DOI: 10.17746/1563-0110.2018.46.3.129-137

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Seventeenth Century Siberia as a Land of Opportunity: Social Mobility Among the Russian Pioneers

On the basis of individual biographies, we explore the social mobility patterns among the Russian colonists of Siberia (members of Russia's service class) in the 1600s, with reference to theories relating to the sociology of labor and social stratification. We show how peasants, hunters, fishermen, and freedmen were co-opted into the service class, and how their social status changed at all levels—horizontal, vertical, geographical, individual, group, intergenerational, and within-generational. Occupation, skills, and income were important factors affecting social mobility. For nearly all categories of migrants, the most common tendency was migration of entire families, though younger single migrants were more likely to move over longer distances. In Siberia, where social regulation norms copied those of the metropolis, upward social mobility occurred nearly exclusively within institutions. Social service provided maximal opportunity for the individual's promotion and for the current and future status of his relatives. This was an efficient mechanism for securing high mobility in Siberian society. By the early 1700s, the degree of mobility had decreased, downward mobility had increased, and the social system had become more sustainable.

Keywords: Career, promotion, social status, social classes, biography, Siberia, service people.

Introduction

The territory of Siberia began attracting pioneers and settlers from various regions of the European part of the country as early as in the 16th century. The region was extremely rich in land, water, fur, and other resources. Besides, the vast expanse of Siberia allowed moving over great distances within the same state. This provided the career advancement opportunities at the "horizontal" level.

It has been a long time since historians of Siberia paid attention to the problem of general social advancement of Siberian service class people and to their career progression, in particular. By now, researchers have amassed considerable factual material about dozens of Siberian service people of the 17th century: high (voivodes, boyar scions (petty noblemen), noblemen) and middle-ranking officers (atamans, sotniks, pyatidesyatniks), including their origin, service, promotion, or demotion. However, these studies were predominantly aimed at reconstruction of biography of one or another person or his family. For example, G.F. Miller presented the whole kaleidoscope of service people biographies in the pages of his "History of Siberia", including: Ilya Ermolin (Miller, 2003: 52–53, 153, 162, 171, 195), the Kolmogorov family (Ibid.: 195–197, 217–218, 236, 250–251), ataman Dmitry Kopylov (Ibid.: 50, 76–81, 205–206, 223–239), pyatidesyatnik Vasiliy Moskvitin (Miller, 2005: 47, 169–183, 186–190), and others. K.B. Hasenwinkel even attempted

Archaeology, Ethnology & Anthropology of Eurasia 46/3 (2018) 129–137 E-mail: Eurasia@archaeology.nsc.ru

to compile a reference and biographical dictionary of Siberian notables of the 16th–17th centuries (1893–1895); N.N. Ogloblin restored the professional and personal life chronology of Vladimir Atlasov, Semen Dezhnev, and Demyan Mnogogreshny (1890, 1892). S.V. Bakhrushin introduced many details in the lives of the Siberian voivodes (1955a, b).

In spite of radical methodological turns, the approach to Siberian service people in the Soviet and post-Soviet historiography remained substantially the same. The careers of service people and changes in their social status were still being looked through the eyepiece of biographical method. At the same time, the best practices of sociology of labor, even in its Marxist interpretation, remained beyond the scope of specific historical studies. Publications by V.A. Samoylov, N.I. Nikitin, G.A. Leontieva, D.Y. Rezun, E.V. Vershinin, A.S. Zuev, I.R. Sokolovsky, P.N. Barakhovich, and others, devoted to reconstruction of the biographies of service people (Samoylov, 1945; Nikitin, 1999a, b; Leontieva, 1997; Rezun, 1993, 2003; Vershinin, 1998; Zuev, 2000; Sokolovsky, 1999, 2006; Barakhovich, 2015a, b), may be mentioned as examples.

Methodology

The existing situation in the historiography forces us to turn towards discussion of social advancement among the members of service class in Siberia of the 17th century, having considered abundant factual material using social-science theories and social mobility concepts. The major issue to be studied is to what extent the "land of opportunity" formula corresponds to Siberian reality and, accordingly, where the Siberian society was on the "social mobility" scale. This issue has never been accentuated earlier in Siberian studies. In theoretical sociology, these issues were considered at a complex level by P.A. Sorokin in the 1920s (2005). His conceptual framework and treatments became universally recognized and gained momentum in further studies conducted by such sociologists as D.V. Glass (1967), M. de Certeau (2010), N. Luman (2005), J. Urry (2012). Among the recent Russian publications, we shall mention a summarizing paper by O.I. Shkaratan (2012).

The systemic assertion that forms the basis of our paper is the presentation of career advancement among the service people in Siberia of the 17th century as a regular change in the status (position) at all levels of social mobility—horizontal, vertical, geographic, individual, group, intergenerational, and within-generational. The mobility in this case is described as a universal phenomenon inherent in the highly organized societies and, more broadly, meaning the change of position in the social hierarchy. As a rule, upward social mobility occurs within institutions (social elevators in the terminology proposed by Sorokin (2005: 87). In the Siberia of the 17th century, one of the main institutions was the sovereign's service. Exactly this public service provided maximal opportunity for the upward social mobility of an individual, his family members, and descendants, and determined the degree of mobility of Siberian society. Along with trends in individual promotion, we also consider the mobility parameters of service people in general as a group within Siberian society in respect to its relations with other social layers.

It should be expressly stated that we study biographies of the most numerous group of service people, predominantly of middle-rank men. The social mobility processes among the voivodes and the bureaucratic administration are not touched upon. Also, captured Polish nobles from Rzeczpospolita (the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth), who were usually appointed to the highest administrative positions in Siberia, are not considered. All the above allows us to fit individual facts of career movement into the general pattern of social mobility among the service class in the Siberia of the 17th century.

The role of the state in social mobility

In the early development of the Trans-Urals territory, there were large disparities of social status between settlers. In essence, service people reassigned from the European part of the country, after arrival in Siberia, immediately fit into its social life. Only the civil service could have guaranteed material security and position in Siberian society. Therefore, active menfolk sought admission into the sovereign's service. By the decision of the tsarist government, in the Trans-Urals territory, garrisons were formed and stockade fortresses were built; subsequently, the latter became considerable settlements, around which rural areas arose. The garrisons consisted of Cossacks (both foot and cavalry) and of "boyar scions", who were the main helpers of the voivode administration.

People often went to Siberia, explaining it as "escaping from crop failure and Church dissent". These reasons were not the only ones; however, only the most active, passionate persons could have broken away from a traditionally established way of life and set off for an unknown land. At the initial stage of colonization, adventurous and skillful settlers always managed to find

their place in life under new conditions. A significant role here was played by the capacity of each settler for adaptation: social, ecological, economic, and linguistic (since the newcomers had to live among indigenous ethnic groups).

In addition, over a span of several centuries, Siberia was a place of exile, where the accommodation of disgraced people gradually shifted to the northeast of the region. The service class was supplemented both by numerous reassignments from various regions of the state, and by involving representatives of other social groups, including the aboriginal population. For the aboriginals, this was a mutually beneficial process. By involving indigenous population in the sovereign's service, the authorities compensated for the lack of human resources and mitigated ethnic conflicts, while newly baptized aboriginals received benefits and material support. In the history of Siberia of the 16th–17th centuries, there were many cases when local aboriginals made their "careers" after mandatory baptism (Bakhrushin, 1955b; Lyutsidarskaya, 2011, 2014, 2015). As shown in the paper by M. de Certeau, the diversity in a society consisting of communities often entails various forms of social mobility (2010: 161–162). However, this is a subject of special studies, so we do not consider the attitude of authorities to the indigenous population of Siberia in this paper.

Apart from service class people (whose movements were controlled by the governmental structures), peasants, commercial hunters oriented towards procurement of valuable furs, craftsmen, and others rushed to Siberia. Freedmen, who moved without restriction and chose occupations at their own discretion, made up a special category of the population. Thus, for some time, they fell outside of the stationary social relations; though they often were affected by them again over time. The previous social status of the freedmen was extremely varied; however, most of them originated from the peasant communities and settlements of the Russian North (Preobrazhensky, 1972: 100–101). There is an opinion that the "freedmen ("free-walking people") wander as shadows across the pages of documentary history, and are portrayed almost as an annoying hindrance for the activities of officials" (Golovnev, 2015: 500). In general, this is true for the history of Siberia of the 17th century. However, at the initial stage of colonization, the freedmen were often successfully involved to "close the gaps" in various situations resulting from the obvious lack of human resources. This is quite in line with the theoretical considerations of D. Glass, who supposed that social equilibrium had a mobile character in developing societies, and the stronger circulation is, the more flexible is the population structure and more expedient is selection of individuals for each layer (Glass, 1967: 18–19).

In new Siberian conditions, settlers might change their way of life as dictated by new circumstances. Frequently, the freedmen learned skills that subsequently became their "specialty". In 1604, there was an instruction from Moscow to Siberian voivodes to select "carpenters at Verkhoturye from good freedmen who are skillful in any carpentry jobs and capable of building ships" (Verkhoturskiye gramoty…, 1982: 149). Ship-construction required a certain expertise, and, together with "master workmen", who were obviously not numerous in Siberia, other "free-walking carpenters" underwent training in special skills during work. Subsequently, this enabled many good workmen to change their status from "freedman" to "ship's carpenter", which promised a good salary and higher social standing (Ibid.: 150). The possibilities of gaining a new status expanded with the construction and development of new cities. In 1604, Tomsk was founded, and in 1605, an instruction from the tsar was given to invite to Verkhoturye "fifty freedmen and eager people to the new town of Tomsk as service people and plow peasants… payment in money and bread will be provided…" (Ibid.: 167–168). In 1607, owing to a lack of riflemen for guard duty, a tsar's letter was sent with a requirement to enlist the deficit from freedmen that were "…fit for service, skillful at shooting, and not thieves". In so doing, the Cossacks were invited to take charge of new riflemen (Ibid.: 195–196). Most frequently, freedmen started their working activities in Siberia as employees involved in the transportation of various cargoes. Subsequently, their life journeys made highly improbable twists and turns. Some of them settled in towns, acquired real estate, families, etc.

An example of changing social standing from the lowest level to a higher one can be found in the census record of Tomsk boyar scion Dmitry Litosov. His grandfather, born in Kargopol, appeared in Tomsk as a freedman, then he managed to enlist in the Cossacks, and subsequently was awarded the rank of boyar scion for his services. Thereafter, his son and grandson remained in this highest service-rank. There is no information about the actual status of the grandfather of Litosov in the Kargopol region. A peasant, a craftsman, a work-hand, a fugitive debtor, a robber, and the like could hide in the guise of a freedman. However, there is no doubt that if Litosov remained in the Kargopol region, he would not have reached a high rank, nor ensured decent living standards for his heirs (Tomsk…, 2005: 44). The career of Cossack cavalryman Avdey

Titov, from Kuznetsk, was rather similar. His father, who lived by himself near the Sysol River, came to Siberia as a freedman, settled in Kuznetsk, enlisted in the foot Cossacks and died after 20 years of continuous service. His son took over Avdey's father-in-law's position in the Cossack cavalry (Kamenetsky, 2005: 296). The mobility of service people of varying ethnicity is in line with the conclusions of Sorokin, who argued that natural selection is particularly effective when "maximally professional and active individuals establish themselves in certain social layers, while those who do not possess these characteristics are 'washed out'" (2005: 349).

Having joined the service class in one way or another, Cossacks usually tried to take a step up. The foot men missed no opportunity to become Cossack cavalrymen, while the latter, in turn, strove to distinguish themselves and take a place among the boyar scions. Such promotions promised improvement of social status, and doubtless also financial benefit, including both an increase in salary and the appearance of new business opportunities. For example, Zakharey Matveev, a "townsman's son", came to Siberia with his wife and children from the Ustyuzhsky Uyezd. In Kuznetsk, he enlisted in the Cossack cavalry. After this, Zakharey was assigned to the voivode's office as a scrivener in the provision supply department, where he served for nearly 30 years, after which he was given the status of boyar scion "for old age and mutilation". Subsequently, his son Nikita found his place in the Cossack cavalry (Kamenetsky, 2005: 319).

A flow of petitions to Moscow, addressed to the tsar from across Siberia, was permanent. A considerable part of these contained requests for an increase in salary or promotion to a higher rank. The petitions usually recited military achievements, indicated the term of service, etc. Generally, these requests were granted. For example, in 1623, a tsar's letter was received about the appointment of Cossack cavalryman Gavrila Ivanov, from Tyumen, as the ataman of Cossack cavalry. This was preceded by a petition addressed to the tsar that recited all the achievements of Ivanov during his long service in Siberia (42 years). By that time, the position of ataman had fallen vacant in Tyumen, so the request was granted (Miller, 2003: 446–447).

Sometimes, petitions ended with a curious attempt at some sort of "blackmail". For instance, Cossack cavalryman Yakim Zakhariev, who considered himself to have been left out of salary increases, wrote to the tsar that if his request were not granted, he would not serve with his former zeal. Yakim asked that he should be rewarded for his service, and for the blood that he had shed "by a salary from the Tsar, as God may advise, your merciful Majesty, so that I, your slave, will not be completely shamed in front of my comrades and will not retire from your further service" (Butanaev, Abdykalykov, 1995: 36). Such expressions are encountered in a number of other petitions. In the petition addressed to Tsar Mikhail Fyodorovich by the service people of the Yeniseysk stockade with regard to paying their salaries (late 1620s), the record of service is completed by the following sentence: "Please reward us, your slaves… so that we, being in the stockade of Yeniseysk, will not leave your Majesty's service" (Sbornik…, 1960: 15–16). In 1645, the Tyumen voivode knyaz G.P. Boryatinsky addressed the tsar with a request to hear his report on his service in Siberia and grant a lucrative compensation. The petition ended with the following words: "Please give the order, your Majesty, to heed my note, so that I, your slave, will not be completely lost and dishonored in front of my brethren, and will do my duty in your Majesty's service with joy" (Pribylniye dela…, 2000: 151). Petitions relating to career progression demonstrate the use of sociocultural adaptation mechanisms and show how important adaptation was in terms of population mobility.

Meanwhile, the notion of "social status" is considered by modern sociologists in the context of creation of family groups (Berto, Berto-Vyam, 1992: 106). Families contributed to the evolution of social mobility among their members, or transferred to them various elements that allowed an individual to change or retain his social status. A good example of this is the Grechaninov family (Grek, Grechanin, Grecheninov, Manuylov), which stood, socially, somewhat apart in Tomsk. In the land of Siberia, the Grechaninovs had managed to create a kinship clan, which guaranteed them a sustainable position in society for a long time. According to the archival documents, Manuyla Grek had at least nine sons. All of these were appointed to higher service ranks, the boyar scions. Even grandsons of Manuyla held one administrative position or another. All of the Grechaninovs were not only literate, but rather well-educated for their time. It happened that after moving to Siberia, Manuyla Konstantinovich Grechanin was able to teach his sons (quite probably, the father himself participated in teaching his children). The founder of the clan served in Moscow in a military Greek company, and in the 1640s was reassigned to Tomsk at the rank of boyar scion. One of his sons mentions in his census record that Manuyla had been deported. This was most probably true, but they preferred to conceal this fact. Stepan and Kalina Grechaninov were employed in the diplomatic service. Stepan participated in diplomatic missions to the Mongolian ruler Altyn Khan on more

than one occasion, while Kalina showed his abilities in the Altai region. Ivan Grechanin participated in military operations, leading a joint detachment of Cossacks from Tomsk and Kuznetsk. He was also the author of letters addressed to the Siberian Department about the state of affairs in the stockaded towns of Achinsk and Melessk. Fedor Manuylov Grechanin prospected for silver ore near the Kyshtak River at the end of the 17th century. Mikhayla Grechanin also held an administrative position. Petr Yakovlev Grechanin (a great-grandson of Manuyla's) carried out the first capitation in the Sosnovsky District of the Tomsky Uyezd in the 1720s. Description of the Grechaninovs' activities could be continued at length. They lived in Tomsk and owned acreages in the uyezd. Apart from administrative and political activities, the Grechaninovs did not stray from the activities peculiar to all service people of that time (they bargained, participated in agricultural land development, etc.). It was a very prolific family with many branches, that undoubtedly left an imprint in the history of the colonization of Siberia (Lyutsidarskaya, 1992: 25, 59).

Comparison of the social status of parents and their children allows intergenerational mobility to be identified, which is an important factor as regards status changes and manifestations of the activity of individuals. A positive transformation of children's social status as compared that of their parents is one of the indicators of a dynamically developing society (Luman, 2005: 158–160).

Expanse of Siberia and social mobility

Sustainable family clans guaranteed the stable existence of colonists in Siberian conditions. Having settled down in a new place, settlers tried to attract their relatives from the European part of the country to Siberia. Some documents about such movements are preserved in archives. Thus, Cossack cavalryman Terentiy Semenov, from Kuznetsk, asked permission to bring his wife and son, his brother with his wife and children, and his daughter-in-law to him from Ustyug; Yeniseysk Cossack foreman Fedor Elizarov Kazanets made a similar request regarding his nephew (RGADA. F. 214, Inv. 3, Col. 136, fol. 175, 213). The presence of relatives allowed them to expand their economic activities, the basis of subsistence.

The story of Parfen Stepnov, his children, and grandchildren is very interesting in terms of changes in social status. Judging by the available sources, it is hard to tell how Stepnov found himself in Siberia, particularly in Tomsk. Documents of the mid-17th century describe him as a service man, though one source calls him a foot Cossack. During this period, Stepnov was distinguished from other service class people by his regular fur-trading operations. However, more than furs fell into the scope of his commercial interests. The amounts involved in the trade activities of Stepnov differ markedly from the volumes of ordinary transactions in the Tomsk market. For example, in 1648/1649, he sold furs alone to the amounts of 44 rubles, while another business deal consummated as "local goods" (elks, hops, skins, bacon, fat, horsetails, etc.) amounted to 500 rubles. These are very considerable sums for that time. In subsequent years, customs documents continuously recorded the presence of Stepnov in the Tomsk market. In 1657, he sold furs to the amount of 26 rubles, and bought 29 head of cattle from indigenous inhabitants of Siberia. Ten years later, Stepnov undertook a journey to Yeniseysk, with sables owned by merchant F. Kislov to the amount of 100 rubles. At the same time, he sent hops to A. Tikhonov, a known Yeniseysk salt producer, who charged him with delivery of 700 pounds of salt to Tomsk. Furthermore, Stepnov also carried his own goods to the amount of 177 rubles. Obviously, such transactions in goods were made annually. Unfortunately, we have not found any documented data on the agricultural activities of Parfen Stepnov; it is known only that in the middle of the 17th century, local authorities borrowed from him more than 33 quarters of rye, intended for paying service people (Ibid.: Col. 470, fol. 30). However, Stepnov could have purchased grain from the local population too.

Parfen's sons were immediately, without gradual promotion from rank to rank, assigned to the boyar scions, and combined their service with business and economic activities. Andrey Stepnov was head of a customs office in 1706 (Ibid.: Inv. 1, Bk. 1452, fol. 4). Judging by the documents, he visited Moscow on missions. Andrey had a large mansion in Tomsk and considerable acreages in the rural district, owned two mills, and organized the catching fish in the Tom River. In 1707, being already a Tomsk customs tax collector, he bought valuable furs (ermines) from the Teleuts for treasury needs. Apparently, it was a very profitable position (Umansky, 1980: 273). Thus, Parfen Stepnov created in Siberia a clan of his near relatives, who were extremely successful in economic and commercial activities for a long time. By the beginning of the 19th century, Stepnovs were listed as merchants of the 3rd guild, who traded in German and Chinese goods, as well as Russian ones (Kratkaya entsiklopediya…, 1997: 88).

In our opinion, the destinies of the Grechaninovs and Stepnovs are not only an excellent example of

intergenerational mobility, but also demonstrate the accuracy of the theory developed by French sociologist P. Bourdieu regarding the existence of various capitals (not only financial, but also social, cultural, etc.) in society. As their advanced forms determine social inclusion, the societies with a high level of social capital are characterized by "dense social relationships, an ensemble of developed mutual commitments, shared understanding, a high level of trust between neighbors, intergroup community clubs, and ties that overcome accepted social barriers" (Bourdieu, 2002: 66).

Social mobility in Siberia was closely related to the spatial movements of the population. On the one hand, it hampered the arrangement of economic and family life of service people; but on the other hand, it facilitated the quickest adaptation to Siberian conditions and, ultimately, a broadening of their outlook. Their knowledge of Siberia was not limited to a certain location, region, etc. The life trajectory of many generations of Siberian Cossacks can be traced quite well from the sources of the 17th century. In his census record, Aleksey Kirillov (a foreman of Cossack cavalry in Kuznetsk) describes his family history as follows: "My great-grandfather was a Novgorod townsman who, escaping wrath, fled to Veliky Ustyug, and from Ustyug to Perm Velikaya; and when ataman Ermak Timofeevich left the Volga, he took my grandfather to Siberia as a guide… and my grandfather served at Verkhoturye, Turinsk, Tyumen, and Tobolsk in the Cossack cavalry service, and he served twenty years in Tomsk. Upon a petition of Tomsk service people and various other sorts of people, he was installed as a priest, owing to the scarcity of candidates; and my (Aleshka's) father Kirilo Merkuryev, served the Great Sovereign since 149 in the customs office for Tomsk and Narym, and in Kuznetsk, and I, Aleshka, was assigned to the vacant position in 188…" (see (Kamenetsky, 2005: 289)). This extract from the Kuznetsk Service register of 1681 contains not only interesting information about changes in places of living of the Siberian service class people, but also a curious fact concerning a dramatic change in the social status of a service man. The Cossack, having served for 32 years, became a Bogoyavlensk *dyachok.* No doubt he was literate and was, obviously, supported by the town's population. From that time on, he named himself Merkuryev, because the priest of the Bogoyavlensk church was Merkury Leontiev. Thus, this Cossack changed not only his social status, but also his surname in the modern sense of this term (Pokrovsky, 1989: 379). This is hardly the only case of changing first names and surnames to reflect changing circumstances in the 17th century. Such phenomena often hamper the work of researchers when correlating sources.

The expanse of Siberia provided the possibility of traveling long distances within the same state (career advancement on the "horizontal" level). To a large extent, this situation neutralized the process of "shrinking" the service class into itself by the end of the 17th century, when the opportunities for mobility were limited by the existence of a large number of "sons, brothers, and nephews outside of the service", as was mentioned in the historiography. Moreover, the trend towards inheritance of service only increased over time. By the beginning of the 18th century, it had become more and more difficult for a layman to find his place in the sovereign's service (Lyutsidarskaya, 2016: 516). This situation was caused by a decrease in the number of garrisons, a change in the political environment of Siberia, and other factors relating to a general reduction in the number of enlisted Cossacks in Siberian territory. S.V. Bakhrushin described this process in more detail in his overview of the Krasnoyarsk garrison (1959: 131–134).

Besides, the existence of vast undeveloped expanses in the east facilitated a returning to a position in state service that had been lost for subjective or objective reasons. This may be referred to as "undulating" (falling-rising) mobility, which is specifically mentioned by J. Urry (2012: 22). Being at fault in one place and, in some cases, having been punished, a person was reassigned to different, usually northeastern territory. At the new place, he remained in the same social position; or, having been demoted, regained his status or even got promoted over time. The entire history of Siberia is riddled with such examples. Even service people punished for their involvement in plots, escapes, and murders sometimes managed to restore their status completely, and the standing of their families. The story of the Chernigovsky family, whose founder's name was Nikifor Romanovich, is interesting in this respect. In 1632, he was taken captive in the course of the Smolensk War (1632–1634). Upon its completion, Chernigovsky preferred to stay in Russia and joined the tsar's service. In 1635, he enlisted in the streltsy of the Tula garrison. However, next summer, Nikifor took part in a "Lithuanian" plot: he knocked the guards senseless, took the garrison's weapons and supplies, and tried to flee abroad. His escape failed, he was overtaken and exiled to Siberia as a punishment. Chernigovsky not only lost his rank and status, but he and his wife were left with no outer garments or life savings; he wrote in his petition: "And we, your slaves, poor people, naked and barefoot, have no clothes to reach Siberia and may starve or freeze to death on the road… Please be merciful and order, your Majesty, that we be given some money for clothes, as God shall tell you" (see

(Krasnoshtanov, 2008: 23)). Generally, the picture in petitions is dramatized. Upon arrival in Yeniseysk in 1637, Nikifor submitted a petition and was reinstated in the sovereign's service "on a par with the Yeniseysk Cossacks" at the rank of Cossack cavalryman—privileged, by Siberian standards. In the Yeniseysk garrison, Chernigovsky proved himself an experienced administrator, and as early as the next seven to ten years, he became a manager of state-owned villages, salt-works, and other state properties in the large Ilimsk region. At the beginning of 1650s, he is mentioned as a Cossack foreman, and in 1655 as a pyatidesyatnik. By that time, his sons, who were born in Siberia, had grown up, and took up the positions of Cossacks in the Ilimsk voivodeship. However, in 1665, indefatigable Chernigovsky took part in the plot of service people and peasants against voivode L.A. Obukhov, who was killed as a result. Witnesses implicated Nikifor's younger son in the murder, while Nikifor himself was designated as one of the organizers. Along with other coup plotters, the Chernigovskys fled towards the Amur River. They were deprived of all statuses earned over decades of service, and the threat of execution for murdering a high-ranking official hung over them. In the Amur region, the fugitive Cossacks built Fort Albazin, hoping to make amends to the sovereign for the past by serving and collecting fur tribute. They actually managed to do it: ten years after his escape, Chernigovsky was officially appointed a manager of Fort Albazin, with the annual salary of a Cossack ataman. His sons also avoided the death penalty, but were reduced in rank from mounted to foot Cossacks (the elder son Fedor was divested of his rank of foreman). Shortly after these events, Nikifor died, and his sons were able to start a new career in Irkutsk and in the border stockades of the Irkutsky Uyezd. The younger son, Anisim, became a foreman as early as 1684, and Fedor was reinstated in the mounted service at the beginning of the 1690s; first, he achieved the rank of Cossack pyatidesyatnik, and then rose to boyar scion. During the 1680s–1700s, the grandsons of N. Chernigovsky occupied the posts of Cossack foremen, pyatidesyatniks, and atamans (for details see (Krasnoshtanov, 2008)). Thus, even after a complete demotion, service people were able to restore their status by means of reassignment to remote and underdeveloped eastern areas. Many people took this opportunity in the 17th century.

Undeveloped expanses of Siberia invited service people to fulfill their aspirations. In the reasonable opinion of A.V. Golovnev, the mainstream Russian culture covered a tremendous territory, owing to eco-social adaptability, variability, and mobility. Adaptability included the ability to capture various eco-niches, adapting to fast social changes. This was the key quality and advantage of Russian culture (Golovnev, 2009: 424). The state supported social mobility, since it had an interest in the fastest possible development of the territory. And vast expanses gave such an opportunity.

Conclusions

Thus, the conducted study, with a certain degree of conventionality, presents the migratory community in the Siberia of the 17th century as a highly volatile organism. A number of objective and subjective factors ensured mobility among the service class people. A sealed off, class-based state was forced to open slightly the window of opportunity in the Siberian region during the first century of its active colonization.

The various cases of social mobility discussed in this article were related to general processes of ethnocultural, social-political, and economic adaptation under the conditions of the initial development of the territory. By the beginning of the 18th century, the mobility of the service community had decreased, and this was accompanied by de-intensification of upward flows and a gradual increase in the downward flow and reproduction-rate of the group. It became relatively closed to newcomers, so people from other social layers encountered increasing difficulty in trying to join it. The bulk of social movements proceeded at the horizontal level of the social structure.

The important results of economic and cultural activities of the Siberian society in the 17th century involve the formation of a movable group of service people. This subcultural group had features of professional military-administrative associations, with a high index of social and territorial mobility, which added a useful adaptive characteristic to the developing Siberian community. Such a variant of adaptive behavior was a regulator of social, ethnocultural, and ethnopolitical processes.

Acknowledgment

This study was supported by the Russian Science Foundation (Project No. 14-50-00036).

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Received January 30, 2017.
Received in revised form February 27, 2017.