

## **Abstract**

The existence of Russian middle class is often perceived as a condition for Russia's democratization and the country's economic progress is often mentioned in connection with the growth of the middle class and henceforth increased popular demand for transparent functioning of public institutions. However economic growth does not necessarily lead to more extensive middle class, especially not when the income inequality rises as was the case of Russia in the particular period. This thesis proves that Russian middle class grew between the years 1998 and 2008, it identifies its specific features and explains its evolution from the perspective of occupation and income. The data from Russian Longitudinal Monitoring Survey, which the thesis is based on, confirm that while the Russian middle class was growing in size, growth in inequality was also observed, especially between cities and countryside and between individual economic sectors.