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**CAREER MOBILITY OF THE MILLENNIAL GENERATION
IN THE CONTEXT OF THE DIGITAL SOCIETY FORMATION**

Specialty: 5.4.4. Social Structure, Social Institutions, and Processes

**ANNOTATION
of the dissertation
for the degree of Candidate of Sociological Sciences**

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The relevance of the research topic is determined by a number of key factors that define the priorities of state policy and changes in the labor market.

Firstly, the development of the digital society is a priority of state policy.

According to the Presidential Decree, technological leadership and the digital transformation of public administration, the economy, and the social sphere are defined as national development goals. Studying the career mobility of the Millennial generation makes it possible to identify trends and patterns necessary for the successful implementation of these objectives.

Secondly, labor market dynamics are undergoing significant changes under the influence of technological innovations, globalization, and structural shifts in the economy. Understanding the preferences and mobility of millennials will help transform business models and personnel management strategies to fit the new realities. Moreover, the development of the digital society creates new opportunities for career growth, and studying this process allows us to identify key skills and competencies necessary for successful adaptation in the digital world.

Thirdly, employers face the complex task of attracting and retaining talented employees from the Millennial generation. Understanding their career preferences helps organizations create attractive working conditions and development programs for young, promising specialists, which will ultimately contribute to the competitiveness of companies.

It should be noted that, according to research estimates, the Millennial generation in Russia already constitutes one of the largest demographic groups, comprising about one-third of the country's adult population. However, their level of economic activity is somewhat lower than that of the previous generation (about 63.8% of millennials are employed in the economy, compared to 72.9% of their predecessors). At the same time, more than 21% of millennials change their workplace or profession at least once a year—significantly more often than in older generations. These features must be taken into account when developing

effective state and corporate youth loyalty and engagement programs in modern organizations.

Finally, career mobility plays an important role in the social adaptation and self-realization of young people, and research in this area can reveal factors that contribute to their successful adaptation and professional development.

Overall, the study of the career mobility of the Millennial generation is highly relevant and important for understanding the trends and patterns necessary for the successful implementation of the country's national development goals, adaptation of business models and personnel management strategies, as well as ensuring the social adaptation and self-realization of young people. It is particularly significant that over the past five years (2020–2025), processes of digitalization and labor market conditions have undergone rapid changes (mass transition to remote work, development of the platform economy, etc.), which makes this research especially timely.

Object of the research: the Millennial generation.

Subject of the research: the career mobility of the Millennial generation.

Goal of the research: To identify the features and develop a model of career mobility of the Millennial generation in the context of the formation of the digital society, based on the results of sociological analysis.

Research objectives:

- To reveal the theoretical and methodological foundations for studying youth career mobility as a type of social process;
- To formulate the concept of “career mobility” in the context of the development of the digital society and describe its characteristics, based on the analysis of sociological theories of career mobility;
- To analyze the career mobility of the Millennial generation and identify its features;

- To determine, based on the study of narrative online and offline interviews, as well as a sociological survey of millennials, their values as the basis for the formation of career mobility;
- To present, based on the description of career habitus, the design of career strategies of the Millennial generation;
- To analyze the demand for Millennial career strategies in the modern labor market and identify their competitive advantages;
- To develop a model of career mobility for the Millennial generation and substantiate the necessity of its implementation in the context of the formation of the digital society.

Degree of Scientific Elaboration of the Problem

The topic of this dissertation implies the study of the role of the Millennial generation in the labor market. The theoretical foundations of this issue were laid by foreign researchers N. Howe and W. Strauss in 1991. Earlier, the German scholar K. Mannheim formulated the concept of youth as a sociological phenomenon, described their characteristics, and analyzed the dynamics of development in the context of social changes. The proposed theories offer an understanding of the younger generation as a social group shaped by historical and social changes.

The theory of generations supplements previous theoretical conclusions, emphasizing its applicability to the urban middle class in Western countries. Scholars argue that people of the same generation share common values formed by their similar positions in historical, economic, cultural, and institutional cycles. The theory is designed to predict long-term trends. The selection of the Theory of Generations (1991) for this research is explained by its application in studying the behavior of different generations in the social space, including career spheres, generational value interactions, and the impact of external factors, primarily digital transformation. The provisions of this theory are used to study organizational

structures both at the macro-level (the organization as a whole) and micro-level (team interactions, motivation of representatives of different generations).

Many studies of Millennials in organizational structures have been carried out by international corporations such as Deloitte, PwC, and Gallup. Among contemporary academic research, the works of V.V. Radaev, which describe the specifics of the Millennial generation in Russia, are particularly notable.

Despite the breadth of the research field, academic studies are still limited. For example, the temporal boundaries of the contemporary generation may differ from those identified by Howe and Strauss. As a result, research outcomes may be misinterpreted, as some researchers may overlook the social factors affecting generational dynamics, values, and behavioral patterns.

With respect to research on career trajectories, a key feature of the current research trend in career studies is its multidisciplinary nature. Not only sociologists such as E. Hughes, V. Kuzokrea, V. Mayrhofer, and A. Jelatchich have studied career issues, but also experts in psychology, management, and economics: E. Schein, A. Bird, R. Sennett, and Russian authors V.E. Gimpelson, E.N. Danilova, T.I. Zaslavskaya, O.I. Shkaratan, and A.G. Efendiev.

Theoretical and empirical career studies conducted by followers such as P. Bourdieu, A. Jelatchich, V. Mayrhofer, and W. Chudzikowski represent an independent and promising line of research. These scholars adapted concepts from the “theory of social space” to analyze careers as processes of competition among individual agents for dominant positions in the social field. The state of the modern labor market in which young people find themselves can be examined through the theories of J. Baudrillard, Z. Bauman, M. Castells, as well as the theory of precariat by G. Standing. Problems of social mobility have been widely covered in both Russian and foreign literature. Research by J. Urry, G.E. Zborovsky, M.S. Komarov, V.I. Lukin, G.P. Orlov, G.V. Osipov, M.N. Rutkevich, P.A. Sorokin, F.R. Filippov, and S.S. Frolov revealed the problem of social mobility by

analyzing stratification movements. Historical aspects of social mobility were explored in the works of E.M. Avramova. Separate concepts relate to the theory of subjective mobility in social change, authored by O. Spengler, A. Toynbee, B. Russell, M. Scheler, A. Bergson, and others.

The scientific novelty of the results obtained by the author is as follows:

- The choice of a methodological approach to the analysis of career mobility as a social process is substantiated, on the basis of which a sociological interpretation of the concept of “career mobility of the Millennial generation” is given;
- Based on sociological analysis, the features of career mobility of millennials in the digital society are described, such as non-linearity of development, focus on personal and professional experience, technological and informational dependence of skills and competencies, flexible combination of real and virtual life, and so on;
- Through quantitative and qualitative research conducted by the author, the value orientations of the young generation as the foundation for the formation of career mobility of millennials are presented and classified;
- It is empirically proven that the value orientations and behavioral characteristics of the Millennial generation form the core of the design and determine the variability of career strategies in the digital society in the form of a demanded career portfolio of millennials, which, in turn, determines the success of this generation in the labor market;
- Competitive advantages in the labor market;
- The author’s conceptual model of career mobility of the Millennial generation in the digital society has been developed, and its main parameters have been identified, which make it possible to describe the mechanism for building successful individual career mobility trajectories.

The empirical basis of the dissertation consists of data obtained as a result of independent sociological research conducted by the author from 2017 to 2022, as well as the analysis and generalization of secondary data from leading Russian and international research companies.

The author's empirical research was carried out in three main stages:

First stage: Conducting 17 semi-structured in-depth offline interviews with representatives of the Millennial generation with professional experience in various economic sectors. These interviews made it possible to identify individual professional development trajectories, features of self-determination, and value orientations influencing the choice of career strategies and forms of employment.

Second stage: Conducting 20 narrative online interviews (career narratives) with millennials—9 men and 11 women, citizens of Russia, working in various cities and economic sectors. These interviews focused on the analysis of key turning points in professional life, identification of factors contributing to the development of soft skills and digital literacy, as well as adaptation to new employment models and the digital work environment.

Third stage: A mass online survey conducted in 2022 using a specially developed questionnaire including eight blocks of questions. The questionnaire was distributed through social networks, professional communities, and using the “snowball method”, ensuring representativeness and diversity of the sample. The survey involved 502 respondents—representatives of the Millennial generation (Russian citizens) living in different regions of the country, working in both public and private organizations, as well as self-employed and freelancers.

As additional data sources, the results of large-scale studies on the organizational behavior of millennials conducted by the international consulting company Deloitte (2013–2023), analytical reports of HeadHunter for 2022–2024, as well as publications by the Russian Public Opinion Research Center, Higher School of Economics, and other reputable research organizations were used.

In the process of data analysis, both quantitative methods (statistical processing of questionnaire data, correlations, building typologies) and qualitative methods (in-depth interviews, narrative and thematic analysis) were applied. This approach provided a holistic understanding of the mechanism for forming career mobility among millennials, the identification of new trends and factors influencing the success of professional socialization of youth in the digital society.

Research Hypothesis

Elements of career habitus (level of education, digital literacy, soft skills) are significant factors in the competitiveness of millennials and have a substantial impact on the formation of their career mobility in the modern digital society. At the same time, the success of career mobility among the Millennial generation is determined by the synchrony of three interrelated components: the demands and challenges of the digital society, the presence of career strategy design, and the individual trajectory of the Millennial generation's career portfolio development.

Provisions to be Defended:

1. Career mobility as a type of social process: Career mobility of millennials is an integrated, self-organizing system embedded in their career habitus, determined by the specific values of the Millennial generation and defining their unique attitude to time and the context of the modern digital society.
2. Features of career mobility among Millennials: Career mobility is determined by the context of time and space in which the generation lives. Millennials (especially those in urban areas) are the first digital generation to internalize values of successful self-realization in the digital environment: a high level of education, diversity of interests, digital literacy, and the pursuit of soft skills development. The rapid change of social, economic, and technological processes, global integration of network communications, and the adaptive value system of millennials shape their career mobility trajectories. Thus, a direct link between the development of the digital society and the career strategies of Millennials is substantiated.

3. Values and behavioral patterns: Based on sociological data, the key values of the Millennial generation influencing career mobility in the digital society are formulated and substantiated. Values are divided into two categories: those related to the perception of time (the pursuit of work-life balance, valuing time as a resource, willingness to adapt socially expected "deadlines" to individual characteristics) and those related to self-perception and the surrounding world (career as a tool of self-expression, desire to improve the world, need for like-minded people, openness to new knowledge). These values determine the main behavioral patterns of Millennials and significantly influence the design of their career strategies.
4. Design of career strategies and competitiveness: The success of Millennials in the labor market is determined by the presence of career strategy design, enabling competitiveness. Career strategy design is presented as the process of developing and planning an individual professional development trajectory. It involves setting professional goals, choosing optimal paths and methods for career success, analyzing strengths, interests, and values, as well as considering external trends and social factors. The core of Millennials' career strategy design is the career portfolio, which includes career habitus, digital navigation skills, values as the foundation for choosing a development vector, and an up-to-date knowledge base (result of lifelong learning). Career strategy design forms the basis of career mobility for Millennials.
5. The conceptual model of career mobility: Career mobility in the digital society is presented through the author's conceptual model, consisting of three interconnected components: the external circle ("demands and challenges of the digital society"), the middle circle ("career strategy design"), and the inner circle ("Millennial career portfolio"). The model explains the mechanism for forming and implementing individual career trajectories. The synchrony of the model's components reflects the degree of

correspondence between external demands of the digital society, professional development strategies, and individual resources and competencies. The higher the alignment, the more effective career mobility and adaptation of Millennials to labor market changes in the digital era.

The **theoretical significance** of the research lies in its contribution to the development of sociological science in the study of generational dynamics, youth mobility, and modern forms of constructing professional trajectories. This study expands the framework of generational theory by integrating the concepts of social space by P. Bourdieu, theories of career capital and career habitus, and modern approaches to mobility analysis (including horizontal and multiple mobility in the digital society).

The author-developed and tested model of career mobility for the Millennial generation in the context of the digital society offers a new perspective on the mechanisms of individual professional strategy formation and adaptation to changing labor market conditions. The synthesis of classical and contemporary theoretical approaches, confirmed by an extensive empirical base, provides a foundation for further research in the sociology of labor, human capital management, youth policy, and education.

The study proposes new methodological and analytical tools for examining professional trajectories, value orientations, and behavioral models of millennials. These tools can be used to study other demographic cohorts and social groups, as well as for comparative analysis of national specifics in career mobility.

The **practical significance** of the research is the applicability of its findings and recommendations in various fields—from state youth policy and strategic HR management in companies to educational institutions and career centers.

The research results allow for:

- improving mechanisms for attracting, adapting, and retaining young professionals;
- developing targeted programs for soft skills and digital skills development, corporate and government mentorship systems;
- adapting HR strategies and corporate culture to the professional and value-based characteristics of millennials;
- designing effective tools for constructing individual educational trajectories and increasing motivation for lifelong learning;
- developing comprehensive recommendations for employers, government bodies, and educational institutions to support youth mobility and create conditions for successful professional socialization of millennials;
- utilizing the proposed model when implementing human capital development programs and forecasting labor market changes.

The practical relevance of the work is confirmed by its demand among the professional community, HR managers, government and municipal authorities, educational organizations, and research centers interested in fostering a strong, innovative, and competitive youth in the digital economy.

Correspondence to the Passport of the Academic Specialty

The work corresponds to the following points of the passport for the academic specialty 5.4.4 "Social Structure, Social Institutions, and Processes":

- **Point 7:** Dynamics and adaptation of social groups and strata in a transforming society.
- **Point 10:** New forms of labor and employment in modern conditions. Informal employment. Precarization of labor.
- **Point 17:** Age cohorts in the system of socio-structural relations.

- **Point 18:** Youth as a social group. Features of the social status, consciousness, and behavior of various youth groups. Problems of youth social development.
- **Point 24:** Social processes in a changing social reality.
- **Point 25:** Social mobility, its main directions and types. Social mobility as a factor in changing social structure.
- **Point 27:** Processes of digitalization, virtualization, and networking in modern society.

Research Approbation

Scientific publications by the author:

- Oleynikova E.E. "Perception of Time as a Key Element in the Design of Career Habitus of the Millennial Generation" // Civil Service. – 2022. – № 1 (135). – pp. 80–85.
- Oleynikova E.E. "A Model of Career Mobility for the Millennial Generation in the Digital Era: An Integrated Approach" // Socio-Humanitarian Knowledge. – 2024. – № 12. – pp. 164–171.
- Oleynikova E.E. "Demand for Career Habitus of Millennials in the Modern Labor Market" // Socio-Humanitarian Knowledge. – 2024. – № 12. – pp. 146–152.
- Oleynikova E.E. "The Reactive Potential of the Millennial Generation in the Reconstruction of Digital Social Spaces" // Koganov Readings: Conference Proceedings. – 2022. – pp. 215–221.
- Oleynikova E. "Exploring Necessity of Smart Management in Digital Space" // Functional Aspects of Intercultural Communication. Translation and Interpreting: Proceedings of the International Conference. – Moscow: RUDN University, 2020. – pp. 78–85.

Conference presentations:

1. All-Russian Scientific and Practical Conference “Digital Society: Sociological Measurement of the Present and Future” (2023)
2. VI All-Russian Sociological Congress (2021)
3. Koganov Readings (2022)
4. Russian Gender Forum (2020, 2021)
5. International Practical Conference “Risks to the Human Capital of the Scientific Community in the Context of the COVID-19 Pandemic” (2021)
6. Conference Session “Public Administration and Development of Russia: Global Threats and Structural Changes” at RANEPA (2020)
7. Conference Session “Public Administration and Development of Russia: Designing the Future” at RANEPA (2021)
8. VII International Scientific Interdisciplinary Conference at RUDN Institute of Foreign Languages (2020)

Structure of the Dissertation

The dissertation includes an introduction, two chapters, seven sections, a conclusion, a list of references (137 titles, 48 of which are in English), and five appendices. The total volume of the work is 189 pages.