

## SOCIAL MOBILITY OF POPULATION AND EDUCATION

Angela MOCANU<sup>1</sup>, PhD, Leading Researcher

Legal and Political Research Institute Academy of Sciences

*Stratification designates the manner in which a society differentiates and ranks the functions. Throughout history mankind has seen different forms of stratification – castes, statuses, classes. Education is a factor that influences on social mobility. For many sociologists, education could also reduce social inequality. For these reasons we intend to analyze the situation of education in the Republic of Moldova. There are a number of indicators that tell us about the situation of education in one country or another: the percentage of GDP for education spending, education spending per capita, the percentage of young people with complete secondary education, the number of students per ten thousand inhabitants, etc.*

**Keywords:** social stratification, social mobility, social structure, social inequality, education, profession.

*Stratificarea desemneaz maniera în care o societate diferențiaz și ierarhizeaz funcțiile. Pe parcursul istoriei sale omenirea a cunoscut forme diferite de stratificare – caste, stări, clase. Educația este un factor care influențează mobilitatea. Mulți sociologi sunt de părerea că educația reduce inegalitatea socială. Din aceste considerente noi ne-am propus să analizăm situația din domeniul învățământului în Republica Moldova. Sunt un set de indicatori care ne vorbesc despre starea de lucruri din domeniul educației dintr-o țară sau alta: procentul de cheltuieli pentru învățământ din PIB, cheltuielile pentru învățământ pe cap de locuitor, procentul tinerilor cu studii medii complete, numărul de studenți la zece mii de locuitori ș.a.*

**Cuvinte-cheie:** stratificare socială, mobilitate socială, structură socială, inegalitate socială, educație, profesie.

**JEL Classification:** I25, I30, I20

Due to the speed the events develop currently, history achieves new forms and overcomes the capacity of the human being to direct itself in life according to the genuine values. Although they do not panic, the humans sometimes understand that the old concepts about life go under, and the new ones are very doubtful from ethical point of view... In order to keep the individuality, the humans become morally insensitive and everyone inhibits in its own personal life. The world needs not only information, because in the “age of events” the information attracts their attention so much so that they cannot assimilate it [1,6].

<sup>1</sup> © Angela MOCANU, aiasinsky@gmail.com

In this study, we decided to analyze the concept's studying degree of class and social stratification, the factors of social structure, the role of the education in forming social structure and mobility, the accessibility and studies' quality in Republic of Moldova according to opinion of the respondents. As empirical material, we used the results of the researches realized by the Sociology Section within the project *Social Stratification Evolution under the Conditions of Society's Transformation and Prospects of European Integration of Republic of Moldova*, performed in 2014 on a sample of 1200 respondents, representative for grown-up population of Republic of Moldova, with a maximum error of 3%; it was used also the statistic data and the method of documents' analysis.

Once emerged, the society was based on inequalities. Certain persons or groups of persons were holding a more privileged place, others could not benefit of any facility in the conditions they were living. The stratification assigns the way a society differs and ranks its functions. Throughout its development history, the humanity experienced different forms of stratification – castes, stages, classes. This problem was a study object of the researchers of all times. More than that, there were a series of authors, especially during Enlightenment period (Th. Morus, Campanella), whose works described ideal social models, without classes. This concept perpetuated during all historic periods, being performed social experiments, where through Republic of Moldova passed.

The education is a factor that influences the social mobility. According to the opinion of many sociologists, the education could reduce the social inequality. For these reasons, we want to analyze the situation of the education field from Republic of Moldova. There a number of indicators that shows the current condition of the education in a country or in another one: cost percentage for education from GDP (Gross Domestic Product), costs for education per capita, the percentage of the young people with incomplete secondary education, the number of students at ten thousand habitants, and others. Quality advancement of the education system is determined largely by the available financial allowances. During 2008-2014, the quota of allowances assigned to the educational field constituted on the average 8,5% from GDP, decreasing with almost a percent in the last two years.

At the chapter of education's financing, the things are bad not only at government level, but also at households' level. According to the statistic data, the average monthly costs of population consumption in 2013 constituted on the average per person 1775 lei, increased in comparison with the same period of the last year – in 2012 the consumptions costs constituted 1598 lei. The largest part of the costs were assigned to cover the need of food consumption – 44,9% with 1,7 percentage points more than 2012. The less money are assigned to education – 0,8%, in decrease with 0,2 percentage points than 2012. UNESCO is concerned about the quality of education from Republic of Moldova. The access to studies of the children depends on the welfare of the family, the children with a poor welfare are discriminated within the pre-university education institutions. The discrimination doesn't happen at official level, but de facto the children from social-vulnerable families do not have access to the education institutions they want. More than that, they do not attend school because of material reasons: their parents cannot assure all the necessary things for that. According to statistic data, the covering gross rate of the primary education in 2010-2011 was of 93,6%.

Table 1

**Graduates of the secondary education institutions, students of higher education institutions in 2007-2013**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Graduates schools/high schools</b>	<b>Graduates of higher education institutions</b>	<b>Graduates of higher education institutions at 10000 habitants</b>
<b>2007</b>	<b>40.506</b>	<b>19.972</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>2008</b>	<b>36.644</b>	<b>29.614</b>	<b>83</b>
<b>2009</b>	<b>35.527</b>	<b>26.611</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>2010</b>	<b>34.878</b>	<b>28.408</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>2011</b>	<b>33.272</b>	<b>27.788</b>	<b>78</b>
<b>2012</b>	<b>29.902</b>	<b>26.730</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>2013</b>	<b>29.661</b>	<b>24.848</b>	<b>70</b>

Source: National Bureau of Statistics of Republic of Moldova ([www.statistica.md](http://www.statistica.md)).

Another indicator of education's quality is the number of high school graduates and high education institutions students. The number of high education institutions' students is bigger than five years ago. Statistic data denote an increase of the higher education institutions' graduates applicable to 10.000 habitants. But we also observe here a less relevant tendency; probably the number of schools and high schools graduates is decreasing. In 2012 the number of graduates from schools/high schools is almost equal to the number of graduates from higher education institutions.

The profession is decisive in holding a position within social hierarchy. According to the results of our researches, the majority of the respondents (over 60%) invoke as first criterion of a profession – its high remuneration. The work's feature and emotional aspects are less important, only every fifth respondent considers that a prestigious profession has to be interesting. Although, when they were asked to name the top most prestigious professions, they selected not the most paid ones. The most prestigious profession is to be a doctor (47%), follows the jurist (36%), teacher and economist – with less than 20%, programmer – 18%. Although as a first criterion of a prestigious profession is invoked the income it offers we can see that only the profession of economist and programmer would satisfy the respondents desideratum, because the minimum wage on economy is the highest in this field, others being less paid, if it is taken into consideration other income sources than the official ones. These professions, though are less remunerated attained the top of the most prestigious from more considerations. First of all for the rural sector, which represents 61% from the sample, they are a constant source of income, fact that cannot be said about the activities from agrarian sector. Still in rural localities, it is kept the tradition that the professions of doctor and professor have a particular social status, more superior than others.

The results of our research indicate a bigger interest (in comparison with the researches realized previously) toward workers' professions. So the tenth respondent considers as prestigious the professions of constructor and carpenter. A great part of respondents from rural space choose the profession of farmer. It is prefigured the idea that not only the professions presuming intellectual work are prestigious and those presuming physical work.

We mention that level of studies and the age of the respondents influence on the criteria for the determinations of professions prestige. For the persons with higher education it is important, first of all, that the profession to be interesting, the more the level of studies is lower, the less this criterion is important. The respondents with complete and incomplete secondary studies focus on the remuneration of the profession. This tendency is observed also in reference to the respondents' age: for young people, the offered salary is not so important. Once the age increases, the preferences of the respondents change also, i.e. the older respondents are the most pragmatic.

According to statistic data, in the employees' distribution on types of economic activities prevails the employees from the field of industry and education. In 2010-2014, it almost doubled the number of employees of hotels and restaurants. It increased almost twice the number of employees from the field of trade and constructions and therefore it increased almost twice the number of persons that work in the field of real estate transactions.

The statistic data on population distribution according to economy's sectors indicate an essential decrease of the population in the field of agriculture. From 2005 since 2014 the population number, working in this branch, decreased with almost 15%. It is observed an increase during these years of the population working in the field of construction and industry. The biggest percent of the occupied population work in the field of services – 54,3%, in increase with 10% since 2005 until 2012.

Table 2

Distribution of the occupied population on the economy's sectors (in%)

Year \ Field	2005	2011	2012
Agriculture	40,7	27,5	26,4
Industry	12,1	13,1	13,2
Constructions	3,9	5,7	6,1
Services	43,3	53,7	54,3

Source: Statistics Almanac of Republic of Moldova: Chisinau, Statistics 2013, page 72.

The field of activity and the incomes are important factors in holding a position in the social hierarchy for a person. The level of income and training is determinant also in the creation of respondents' future plans. More the respondents' studies are advanced, more their aspirations and future plans are optimistic. Therewith, these respondents are more demanding toward their training level and obviously they have a higher information degree.

The level of income influences the professional mobility intentions of the respondents. It is being inversely proportional with the intentions of professional mobility. Once the level of income increases, it decreases the intentions of the respondents to change the profession or the field they work within. Although one of the main reasons for the intention to change the profession is the poor salary for the position they hold currently, few are those who have the intention to open their own business or declare that they would like to work in the private sector. The majority if the respondents opt for budgetary sector, due to relatively constant situation. This fact is ascertained mostly in rural localities, where the budgetary sphere allows people to have a small income without any risks.

Every second respondent doesn't work according to the obtained profession and almost the same number assign to the profession they currently perform an average degree of prestige. One-fourth of the respondents consider that the work they perform is not prestigious. More than half of the respondents that affirmed they do not work according to the obtained profession have the age between 30 and 49, at this age is namely the biggest professional mobility. If we analyze the professional mobility according to the type of the locality, we can observe that this kind of situation prevails in rural localities – 67%. We can suppose that the change of the profession took place not from the desire to change for something better in life, but from the lack of possibilities to choose, because the social transformations from Republic of Moldova reduced drastically the variety and the number of work positions, especially in rural localities. The professional mobility is more reduced for the persons with higher education – only 14% affirmed that they do not work according to the obtained profession, more than half of the respondents with secondary and specialized secondary education do not work according to the studies they made.

The work should offer to people the possibility to live peacefully and well – every second respondent has this opinion. Then it follows the possibility to communicate with others – 38% of them gave the maximum mark to this preference. The possibility to advance, to work creatively is less important. We observe as in the top of selecting the most prestigious professions that people want to live well without many efforts and risks. Here the individual – psychological factors say the word and the social factors too; in a society where the laws function preferentially, we cannot have an avalanche of entrepreneurial enthusiasm. This situation is formed due to the lack of an education strategy for the population regarding the cultivation of social-professional skills. Although at theoretical level, the competent bodies undertake certain actions to rectify the situation in this field. According to the new strategy of education's development for 2014-2020, the education system needs multi-dimensional changes. It is necessary to improve the expenditure of the public money invested in education, the capitalization of the opportunities offered by the information technologies, the extension and the diversification of the training system of the grown-ups all lifelong, the adaptation of the national education to the European educational space.

The situation from the economy's field has impact on all other spheres of the social life, so we asked the respondents to give an appreciation to the changes produced in the economic sphere in the last two years in urban and rural localities. But the type of localities does not influence on the perception of economic situation: the majority considers it neither good, nor bad – 29% in the village and 33% in the city, bad – 23% and respectively 20%. Only 2% of respondents appreciate the changes produced in the last two years as very good. It is obvious that this assessment, the way and the degree the social-economic reforms affected them are connected the future plans of the respondents. When they were asked about their future plans, many of the respondents, almost one-third, opted for obtaining a better remuneration of the work. A great part of the population planned to go abroad, every six person has the intention to this thing in the near future. We can suppose that a part of the respondents that opt for obtaining a better paid work want to do this thing abroad, once the economic situation of our country is seen through dull colors. In comparison with the results of previous investigations, the current research denotes the increase of those who want to stay in the country, at least for a close period of time.

The future plans are determined to a great extent by the income level of the respondents. The persons with a small income have the intention in the nearest future to raise their qualification – almost

every fifth person wants to do this. And only 5% of respondents with such level of income have the intention to change their place of work; whilst one-fourth of them would like to get a higher remuneration of the work. Abroad, as it was expected, have the intention to go the persons with low incomes – every eighth person wants to find a job abroad. It is extremely small the number of those who would like to gain a new profession. According to the results of the research, we obtained a percent at the level of margin of error of the investigation for those with humble incomes, and the well provided respondents do not even take into account the possibility to get a new profession in near future. So, the professional mobility, even at the intentions level, is extremely reduced, regardless of the respondents' income level.

Regarding the improvement of the professional qualification, the most demanding are the persons with higher education and specialized secondary education: almost one-fourth of the respondents would like obtain it in the near future. Once the level of studies decreases, it decreases suddenly the intentions of the respondents to improve their professional level – only 5% of respondents with secondary education (complete and incomplete) would like to do this in the near future. The same tendency is observed in the intention to get a better remuneration of the work or to work abroad: the trained, with higher education of specialized secondary educations persons have this intention prevalently.

In the issue we can say that changes took place in the field of social-professional stratification, with or without the desire of the social actors, even if they are not as quick and positive as we would like them to be. There are some factors that form the perception of the individuals concerning this fact. The level of training and income is important in the creation of the respondents' future plans. More the respondents have advanced studies, more their aspirations and future plans are optimistic. Therewith, these respondents are more demanding toward the level of training and, obviously, they have a higher information degree.

The level of income influences the intention of professional mobility of the respondents. Once the level of income increases, it decreases the intentions of the respondents to change the profession or the field they work within. Though, one of the main reasons of the intention to change the profession is the small salary of the position they hold currently, few of them would have the intention to open their own business or declare that they would like to perform in the private sphere. The majority of the respondents opt for the budgetary sector, due to relatively constant situation. This fact is ascertained especially in the rural activities, where the budgetary sphere allows people to have a small income, but without risks.

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