young men (ILO 2016), constituting a ‘NEET gender gap’ of 9.1%. While lower than countries such as Mexico (26.3%), Turkey (27.8%) and Columbia (19.7%), this gender gap exceeds the OECD average of 4.9% (OECD 2017). As elsewhere, since male and female unemployment is at a similar level for the age group, the main factor accounting for this discrepancy is the high proportion of young women who are not actively seeking work because they are looking after children – 29.1% of the NEET group as a whole (Varshavskaya 2016: 33). As will be discussed below, this pattern may be seen to reflect a combination of push and pull factors including a significant gender pay gap and state incentives towards maternity, both of which will impact most significantly on the prospects of young women from lower socio-economic backgrounds (OECD 2016).

Table 1: NEET 15-29 year olds by gender in OECD countries and Russia, 2015 (%)

	15-29 year old men	15-29 year old women	15-29 year olds
OECD average	12.1	17	14.5
Russia	9.6	18.7	14

Source: OECD 2017

Table 2: NEET youth in Russia, by status, age group and gender, 2014 (%)

	Age	NEET – general	NEET – unemployed	NEET – economically inactive
Men	15-19	6.2	2.3	3.9
	20-24	13.2	8	5.2
	15-24	10.4	5.7	4.7
Women	15-19	6.2	2.2	4.0
	20-24	21.7	6.6	15.1
	15-24	15.5	4.8	10.7

Source: Varshavskaya 2016

### 2.1 Youth insecurity of income and tenure

As Yates and Payne (2006) argue in the UK context, social exclusion is not exclusive to young people who are NEET, and may also be highly evident amongst those who are 'EET'. Indeed, both Russia's relatively low number of openly NEET youth and its low overall unemployment rate are largely attributable to the specific ways in which Russia has coped with the economic dislocations rendered by the collapse of state socialism and transition to a market economy, which expose a high proportion of young people to forms of income insecurity and, ultimately, working poverty. Since the beginning of the transition period, Russian employers have been using forms of internal numerical flexibility to offset the risks of operating in a market economy, using the widespread adjustment of employees' working hours and wages to deal with uncertainty, and thereby transferring the costs of adjustment to workers themselves. Thus, in addition to the insecurity of tenure rendered both by the prevalence of informal contracts and growing use of non-standard contracts, formal or informal employees are heavily exposed to income insecurity in the form of wage arrears and pay cuts, either through the cutting of the 'envelope wage', lower performance pay, or loss of hours. These features of the Russian economy are no less evident now than they were in the 1990s. Kapeliushnikov et al. (2012), for example, find that over a twelve month period between 2008 and 2009 there was a decrease of 5.5% in the number of hours worked across the entire economy, while Tikhonova (2015) indicates that workers across a number of sectors experienced falling wages during 2015. Again, the sectoral distribution of youth employment has placed them at greater risk of income insecurity, just as it exposes them to insecurity of tenure as internal numerical flexibility is most heavily concentrated in trade, manufacturing, construction and agriculture (Demidova and Signorelli 2012). As well as thus

being more exposed to income insecurity than any other age group, young people are also disproportionately exposed to working poverty for two reasons. First, the sectors they work in have a high proportion of workers who are classified as working below the poverty line (27.2% in agriculture, for example, compared to 13.1% of all workers) or earning 1-2 times the subsistence minimum (39.2% in the hospitality trades, against 28.9% of workers) (ILO 2014: 29). Second, these sectors employ most of those working informally. As already noted, informal employment carries penalties in relation to a range of workers' rights such as access to work-based training and to insurance contributions necessary to access unemployment benefits in full. In addition, informal employment can carry clear wage penalties for some. Lehman and Zaiceva (2013: 41) point to 'a lower free-entry tier of informal employment where workers encounter large wage penalties relative to their formal counterparts'.

While young people as a whole may be seen as disadvantaged compared to older workers, their exposure to forms of job and income insecurity and to unemployment are clearly shaped by a range of social characteristics, not least social class background, gender and location. Not surprisingly, low educational qualifications are a key determinant of unemployment. In 2012, unemployment was 25.1% for 15-24 year olds with less than basic education and 24.7% for those with incomplete secondary education. The same groups had the highest likelihood of being employed on an informal contract: 67% and 49.1% respectively (ILO 2014: 26). With regard to gender, young men's predominance in areas such as manufacturing, construction and certain parts of the service sector has made them more vulnerable to unemployment during downturns. They are significantly more likely than young women to be employed on temporary contracts, by a margin of 6.2% in 2012 (10.7% and 4.5% respectively). Young women, on the other hand, have seen growth in some of the sectors where they dominate in recent years. Public health, for example, expanded by 4.5% in 2008 (ILO 2014: 20). Taking into account employment data over a number of years, however, young men and women have roughly the same level of unemployment, standing at 14.5% and 15.1% respectively in 2012 (ILO 2014: 31). Furthermore, despite a higher proportion of young women possessing higher education (24.8% compared with 16.8% of young men), young women's wages reflect the wider gender pay gap in Russia, albeit at a lower level. Women 15-24 year olds earn 26% less than their male counterparts, compared with a gap of 33% for older women (ILO 2014: 28). Gender is also prominent in shaping participation rates, with 35.1% of women aged 15-24 active in the labor force in 2012 compared with 43.8% of men (ILO 2014: 15). As already noted, a relatively high proportion of young women are inactive due to childcare responsibilities, which is a higher rate than that in EU27 countries, where 39.6% of young women aged 15-24 are economically active. Studies of young people's family transitions in different parts of Russia strongly suggest that social class is also a key determinant of early family formation, with working-class youth much more likely to have children in their early to mid-twenties than young people from higher-educated backgrounds (Roberts et al 2003; Walker 2011). This suggests that, as Sobotka and Toulemon also find (2008), apparent shifts towards a heavily protracted youth phase and related delaying of family transitions are not universal developments across social classes, despite some theorists often claiming them to be (see Arnett 2016, on the notion of 'emerging adulthood', for example).

A series of ethnographic studies of working-class, low-qualified young men and women sheds further light on the ways class and gender, as well as place, shape transitions to adulthood for those entering jobs in the lower levels of the construction, service and manufacturing sectors (Walker 2010, 2011, 2015, 2016). Data from both the provincial town of Ul'yanovsk and the city of St. Petersburg indicate the difficulties faced by young men leaving initial vocational education and training (IVET) colleges to take up low-paid, low-prestige jobs:

In factories it's like... the wages are really low, like, ten thousand, twelve, and there's no prospect of career growth. It's like, say you started there, stood by a machine, well that's it. You'll be standing next to that machine basically for the rest of your life... It's pointless...

yes, you get pay rises, but say you were, like, an ordinary foreman, right? And you became a senior foreman. Well, they'd add a thousand, maybe two. Really, it's pointless. (Volodya) (Walker 2018)

A primary concern of young men, given the primacy of the provider role to Russian constructions of masculinity, was that the jobs available to them would not pay enough to underpin future housing and family transitions. The perception that formal progression structures would not allow young men significantly to improve their position agrees with the conclusions of national level studies (ILO 2014), which find that employers have a tendency to expect the education system to bear the largest burden for human resource development and focus on already highly-skilled workers rather than lower-skilled labor market entrants. As such, rather than viewing the jobs they got after college as stepping stones or long-term options, young men searched for alternative routes to satisfactory employment, often seeing higher education as the answer. Again, national level data indicate a massive increase in the take up of tertiary study as the higher education market has opened up and young men who had previously made transitions from the education system directly into factories adopt an individualized strategy to improve their prospects. However, the prospect of social mobility through the new education system accessible to working-class youth is largely illusory. There is significant over-qualification, with 33% of young men possessing degrees but working in elementary occupations (ILO 2014: 21), and an overall increase of higher education students from 3.5 to 7.1 million between 1998 and 2010 (ILO 2014: 13). The returns to higher education have thus significantly diminished, and will be lowest for graduates of the less reputable new institutions, which have been seen as providing a form of 'pseudo education' (Konstantinovskii and Popova 2015). Rather, Walker's research suggests that the contradiction between social norms and expectations surrounding men's roles and the inability of the jobs available to low-qualified men to meet these is rarely resolved. Instead, this inability is internalized as personal failure, reflecting the tendency among young men to see their situations in terms of personal choices made within a market context (Walker 2011, 2016, 2018). Given the centrality of the notion of 'self-realization' to constructions of masculinity, and of personhood generally, in post-socialist states (Mackovicky 2014), it can be expected that such experiences will contribute to long-standing and ongoing problems with mental health and the subjective wellbeing of working-age, working-class men (Bessudnov et al. 2011; Walker 2012).

In some respects the experiences of the young women in these studies pointed to even greater barriers to integration into stable forms of employment than those of the young men. Given the gender pay gap noted above, combined with their social class disadvantages manifested in low educational qualifications, many of the young women in Ul'yanovsk were making transitions into jobs, sponsored by their IVET colleges, that few of them would remain in for long:

I worked there [Ul'ianovskaia Shveinaia Fabrika] for a while but... the wages were just awful... about 900 rubles... These orders that come from England and Germany, we sewed them and stuck labels on that said they were from England – we were just cheap labor (Irina [PU15], 19, sewing machinist) (Walker 2011).

Like their male counterparts, many of the young women saw further qualifications as a way of overcoming labor market disadvantage, and the majority viewed the new service sector as a much more attractive prospect than female-dominated parts of the manufacturing sector, which were largely staffed by older women and migrants. Nevertheless, it was only in St. Petersburg, with its fast-growing service economy, that employment in popular sectors such as tourism and hospitality were a realistic option. Even here, however, the rewards of employment in such sectors were much more symbolic than material. Young women taking jobs in tourist agencies and hotels were enthusiastic about doing so but fully expected, and accepted, that salaries would fall into what the ILO defines as the low-paid segment of the workforce (1-2 times subsistence minimum) (Walker 2015). As such, the young women in these studies, both in Ul'yanovsk and in St. Petersburg, tended to be materially worse off than the

young men, but at the same time less openly concerned about this. Indeed, both young men and women often repeated the wider gender norm that men were expected to earn more, thus justifying rather than challenging the gender pay gap.

## 2.2 Barriers to youth mobility

In addition to the expanded and newly accessible higher education system, many of the young people in Walker's research in provincial Russia regarded migration to another city or region with better prospects as a way out of transitions into the forms of poor work available at the local level. However, as a number of larger-scale studies have attested to, labor market actors of all ages in Russia face serious impediments to internal migration, such that many who wish to move are not able to do so. Bornhorst and Commander (2006), for example, point to significant housing market imperfections and information asymmetries, as well as a weak relationship between regional income levels and unemployment levels. Patterns of labor mobility in countries such as the USA, where workers readily move to regions with better conditions, are not evident. Indeed, they even point to the existence of liquidity traps in a significant number of regions with low income levels, which 'effectively lock workers into long run poverty and lack of access to resources'. As much as a third of the Russian population may be so affected (2006: 284). In addition to problems relating to liquidity, Russians may have misgivings about migration, both because of the legacy of how difficult migration had been during the Soviet period and because of ongoing fears about access to public services. As Hill and Gaddy (2003: 6) argue, although the old Soviet internal passport system (*propiska*) is no longer used to control population movements, the need to register in a place of residence in order to access public services still constitutes a barrier, not least if formal employment has not been secured. Some ethnic groups, such as young people from the North Caucasus, face more severe barriers than others in this respect, as local authorities may be unwilling to register them, and police attempt to control both their movement between regions and their presence within cities (La Cava and Michael 2006). Overall, mobility in Russia appears to have begun at the low level of around 3% per annum through the first half of the 1990s and declined to as little as 1.2% in 2008 (OECD 2011).

The ILO's school-to-work transition survey of internal migration among 15-29 year olds points to significantly higher figures for young people. Among this group, 16% in 2012 moved to another city or region for all reasons (including family relocation, education and training) and 9.5% moved in search of better employment opportunities (ILO 2014: 10). While these data are not disaggregated by education level, qualitative studies by White (2007) and Walker (2010) point to differential patterns of and prospects for internal migration amongst young people from lower and higher income backgrounds, which reflect and reinforce wider patterns of social stratification in Russia. White argues that 'Russians today are free to go and work where they like, if they have the capital to do so' (2007: 907). This illustrates how the social and cultural resources of young people from higher educated backgrounds leads them into the institutional and market structures that facilitate their migration to Russia's major cities and the atypical employment opportunities they offer. Walker, on the other hand, finds young people from working-class backgrounds, and especially young women, to depend on much stronger sets of ties for their mobility, using kinship networks to negotiate what would otherwise be hard to access housing and job markets:

Of course, I'd like to get out and move to some other city, but it's hardly likely to happen. I don't have any relatives, and you don't just go to a completely different city just like that... When you arrive in a different city, of course it's difficult. You don't have anyone to turn to... It would be really difficult alone in a different city. Relatives would be like a support (Maria [Ul'yanovsk], 20, sewing machinist) (Walker 2010).

Young men were similarly dependent on family connections in other cities to facilitate migration, but also had access to a limited set of labor markets, especially those connected to the construction

industry, that offered both formal and informal accommodation options (for example, working away, *'na vakhte'*, usually in Moscow or St. Petersburg, and living in barracks or with a group of other young men in private rented accommodation). The differential routes available to working-class young men and women, as well as the different cultural expectations outlined earlier, are reflected in the wider mobility figures for youth as a whole, with 12.5% of young men relocating for work in 2012 compared with 6.5% of women (ILO 2014: 10).

### 2.3 Regional inequalities

Barriers to labor mobility are among a number of factors that have contributed to the maintenance of wide disparities between regional unemployment rates in Russia. Bornhorst and Commander (2006) also point to the relatively low responsiveness of wages to regional disparities, as well as to lagged employment creation in depressed regions. Alongside low mobility, they have hindered the development of an integrated labor market. As such, young people in Russia face radically different employment prospects depending on which regions they live in. Thus, in 2015, while the national unemployment rate for all ages was 5.6% (RR 194), a number of regions had significantly higher rates, most notably the Siberian and North Caucasian Federal *Okrug*. In the former, the Republic of Tiva had a rate of 18.6% and Zabaikalskii Krai, 10.4%, while in the latter, the Republic of Ingushetia had 30.5% (ibid). Consistent with points made earlier about young people's weak position relative to other labor market actors, in every single region the highest rate of unemployment was for the 20-29 age group, and in those regions with high unemployment, youth unemployment was disproportionately high. In Zabaikalskii Krai, 40.3% of 20-29 year olds were unemployed, and in Ingushetiya, 60.1% (Rosstat 2016).

Demidova and Signorelli (2012) attempted to determine the causes of regional youth unemployment and found the level of regional output and overall regional development (using import-export activity as a proxy) to be significant factors. Also notable is the sectoral composition of the workforce in different regions, which not only shapes the likelihood of spikes in unemployment around economic crises, but also provides an indicator of the extent of informal employment in different regions. The North Caucasian states, for example, are heavily geared towards agriculture, with 45% of all young workers in the Republic of Dagestan employed in this sector. Parts of Siberia, such as Altayskiy Krai, are also dependent on agriculture for youth employment (20%). Other regions, such as Vladimir and Kaluga (Central Federal Okrug) and Ul'yanovsk (Volga Okrug), have 1.5 times the national average of young people working in the manufacturing sector. While data on informal employment by region are not available, we might expect young people in these regions to be more exposed to informal employment because of the nature of employment in these sectors. In addition, one factor potentially limiting interregional mobility that is not addressed in the mobility literature is the unequal standards and provision of education between regions. Young people from the North Caucasus, for example, may be uncompetitive outside of their own region due to the low standard of education they have received (La Cava and Michael 2006).

A further indicator of the regional dimension of young people's employment conditions lies in regional data on the enforcement of employment protection legislation (EPL). Kapeliushnikov (2009) finds that cities such as Moscow, St. Petersburg and Nizhnii Novgorod have far fewer legal cases brought by workers against employers (1-4 per 1000 employees) than in regions such as the North and the Far East (200 per 1000 in Magadan, for example), both because workers have more options to find alternative employment in major cities, and because enforcement is much weaker in them. As such, Gimpelson et al. (2010) describe Russia's EPL framework as 'a kind of mosaic or patchwork', offering significantly greater protection to workers in some regions than in others. Thus, with regard to unemployment, informal employment, employment protection and the sectors in which they may find employment, young people in different regions of Russia face vastly different prospects. As be discussed below, these have implications for the types of labor market policy that should be directed to them.

### 3. Sub groups of NEET and otherwise vulnerable youth

The sections above outlined the ways in which income precarity and precarity of tenure are widespread phenomena among Russian youth, with unemployment affecting 20-29 year olds more than any other group. As much as 50% of youth employment is informal. Within this, social class background manifested in low educational qualifications was identified as a key factor shaping the propensity of both young men and young women to be unemployed or in insecure employment, as was location. While precariousness of different kinds, and therefore dimensions of social exclusion, may thus be seen as a widespread phenomenon among working-age Russia youth, a number of sub-groups can be identified as especially vulnerable.

#### 3.1 Rural and small town youth

It has already been shown that significant differences exist in levels of development across Russia's regions, which in turn shape young people's access to employment and the types of employment available to them. Inequalities relating to spatial location are similarly evident *within* regions, with Russia, like most post-Soviet countries, showing higher levels of income deprivation in rural than in urban areas. This is clearly reflected in the education and employment prospects of young people in rural areas, who constitute 29.5% of the total youth population in Russia (Elder et al. 2015: 13). According to a study of NEET youth drawing on the Russian Longitudinal Monitoring Survey during 2012-14, Blinova and Vyal'shina (2016: 42) find 19.9% of rural youth to be unemployed, more than twice as many as urban youth (8.1%). They also find that, among those who are economically inactive—43.5% of rural youth and 33.6% of urban youth—more young people in urban areas (82.5%) are studying compared with those in rural areas (66.5%). They also find a significantly higher rate of young women who are looking after children in rural areas (15.8% compared to 9.8% in towns) and a higher proportion of youth who are inactive and not actively seeking work (15.7% vs. 4.3% in towns). Importantly, however, while the latter are labeled as 'young people who do not want to work', Blinova and Vyal'shina (2016) found rural youth as a whole to be willing to work for much lower wages than their urban counterparts: 38.9% of those 'looking for work' and 25% of those 'not looking' would work for less than 14,750 RR per month compared with 7.8% and 0% of urban youth in the same categories. Further evidence of the severe lack of opportunities in rural areas lies in the informal economic strategies employed by rural youth in order to get by: 52.1% had grown products on their own land for sale or exchange, and 68.7% had hunted or fished as a way of making money (2016: 46). In addition to these indicators of rural poverty, the ILO's youth transitions report found that 64.4% of young people in rural areas are in informal employment compared to 45.3% of urban youth (Elder et al. 2015: 36).

The problems faced by rural youth, as well as by youth in the smallest urban settlements, like those of young people who cannot move to more prosperous regions, are the result both of a lack of economic development and state resources at the local level and problems of mobility rooted in the failure of the market (of housing, labour, and transport) to overcome the warped economic geography inherited from the Soviet era. Indeed, the experiences of young people in villages and small towns are even more illustrative of this than those of young people wishing to move between urban areas. During the Soviet period, migration from rural to urban areas had been a defining feature of modernization. Although the movement of adult collective farm workers was particularly restricted (Buckley 1995: 902), young people were frequently able to move to cities for work, and resided in hostel accommodations (*obshchezhitiya*) provided by enterprises (Donova et al. 1997: 2). Although those moving to regional towns and cities in order to study appear to still have access to student hostels, the closure or sale of *obshchezhitiya* attached to industrial enterprises after their transfer to local authorities in the early 1990s appears to have closed off this route for prospective young workers (White 2007: 899). White finds that the private rental sector in no way satisfies demand for housing, and that the lack of accessible accommodation for those attempting to leave small towns and villages leads to a high incidence of return migration (White 2007: 890).

Walker's research with young people in villages and small towns identifies similar barriers and, as with young people wishing to move to other regions, finds young people's prospects for migration to be heavily shaped by their kinship networks, with relatives in towns and cities often acting as a kind of 'bridging' capital (Narayan 1999) if they provide temporary accommodation and connections to job opportunities at the destination. However, many young people lack these, or relatives are unwilling to help, and instead fall back on social capital rooted in their locality ('bonding capital') that ultimately limits their horizons for action and life chances, given the severe lack of employment opportunities available in such places (MacDonald et al. 2005). Indeed, the overwhelming predominance of informal relations in the labor market, with young people in a number of studies citing personal contacts as their main source of information about jobs (La Cava and Michael 2006; Walker 2011; Elder et al. 2015), ultimately places young people with less social capital at a significant disadvantage.

As well as facing obstacles to accessing opportunities for employment, rural and small town youth in these studies had often severely limited educational options, which further narrowed their prospects. Although levels of education in Russia are extremely high by international standards with universal access to basic education (Elder et al. 2015: 15), for young people in villages opportunities to progress to initial or secondary vocational colleges or to higher education are dependent on mobility. While universities in major cities have often been able to maintain their accommodation offer for high-achieving students coming from elsewhere, vocational colleges, like most enterprises, have not, and no longer provide a bridge into cities. Walker (2011) even points to a localization of educational options for young women in rural parts of Ul'yanovsk Oblast'. Vocational colleges in village locations started what were seen as 'female subjects' because local young women who had previously gone to colleges in the city had 'nowhere else to go'. However, it was unlikely that the professions involved (sewing and cooking) would have been applied in a work setting without the opportunity to move to urban areas for employment (in food processing or clothing manufacture, for instance). This amounted to a kind of domestication of young women who would likely see motherhood as a better option. Pro-natalist welfare policies such as 'maternity capital', which provide mothers with progressively larger sums of money for successive children (453,026 rubles for the first child in 2017), would be of more significance to young women from such backgrounds.

While educational options at the local level were limited, some young people in rural Russia have difficulty accessing even these. As with attempts to move to cities for work, many respondents used kinship networks to facilitate the housing transitions necessary to attend college as there was nothing close enough to their home, as well as occasionally renting rooms from 'grandmas'. Given the large number of NEET youth in villages who leave the education system with only 'incomplete secondary education' (through 9<sup>th</sup> grade, at age 15)—85% according to Blinova et al., compared with 45.3% of urban youth (2016: 44)—it might be hypothesized that an inability to overcome spatial barriers is a key factor in excluding young people from basic vocational education. More broadly, immobility must be seen as a major cause of forms of cumulative disadvantage. Where they are both excluded from opportunities in cities and have few prospects at the local level, young people, and young men in particular, are at greater risk of being exposed to opportunities to engage in activities that may be harmful to both their prospects and their wellbeing, such as alcohol and drug use, as well as criminal activity, as will be discussed further below. As La Cava and Michael find in research in the North Caucasus (2006: 11), 'young people consistently identified substance abuse, particularly drug abuse, as an important health problem in their lives and cited unemployment and idleness as the major cause'.

As well as being shaped by young people's immobility, access to quality education is seriously affected by the basic financial position of young people and their families. The prevalence of poverty in small towns and villages is a severe impediment to young people's chances of achieving success through the education system. As Kosaretskii et al. (2014) argue, the influence of poverty on educational chances in Russia changes over time, beginning with the lower likelihood of poor families to place their children in

kindergartens, which may influence their early educational development. The quality of local schools is determined by the socio-economic status of a neighborhood, and children will come to be affected more directly by their parent's financial status, as informal payments begin to be demanded. This pattern becomes more fully established through secondary school, as 'the better the education offered by a school, the higher the likelihood that obtaining it will involve certain forms of payment, from paying for optional items and additional services to paying for admission' (Roschina et al. 2006). Such limitations invariably continue to shape educational opportunities through higher education. The traditional requirement of investment into additional classes to gain entry to good universities was not displaced by the introduction of the 'unified state exam' (*Edinii Gosudarstvennii Ekzamen*), which better-off families approach in the same way (Kosaretskii et al 2014).

In addition to their relative exclusion from the education system, young people in poverty—especially, but not exclusively, those in villages and small—suffer exclusion from a variety of forms of state welfare which may be out of reach in their locality (notably employment services), or, as in the case of healthcare, carry charges they cannot afford to pay. As Ovchintsova (2004) outlines in relation to research in rural parts of Leningradskaya Oblast', 'although the majority are satisfied by the medical services they receive in polyclinics... access to such services has decrease.' The assortment of medication available in pharmacies has widened, but high prices make medicine inaccessible for the majority of villagers... 28% of respondents declined medical help because they could not afford it'. Recent reports point to similar problems, despite the investments made in healthcare as part of 'national projects' (Todorov et al. 2015). Thus, in addition to the risks of alcohol and drug use, young people in poverty face direct health risks in connection with their lack of access to healthcare. La Cava and Michael add to this a desire for, but lack of access to, information about serious health risks such as tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS among North Caucasian youth (2006: 11). It should be noted, though, that in relation to health, as in relation to mobility, a lack of material resources can be compensated for by the social resources available to young people in poverty. Glendinning and West (2007), for example, find that, despite having poorer general health, young people in villages in Siberia have better mental health than their counterparts in nearby cities: 'in small communities social capital associated with family support and kin-based networks become important resources instead. Positive mental health is bound up with the local cultural context, centred on the family household and "traditions" of rural society' (Glendinning and West 2007: 1181). Thus, as de Haan (2000) notes, dimensions of social exclusion do not always overlap.

### *3.2 Care leavers and young people with disabilities*

Young people leaving care are among the most vulnerable members of any society. Compared with other youth, they are at significantly greater risk of educational failure, unemployment, homelessness, poor mental and physical health, and involvement in prostitution and crime (Murray and Goddard 2013). In the context of increasingly protracted transitions to adulthood, with young people depending on parental support well into their twenties (Furlong and Cartmel 2007), the compressed and accelerated transitions of care leavers exacerbate the disadvantages they face. Successful outcomes depend not only on the resilience young people are able to build while they are in care, but also on the support available to them both during and after transitions through education, into work, and into independent housing.

The number of orphaned children in Russia is difficult to calculate due to the number of different types of institution providing alternative care for children and young people (Khlinovskaya-Rockhill 2010: 1). Estimates have ranged between 720-740,000 over the past decade (Khlinovskaya-Rockhill 2010, Denisova 2014, Stepanova and Hackett 2016: 369). Of these, 95% are 'social orphans', who have been taken into care but have at least one living parent (Iarskaia-Smirnova and Antonova 2009). Until recently, the overwhelming majority of young people in care resided in state children's homes, which have been seen as a last resort because of the harm they can do to children's psychological and

emotional development (Forrester 2008). In the Russian case, for example, Lerch and Stein (2010) point to the frequent misdiagnosis of mental health problems, while the common experience of multiple transitions between institutions is regarded as hindering the development of social and emotional resilience by repeatedly breaking emotional attachment and the rehabilitation process (Lerch and Stein 2010 113).

With regard to transitions out of care, it is here where the failings of the care system are most evident. According to one recent study, 10% of care leavers commit suicide, 40% become involved in criminal activity, and a further 40% develop drug and alcohol problems (Philanthropy 2015, in Stepanova and Hackett 2016). Lerch and Stein (2010) argue that only 4,000 out of the 40,000 young people who leave care each year are able to establish stable lives. As well as their experiences within care, these outcomes clearly result from major shortcomings in the ways young people are prepared for life after care and the provision of aftercare support. Lerch and Stein point to a range of chronic problems, drastically affecting care leavers' life chances. There is a severe lack of appropriate housing: 28% had inadequate housing arrangements, 1.8% were known to be homeless, and many were sent back to families where they were at risk of ongoing mental, physical and sexual abuse. Inappropriate educational pathways create permanent disadvantages: 68.8% were sent to IVET colleges on the basis that these had accommodation for young people from children's homes, but this form of education can be a dead end. They lack support in pursuing higher education: those managing to do this, 4%, would often have to support themselves despite *de jure* grant entitlement. There is widespread discrimination in the labor market and exploitation in employment. They lack preparation for all aspects of life after care, including advocating for their rights, developing interpersonal skills and managing personal relationships. Given that, as explored above, the social and economic dislocations rendered by the collapse of state socialism have magnified the importance of family, kinship, and other sources of social capital in negotiating all aspects of the transition to adulthood (Walker 2010), the need for strong forms of transition and aftercare support from the state is especially acute in Russia. However, current practice indicates that very significant investments and innovations are required to improve outcomes.

Many young people within the care system, and some of those who leave it, are among the 8% of 15-24 year olds in Russia who have a physical or mental disability, including such debilitating conditions as cerebral palsy, blindness and low vision, Down's syndrome and autism. As elsewhere in the industrialized world, people with disabilities experience a wide range of forms of social exclusion, and are disproportionately represented among the poor as a result. Indeed, the physical exclusion of people with mental and physical disabilities from the rest of society throughout the Soviet period, and the ongoing stigma attached to disability, increases the obstacles faced by the disabled in Russia. Young people with physical disabilities face enormous obstacles in the educational sphere, including a lack of physical access, a lack of assistive technology and teaching aides, and segregation in specialized schools with limited academic programs. These forms of exclusion carry through to young people's working lives, with the employment gap between able-bodied and disabled people in Russia higher than anywhere else in the world at 52.7% (Banning-Lover 2016). According to a recent Human Rights Watch study, on reaching adulthood, due to the low level of education they have received, young people with disabilities struggle to enroll in universities or gain professional skills that would lead to meaningful employment. In addition to poor educational qualifications, people with disabilities are widely discriminated against by employers. It should also be noted that a large proportion of young people with disabilities never make any significant contact with either the education system or the labor market, in part because of the ongoing stigma attached to disability that leads families to keep disabled children at home and away from society. With regard to rights—to education, healthcare, and various forms of welfare—disabled youth, like young people leaving care, are well catered for on paper, but in practice, as Dimenshtein and Larikova (2009) argue, the biggest problem for the disabled is the lack of legal implementation of their rights to medical and welfare services (in Frohlich 2012: 375). There is

little regulation of integration projects and the processes that should be providing for their rehabilitation (Maleva and Vasin 2001: 101), and there is enormous variation in the capacity and desire of local officials to deliver what they are supposed to (Romanov and Iarskaia-Smirnova 2008: 103).

### 3.3 *Young immigrants*

Migrant youth from the former Soviet republics—especially from Central Asia, and to a lesser extent from Ukraine, Belarus, and Georgia—have become highly visible in Russia in recent decades, particularly in its global metropolises of Moscow and St. Petersburg, and should be seen as a group of young people at risk of various forms of social exclusion. Migrants from former Soviet states are estimated to constitute between 8 and 10% of the Russian labor market (as many as 12.5 million in the 1990s), and are largely employed in construction and low-level service work (Cook 2016). While mostly low-paid, these forms of employment allow many to send remittances to family members in their home countries (Heusela 2017). Cook (2016a) describes the presence of millions of Central Asian migrants living on the outskirts of Russia's major cities as constituting both a new component of the political economies of Russia and its Eurasian periphery, and a new dimension of social inequality.

Citizens of CIS countries are entitled to travel to and work in Russia according to bilateral agreements—an opportunity taken up predominantly by young men, but sometimes by women—but their lack of rights and the non-observance of those rights they do have makes them highly vulnerable in a number of ways. First, since Russia closed its 'open door' policy on migration in 2002 (in the context of increasingly xenophobic, anti-migrant public opinion, as well as evidence of forced labor and human trafficking), migrants have been required to obtain forms of official registration to live and work there. This has left them open to exploitation by intermediary services offering both residential registration and employment authorization for large sums; the passing on by employers of the costs of a new type of work permit since January 2015 (around 4000 rubles per month: Luhn 2015); and the confiscation of passports by unscrupulous employers (Stephenson 2006). Second, even when they are living and working legally with the necessary documentation, migrants have practically no labor or employment rights, or entitlements to legal assistance or access to welfare, since Russia is not a signatory of the ILO's Convention on Migrants' Social Security Rights. Indeed, both the latter fact and the closure of its open door policy suggests that there is a dovetailing of state policy on migration from Central Asia with xenophobic public opinion (Gorst 2011). Third, since many migrants (perhaps the majority) work informally, employers bear virtually no responsibility for health and safety conditions in their workplaces, with construction—where migrants are predominantly employed—accounting for the majority of workplace accidents (Olimova 2010). Fourth, since 2011, up to which time registered migrants received health insurance, migrants now have practically no rights to healthcare, with only emergency care and the treatment of infectious diseases such as TB provided. As Cook argues (2016b), however, the latter is usually withheld in favor of sending migrants home to save the expense. Fifth, given the low wages they are forced to live on and the difficulties surrounding registration, many migrants live on construction sites or in non-residential buildings and barracks provided by their employers, which can be crowded and unheated, and therefore contribute to infectious diseases as well as respiratory problems (Cook 2016b). Xenophobic attacks and the deliberate exclusion of migrants from the 'white' Russian housing market keep millions of young Central Asians on the very periphery of Russian society. Finally, while the majority of migrants are young men, those young women who come to Russia for work can find themselves in even more precarious positions. Not only do the forms of employment engaged in by young women from CIS countries tend to be very insecure (informal employment as cleaners and cooks, for example), but also, the risks of exploitation may be greater, with many reported cases of women being forced into prostitution after having their passports stolen. In addition, women migrants from Central Asian countries may be seen as tainted by their male compatriots if they have transgressed social mores by living together with men in shared accommodation, thus potentially leading to their exclusion from migrant social networks and further vulnerability (Cook 2016; 2016b).

### 3.4 Youth with substance abuse problems

One challenge facing young people with substance abuse problems in Russia is that substance abuse tends to be framed by experts in the media as a psychological issue, and therefore, as something that can affect anyone, regardless of their social characteristics. This is the argument of a recent study by *Novaya Zhizn'* (Lazareva 2009), a leading NGO treating people suffering various forms of addiction, based on a sample of about 150 of their clients. This discourse is damaging, because it supports an asocial view of something that has very clear social causes. Broadly, substance abuse can be found among young people experiencing one or more of the forms of social exclusion outlined above. It is both a manifestation of, and further embeds, processes of social exclusion. A recent study by Morev and Popova (2011) based on data collected in Vologodskaya Oblast and regions of the North-East Federal Okrug provides a more sociologically-grounded portrait of people with drug addiction problems. Based on 1284 cases collected through the Vologodskaya Oblast narcological dispenser, they find that: 82.8% are under 30 years old; 89.5% do not have higher education, 34.2% have not completed secondary education, 23% have IVET education; and 80.7% are male. Thus, a portrait of young, less-educated men emerges. Occupationally, although they do not provide information for different age groups, the unemployed (24%) and workers in industry, transport and agriculture (43.5%) predominate. They conclude by calling for 'the creation of the conditions for the self-realization of youth, and the coordinated efforts of social, political and other structures in this area'. Although only covering one region, and lacking important cross-sectional information about young people's places of residence (rural, small town), this study provides an important and rare insight into a problem that may have psychological dimensions, but clearly has social roots.

As well as having social and economic conditions in which many young people might be drawn to drug use, Russia has struggled in the post-Soviet period to control the trade in illegal drugs, its location close to Afghanistan and porous borders with states such as Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan helping to make it the world's largest heroin consumer by 2010 (Pivovarchuk 2015). As well as having over 7 million drug users nationwide, with 1.5 million heroin addicts, Russia is also battling with the spread of synthetic drug use ('krokodil', 'spice'), which has been responsible for mass poisonings.

Despite this, Russia has one of the worst records in the world for the treatment of drug addiction, partly because of the dominant narrative that pathologizes people with drug problems simply as 'drug addicts' (*narkomany*). Although presidents Medvedev and Putin have both made commitments to improve drug rehabilitation programs, government-funded rehabilitation centers cater for a small minority of those who need them, meaning that faith-based treatment centers run by NGOs are the main resource. Furthermore, official approaches to treatment are in conflict with international norms, with a denial of the potential success of methadone and other forms of opioid replacement therapy. The failure to treat the problem has helped to fuel Russia's epidemic of HIV/AIDS, which has continued to grow despite HIV infections falling worldwide: 95 000 cases of HIV infection were reported in 2015 in Russia compared to 90,000 in 2014 (Luhn 2016).

### 3.5 Youth crime, juvenile justice and leaving custody

Youth crime in Russia follows similar patterns to those prevailing in other OECD countries. Apart from an increase during the turbulent early 1990s, crime rates have been stable over the past two decades. Overwhelmingly, involvement in youth crime (at least of the type most closely monitored and acted upon by the police) is strongly associated with forms of social disadvantage. As McCauley (2010) outlines in her work on young people in Russia's prison system, "a solid core... come from dysfunctional families, and from children's homes; exclusion from school, use of drugs, and a history of abuse is common property, as are psychological and learning difficulties."

As McCauley (2010b) argues, Russia's approach to juvenile crime is exceedingly punitive. As well as having practically no focus on welfare approaches through prevention or rehabilitation work—

undertaken in other countries through community policing, social workers and probation workers—there is excessive use of custodial sentencing even for relatively minor crimes such as theft. While historically this was due to the strictness of the Criminal Code inherited from the Soviet era, since reform of the code in the 1990s, it has been due simply to a lack of alternatives to custodial care or the political will to create them.

The main alternative to custody, a suspended sentence, is the most common outcome of juvenile court hearings. As McCauley argues (2010b), it is used in an absurd manner because no welfare is given with it, such as visits to young offenders by police or social workers. The court is simply waiting for a young offender to commit a further crime, at which point a custodial sentence is given. Russia also has special schools and technical schools as educational alternatives to custody, but these are very small in number and do not even exist in some *Oblasti*.

There is an active penal reform community in Russia consisting of more progressive practitioners (judges, social workers, and NGOs) and politicians which has been pressing for alternatives to custodial care for many years, but it lacks the academic clout and the evidence base of its western counterparts. Nevertheless, a number of alternatives have been developed since 2004 largely due to pressure from the United Nations, with provisions for both community service and restrictions on personal freedom through tagging, as well as some moves towards restorative justice. However, a small minority receives such sentences as they are largely dependent on the work of NGOs rather than embedded into state structures (see policy section below).

Once placed in custody, a young person's life chances are further diminished in a number of ways, such that the forms of social exclusion that led them to prison are compounded and multiplied. Such are the conditions endured by young people in custodial care that, upon leaving, they are very much unprepared for civilian life. McCauley describes young ex-prisoners as 'physically and mentally broken' (2010b). According to Abramkin (2001: 22, in McCauley 2010b: 225):

Our children and young people leave our penitentiary institutions as moral and physical cripples... here they become beings who cannot adapt to a life of freedom. Russian 'crime factories' do not correct an individual but make him someone who destroys life. Not only his own, but others' too.

While there are some active labor market policies (ALMPs) (public programs of social adaptation, for example) provided for ex-offenders by the Federal Employment Service, reflecting their civil right to both training and a job upon release, they are often lacking the necessary documents (a passport and a labor book) to gain either formal employment or a place on a scheme, pushing them into informal work. As for employers, while the state prokuratura used to make enterprises take on former prisoners in the USSR, under market conditions they can simply refuse (Stephenson 2006). Such difficulties naturally increase the likelihood that ex-prisoners will reoffend, become homeless, develop drug and alcohol abuse problems etc.

#### 4. Policy measures

As Sen (2000: 33) argues, 'our opportunities and prospects depend crucially on what institutions exist, how they function, and how inclusionary they are.' For that reason, a focus on institutions has been central to the study of social exclusion (de Haan 2000). The present study has highlighted a number of institutions in the Russian context that have been identified as having exclusionary effects of various kinds on young people's integration into the labor market and wider transitions to adulthood. In some respects, institutions have been inherited from the Soviet period and have retained or, in some cases, amplified, features that are counterproductive. Vocational education, for example, is marked by an institutional inertia that led Walker (2007) to describe it as a 'zombie system'. Prisons and juvenile justice in Russia appear to favor a punitive approach that, in a context of widespread poverty, is in

some ways worse than Soviet practice. In other cases, institutions such as the employment protection system and employment service (see below) have been established *de novo*, but have been undermined by two features characteristic of post-Soviet Russia: the absence of the rule of law, and a lack of resources for welfare. In other cases, institutions that had been within the hands of the state, such as housing and the education system, have developed a range of exclusionary features as they have become (explicitly or implicitly) marketized. More broadly, beyond the institutions immediately shaping exclusionary tendencies around young people's transitions to adulthood, post-Soviet Russia has been characterized by social dislocations on most fronts, as the cradle-to-grave Soviet welfare state first failed in the 1990s, and then came to be gradually transformed through neoliberal reforms under Putin (Cook 2007).

Against this background, post-Soviet Russia has also seen the emergence of a third sector, which has sought to fill the gaps created by market reform and the failure and transformation of the welfare state. Having been suppressed throughout most of the Soviet period, civil society in Russia began to expand in the context of political liberalization under Gorbachev, and initially focused on a broad range of issues aimed at opposing the hegemony of the Communist Party by promoting 'the rule of law and civil and political liberties' (Uhlin 2006: 40). The 1990s saw the emergence of Western organizations—such as the Soros, Ford and MacArthur foundations—which focused on the development of the social sciences and humanities, while the Russian government funded home-grown 'societally-oriented' NGOs focused on the achievement of public goals and benefits (Romanov and Iarskaia-Smirnova 2015: 361). After Putin's first election as President, the Russia government then developed a dual strategy towards the non-state sector that was aimed at limiting political opposition by (i) increasing restrictions on NGOs supported by international donors, and (ii) funding a small range of national philanthropic institutions that it could easily control (ibid). Domestic organizations rendering social services came to be substantially supported during the Medvedev presidency (2007-11), but, as Romanov and Iarskaia-Smirnova argue (2015), this cemented state influence and interference while limiting the more critical dimensions usually characteristic of third sector activity. Both aspects of this strategy have continued in Putin's most recent presidency, with internationally-funded NGOs forced to declare themselves 'foreign agents' after a new law passed in 2012. Thus, in a context in which welfare provision has been disrupted first by the bankruptcy of the post-Soviet Russian state, and then by a stalled process of neoliberalization, Russia's NGO sector has been limited both materially and politically in its attempts to fill gaps and address shortcomings in state provision.

#### 4.1. *Labour market policy*

Russia has a range of active and passive labor market policies, some of which may help young people find work or retraining, or provide a safety net while they do so. Its strategy up to 2020 is set out in the 'National Program on Employment Promotion', which is intended to cater to the entire population, while also offering certain programs directed at specific groups. Compared with OECD countries, Russia's employment program is under-developed, costing only 0.12% of GDP against an OECD average of 1.69% (ILO 2014). This makes the arm of Russia's employment policy, the Federal Employment Service, severely under resourced, affecting its ability to deliver anything effectively.

With regard to ALMP, the Federal Employment Service (FES) offers: labor market information, vocational guidance, temporary employment for vulnerable jobseekers, vocational training, internships for 18-20 year olds, public works, self-employment and social adaptation schemes (fresh start, job clubs). Of these, only the internships scheme seems to be catering to young people. This type of scheme can be highly beneficial to young people entering the labor market, allowing them to overcome their lack of experience and often to gain a foothold with a specific employer. However, only 0.9% of the ALMP budget was spent on this program in 2011 with only 0.1% of ALMP beneficiaries taking part (ILO 2014: 90). Since youth unemployment is three times higher than that of adults, this would suggest that the available resources could be targeted more effectively.

Alongside its resource problems, ALMP in Russia appears not to be targeted in a productive way. First of all, there is very little performance monitoring, with only a handful of impact and evaluation studies over the past 10-15 years. One notable study by Benus et al. (2005) concluded that re-training programs had little effect on employment probabilities, wage levels or duration of unemployment, and yet in 2011, vocational training still accounted for 52.7% of ALMP expenditures (ILO 2014: 90). Secondly, the ability of the FES to address local and regional youth unemployment problems is questionable. The responsiveness of federal programs to regional and local needs is built in in part through the way they are funded, with regions where unemployment is especially severe (such as the North Caucasus) receiving a larger share. In addition, since the content of federal programs—be they retraining, internships, ‘new start’—can be geared to local labour markets. However, as a recent ILO report argues, ‘funding allocations based simply on forecasted regional unemployment levels fail to take into account the specific risk factors faced by unemployed individuals at the local level. Local employment offices are, therefore, unable to adjust the relative intensity of employment services based on the specific barriers various categories of unemployed face (ILO 2014: 96).’

Given the problems relating to young people’s mobility outlined above, which echo the arguments made about Russia’s low internal labor mobility elsewhere (World Bank 2011, ILO 2014, Bornhorst and Commander 2006), it would seem that policies promoting youth mobility could make a significant difference. These could assist with the costs of moving through travel grants, ensure registration for access to welfare in the point of destination, provide tax breaks for employers, better information about employment in other regions and localities, and forms of temporary and permanent accommodation. In addition parts of the education system could re-establish accommodation facilities and thereby contribute further to youth mobility. Youth mobility could also be facilitated through better unemployment benefits, which would give young people the means and the time to look outside of their locality (ILO 2014: 74). At present, unemployment benefits in Russia (passive labor market policy) favors workers with work experience, as a proportion of benefits is paid on the basis of social insurance. The benefits available to young people are so poor that very few register as unemployed, and without a proper safety net, are forced to accept poor job offers. This ultimately has a negative impact on their longer-term prospects as well as exacerbating problems of skills mismatch in the wider economy.

The most significant failing of Russia’s employment program is its almost complete focus on supply-side interventions and failure to acknowledge or attempt to improve problems relating to the jobs available to young people, i.e., the informality of employment relations, which underpins both income insecurity and insecurity of tenure for so many young people. Indeed, this is best illustrated by the fact that over one third of the vacancies advertised by the FES are for jobs that pay below the subsistence minimum (ILO 2014: 96), indicating that there is little attempt to find and work with better employers. In this context, training, informing and placing groups of unemployed people (young or otherwise) into work can only result in a churning between bad jobs. Breaking out of this cycle could only be achieved by combining existing supply-side with demand-side interventions, which lie in two principal areas. First, employment protection legislation in Russia could be better designed and enforced to discourage informal employment and protect those on temporary contracts. As Gimpelson et al (2010: 636) argue, ‘EPL should become easier, more transparent, and less costly. Its rationalization even under weak enforcement institutions could weaken incentives to avoid laws and formal rules, limit selectivity of enforcement and compress variations in law compliance.’ Second, the stock of ‘good jobs’ with decent pay and prospects could be increased by encouraging the growth of certain sectors and the establishment of more inclusive practices in all sectors. As noted above, in-work training, i.e., lifelong learning, tends only to be available in forms that are properly remunerated in particular types of enterprise (export-oriented companies with already highly-skilled workers and managers). If such opportunities were more widely available, they could increase labor productivity and, in turn, improve

young people's pay and advancement. More broadly, investment in and encouragement of dynamic sectors could be used to create job opportunities for young people.

#### 4.2. *Youth integration programs*

As noted above, few of the active labor market policies currently available in Russia cater specifically to young people, reflecting the lack of an overall strategy for youth integration. However, this has not always been the case. In 1994, a federal program entitled 'Youth of Russia' (*Molodezh' Rossii*) was launched with a broad set of objectives covering a variety of youth issues and constituting a comprehensive youth policy. As well as the position of young people in the labour market, the program focused on youth political participation, the development of sports and the creative arts, improving young people's health through the prevention of drug addiction, and assisting young families in housing acquisition. The program was periodically renewed until 2005, at which point its objectives were said to have been realized (Tass 2016). According to the Institute for Urban Economics (2005), however, evaluating the results of the program was difficult due to a lack of numerical indicators reflecting its impact. Overall, they argue that concrete mechanisms for achieving its broad aims were neither clearly formulated nor consistently pursued, the only measurable achievement of the program being the establishment of a number of youth councils which are expected to lobby on local government issues.

In a report on young people in the North Caucasus, La Cava and Michael (2006) argue that it is precisely this kind of integration of young people into administrative structures and decision-making bodies that might begin to have an impact on the various forms of social, economic and political exclusion experienced by young people. They found that young people in the region were unaware of any organizations that worked with youth in their communities and that the youth departments of political parties failed to reach out to them (11). As well as requesting employment and education programs, young people wanted to see the introduction of more recreational opportunities, especially those accessible to young women, health outreach, new youth organizations and greater opportunities to interact with government (12). All of these forms of provision and engagement would seem a good idea at the national level, and may be a part of a new Youth of Russia program, which appears to be launching in 2017 after the Education and Science minister Dmitri Livanov announced the need for its reintroduction (Tass 2016). However, the limitations and negative outcomes of attempts to integrate youth into decision-making processes should be recognized, as the persistent attempts of government to co-opt youth—most notably through funding GONGOs (government-organized non-governmental organizations) such as the nationalist group NASHI—may be seen as undermining rather than strengthening democratic processes (Ohana 2008: 64). Therefore, the success of the new program will depend on the extent to which young people are genuinely and critically engaged. In addition, genuine monitoring and evaluation processes need to be established for all aspects of the program.

#### 4.3. *Care leavers and young people with disabilities*

As Russell and Iarskaia-Smirnova (2013: 2) point out, during the 1990s, disabled people in Russia were placed in the contradictory position of winning "greater recognition and freedom over their lives at a time when political and economic instability undermined the potential of state welfare... to reduce disabling barriers." The period of economic growth beginning in the late 1990s went some way to reversing this as the state came to adopt the model of many western countries in funding NGOs to fill gaps in various forms of provision. However, cuts in tax breaks to NGOs after the economic crisis of 2008, alongside severe cuts in foreign funding following the passing of laws restricting international involvement in NGOs in 2006 (followed by the 'foreign agent' law of 2012), made the environment much more difficult, with many Russian NGOs closing (Frohlich 2012: 376). Frohlich (2012) finds that, where they exist, NGOs working with disabled children and young people can be highly effective (the Russia-wide organization *Perspektiva*, for example), but their successes are necessarily limited by their partial coverage, as well as lingering negative public attitudes towards the disabled. Thus,

“marginalization of the disabled is still more widespread in Russia than in other Western countries... disabled individuals tend to either be institutionalized or be confined indoors” (Frohlich 2012: 376).

With regard to care leavers, the process of deinstitutionalization of the care system that began in earnest in 2006 has already meant that many young people are now in more appropriate forms of care, which will have a positive impact on the resilience they are able to build. At the same time, Lerch and Stein (2010) point out that a high proportion of young people will still have to remain within state institutions because of the nature of their condition, while Khlinovskaya-Rockhill (2010) finds that some of the alternative forms of care in her case study of Magadan are not entirely successful. As such, the improvement of care within traditional forms of state institution still needs to be a priority, with both Lerch and Stein (2010: 116) and Stepanova and Hackett (2016: 377) pointing to a need for significant professionalization of care, while the success of alternatives to traditional forms of care should not be taken for granted.

With regard to NGO involvement in the sector, Khlinovskaya-Rockhill explores emerging models promoted by NGOs whereby social orphans spend more time with their parents to maintain attachment to their family, although both she (2010) and Disney (2015) identify state institution resistance to NGO approaches. Perhaps most importantly, Khlinovskaya-Rockhill argues that the biggest problem with the state care sector is its ability to remove children from families that are simply experiencing financial and material difficulties (by labeling such families as ‘neblagopoluchnie’ (‘dysfunctional’ or ‘unfit’), which then positions them as morally deficient) when temporary solutions whereby the state helps rather than replaces the family would be far more appropriate and in the interests of the child or young person. As regards measures aimed specifically at facilitating transitions out of care, as Lerch and Stein find, transition and aftercare services for care graduates in Russia vary widely in type and quality, with a patchwork of state-run children’s homes, educational institutions, and both domestic and international NGOs responsible for securing accommodation, training and jobs for care leavers and running a range of preparatory and aftercare mentoring programs. A recent study by Abramov et al. (2016) finds some positive developments coming from NGOs working within state institutions, noting in particular efforts to make care graduates aware of their rights and how to advocate for themselves through specialized programs. However, like Lerch and Stein, their interviews with care providers highlighted ongoing concerns about almost every aspect of transitions, from housing, education and employment to young people’s general preparedness for financial independence. A regional perspective on ‘what works’ among different types of existing state and NGO provision would be beneficial as it could identify policies that would work elsewhere. Questions would include: to what extent have services in a given region been able to support transitions into tertiary education; how have services overcome difficulties in sourcing appropriate housing for care leavers; which kinds of employers have been most supportive in taking on care leavers; which models of mentoring programs have been effective in helping care leavers overcome problems?

#### *4.4. Youth justice system*

The best way to diminish the likelihood of young people becoming involved in crime in Russia would be to address the various problems identified in this report in relation to education, work and mobility. These structural problems leave many young people unable to make a successful transition into adult working life, and make involvement in crime more attractive. However, as has been shown, the criminal justice system itself in Russia is responsible for embedding and multiplying forms of social exclusion amongst those who become involved in crime. In addition, Russia’s highly problematic social care institutions and the absence of an effective after-care transition system for its ‘social orphans’ act as a conveyor belt for its courts and penal institutions. The institutional failings involved in these outcomes should in many ways be easier to address than the wider economic problems that also shape them, but so far they have proved difficult to dislodge.

As MacCauley finds, alternatives to custody have been successfully tried in cities such as Rostov, Moscow, St. Petersburg and Saratov, growing out of a UNESCO-supported project in the late 1990s. The past two decades have seen the emergence of *de jure* alternatives to custodial sentences such as community work, tagging and restorative justice, which add to long-standing provisions such as vocational and technical schools. However, there is still resistance to these at the national level so that none are widely available. Similarly, efforts to transform existing Commissions for Children’s Affairs (*Kommissii po Delam Nesovershenoletnikh*) into bodies with greater social work resources—both by directors of the commissions in cities such as Moscow, Perm and Nizhninovgorod, and by prominent NGOs such as *The Rights of the Child*—could help to keep young people away from the courts, but these too have been pushed back by the federal authorities (McCauley 2010b: 106). Thus, making progress in reforming the way Russia treats young offenders will depend on the ability of the reform community to find ways to achieve at the federal level the innovations they are developing in particular regions and localities. This in turn will depend on significant political will from senior politicians. In this way it may be possible to reduce the incidence of young people appearing in courts, and reduce the incidence of custodial sentencing when they do.

#### 4.5. Drug rehabilitation

As with youth involvement in crime, improvements in the education, work and housing spheres would be the best way to reduce youth drug abuse in Russia. It is clearly those who are most excluded in relation to education and employment, forms of exclusion underpinned often by housing and mobility limitations, who are at highest risk. In addition to this, however, significant improvements could be made in state provision of drug rehabilitation services, or in the funding of private clinics, which have been receiving subsidies from the state since 2014. There are many successful NGOs operating across Russia’s cities and regions that provide rehabilitation programs of various kinds, such as ‘City without Drugs’ in Ekaterinburg (nobf.ru). On the other hand, the Russian NGO community has tended to back what seems to be the official view on methadone programs (Starii Svet 2017, for example). Aligning with international norms on this issue appears unlikely.

#### 4.6. Young migrants

The NGO sector has attempted to act as an alternative form of welfare provision for migrants, but its ability to do so has been limited. On the basis of research in Moscow in 2013-15, Cook found the small number of NGOs operating in the city to face serious impediments in relation to the licensing of medical practice, thus limiting them to signposting activities among fragile networks. As she concludes, ‘NGOs were few to begin with, had limited resources, are pummeled by regulations, and can do little to fill the gaps in public services’ (Cook 2016b). Due to the contingency of their funding and the bureaucratic barriers they faced, a number of the NGOs found by Cook had closed by the end of the research project. The position of young migrants could thus be improved by an increase in state support for migrant NGOs, accepting that, in the current political climate, these NGOs would have to be home-grown rather than international. In addition, the state could be encouraged to become a signatory of the ILO’s Convention on Migrants’ Social Security Rights, thereby providing access to employment rights, entitlements to legal assistance and welfare.

## 5. Conclusion

This report has illustrated that the social exclusion of young people, in Russia as elsewhere, is experienced in a variety of different ways and to different degrees. Some forms of social exclusion have not been addressed here, such as that experienced by sexual minorities denied recognition of their identities. Others, such as income insecurity, have been shown to exist on a mass scale, with as many as half of young people denied the necessary basis on which to build wider transitions into independent lives. More extreme forms of marginalization have also been identified, whereby significant minorities of young people experience exclusion in multiple domains of their lives, with severe consequences for their life chances. In both its mass and extreme dimensions, social exclusion in Russia has its roots in the economic system, in dysfunctional markets that do not work for everyone, and in failings on the part of the state, both in its inability to facilitate the existence of and access to decent education, work and housing, and in its inability or lack of political will to transform state institutions and processes. Social and economic policy and the support and integration of the more successful non-governmental actors involved in different aspects of youth inclusion could address all of these problems to some degree.

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