

Sc.D. (Pedagogical sciences), Associate Professor, **LILIYA SUSHENTSEVA**

Lviv Polytechnic National University  
Address: 12, St. Bandera Str., Lviv, 79013, Ukraine  
Phone: +380676630777. E-mail: Liliia.L.Sushentseva@lpnu.ua

Ph.D. (Pedagogical sciences), Associate Professor **MARIANNA HAVRYLYUK**

Lviv Polytechnic National University  
Address: 12, St. Bandera Str., Lviv, 79013, Ukraine  
Phone: +380675303939. E-mail: mhavrilyuk@gmail.com

## **PROFESSIONAL MOBILITY: PHILOSOPHICAL AND SOCIOLOGICAL ASPECTS**

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*In the article the problem of competitiveness of able-bodied citizens and their capacity for professional mobility have been studied. The professional mobility has been researched by foreign and Ukrainian scientists. The European scientists started empirical investigation of the mobility processes in the mid-XX<sup>th</sup> century. It has been found that the division of labor in the history of human society led to the emergence of professions and was the main (motivation) driving force of human progress. Due to it people started to differ from one another. Considering this fact, P. Kropotkin emphasized the future professionals' need for the development of mobility. The basis for the study of such phenomenon as professional mobility is the research works of E. Durkheim and M. Weber. Functional approach to the analysis of professional mobility as a social phenomenon became the fundamental base of their research. Philosophers interpret the concept of "mobility" in terms of dialectic Law of the Development of Society, and sociologists distinguish the dynamism of social development as the main factor that determines the nature and the content of social and professional mobility. It has been proved that among the able-bodied citizens who deliberately have chosen a certain profession and have mastered it, there are people who are forced to get training for a new occupation and pursue a different profession. The research results let us state that among these people there will be those who will not always be ready for professional mobility. Professional mobility has been described as a condition and a consequence of the professional division of labour according to the society needs by changing the profession or training for a new one and has been also considered as a change of employment position or role of the worker that is caused by the change of the place of work or profession.*

**Key words:** social mobility, professional mobility, profession.

### **Introduction**

A rapid decrease in the living standard of the majority of Ukrainians, progressive polarization of the population income as well as the increase of the inequality of social opportunities for individuals from different groups, significant change in the criteria system for evaluating success and the growth of trends in the spread of non-institutionalized channels of social mobility have forced the reforms in Ukrainian economy which have been occurring over the past decades, and are accompanied by the increase of both social and professional mobility of the population. An important

issue that worries researchers both in Ukraine and in other countries is a problem of competitiveness of able-bodied citizens and their capacity for professional mobility.

### **The aim of the study**

The aim of the article is to explore the problem of professional mobility in the philosophical and sociological aspects. The authors have defined the following objectives: to analyze the scientific and pedagogical literature, which highlights the different aspects of the problem under research in terms of philosophy and sociology; to define the essence of professional mobility in this aspect.

### **Theoretical framework and research methods**

From the middle of the XX<sup>th</sup> century the study of empirical processes of mobility started in Europe (the United Kingdom, Sweden). The answers to the questions: how to conduct the research; which concepts to use; what statistics for the processing of empirical information to involve could be found in the works of American researchers (S. Lipset, R. Benedix, P. Blau, O. Duncan, D. Featherman, R. Hauser). According to P. Blau and O. Duncan, the empirical research of mobility should be focused on the analysis of the conditions that affect the professional achievements within a particular society.

### **Results**

The research papers written by E. Durkheim and M. Weber have become the basis for the study of such phenomenon as professional mobility. A functional approach to the analysis of professional mobility as social phenomenon has formed the fundamental basis for their research. In terms of this, the famous Russian philosopher and sociologist P. Kropotkin emphasized the need for the development of future specialists professional mobility. Having a high opinion of “Moscow education and training system”, which was developed by D. Sovetkin, the scientist pointed out that the system taught not only the professional skills but also the methods of work and presented the “general rules for studying a variety of crafts, knowledge of the general principles of machines, tools, labour procedures etc.” (Fields, Factories and Workshops, p. 170).

To assess the evolution of the “man – labour” relationship and characteristics of individualization of social behaviour E. Durkheim introduced the concept of “plasticity”, which reflects the ability and the capacity of individuals to shape their work, professional orientation and perspectives. The scholar describes as characteristic feature of “plastic” workers their continuous internally deterministic improvement of personal competitiveness as well as their ability to identify new professional opportunities and new forms of professional self-realization. Thus the evolution of the attitude towards the job led to the actualization of workers’ ability to shape the content of their professional role according to their own goals and opportunities. Following E. Durkheim’s ideas, K. Marx, having carefully analysed the process of work itself, identified its crucial role in the life of an individual and a society, as well as its direct relationship with the process of professional mobility formation. K. Marx argued that “the division of labor within modern society is characterized by the fact that it creates specialities, separate professions” (Marks & Engels, 1970, p. 159). Employees of a certain profession form a professional group and members of this group usually

have the same specialization and general business interests. A professional group is a wide socio-professional community that is included in the social structure of society.

The empirical research carried out in the United States of America and Europe in the middle of the twentieth century indicated the determinant role of professional achievements in the social mobility process. In their research work “Social Mobility in Industrial Society” American sociologists S. Lipset and R. Benedix define mobility as the movement of people who are engaged predominantly in mental work. It is also worth noting that thanks to these researchers the professional mobility has acquired the status of independent research subject. As a result, the necessity to define the concept of “professional mobility” has arisen. This notion appeared in the scientific literature in the early 1950’s of the last century. Originally it meant a change of various kinds of occupations or professions relating to the main types of works: physical, non-physical and farming. Regarding the professional mobility, the scientists believed that its essence could be clarified on the basis of the following empirical indicators: movement of “generation of children” in terms of physical, non-physical work and farming compared to “generation of parents”; assessment of the inheritance of prestigious and non-prestigious occupations (prestigious occupations were defined as those connected with non-physical work and non-prestigious work referred to physical work and farming); determination of the intensity of upward, downward, and total vertical mobility.

The concept presented by S. Lipsent and R. Benedix was one of the attempts to develop a theoretical model of professional mobility, however, some scientists (V. Novikov, in particular) argued that it had a number of significant drawbacks: the lack of consistent differentiation of professional mobility from other types of social mobility; the suggested research methodology did not determine an empirical criteria of professional mobility fully, being limited to stating just one criterion – that of changing the type of work; in this particular concept the authors did not pay much attention to the analysis of professional career within one generation.

Professional mobility is a prerequisite and a consequence of the professional division of labour according to the needs of society by changing profession or acquiring new profession and is considered a change in employment position or the role of the worker due to change of job or profession.

In the Soviet Union the main incentives for professional mobility were the scientific and technical achievements, which led to the emergence of new professions and necessity of advanced training. Nowadays the development of market economic relations

is of great importance. The subjective aspect of professional mobility, which occurs when the change of employee interests results in making the decision to change the workplace or even profession, should be taken into consideration. To do this, a personality should possess certain qualities, namely: readiness and inclination to change the sphere of professional activity. So, as it has been found, professional mobility includes the following aspects: objective (scientific, technical and socio-economic conditions and the very process of changing professions), subjective (the change of interests results in the change of workplace or profession) and characterological (formation of readiness for professional mobility).

The further investigations of professional mobility in Western sociology in 70's of the XX<sup>th</sup> century were conducted by P. Blau and O. Duncan. The scientists tried to develop a unique system of professional structure of society and to introduce the sophisticated statistical methods and procedures of professional mobility analysis (Duncan & Featherman, 1972). The researchers attempted to solve the problem of efficiency and fairness in the context of social mobility in American society. Special attention in the research was paid to the analysis of those conditions which affected the professional achievements and mobility within the institutional differences of a particular society. The use of multiple regression, which explores the impact of two or more variables on a criterion, became an important achievement of the researchers. However, a significant disadvantage of P. Blau and O. Duncan's work was the fact that they did not disclose the impact of social mobility on life style, psychological and cultural aspects.

In the 80's of the XX<sup>th</sup> century there appeared a new generation of researchers (L. Jones, D. Goldthorpe, R. Erikson, D. Featherman, R. Hauser, etc.) who dedicated their research to social mobility. They focused on the comparison of social mobility of different generations. The scholars believed that the factor of mobility, which indicates the unequal opportunities for different generations, was not changing and remained stable in industrial societies for certain period of time. The model of social mobility introduced by D. Featherman, L. Jones and P. Hauser gave the opportunity to study the core samples of immobility and exchange between five professional strata. As a result, they made the following conclusions: the low level of social mobility was appropriate for top and bottom layers of the sample stratification levels; the most extensive mobility was characteristic of medium and intermediate layers; on the top and the base of a social pyramid there were strong protective barriers that emphasized the existence of boundary between upper and lower classes; individuals had more or less equal opportunities for

upward and downward mobility. R. Hauser justifies the idea of "specific forms of mobility" that are characteristic of one type of culture rather than of one type of society. The cultural interpretation of mobility was extended and considered as one of the main characteristics of a certain, mainly western tradition.

In the 80's of the XX<sup>th</sup> century there appeared the works of Soviet sociologists S. Makeyev, A. Vyshnyak, V. Tarasenko, T. Zaslavskaya, R. Ryvkina and others, in which methodological, methodical and organizational problems of studying social structure in dynamics were analyzed, as well as research trends and directions of social mobility of different groups and segments of the population were studied.

In the late 1980's and early 1990's foreign sociologists became increasingly interested in professional mobility, and in research into its socio-cultural aspects, in particular. The most significant generalizing research works were the works of B. Wagner, D. Goldthorpe, R. Erikson and others. In their papers these scientists considered mobility as a set of elements of the inner life of social subjects, united into a coherent system that provides the degree of subjective mobility needed for the adaptation to the environment or to the active impact on it (Erikson, 1992).

In foreign sociology the research of professional mobility has its long history and systematic character while in our country (particularly in the post Soviet Union period) the attention of scholars to the study of professional mobility was paid only in the 1960s. Soviet scientists made the main emphasis on studying labour and migration movements caused by the necessity to solve socio-economic problems and the lack of efficiency of the existing labour distribution among the places of social production, employment areas as well as inefficiency of workers' mobility between these places. The term "labour mobility" was first used by T. Zaslavskaya for analysing the processes of labour changes in our country. The researcher treated this kind of mobility as the change of job by workers: "Movement of workers from one job to another is a basic act of the many that make up the global process of labor mobility" (Zaslavskaya, 1974, p. 17). Labour mobility, but for movement from one workplace to another, also includes changes of skill levels, movement of workers between different sectors of economy and territorial labour migration caused by the change of occupation.

The different directions of social mobility, including its professional aspect have been highlighted in several research works aimed at examining the labour migration and turnover of personnel. Promotion of the employee to a challenging work due to his/her professional development, continuing education and

training, gained experience could be considered as “vertical movement” or social evolution” (Kugel, 1983). The researcher A. Mudryk is of the same opinion. He believes that “professional mobility is the promotion of individuals through various levels in the hierarchy of employment provisions” (Mudryk, 2000, p. 189). In our opinion, this approach to the interpretation of the concept of “professional mobility” does not reveal its essence and requires more detailed and comprehensive study.

S. Kugel has described mobility as a complex concept that includes a range of different components such as: parties, levels, criteria. The peculiar features of mobility are its versatility, multidimensionality and its multifaceted character. In our opinion, the author precisely determines the universality of this concept to eliminate the contradictions of educational process and provide the compliance with its logic (Kugel, 1983).

Considering professional mobility in terms of sociological approach, L. Lesohina has expressed the opinion that it should be viewed from different angles. On the one hand, it is a change of position, due to external circumstances (lack of jobs, low wages, household disorder, etc.). In this case mobility is induced by the necessity of people to adapt to real life situations. On the other hand, mobility can be seen as the inner self-development of an individual, based on ultimate values and the need for self-perfection.

While exploring the non-institutionalised tools of the development of professional mobility, O. Posukhova considered professional mobility of population as a social phenomenon and has associated it with social inequality. The scholar has explored professional mobility not through traditional institutionalised channels (determined by the law), but through non-institutionalised ones, namely: unlawful (intimate-personal tendency, personal protection and patronage, such as: association of people coming from the same area, ties of blood, dating, friendship, affiliation to the political elite etc.) and illegal channels. At the same time, having explored the issues of social movements, M. Rutkevich and F. Filippov concluded that in a socialist society as a result of radical changes of social-class structure the majority of actual obstacles to social movements had already disappeared, the nature and the social consequences of these movements as well as the character of those incentives that induce professionals to change their social status had been changed. The scientists have argued that social movement is one of the forms of gradual elimination of social differences, and vertical gradation exists so far as there is still inequality in terms of work complexity (Sushentseva, 2013).

In the early fifties of the XX<sup>th</sup> century famous sociologists (R. Benedix, D. Glass, H. Zetterberg,

S. Lipset, S. Miller, G. White and others) introduced the thesis of “industrialization”, assuming that industrialization increases the possibility of upward social mobility for individuals from different social groups. They wanted to prove that the rate of social mobility in industrial countries was higher than in non-industrial ones. In their research the scientists (R. Benediks, S. Lipset, G. Zetterberh and others) recorded the move from physical to mental labor, from farming to industry, from executive to managerial work. But eventually their hypothesis was not confirmed, because it was found that the overall level of social mobility for different societies was almost the same. Most western sociologists consider an economic factor to be the dominant factor of social mobility, and today it has become the basic reason of mobility in Ukraine too, as nowadays wealth has become a recognised criterion of social success, social security and opportunity of enhancement to higher strata.

The development of innovative technologies in industrial society leads to the emergence of new professions, which, on the one hand, require high qualification and constant training, and, on the other hand, are well-paid and prestigious. As a result, the level of mobility is constantly increasing.

Social mobility is characterized by certain peculiarities, extent and trends in transformation of social structure and is defined by a complex of factors, such as: structural changes in the economy; changes in the system of employment; decrease in the standards of living of the majority of the population; social anomia (destruction of one value-normative system and the absence of any substitute); and social deprivation (restricting access to material goods). The study of mobility mechanism requires grouping of factors. Exploring the intra-generational social mobility in society of semi-open type L. Kansuzyan pointed out the significant determinants of social mobility at two levels: macro level (social class relationships, social policy, scientific and technical progress, socio-historical factor) and micro (class affiliation, social origin, political position, conditions of labor, industry, education and training; natural sub-layers such as gender and age). The scientist also distinguished three social groups according to the degree of mobility intensity: mobile; moderately mobile; immobile (Kansuzyan, 1993).

Thus social mobility is based on the combination of different types of relationships between an individual and the society (group, social stratum) that are formed under constantly changing conditions. Considering the fact that an individual plays a crucial role in the relationship of human and society a future skilled worker needs to be adaptive, communicative and tolerant. The activity and dynamics of an individual is determined by

the movability and the variability of his/her internal state, i.e. socio-cultural mobility. Given the fact that social mobility is the initiator of social change and the driver of transformation from a potential being into real one, its actualization will encourage objective changes in the social position of an individual, changes of his/her social status, positions, roles etc.

Studying the category of “social and cultural mobility” from the standpoint of philosophy, Ivan Vasylenko notes that it is an important feature of social life that can be presented as a way of existence of the open nonlinear system formed by the interaction of social subjects, dynamic and static elements comprising constant and variable components.

The permanent elements of social life are such categories and concepts as mentality, social memory, individual spiritual core, stable “core” formed by the values of high rank. The dynamic elements include: “social change”, “social process”, “social dynamics”. Where the outer side of changes due to changes in the social system is reflected in the mutual arrangement of subsystems, we can speak of an objective component, but a subjective component is represented by the socio-cultural mobility of a personality which we are most interested in. Socio-cultural mobility is quite complex formation and represents a combination of the following components: practical thinking methods, ideological settings and holistic orientation of a person. All these components have different degree of freedom, i.e. degree of mobility. Therefore, socio-cultural mobility consists of changeable ways of practical thinking, ideological views and value orientations that are developing (Vasylenko, 1996).

Under existing conditions, the category of “mobility” obtains a wider meaning that provides understanding of the role (cultural, social, professional) that mobility can and should play regarding different qualification levels of a worker. Moreover, professional training should meet modern requirements of personal development, production, society and the state. Therefore, it is necessary to consider the category of “mobility” as the integral concept, not only in terms of anthropology and sociology but also in philosophical and psychological-pedagogical aspect.

The works of E. Durkheim, M. Weber, A. Shyutsa, M. Scheler and other scientists are the basis of the philosophical approach to the formation of professional mobility. In their works the scientists reveal the essence of “mobility” through the prism of the basic laws of dialectics. Gradual accumulation of quantitative changes and their transition at some stage in the fundamental qualitative changes ensure development. While quantitative changes are made through gradual accumulation, transition to a new qualitative state is carried out in the form of a

jump. In the structure of mobility process this jump is represented as a break with the old and adaptation to the new. Knowledge of the above dynamic properties is the basis for predicting the nature of the profession.

The dialectical law of the unity and conflict of opposites plays an important role in understanding the essence of mobility. This law explains the source of transformation and the development of objects, processes and phenomena. The mechanism of implementing mobility in society is due to this particular law in resolving contradictions in the educational process. Thus, for example, qualifying mobility reflects not only the promotion of officials, but also describes the professional and industrial stability of an employee. This bilateral dialectical process organically combines such seemingly contradictory elements as employee’s competence and potential of vertical movement, on the one hand, and his/her possibility to “stay” in the profession or industry for a certain period of employment, on the other hand (Sushentseva, 2013).

## Conclusions

Thus, philosophers interpret the concept of “mobility” in terms of dialectic laws of social development, while sociologists distinguish the dynamism of social development as the main factor that determines the nature and content of social and professional mobility. From the perspective of social aspect the phenomenon of professional mobility is treated as an integral part of social mobility that is any individual or social object (value) transition from one social position to another. According to this, professional mobility is a change of an individual position in the vocational qualification structure of society; it is a position that individuals may occupy in society (as a rule, it is a sign of an open or closed nature of a particular society), and that is a change by an individual or group of individuals of one profession to another.

The study of vertical and horizontal professional mobility belongs to the perspective of future studies.

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