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Russia, Factor 17: Good Governance

Russia: An Analysis on Governmental Policies

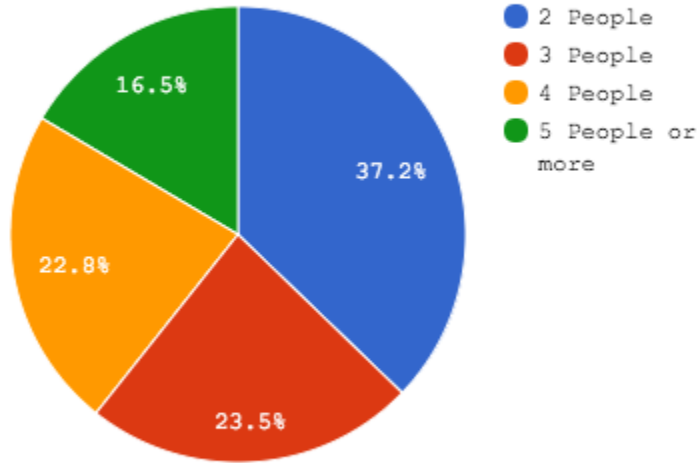
Russia is the largest country in the world, covering most of Eastern Europe and reaching all the way to Asia. It stretches across 9 different time zones, and its total land mass is bigger than Pluto. After the collapse of the USSR, Russia retained most of its size and remains a major country. It is also one of the most important emerging economies in the world. Vladimir Putin is the current president of Russia. Recently, world leaders have criticized Putin and the Russian government for their military intervention in the Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea on March 18, 2014. The annexation was a result of the 2014 Ukrainian Revolution. The revolution removed the Ukrainian president Viktor Yanukovich from office, and a new interim government was formed. This new government led to more social unrest and protests in the Ukraine. While the Russian government has denied any illegal activity in the annexation, many of the world's leaders and the Ukrainian government still consider the annexation and military intervention illegal, and a breach of multiple treaties^[1]. The Russian government refuses to relent on its control over Crimea, and the Ukraine remains a hot spot of political instability in Northeastern Europe.

To avoid increased military conflict, other nations have placed sanctions on Russia to try and weaken the country's economy to get the Russian government to negotiate with other countries. The EU sanctions are targeted at Russia's state finances, energy and arms sectors. Russian state banks will no longer be able to raise long-term loans in the EU and EU-Russia arms deals are banned for the future. The EU also will not export a wide range of oil industry technology. There are three major state oil firms being targeted: Rosneft, Transneft and Gazprom Neft, and Gazprom. But the gas industry, space technology and nuclear energy are excluded from the sanctions. The EU sanctions also include Western asset freezes, and travel bans for top Russian officials and Ukrainian separatist leaders. US sanctions target Russian banks, Russia's richest businessmen and other large Russian businesses.^[2] The governmental policies and administration of Russia under Putin have a direct effect on Russian food security.

Food security in Russia and the life of Russian families have been negatively affected by the lack of good governance of Putin and his administration. A 2012 census shows that on average there are about 3 (2.58) people in a Russian household. Censuses from 1989 recorded the the number of people living in one house in both rural and urban areas; the results are shown below (See Figures 1 and 2). The typical family size hasn't changed too dramatically in the recent past; recent censuses indicate the majority of homes have between 2 to 3 people in a household. In Russian families it is not uncommon for unmarried children to live with their parents or for parents to live in the same house as their married child and grandchildren. Women have a very "traditional" role as housewives: they are expected to stay home and take care of all the household chores or needs. Approximately 80% of Russian households do not have a microwave or a washing machine.^[3] The common Russian diet consists of three meals a day called *zavtrak*, *obed* and *uzhin*. Russians enjoy home-cooked meals and do not typically go out to eat or eat prepared foods. Potatoes are a staple in the Russian diet, and many Russians eat some form of potato daily. Russian diets contain a lot of grain foods and it is commonplace to have bread on the table for every meal.^[4] Also, Russian crops consists mainly of those that can survive in cold climates, such as grains (rye, barley, buckwheat, and wheat), root vegetables (beets, turnips, potatoes, onions), and cabbage.

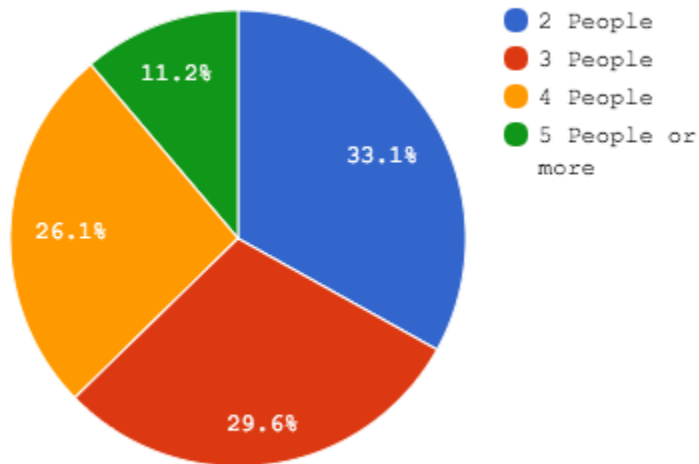
(Figure 1)

**Average Size of Russian Household:
Rural**



(Figure 2)

**Average Size of Russian Household:
Urban**



Russia currently has one of the best mass education systems in the world, with a 98% literacy rate, which includes basic and higher education. Schooling is mandatory for children ages 6 through 15. Children

attend primary school from age 6 to 10 and then in enroll in senior school until age 15. If a student wishes to continue onto a higher education, he/she must remain in secondary (senior) school for another two years (15-17). The schooling lasts 11 years and each year consists of a core curriculum. At 15 years old, students must choose between going to a vocational school or a non-university institute. These schools will typically offer programs of academic subjects and a program of training in a technical field until students reach 17 or 18.^[5] The few private schools that exist in Russia charge a high tuition, similar to the private schools in the United States.

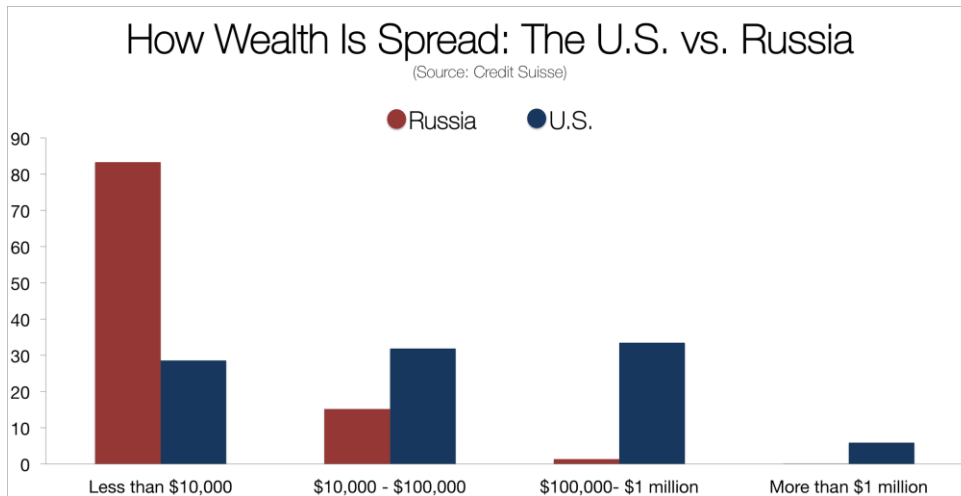
Healthcare in Russia is inadequate for the needs of the Russian citizens. Since the founding of the Russian Federation in 1991, the healthcare system has dramatically worsened. From 2005 to 2013 the number of healthcare facilities in rural areas plummeted by 75% (from 8,249 to 2,085). This includes a 95% drop in the number of hospitals and a 65% drop in the number of health clinics. In fact, “17,500 towns and villages now have no medical infrastructure whatsoever.”^[6] In the last decade the life expectancy in Russia fell from 70 to 65 years old. Russian men are especially affected by the decline in available health care services. On average Russian women live 13 years longer (60.4 men, 74.1 women), making Russia home to the widest gender gap in life expectancy in the world. Not only that but, between the years 1996 and 2005, Russia experienced one of the fastest growing HIV/AIDS epidemics in the world. Not only is the AIDS epidemic worsened by the lack of medical care, the problem is exacerbated by “a combination of widespread intravenous drug use, ignorance of or disregard for the perils of unsafe sex, and the conservative policies that have held sway in the Kremlin since Vladimir Putin’s return to the presidency in 2012,” according to an article on Newsweek. In Russia, approximately 1 million people are estimated to have HIV/AIDS, and around 200 new infections occur every day. Sex education, needle exchange programs, and methadone treatment are shunned by the Russian government and the Russian Orthodox Church as they would only “promote” these dangerous behaviors.^[7] The AIDS/ HIV epidemic could be helped, if the government chose to help their citizens.

The Russian economy depends on 12 main industries (Figure 3), including the leading industry of machinery construction, followed by the chemical and petrochemical industry, fuel and energy, metallurgical complex and finally the agricultural complex.^[8] In Russia the minimum wage is 5,554 Russian Rubles (72.13 USD) a month, though it can change based upon the area, such as Moscow, which has a minimum wage of 12,850 RUB (166.88 USD) a month. Despite Russia’s political and economic issues, most businesses are not changing their hiring plans. About 2/3 of employers plan on continuing to hire workers, though not all employers are willing to raise pay to meet the increases in the cost of living. Employers are, however, willing to hire less qualified workers before they will increase another worker’s pay.^[9] A 2004 article by William Liefert claims that food security is an issue, not to all people of Russia, only to specific socioeconomic groups, who lack enough purchasing power to support a healthy diet. There is a high level of income inequality in Russia, which is fueled partially by the energy sector. 111 people control 19% of all household wealth. Those in the top 10% of the population control 85% of wealth in Russia. Four out of five people in Russia have less than \$10,000. This is a stark difference between the rich and the poor. While Putin has acknowledged this as an issue, since 2008, not much has happened to combat this high level of economic inequality. Furthermore, a PBS article states: “Worldwide, there is about one billionaire for every \$170 billion in household wealth; in Russia, there is one [billionaire] for every \$11 billion.” The article goes on to state that 90% of entrepreneurs have faced corruption, at least once. Figure 4 shows the distribution of wealth in Russia compared with wealth distribution in the United States.^[10]

1	Oil and gas
2	Mining
3	Processing precious stones and metals
4	Aircraft building

5	Aerospace production
6	Weapons and military machinery manufacture
7	Electric engineering
8	Pulp-and-paper production
9	Automotive industry
10	Transport
11	Road and agriculture machinery production
12	Light and foodstuffs industries

(Figure 3)



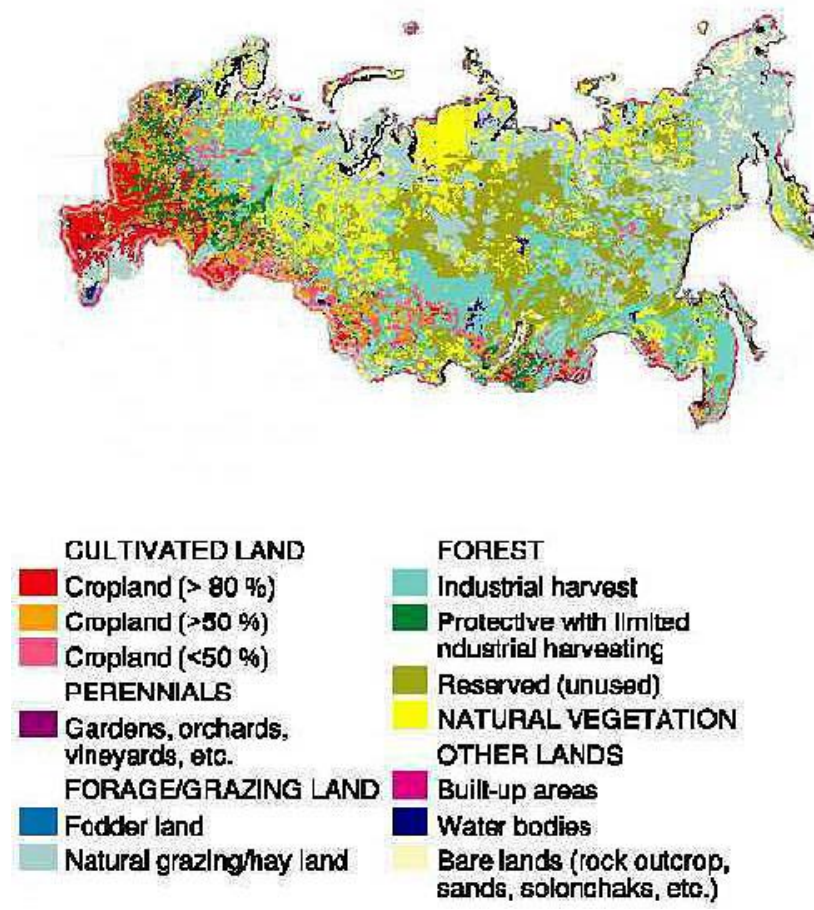
(Figure 4)^[10]

Through the transition of the Russian economy after the fall of the USSR to the Russian Federation, gross agricultural production has been sufficient enough to maintain an adequate food supply, though the transition did cause a rise in poverty. The rise in poverty results in some of the population being unable to purchase a healthy diet. From 1996-98, about 6% of Russians had inadequate food consumption. A survey done in December 2000 to January 2001, went to all houses (including single-person households) at or below the poverty line.^[11] The survey found that 41% of the poor were unable to purchase an adequate food diet. In 2000, 29% of the Russian population was below the poverty line. These statistics indicate that 12% of the Russian population in 2000-2001 had an inadequate and unhealthy diet. The doubling of the number of Russians unable to afford a healthy diet between 2000-2001 and 1996-1998 is due to the economic crisis Russia faced in 1998, which increased the amount of poverty.^[11]

Dacha gardens are one way that together, as a community, Russian citizens can feed themselves. Dacha gardens in Russia are small peri-urban seasonal homes and farms that produce 40% of Russia's total food production. Though Dacha gardens produce almost half of Russia's food, they only use about 3% of the arable land in Russia.^[12] In 2011, the food production was 40% Dacha gardens, 11% peasant farmers, and 49% large-scale industrial farms.^[13] Dacha gardens produced over 80% of Russia's fruits and berries, 66% of the vegetables, 80% of the potatoes, and almost 50% of the nation's milk. While Dacha gardens may not represent the majority of Russian food production, it is an important aspect of Russian culture and its agricultural production. When traveling to Russia it is not uncommon to see street corners littered with small produce stands filled with fresh foods produced in the Dacha gardens. During the communist

reign of Russia. Dacha gardens produced nearly 90% of Russia's food. Dacha gardens are an amazing example of how small, diverse, and sustainable farms can be successful in large nations. Dacha gardens can and should be used around the world as an example of how successful small scale and local farming can be.

The biggest barriers in improving agricultural productivity are the country's climate and the lack of arable land and climate. The climate is extremely varied with extremely cold winters, and warm to dry summers. This results in most Russians only being able to grow in the summer, and the most common produce grown are hearty grains, root vegetables and cabbage. In Russia only 13.1% of its land is used for agricultural purposes: 7.3% is arable land, .1% is permanent crops, and permanent pasture is 5.7%. This arable land is spread throughout primarily the south-eastern regions of Russia, as this area has the most fertile soil. An article titled "Country Pasture/Forage Resource Profiles: Russian Federation" on FAO.org (The Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations) states: "Russia's far northern location and harsh climate causes most of the area to be unsuitable for crop production. Most rainfed agricultural activities are located between 40 degrees N and 60 degrees N latitude. The transitional seasons of autumn and spring here are short, creating a brief window of opportunity for crop seeding and harvest. Higher latitudes are associated with long, cold winters, and short, hot summers that limit the growing season. The distribution of cultivated land, perennial crops, cultivated forage/grazing as well as forest and natural vegetation is shown on Figure [5]."^[14]



(Figure 5)^[14]

Global Warming, and climate change, have impacts all around the world. Though in Russia, this may be good news. The climate of Russia has become hotter and as a result there is increased precipitation (in most areas), decreased snow cover, and increased mean temperature.^[15] These effects sound amazing for Russian agriculture, and according to an article on The Diplomat: “climate change on Russian farmers will be unambiguously positive”. However, climate change is not without a downside. “non-arable” regions in Siberia could indeed see their agricultural productivity increase, regions in the south and west of Russia that are currently arable are likely to be increasingly affected by drought, wildfire, and changing irrigation patterns, a process that is already under way.” This effect of global warming is what is more common, and something that will also hurt Russian farms. The Diplomat article goes on to say: “Analysts have suggested that the melting of permafrost in Russia’s far north could alter river flow patterns sufficiently to create water shortages in Stavropol and Krasnodar, historically the country’s most productive agricultural regions. Consequently, while Siberia becomes newly fertile, the country’s traditional breadbasket in the Volga River basin could become arid. Additionally, the rising incidence of drought and wildfire associated with climate change could be devastating for agricultural production in western Russia. In 2010, unprecedented summer heat caused massive wildfires that dramatically reduced agricultural output in western Russia, destroying one third of the country’s wheat harvest.... The country experienced another major heat wave with a devastating impact on agricultural output in the summer of 2012, suggesting that this pattern is likely to continue and intensify as global temperatures rise. Accordingly, any gains in agricultural productivity farther north could be offset by drought and wildfire in southern and western Russia and by the effect of melting permafrost on the country’s irrigation patterns, confounding any hopes of increased grain production.” In addition to this the closeness of Russia to the Arctic Circle, and thusly the increase of sea level because of melting ice, results in Russia losing 468 square kilometers of land every year.^[16] Under the threat of global warming, a strong and positive stance needs to be taken by the Russian government to benefit the country, it’s citizens, and the environment.

The barriers to employment at a living wage are the economic and political issues Russia has faced since its switch from a totalitarian government and command economy to a federal government and market economy. The Russian government has had many issues in this transition but it remains one of the largest (if not *the* largest) and most important emerging economies in the world. As of September 2015, 22 million Russians are living in poverty. In other words, almost one in seven Russians is at, or below the poverty line.^[17] The increase in poverty is caused by the worsening Russian economy, with inflation hitting a 13-year record high in March 2015. Russia’s GDP also fell by 4.6 percent in the second quarter of last year, its largest fall since 2009.^[9] Russian families are being hit by not only the rising inflation, but also by shrinking wages (which decreased by 6.9%). A report by The Moscow Times in March of last year finds that Russian families spend more than half of their wages on food.^[18] An article on The Guardian states: “An average of 19.2 million Russians – or 13.4% of the population – were living last year on less than 9,452 roubles (\$139) a month, the minimum subsistence level determined by the Russian government in the fourth quarter. This figure represents a 20% increase year-on-year, with an average 16.1 million people living below the poverty threshold in 2014. More Russians have been slipping into poverty on the back of the Western sanctions and low oil prices that have battered the country’s energy-dependent economy and significantly diminished purchasing power.”^[19] This means that the high amount of poverty is the biggest barrier to the Russian people in accessing food markets and adequate nutrition. In fact, Russia’s newly-founded rating agency reports that it does not expect economic growth until 2018.

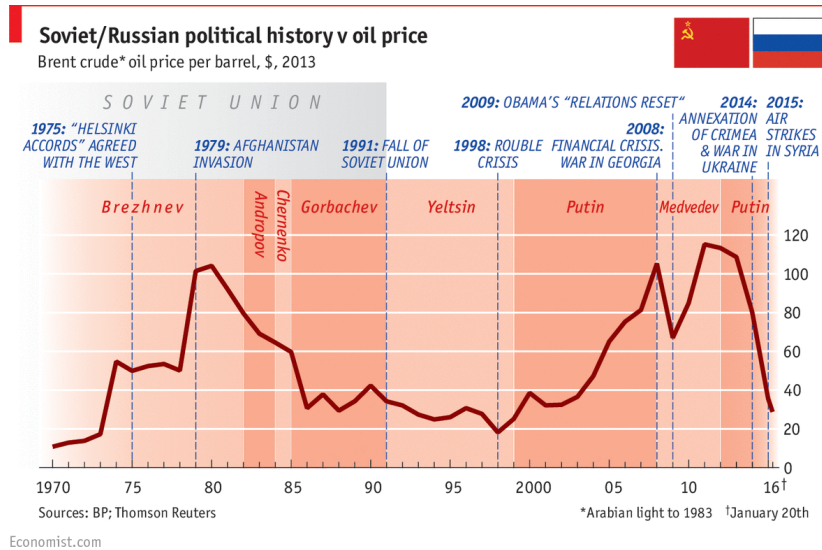
The factor of good governance in Russia is the overarching issue the people of Russia face, and the largest adversary of food security. The government’s policies are not only affecting food availability and quality, but the daily lives of their citizens. Recently Putin and his administration have made a law that bans all imported food from countries that have put sanctions against Russia. The cause of these sanctions against Russia is the military involvement in Ukraine, and the annexation of Crimea, which many say was illegal. Not only that, but Putin issued an ‘incinerate on site’^[21] law for all banned EU food

products. Russia is the largest importer of animals, meat, dairy products, fruits and vegetables, according to the European Union.^[20] The wide array of sanctions affects not only the Russian economy and its people, but it also hurts the economy of Europe as a whole, because the vast majority of imports has stopped. The only EU food products being imported are being illegally smuggled into the country. The effect on the typical Russian family is this: a majority of Russians are at or below the poverty line and cannot always afford food. Now when the largest importer stops importing, food prices skyrocket. Russians are starving and while Putin claims this will give local Russian businesses their time to shine, it is proving harder to mimic, recreate and produce these European goods. Not only is the Kremlin banning food imports, it is also planning on banning imports on medical items. As of August 5, 2015, X-ray machines, tampons and condoms have been banned. A Russian official is quoted saying (about the condom ban), ““more disciplined, more strict and discriminating in choosing partners, and maybe would do a favour to our society by helping to solve demographic problems,’ Gennady Onishchenko, Russia’s former top medical official, told RIA Novosti”^[21] This led to Russian people expressing an immense amount of outrage, as Russia has one of the fastest growing HIV/AIDS epidemics. There are petitions being signed to “rethink” the law. Others suggest to give the illegally imported food to prisoners or those in need instead of just destroying it. In both instances the petitions garnered hundreds of thousands of signatures. Others have taken to social media with satirical statements and videos praising Putin for his patriotism and shunning of the evil, fascist “Yankeeland” of Obama.^[21] The ban on foodstuffs is worsening the already down Russian economy.

At the start of the new year, the Russian economy is hurting. The oil industry is suffering setbacks, and the Russian government is not doing well enough to cope with their down economy. There is the potential of the budget hitting a deficit of 6% of GDP, and Russia’s rainy day fund of \$50 billion will be gone by the end of the year.^[22] If the deficit grows to be 17% of budget incomes (\$45 billion), the government plans to make significant cuts to the budget, primarily to salaries in the public sector.^[23]

Not only that but according to an article on The Economist:

“Russians face a fundamental degradation of their quality of life, says Natalia Zubarevich of the Independent Institute for Social Policy, a think-tank. Real wages fell by 9% in 2015 and 4% in 2014, the first dip since Mr Putin came to power in 2000 (see Figure 6). GDP per person is down from a post-Soviet peak of close to \$15,000 in 2013 to around \$8,000 this year. While official unemployment is just 6%, wage arrears are up. More than 2m people fell into poverty in 2015, and the share of families that lack funds for food or clothes rose from 22% to 39%. Pensions are normally indexed to inflation, but in 2016 they will rise by just 4%.”^[22]



(Figure 6)^[22]

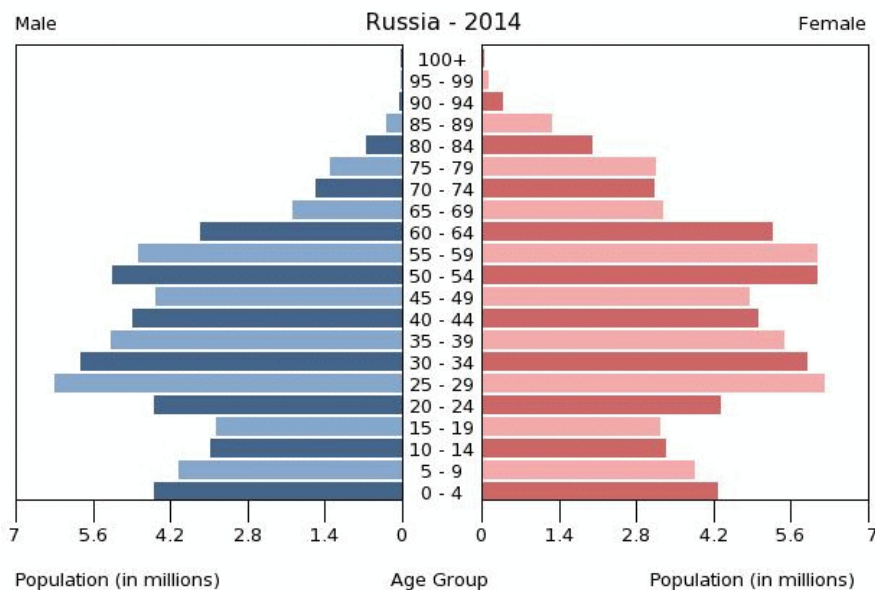
As the future progresses, the inevitable decrease in oil production will affect the Russian economy. The level of pollution will also increase as Russia keeps drilling oil, and harvesting resources from their land (potentially into Siberia one of the cleanest and least disturbed areas left on Earth). Russia will continue to depend on food imports in the near future, as its climate makes growing a variety of foods difficult, and so food shortages and famine could affect the people, and as a result, the government. Lifespans, healthcare and population growth are all concerns, as the healthcare sector is in a very poor state. There have been, and probably will continue to be, generations of low birth rates as the HIV/AIDS epidemic spreads, and the Russians continue suffering from a graying population. Both of these issues will cause a population drop in the near future, which, again, will affect the good governance of the Russia.

Global Graying is the term given to a change in population demographics in (primarily first world) countries around the world. In these countries elderly, non-working adults over 65 will outnumber the number of adults in the working class. This puts a strain on the economy as the population will not have enough people being born (and then going into the working class) in order to pay into social services such as Social Security, and social healthcare. Russia is suffering from a graying population because of a deteriorating healthcare system, low fertility, and an AIDS epidemic. In 1995 the number of people over 30 far outnumber the people 30 or younger (See Figure 7).^[24] The trajectory of Russia's population is set to decrease, not increase. Due to the economic and political issues that Russia is facing, passing legislation to combat this issue is difficult. The inability to change or better this situation makes the elderly among the most economically disadvantaged and vulnerable social groups in Russia.

To combat the issue of a graying Russia, reform in the healthcare system would be the most effective and easiest to implement. Though the reform passed must not be ill-designed. Unnecessary decentralization, and an over reliance on the private sector will make the already crumbling medical infrastructure worse. Poor and starving citizens cannot afford to pay into a privately controlled healthcare sector, so if the healthcare sector is to be reformed, it should be more so public than it is private. An over reliance on the private sector to control and create hospitals, and all the other medical infrastructure, would not help any of the rural Russians who do not have access to hospitals. With heavily privatized medical infrastructure, the government lacks the ability to adequately control the medical sector. If a more "socialist" approach is taken, healthcare is typically easier to obtain and is less expensive. This *would* benefit the Russian

citizens, as they would have medical care ensured to them. The healthcare system should also be very centralized, as a strong national healthcare system makes keeping the citizens healthy an easier task. The way Russian healthcare provides its citizens with free healthcare currently is by offering OMC, which is an compulsory insurance.^[25] However OMC only covers the most basic of treatments, and is not valid when traveling, even if traveling domestically. The Russian healthcare system is overstressed, overworked, and underfunded. A complete overhaul needs to happen in order for healthcare to meet the needs of Russian citizens.

Under a strong, central healthcare system health campaigns promoting healthier lifestyles among Russian citizens could happen. A reduced amount of smoking and alcohol consumption, and better access to healthier diets should improve general health greatly. To do this though, Russia's domestic and foreign policies need to be fixed, and a strong public healthcare system should be put into place. In addition, Russia, like many other countries, is being proactive in trying to combat their declining population. The Russian government has decided to pay 250,000 rubles, or about \$9,200, to mothers - if they have a second child. Hopefully more policies like this continue to happen to help the Russian population grow.^[26]



(Figure 7)^[27]

Food security can be improved by utilizing new farming technologies, and using NGOs to help the citizens. Citizens are starving because food is too expensive. If enough food can be produced so that food prices are extremely low, then Russian citizens will be able to buy a healthy, and nutritious diet. There are new farming techniques that can improve on the efficiency of farming. Small scale implementation of Closed Ecological Systems farming is fairly efficient because, these ecosystems would not rely on matter exchange outside of the system. Business Insider states: “Such closed ecosystems would theoretically transform waste products into oxygen, food and water in order to support life-forms inhabiting the system. Such systems already exist in small scales, but existing technological limitations prevent them from scaling. Scientifically viable in 2015; mainstream in 2020; and financially viable in 2021” So, this technology while it is able to implemented now, it may not be the most accessible form of farming. Other theoretical methods of farming would be Vertical farming, which is what it sounds like, farming in a vertical tower. This technique can be used in urban areas; the other method would be synthetic biology “with the ultimate goals of being able to design, build and remediate engineered biological systems that process information, manipulate chemicals, fabricate materials and structures,

produce energy, provide food, and maintain and enhance human health and our environment.”^[28] If the Russian government were to invest heavily into agricultural technologies, and to become more sustainable, perhaps a new Space Race, or Arms Race could take place between Russia and another country, such as the USA. Except this would be an Agricultural Race, and this competitiveness will help the citizens, and the world, it wouldn't be a race that would destroy the world, but one that could help it tremendously.

The economic issue seems to keep worsening and unraveling as time goes on, and the Russian government doesn't seem to be changing. Improving the governance of Russia is necessary in order to benefit Russia as a whole. Any improvement in governance would ease international tensions, and Russia could get back into the good graces of the UN and the EU - which may lead to Russia receiving some economic relief. With the food imports ban and EU sanctions being lifted, it may give the Russian economy a chance to rebound. Improving the governance would all around improve the wellbeing of the Russian people. This improvement is not something that can happen overnight. Putin and his administration seemed to be very nationalistic in nature, they want to show the world of Russia's great strength and show their independence. Therefore, any reform in the Russian government needs to come from the people. This issue needs to be addressed from within. If not, if this reform is being pushed by NATO, or the USA, it can be dismissed as Western propaganda against the Russian government. It is absolutely necessary for the improvement of the Russian government to come from within. The Cold War, though it may have ended 20 years ago, still happened in most people's lifetime. Most adults can remember The Cold War to some extent. In the US today, would a pro-Russian governmental reform, a communist reform, succeed? Not at all. The question now becomes how do we, as the USA, as the EU, as the UN, help Russian citizens fight for reform? Should we help them? What if this style of government is what the citizens want? This topic is fairly nuanced. I think we should try to help the citizens, but not directly. The Enlightenment helped fuel the American Revolution, the American Revolution helped fuel the French Revolution. Change begets change. If a reform movement is to be led, it will be led by the progressive youth. Look at the current US election. Bernie Sanders, a socialist, gained a large following, mainly by progressive youths. The 2014 Ukrainian Revolution, was started on Facebook, many of the followers were youths.^[29] The Ukrainian Revolution is the change that can beget change. If the EU can aid the new interim Ukrainian government, help quash the Russian-Separatist movement, and allow Ukraine to reclaim the land of Crimea the revolution can be seen as a success. If this news spreads enough into Russia it can be the fuel needed to lead a reform against the Russian government.

However, a major governmental reform is not always feasible, neither is a revolution; especially in Russia, which has one of the most advanced militaries. The most feasible solution, is to work within the current system of government and solve the issues with the EU, the Ukraine, and other world powers. The EU lost one of its more major powers, Great Britain, in a recent referendum. This loss may result in the EU being more likely to negotiate a compromise with Russia to help boost EU member economies, and stabilize after Great Britain leaves the EU. All parties must talk, negotiate and resolve the issue of Russian military presence in Ukraine, and the control over Crimea. The Ukrainian government feels slighted, and the many nations internationally feel as though treaties have been broken. The treaties either need to be renegotiated, a compromise could be made, or force could be used. Regardless of the avenue, the issue needs to be resolved, this stalemate of placing sanctions upon one another is not working. The EU economy will start to feel the economic pressure of losing one of their largest importers, and Russian citizens are starving. I believe that the best way to satisfy both sides, is to compromise, if possible. Trade should resume, though maybe at a higher rate for Russians to import EU products, in return Russia is able to maintain its annexation of Crimea. Another possibility is to have a non-affiliated peacekeeping party (such as the UN Peacekeepers) hold a vote in Crimea to see what the citizens desire, though both sides of the conflict would have to agree to hold a vote. If any party shows signs of voter-tampering then that party will automatically forfeit potential control of Crimea. Regardless of how a peace is made, a peace

does need to be made. If it is not, the economic problems of Russia will only worsen, and the citizens will pay.

There is another route to help Russian food security - economic development. In the transition from a command economy to a market economy, many industries, including agriculture, were privatized. During this transition, corruption and inequality increased greatly, many may remember the sudden transition of the '90s and all the issues that came about. Twenty years later though, the economy is ripe with potential for development. With a literacy rate of 98% Russia has many bright minds to fulfill high paying jobs. An example of this is the healthcare sector, as previously mentioned Russia needs serious reform in its healthcare and aid to its poor and starving citizens. Families, communities and government need to focus on rebuilding its medical infrastructure. This development will create job opportunities for doctors and other medical professionals, laborers and other administrative jobs. This will also open up career fields for future generations that are not currently available as the new hospitals will need plumbers, electricians, janitors, accountants, supply managers, doctors and nurses to fill them. Families and communities are filled with smart and educated people. If they come together and focus on fundraising and petitioning the government to pass legislation to fund and create new hospitals and other medical infrastructure, their lives, and their families lives can be improved.

Citizens from Russia, or around the world, can also reach out to NGOs and ask to help ensure food security for Russians. There are lists of NGOs that are trying to solve the same issues that plague Russian citizens. The issue is that the Russian government is not friendly to foreign, or native NGOs and they rarely receive any sort of aid or help from the Russian government.^[30] If this were to change though, it would be much easier for NGOs to provide relief to the starving people. There is however, an NGO that is based in Moscow, Russia that fights for social justice and AIDS victims. This is the Andrey Rylkov Foundation for Health and Social Justice. People from around the world can donate and help fund this foundation. If this foundation grows large, and popular enough, other NGOs may pop up, to try and help Russian citizens

Together, Russian citizens can increase their lifespan, help stop their AIDS epidemic, and end poverty through implementing better governance.

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