DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.34069/AI/2020.30.06.2

Channels and "lifts" of social mobility of modern young townsfolk

Каналы и "лифты" социальной мобильности современных молодых горожан

Received: April 30, 2020 Accepted: May 31, 2020

Abstract

The article analyses the recent data on social mobility problem in Russian post-Soviet young people. Based on sociological research in the form of the poll of young people aged 15-28, living in the Russian province – the towns in the south of Tyumen region (N=1200), - the dominant channels of young people's mobility were found out, as well as the motivation and setting on mobility in different categories of young people. The value of the research results consists in deep understanding of the person and groups' social mobility problems, on the whole, and young people, in particular, in post-Soviet Russia.

Key Words: social 'lift', pseudo mobility, mobility trace, social status, mobility management.

Introduction

Presently, in contrast to Sorokin's ideas, it is advisable to differentiate the notions of "the channel" and "the lift" of social mobility. The former one is the sphere, where mobility takes place, while the latter one – "the lift" – is the instrument (means) of mobility. The traditional channels of social mobility remain, in Sorokin (1927) and Weber's (1990) viewpoints, politics, education and power. In spite of this fact, there is a transformation of the given channels' contents,

Аннотация

В статье анализируются последние данные по проблеме социальной мобильности российской постсоветской молодежи. Ha основе социологических исследований в виде опроса молодежи в возрасте 15-28 лет, проживающей в российской провинции - городах на юге Тюменской области (N=1200), выявлены доминирующие каналы молодежной мобильности, а также мотивация и установка на мобильность в различных категориях молодежи. Ценность результатов исследования заключается в глубоком понимании проблем социальной мобильности человека и групп в пелом и молодежи, В частности. постсоветской России.

Ключевые слова: социальный "лифт", псевдомобильность, отслеживание мобильности, социальный статус, управление мобильностью.

arising out of the new "lifts". The study of the social mobility problems has an increasing tendency due to the appearance of its new spheres of expression (mass-media, gender, ethnos, physical and psychological disability, mercenarism, volunteering, identification belonging, virtual life).

The aim of the paper consists in determining the dominant channels of increasing mobility, which

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the young provincial townsfolk count on, as well as the revealing of factors, influencing the motivation and setting in order to realize the mobility.

The article reveals groups of factors, influencing the choice of the channel, 'lift', trace of mobility: objective and subjective factors, connected with the personality of the individual.

The channel of mobility (Sorokin, 1927; Weber, 1990) is interpreted as conditions circumstances of social reality, preconditioning any mobility within the stratification system of society. Nevertheless, it is precarious to identify completely the channels of mobility and social "lifts".

"The social lift" is, first of all, an artificially constructed instrument of mobility, while the channel of mobility functions as objective reality, irrespective of the personal and social wishes. Hence, it is advisable to differentiate the analysis of these social phenomena. It is commonly known that channels of mobility are represented, first of all, by social institutes and the person's spheres of activities: family, property, army, education, power, religion (church). It is the undoubted fact that in different historic periods some or other channels of mobility dominate in society. Besides, due to social changes new channels appear, while the former ones lose their topical character. Thus, for example, in Soviet times such social mobility channels as education, army, power predominated. In the early post-Soviet period new channels appeared: property, business, criminal infrastructure. Education, as a channel of vertical mobility, may lose its value. At present, there are such popular channels as property, power, army, politics, mass-media reference.

So, the list of mobility channels, in principle, doesn't change throughout the existence and functioning of the enumerated social institutes, while their meaning and part in the tempo of mobility and the choice of the predominant trace constantly undergo correction under influence of the outer conditions.

The dynamic transformation of the outer and, first of all, social environment taking place at this historical period of Russia, requires not only active functioning of the enumerated channels in order to provide mobility, which is extremely difficult in the critical conditions of a number of social institutes (family, education), but also the use of additional instruments to activate mobility first of all, vertical mobility.

Such an instrument is a "social lift". In his fifth pre-election article from February 13, 2012 "Building justice. The social policy of Russia" Vladimir Putin declares the value of "social lift" in respect to the low contribution into professional outlook and personal potential realization of such channel as education.

Indeed, in the Soviet period of Russian history this channel not only provided intense social mobility, but determined resolutely its increasing trace that enabled the society to keep amount of human potential high, in particular, the one, expressed by the Index of Human Potential Development (further referred to as IDHP). Thus, in 1993 Russia took the 27th place in the world, according to IDHP, while now – only the 57th.

As to education, it is worthwhile to pay attention to the following peculiarity of its use as a channel of mobility. In modern conditions this channel tends to transform from the real one into the false one, something illusionary, a "pseudochannel" of increasing mobility. The point of its illusionary character is in the fact that on entering the higher educational institution a young person estimates himself by his milieu as a person, reaching a higher social position, while it is commonly known that education in a higher educational establishment mostly does not grant getting an interesting and well-paid job in the acquired profession, helping the person to maintain his accomplished status or to highten it.

The reverse side of the illusionary character of education is in the fact that getting the status of a pupil or a student requires its maintainance through constant work, while the majority of modern students only pretend to study. So, the stereotype about vast prospects for the graduates of institutes and universities is not objectively proved.

Due to the illusionary character of vertical mobility in students, it is possible to speak about other expressions of "pseudomobility", namely, in cases, when a subject or a whole social group get the "tokens" of belonging to high rank positions, not possessing their true qualities. For example, when a person buys on loan an expensive car, a telephone, a flat, but is unable to pay the loan back, or through protection occupies a high office, but cannot maintain it because of incompetence.

Another example of "pseudomobility" in modern Russia is the appearance of a new social group, which Toshchenko (2015) calls "the precariat".

In his words, these are well-educated people, but underpaid, or having occasional low income (tutors of institutes and universities, managers of the minor hand, medical nurses, kindergarten educators, culture officials).

Hence, nowadays education cannot be considered a wholesome channel of increasing mobility. According to a number of scientists, it is possible to overcome "the pseudomobility effect" by "learning all your life" (Bukodi, 2017, Blanden & Macmillan, 2016). We cannot but agree with this point of view, because, moreover, such education is getting more and more accessible, due to digital technologies. The pointed out features of social mobility, taking place in the Russian society, require not only the search of new social mobility channels, but also the creation of instruments to improve the effectiveness of the latter ones.

As the new channels of increasing mobility, besides property, business, nowadays political (public) activity is mentioned more and more often. In particular, Belusa (2013) names the membership in the ruling party to the newly formed channels, as well as belonging to the opposition and initiating new parties, together with the participation in the youth public activities. "The social lifts" in such channels are represented by the practice of organizing the management and political reservations, competitive interviews, volunteering, supporting public initiatives through the grant system. It is noteworthy, that the channel of increasing mobility is represented not only by the political activity of the person, but also by his adherence to the leading political doctrine (Steinert-Threlkeld, 2017; Almeida, 2015; Carpenter & Moore, 2014). In the opinion of the cited authors, mobility increases with the preference of political values of freedom and individualism (Wilding & George, 2009; Janson, 2017).

The working instrument to exercise increasing mobility is surely the system of talented children and young people's support in our country, which consists in creating conditions to provide accessibility for capable and talented children and young people of any educational, culture, sports organizations, helping to divulge, develop and realize their potential. The notion of "social lift" also refers to the realization of events in organizing transterritory mobility for the young people to be able to work in most socially demanded spheres, requiring their professional knowledge and skills. For example, foreign scientists with the full right think that professional and career mobility, as a rule,

among the officials, depends not only on the age, rank and education of the person, but also on transterritory mobility of the employees (MacGregor & Eugin, 1974).

Malyshev (2012) points to a number of reasons to activate the value of "social lifts", among which he refers to the necessity in increasing the number of the mid-social class in order to provide public stability, overcoming the tendency to increase the facts of young people deviations, prevention of the economic stagnation danger. Malyshev calls our attention to the specific character of modern "social lifts" functioning. Its essence is in the fact that in the core of the forming information society there appears the functioning of "the virtual lift", bringing its first fruits and letting the advanced "digital" young people take real high social positions. The peculiarity of "the virtual social lift" consists in several aspects.

First, it helps the maximal number of people to demonstrate their "digital" abilities – the fact that expands territorial and professional choice limits and suggestions. Second, the virtual life helps young people to demonstrate and to develop actively their creative abilities, which nowadays are the most required commodity in all markets. Third, this "lift" is devoid of the preconception element in choosing the best variants, as the opinion of the opportunities and abilities of the subject is formed anonymously, through technical means. Fourth, using digital communications decreases the competition "on the lift entrance", because the number of people, who want to use it, is limited by those who have perfectly mastered information technologies that are not accessible to everybody because of the age factor, place of dwelling, education, material and other opportunities.

One more "lift" in the educational channel of social mobility is the command of foreign languages. In conditions of modern global world the mastery of another language than native is hard to overestimate. This situation is felt in the society, but was never yet referred to as a "lift". Besides, another social lift, actively functioning throughout the world, including Russia, is massmedia. The appearance and numerous "rushing" in mass-media enables not only the individuals. but whole groups to form their respective image, which transforms into the stable social status. Such situation takes place in politics, culture, arts, sports. This "lift" played its positive part with reference to invalids, who, with the help of mass-media in Russia, socialize into an accessible public milieu.



At the same time this "lift" may be used to create a negative image, that deteriorates the reputation and degrades the social status of some professional groups (medical workers, housing and communal services workers). The same situation took place several years ago with military men, policemen. It was successfully overcome with the help of mass-media.

The analysis of the issues of social lifts functioning in modern Russia leads to the ideas of the interconnections in their tendency, activity and viability with the dialectics and dynamics of social development, as well as with the strategy of political and social-economic choice.

Due to this thesis we can suppose that de-jure measures will be taken to improve the work of such "lifts" as military service and other military activity, education, medicine, housing and communal services workers, support of talented and perspective young people, pioneering, information sphere, the internet technologies. It is difficult to forecast the development of events de-facto. It is a sure fact that such "lifts" as income (property, riches, the capital), family relations, lucky marriage, political activity, reference to a certain professional group (the military, officials, financiers, raw material industry workers) will retain their positions. Also the movement of volunteers gains a special value as a public force and a social "lift". It is true that not only participation in public activity organizations and associations contributes to the horizontal (that goes without saying), but also to the vertical mobility, as well as the very membership in the public organization and activity is the inference of life conditions and the result of realization of a certain need - the motive, embodied in the setting and activity.

Foreign authors pay attention to a number of channels of social mobility, strange to the Russian society, but having significant importance in the past: the struggle for women's emancipation and social guarantees for minorities. Indeed, from the times of Zetkin, depending on the strategy of political course and the development of social and scientifictechnical progress, different societies prefer increasing mobility of certain sex representatives or people of this or that ethnos (Statham, Brannen & Mooney, 2008; Carpenter & Moore, 2014; Sambanis & Shayo, 2013).

With this, there is a question of in-subject determinants of social mobility. Shpektorenko (2013) mentions two groups of characteristics, such as qualities, developing the inner need of

the individual in social mobility: the valueoriented and the competent ones. To the first one he refers the social trend, social intentions (motives), social interests, social expectations, social satisfaction. To the second one - studial capacity, social experience, culture, competence. Both groups of qualities are the result of ontogenesis and socialization.

The evidence of this statement requires precision of the essence of mechanisms forming in-subject determinants of social mobility and the answer to the question, which of these mechanisms fail: ontogenetic or socialized.

The recent research shows that social activity is connected with the set of psychophysiological determining personal qualities, personality communicative features, his selfesteem, the level of aspirations (ambitions) and the contents of his system of values, while the latter is a "key" to expressions of social activity and mobility. The works by Shamionov (2014), thinking that activity is determined by the presence of a certain risk-potential in the individual – all kinds of resources, helping him to take decisions and act with high risk, show that the risk-potential depends on purposefulness and the initiative. The study of social psychologists (Herzberg, Mosner, Blokh & Sinderman, 2007; MacClelland, 2007) reveal that the person's mobility is connected with his motivation for success and avoiding failure.

The referred data enable us to state that not only environmental (objective) factors influence the intensity and tendency to mobility, but also – the intrasubjective factors, representing a complex of psychophysiological and socialized qualities of an individual.

Such an interdisciplinary approach to social mobility was once initiated by Sorokin (1927). Focusing on the professional mobility (inter- and intraprofessional), the great sociologist pointed out not only environmental, but also personal factors in expressing mobility. The carried out survey of scientific trends and results on the problem of Russian young people social mobility helps us to determine a number of research caches, requiring filling with the new veritable data in the study of the given phenomenon. To such issues belong: the dominant sources and factors of economic, labour and professional mobility (mentality, ideals, value orientations) and their contents; optimal social conditions for the young people to exercise upgrading mobility; effective management mechanism to regulate young people's social mobility; the components

of social mobility; the effectiveness of different social "lifts" and its connection with intra- and intersubjective factors.

Methodology

The tasks were: to clear out what age and identification categories of the youth are most mobile and what outer factors contribute to forming the motivation and settings for professional and career mobility. To underscore, in what sphere of activity young people estimate their chances in upcoming mobility as most successful. To appraise the main factors, inhibiting the expression of social mobility among young people. To suggest public measures, enabling the youth, living in provincial towns, to enhance their aspirations and get prospects to upgrade their social status.

In 2016 in the framework of fulfilling the grant of the Russian Humanitarian Scientific Fund (RGNF), a group of researchers from Tyumen Industrial University (TIU), Russia, held a sociological investigation in the form of the poll of young people aged 15–28, living in south minor towns of Tyumen region (with the population of 1 mln. people and $> 100\,000$ people) - N = 1200 people. The general total made 448 504 people, while 256 500 of them are women and 212 004 - men (women - 55,1%, men - 44,9%).

The hypothesis is as follows. If for the young people, living far from megalopolises, it is possible to realize the policy, oriented on the freedom and individuality, and also to overcome negative factors, preventing to express activity and mobility, the number of young people, having a setting to express their social mobility, will increase.

Results and discussion

The most mobile (both vertically and horizontally) are young people, aged enough for crucial life events. Here belong young people, aged 15-28 (62,3%), 22-24 (67,7%). In these age categories the young people finish their education on the programs of secondary, special professional, higher education and start working. Young people of minor towns are more orientated on mobility, than the inhabitants of the cities (42,4% and 28,8% respectively).

The females show higher contrasts of mobility (both the horizon and the top), than men (48,4% to 40,9% in the general sampling).

As to the factors, predisposing people to express mobility, the most important were, according to the majority of respondents, constant self-education (58,6%), commercial activity (45,4%), change of dwelling (18,1%), parental and friend relations (16,2%). Besides, among the factors, contributing to mobility, a huge place, in the respondents' opinion, is taken by such subjective characteristics of the person as the wish to achieve the goal, persistence (50,7%), the ability to set relations with the necessary people (20,3%), charisma, the ability to influence people (22,3%), trail-blazer frame of mind (11,2%).

It is noteworthy, that the majority of young people think that real chances for self-realization, conditions to build a career, presently, can be estimated as average (51,7%). 27,6%, estimate their chances of upgrading highly, and 4,7% of the respondents – very high. Nevertheless, the majority of young people hope to improve their economic condition, comparing to that of their parents (74,7%).

Answering the question of where, in the respondents' opinion, there are more opportunities for career growth — in economically developed countries or in Russia, many answered that in the West (44,9%). 23,3% of young people agreed that the chances in the West as well as in Russia are approximately equal. The rest eluded the answer. The female representatives and the younger respondents often spoke in favor of the Western system of self-realization.

The researchers were eager to find out what could young people sacrifice for the sake of their career and professional growth. It turned out, that the majority of the respondents could sacrifice their free time (82,9%), the living standard (35,6%), health (20,1%), personal happiness (14,4%). The group, tending to "sacrifices" is mostly female and younger men, aged 15–18.

While evaluating the chances of successful vertical and horizontal mobility (transterritorial), the young people mentioned the most favorable spheres (channels of transposition). Among them there were: work in the bodies of state power (33,1%), in the Ministry of Home Affairs – the police, the MCHS (the Ministry of Extra Situations) – 30,8%, in financial sphere – 35,4%, business practice (34,7%), working activity at large state corporations – (27,5%), work, connected with PR-technologies – 38,3%, volunteering and expressing public activity (18,4%).



It was also important to estimate which factors, to the respondents' minds, prevent expressing mobility in youth. Among the most significant factors there were noted inaccessibility of education, connected with high cost of education (41,4%), bad household and material conditions (35,8%), incongruity of the conservative education with the demands employer(36,6%). The subjective characteristics, having negative effects on mobility, are mostly the inability to present oneself (44,3%), absence lack of assertion show (30,3%).extra-perfectionism (25,7%).

The data of the poll depict that ambitions in young people are necessary for successful mobility. According to the quiz, their expression is average in the young people. The answers to the questions about respondents' plans testify to this fact. 40,3% of the respondents build plans only for the nearest future, 36,9% of young people plan not only the nearest future, but also the distant one, 22,8% do not make plans at all. It is interesting, that the older the respondents get, the more they build plans for the distant future.

Estimating the effectiveness of the power bodies in organizing public events for "lifts" functioning to increase youth mobility, the majority of young people spoke about their unsatisfactory work (76,6%). Negative marks predominated in town dwellers (less than $100\ 000\ \text{people} - 88, 4\%$). In the cities the estimations were more positive. In this case, it was 58, 2% of respondents.

The people, who participated in the poll, also noted that the majority of "social mobility lifts" is represented in scientific, creative and public spheres. However, these "lifts" are accessible only to a limited number of people: excessive formality in producing the documents for participation in programs and projects (76,4%), insufficient objectiveness when choosing the participants (72,2%) in the form of favoritism and negativism, insufficient help, necessary to fulfil the project tasks (70,3%).

Conclusions

Political, economic, household, cultural following factors precondition the influence of individuals' external environment. The latter ones determine the choice of social mobility "lift". The low motivation in social, professional career growth is pointed out. The strategically important point for increasing youth's mobility in the province is the change of the paradigm of regional social policy, determining the priorities

in young people's initiatives, based on the subsidiary principle. The next strategically important trend to upgrade youth mobility is providing them with accessibility for continuous education, irrespective of their place of dwelling and the income. The third important measure to enhance the rapidity of mobility, especially of young women, is creating the conditions to combine the functions of the mother and wife with the qualities of the professional worker. This will not only optimize mobility, but will decrease the acute crisis in demography, which is still topical for Russia.

The in-got results enable us to speak about high topicality of the mobility phenomenon among the youth of provincial territories. The processes of mobility increase in the most crucial moments in society: military actions, revolutions, the change of social-economic formation, scientific and technical transformations, political discord, expressions of anomy.

Beginning with 1987, the crises in Russia succeeded one another, which lets us speak, as it seems to be, about the favorable conditions to express all kinds and types of mobility. In spite of this, the reality and the sociological questionnaire data show that motivations and settings on mobility in young people, living in the province, are insufficiently expressed. It is linked with a number of factors, preventing transpositions (Gavrilyuk et al, 2016).

The topical spheres of individual activity are cleared out, and there are different kinds of mobility as well as the variants of "pseudomobility". The research showed that the directions and rapidity of mobility are influenced objective factors and subjective characteristics of individuals, connected with the dominant identification (sex, age, territory).

Among the favorable determinants of mobility there are: constant self-education, participation in commercial activity, change of dwelling, parental and friend relations, accessibility of "social lifts" and their channels. Among the subjective personal qualities, contributing to mobility, the most important are: persistence, communication, charisma, innovation orientation.

The restrictions of mobility are also well grounded - the unwilling to sacrifice common human values (health, personal happiness, communication with friends and relatives) for the sake of career, professional and status growth. The absence of the goal and the chosen strategy,

limited personal resources, unfavorable household conditions, difficulties in getting education and practicing self-education are also the limit.

In such conditions the significant resource for young people's mobility can be help to the youth from the government bodies, business, public organizations. At present, the effect of such help is estimated by the respondents as insufficient due to the formalities of the procedure to participate in the appropriate projects, subjective preferences when choosing the participants, low financing of the "lift" activities.

The research also revealed that there is a law, demonstrating that mobility intensity and the setting on mobility are higher among the residents of major towns, among women and the younger people (aged 15–18). Living in Tyumen province, they do not have high ambitions as to social, professional, economic vertical upgrading and transterritory mobility. The received data testify to the insufficient government attention to creating conditions for upgrading the current "lifts" of social mobility for the young people, living on the territory of Russia.

The arrived results enable us to conclude about the necessity to manage mobility in young people through overcoming negative factors, inhibiting it, and praise, and stimulation of the factors, contributing to mobility. One of the important mobility instruments is surely "the social "lift", presented as a project or a program, where young people on all categories and living anywhere, including the province, could participate. Hence, one of the main research tasks in prospect is working out of the mechanism to manage mobility among the young people, living in the province.

The practical value of the present paper is in the fact that the results of the research held were represented at the sessions of the government boards, forming the youth policy in Tyumen province of Russia, and they laid the foundations of the Doctrine of the New Youth Policy in the Region up to 2030. Considering that provincial territories of Russia have much in common, the inferences, made on the base of this research, can be projected onto other Russian regions.

The motivation and setting on social mobility in young people, living far from the Federal centre of Russia, in the towns with the population of 100 000 up to 750 000 people (West - Siberian province) are relatively low. For this there are many objective and subjective reasons,

influencing which will help to improve the situation from the point of view of professional, career and transferritory aspects of young townsfolk mobility.

One of the main instruments, contributing to mobility of young people, is using the so-called "social lifts", which are not only institutional, but also a public means to increase mobile activity. The researchers name the factors, enhancing mobility: accessibility of education due to simplifying formality procedures, financing of the participants of the programs. It is extremely important for increasing mobile activity in young people (both vertical and horizontal) to manage this process, including the virtual space, which will be the theme of our further research. Building the management model and working out its algorithm for the realization is a prospective task for the authors.

Acknowledgement

The research is made on the materials, got in the course of doing the RGNF grant No.15-03-00284a "The Image of the Future in the Choice of Social Mobility Algorithm for Modern Young People in Russia" in the towns of Tyumen region south of Russia, referring to the category of provincial towns, which enables us to project the inferences, made as a result of the research, on the majority of Russian towns.

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