

Poverty and Social Ostracism: Interdependence in Modern Society

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study is to analyze the reasons and factors influencing the emergence of social ostracism based on wealth in modern society. Setting this goal involves solving the following problems: to consider the essence of such a psychological and social phenomenon as social ostracism; determine the individual factors of the emergence of ostracism in society; study the motives and reasons for the exclusion of an individual from a social group on the basis of financial security. The research material was the work of both Russian and foreign scientists; the research was carried out by analyzing their content. The study showed that poverty and social ostracism are two interconnected phenomena of modern society that can lead to dire consequences, especially given the socio-economic situation around the world caused by the wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. The level of social exclusion and ostracism is regulated through social control and is supported by social and cultural patterns of behavior adopted in society. The authors argue that the state should take various measures to reduce the level of poverty in the country, which should lead to minimization of cases of social exclusion.

Keywords: Poverty, Social ostracism, Income level, Society, Social layer, Discrimination.

1. INTRODUCTION

Today, one of the most pressing social problems is the problem of poverty, which affects tens of millions of people around the world.

Currently, according to the World Bank, 736 million people (10% of the world's population) live in extreme poverty (with an income of less than \$1.9 per day), while 3.4 billion people have a daily income of less than \$5.5 [1].

According to UN calculations, the number of people living in extreme poverty in 2020 may increase to 71 million. This is stated in a published UN report on the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the achievement of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, which include poverty eradication. Loss of income, lack of social protection and rising prices will lead to the fact that even those whose economic situation was stable may be at risk of poverty and hunger. The UN report notes that the income of about 1.6 billion workers who were already

in vulnerable conditions fell by 60% in the first month of the crisis [2].

In addition, the head of the World Bank David Malpass said that the collapse of the world economy will lead to the fact that about 60 million people worldwide may be in a state of extreme poverty [3].

The urgency of the problem of poverty is underlined by researchers and scientists around the world. Gutiérrez-Romero R., in his work "COVID-19 response needs to broaden financial inclusion to curb the rise in poverty" on the impact of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic on the economic situation around the world, suggests that the effects of the pandemic could negate long-term progress made in reducing global poverty. The author suggests that by 2021, the world's population living on less than \$5.50 a day will increase by 231 million, of which almost 107.8 million will end up in extreme poverty, living on less than \$1.90 a day [4].

Russia is no exception. According to the Federal State Statistics Service, in September 2020 the number of poor

people was 19.9 million, or 13.5% of the total population [5]. The fact that the pandemic and the associated crisis will lead to a deterioration in the standard of living of the population is recognized in the Russian Federation. According to A. Aganbegyan, in 2020, the number of the poor in Russia will increase to 30 million [6]. Chairman of the Government of the Russian Federation M. Mishustin said that due to the coronavirus, the achievements in the fight against poverty, accumulated over decades, are at risk [7].

The unresolved problem of poverty has colossal consequences for all spheres of public life. It is known that the level of financial well-being directly affects the social position occupied by an individual in society. The low level of income becomes a reason for the exclusion of an individual from public life, ignorance, bullying, in other words, makes a person a victim of social ostracism.

Social ostracism is a significant social and psychological phenomenon, the manifestation of which can be experienced by people of any age, being in various social groups. Cases of social ostracism can be both fleeting and long-term; some studies provide data on daily statistics of ignorance and exclusion. Social ostracism can significantly affect the psychological and physical health of an individual, cause painful emotions, anger, frustration, aggression, sadness, and a feeling of loneliness.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The object of this work is ostracism as a psychological and social phenomenon and its consequences. The aim of the work is to study the causes and factors affecting the emergence of social ostracism based on wealth in modern society.

To achieve this goal, it seems necessary to solve the following tasks: to consider the essence of social ostracism as a psychological and social phenomenon; determine the main factors in the emergence of ostracism in society; study the motives and reasons for ignoring and excluding an individual from a social group on the basis of wealth.

The methodological basis of the research was formed by such general scientific methods as deduction and induction, scientific analysis, synthesis, description and abstraction.

3. RESULTS DISCUSSION

Social ostracism is a psychological and social phenomenon that manifests itself in the deliberate disregard, displacement and infliction of physical and "social pain" on an individual who, according to any criteria, does not fall under the "standards" of a social group. Social ostracism is ubiquitous: neglect while

playing in kindergarten, bullying at school, mobbing and psychological abuse in the work collective.

The low level of the individual's well-being is one of the main factors provoking the emergence of situations of social ostracism in relation to the individual or his family.

Studies aimed at researching the phenomenon of social ostracism began to be carried out in the 60s of the last century, but the empirical base of that time consisted of only a few experiments. A powerful impetus to the study of the nature and characteristics of social ostracism was given by the work of R.F. Baumeister and M.R. Leary «The need to belong: Desire for interpersonal attachments as a fundamental human motivation», 1995 [8]. Several schools at once independently of each other came to the need for a deep study of the processes of rejection and exclusion of individuals from social groups. The researchers found that as a result of ostracism, individuals exposed to it experience not only "social pain", but also physical pain, and as a result, their fundamental needs, such as the need for belonging, for self-affirmation, and others are violated.

In 1997, K.D. Williams presented his theoretical model of ostracism to the scientific community [9]. According to his model, the socially ostracized individual goes through three stages of response. The first stage is reflex, it is characterized by an immediate reaction to the action of ostracism and can be accompanied by anger, "social pain", sadness and even aggression. The second stage is reflexive, at this stage the individual builds up a response strategy. Depending on various factors, an individual can choose a destructive response strategy, antisocial or prosocial, or even leave the group and exclude any interaction. The final stage is the stage of resignation, in this case we are talking about a long or, one might say, chronic process of social ostracism. At the last stage, the individual experiences submission and humility, along with the realization of his worthlessness and helplessness, which often leads to depression, a decline in mood and vitality.

There are different forms and ways of manifestation of ostracism, such as bullying, active rejection, passive rejection, ignorance, etc. Bullying - one of the most cruel forms of ostracism, manifests itself in the active demonstration of a negative attitude towards the victim through ridicule, insults, psychological and physical violence. Active rejection arises as a response to any words or actions of the victim and is expressed in complete disagreement, rejection and denial. Often it can manifest itself as an active underestimation of the importance of the point of view and opinion of the victim, demonstration of one's own superiority in any issue or action. Passive rejection can manifest itself in certain situations, such as being excluded from the game, ignoring during dialogue, avoiding physical interaction.

Ignoring is characterized by the complete exclusion of contact with the victim.

Social ostracism is a phenomenon that entails a number of negative consequences, such as: aggression, closeness, violation of the processes of socialization and adaptation in society, deviant behavior, etc. A team of Chinese researchers from Renmin University, studying the relationship of social ostracism and aggression in adolescents in the work "Ostracism and Aggression among Chinese Adolescents: a Moderated Mediation Model of Trait Anger and Forgiveness" came to the unequivocal conclusion that ostracism is positively associated with aggression and manifestations anger [10].

The consequences of social ostracism can be far more dire than it might seem at first glance. In the event that a child is socially ostracized in a group by peers, it may show inappropriate aggression at home with its parents. A person who is regularly socially ostracized will experience emotional stress and even physical illness. A child who is ostracized by parents can become angry, insensitive, moreover, it may have problems with mental development, as well as with physical and mental health. The consequences of social ostracism can be: problems with individual identity in society, a decrease in prosocial behavior, a low level of empathy, a high risk of being included in destructive and extremist organizations and criminal groups, deviant behavior, a high level of aggression, etc.

A group of scientists from Hong Kong also studied social ostracism, its factors and consequences. In five studies, researchers tested whether ostracism caused feelings of relative deprivation and whether relative deprivation explained the effect of ostracism on aggression. According to the results of the study, they found that study participants whose life experience of ostracism was present exhibited a higher level of relative deprivation. In addition, the study found that the feeling of relative deprivation mediated the effect of ostracism on aggression [11].

Ostracism is a form of social punishment and, in addition to stress and mental suffering, it can also bring physical pain. In 2009, a group of scientists at the University of California identified the relationship between social rejection and physical pain. Social isolation is known to activate areas of the brain associated with stress, but recent research has shown that social ostracism also activates areas associated with physical pain.

A few years ago, theories explaining the relationship of aggression and violence with social isolation of the individual argued that the main factor prompting an individual to violent actions is a low level of intellectual abilities and, as a consequence, the impossibility of accepting social norms and a low level of adaptability to

social life. But after the discoveries of R.F. Baumeister and M.R. Leary's vision of the problem has changed. It has been learned that people who have been ostracized experience self-regulation problems as a result of social isolation and exclusion. This provokes aggressive behavior, violent and illegal actions.

The high level of poverty is one of the main factors influencing the criminalization and crime rate in the society. Destructive behavior, an asocial lifestyle, aggression and, as a result, inclusion in various illegal groups is the consequence of social ostracism, which is often subjected to representatives of social strata called the "poor" and "social bottom".

For the first time, the study of the relationship between the phenomenon of poverty and social exclusion was started in Great Britain in 1983 by J. Mack and S. Lansley. In 1990, their research was continued by D. Gordon and S. Pantasis, and in 1999 also by a group of scientists from Great Britain, including D. Gordon, L. Adelman and others. The data obtained in the course of the research made it possible to establish the relationship between social isolation, poverty, unemployment, and isolation from services. Scientists understood the concept of "social exclusion" as a lack of access to financial resources and social relations.

In addition, the famous English sociologist Giddens A. Beyond in his work *Left and Right: The Future of Radical Politics*, which studies the historical development of social institutions, examines the phenomenon of social ostracism and exclusion as a consequence of the suboptimal distribution of income and social wealth in favor of the ruling class [12].

According to H. Silver, social exclusion is a kind of dynamic process of interaction between excluded and excluded social groups or certain individuals. At the same time, those who exclude by means of various mechanisms deprive the excluded of access to financial resources and social ties [13].

M. Wolf developed an approach for classifying situations of social exclusion. The classification is represented by the following types of classification features: dependence of exclusion and ostracism on the means of subsistence; social services, welfare; from political choice; from the culture of consumption, etc. [14].

Also, a fairly large number of works by modern Russian scientists have been devoted to the study of the relationship between low wealth and the facts of social ostracism in modern Russian society.

N.E. Tikhonova, based on the results of a longitudinal panel study of households in 1996-2002, concluded that the description of the processes of an individual's exclusion from Russian society is possible from the standpoint of horizontal stratification, identification and

analysis of "risk factors" for the emergence and development of social exclusion and social exclusion. This study has shown that the surveyed families have not only low wealth, but also lack of access to the main mechanisms of integration in society [15].

Special attention should be paid to the research of E.O. Smoleva to identify the mechanisms of exclusion of certain social groups of the population. According to the results of the research, it was established that there is a relationship between the mechanisms of social ostracism and certain social attitudes and stereotypes present in society. Author pays special attention to the economic exclusion of the individual through access to employment [16].

As a rule, a victim of ostracism becomes a person who fits the description "not like everyone else." From childhood, people tend to divide society into "theirs" and "strangers" according to the presence or absence of any socially significant qualities. These qualities, in particular, include: unkempt appearance, low income, lack of prestige of the profession or type of activity, low social status.

Poverty and misery are often perceived as weakness by many people. Society tends to believe that a person with a low level of income is to blame for their "poverty", because they does not make an effort to fix it, because they are lazy, have no willpower, etc. This generates social ostracism, financial rejection and further exacerbates the problem of poverty and social inequality in society.

The internal state of an individual, externally expressed in poverty, affects psychological development and moral guidelines. Social alienation and censure cultivate a response, expressed in aggression, a tendency to violence. To some extent, the individual begins to try to correspond to the image that others ascribe to them, because they lose hope to change anything.

The modern scientist Rutger Bregman said during one of his lectures: "Poverty is not a lack of character, but a lack of money" [17]. If the presented statement was a reflection of the thoughts of the majority of people, perhaps the problem of social ostracism on a financial basis would not have been so urgent. Oppression and psychological harassment of people with low incomes provokes many negative social side effects, from an increase in the crime rate to an increase in the number of suicides.

4. CONCLUSIONS

At the moment, a portrait of a "poor" person has been formed in modern Russian society. Low level of moral and ethical culture, low level of culture and education, drunkenness, drug addiction, use of obscene language, rudeness, indifference to the upbringing of the future

generation - all these are the features of the psychological portrait of the "poor" through the eyes of society.

Thus, discrimination against the poor in society, as well as the formation of their image, different from the rest, is carried out not only in terms of income, but also in terms of their behavior.

Such prejudices and attributed qualities to people that they often do not possess lead to bullying, bullying and even complete ignorance and exclusion from social groups. These actions subsequently lead to psychological trauma, internal aggression, which is ultimately realized in deviant behavior and leads to an increase in the crime rate and other negative consequences.

Poverty and ostracism are two social phenomena that today pose a great threat to public life. Government action to reduce the number of poor people should be comprehensive, including measures to prevent crimes committed by people below the poverty line. These activities should contribute to social stability, reduce the number of delinquencies and improve the quality of life of people.

Management and regulation of the level of social exclusion and social ostracism should be carried out by the state and include the processes of social integration of excluded individuals and groups.

Meanwhile, it seems important that each member of society realizes the possibility of their own contribution to the creation of a favorable social environment through a tolerant attitude towards all members of society, regardless of their income and social status. Minimizing cases of social ostracism in modern society will lead to the harmonization of social relations, a decrease in the crime rate, and an increase in the psychological and physical health of members of society.

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