

Olga Kyvliuk, Denys Svyrydenko  
Katedra Metodologii Nauki i Oświaty Międzynarodowej  
Narodowy Uniwersytet Pedagogiczny im. Michała P. Dragomanowa w Kijowie

## Academic Mobility as “Brain Drain” Phenomenon of Modern Higher Education

**Słowa kluczowe:** mobilność akademicka, „drenaż mózgów”, ukraińskie wykształcenie wyższe, globalizacja wykształcenia wyższego, badania postkolonialne.

**Keywords:** academic mobility, “brain drain”, academic migration, Ukrainian higher education, globalization of higher education, postcolonial studies.

### Introduction

The further deepening of the mobility processes of students, teachers, scientists, administrators of educational institutions in order to fill the European integration of Ukraine with real content is in demand in Ukrainian society. The development of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) is inconceivable without the Ukrainian experience that our society and education can provide. The actualization of the processes of academic mobility is a fair answer to the challenges of the global economy, which develops on a planetary scale, and the internationalization of education acquires a powerful scale, forming a multicultural educational environment. The processes of globalization are reflected in the system of higher education through reforms aimed at the development of the global educational area, clusters of which are the European Higher Education Area and similar areas for higher education in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Southeast Asian Higher Education Area, etc. The academic mobility in the context of the development of

---

Adres/Adresse: dr hab. Olga Kyvliuk, Katedra Metodologii Nauki i Oświaty Międzynarodowej, Narodowy Uniwersytet Pedagogiczny im. Michała P. Dragomanowa w Kijowie, ul. Pyrogowa 9, 01-601 Kijów, Ukraina, panyolga@ukr.net.; dr hab. Denys Svyrydenko, Katedra Metodologii Nauki i Oświaty Międzynarodowej, Narodowy Uniwersytet Pedagogiczny im. Michała P. Dragomanowa w Kijowie, ul. Pyrogowa 9, 01-601 Kijów, Ukraina, denis\_sviridenko@ukr.net.

the global educational area is understood as a key tool for ensuring their effectiveness.

In this regard, the *Magna Charta Universitatum* emphasizes that universities, especially European ones, consider the mutual exchange of information and documentation, as well as an increase in the number of joint projects for the development of education, as the main element of the constant progress of knowledge. That is why, as in the early periods of their history, they stimulate the mobility of teachers and students, and also consider a common policy on the issue of equal status, titles, examinations (without prejudice to national diplomas) and the award of scholarships as a necessary tool for carrying out their mission in prevailing conditions for today<sup>1</sup>.

However, on the one hand, the quantitative indicators of academic mobility in Ukraine demonstrate a low effectiveness of its implementation, which is due to objective factors (legislation in the field of higher education, etc.). Subjective factors indicate the world outlook unpreparedness of representatives of the academic environment to appear as subjects of exchange programs, or participation in them for the purpose of leaving abroad. These factors actualize the implementation of research studies in the field of philosophy of education, which would provide an opportunity to make the processes of academic mobility more intensive and, more importantly, more informative, minimizing the threat of brain drain abroad.

The relevance of the study, that we are carrying out, is also increased with the following thesis, made by A. Slobodyan and E. Stadnyi: "Today there is no request for such studies in the Ukrainian government, but the study of Ukrainian academic migration allows us to develop policies to reduce the effect of "brain drain" and "brain waste", improve effective interaction with the diaspora, attract investment in the Ukrainian economy, and last but not least – stimulate reforms in the educational and scientific spheres. That is why we believe that such studies have a strategic advantage in the first place, and they will eventually find a proper response among the Ukrainian authorities"<sup>2</sup>.

Our theoretical research is aimed at extending the methodological tools for studying the problem of brain drain (academic migration), which would enrich the opportunities for optimizing both the provisions of the Ukrainian educational policy, and the strategy of supporting

---

<sup>1</sup> *Magna Charta Universitatum* (18, September 1988), <http://www.magna-charta.org/resources/files/the-magna-charta/english> (19.09.2017).

<sup>2</sup> О. Слободян, Е. Стадний, *Українські студенти за кордоном: скільки та чому?*, <https://cedos.org.ua/uk/osvita/ukrainski-studenty-za-kordonom-skilky-ta-chomu> (19.09.2017).

young people, preserving the social capital of the Ukrainian nation. A specific feature of the implementation of academic mobility programs in the Ukrainian higher education area is the fact that they are not a legitimate response to the demands of globalization, but they are also developed in the sociocultural area of a transitional (transitive) country.

The particular fact, that determines the special axiological foundations for the implementation of mobility programs, bears the imprint of overcoming the post-colonial (post-totalitarian, post-Soviet, etc.) heritage, and the complicated nature of the modernization of the Ukrainian economy. Trying to discover the brain drain aspects of academic mobility phenomenon, we appeal the Ukrainian experience as a demonstrative case. The authors try to represent ones' own vision of the academic mobility implementation at Ukrainian higher education area and define key social and cultural determinants of brain drain activity.

### **"Academic mobility" and "brain drain" concepts at the modern educational discourse**

The mobility is not just a key trend in the global world, but it is also a development resource for individuals as well as for whole societies. Researchers specify the fact that the scale of mobility increases enormously in amount for several decades and the everyday mobility of a person takes on a new meaning: blurring of distinction between countries, powerful migration flows, supporting mobility in many spheres of public life lead to multicultural challenges for modern society. At the same time, the globalization appears as an imperative of modern society, it covers the majority of spheres of human life, including the sphere of higher education, against which the formation of global areas of education and research take place, the fundamental existence principle of which is the active implementation of the ideas of academic mobility.

The academic mobility is a demonstration of a wide range of human freedoms – the freedom to choose a place of study, the right to free movement, the academic freedom, etc. Such an understanding of this phenomenon harmoniously fits into the context of students treatment as creative individuals, who aspire to develop and actualize their potential in getting higher education, being declared as one of the fundamental principles of the modernization of higher education in Ukraine.

Furthermore, the blurring of distinction, the breadth of opportunities for individualization and realization of freedoms, initiates the problem of distorting the deep essence of some sociocultural phenomena.

The Ukrainian sphere of higher education in this context is demonstrative: Ukraine has been a participant of the Bologna process for more than ten years; however, the nature of the implementation of its ideas acquires a wide range of signs – from imitative to pathological. As we have already noted, a complex sociocultural environment, the Ukrainian society of a transitive type, in which complex processes of fighting between local and global discourses, clashes of modernization (anticolonial) projects with neo-colonial ones, etc., is not the last one in this situation. The migration processes emerge as a prominent phenomenon, in particular, in the academic environment, which in social and humanitarian knowledge is known as the “brain drain”. The academic mobility of students, teachers, scientists and administrators of educational institutions also takes on enormous importance in their implementation. In the methodological context, the authors of the study proceed from the consciousness of threat, that the less economically healthy countries do not experience the benefits of participating in academic mobility programs; they are an embodiment of social capital, which, thanks to academic mobility, leaves the country: “Academic mobility can create more brain drain than brain gain to less economically healthy countries and promote a new pattern of migration: Talent Mobility”<sup>3</sup>.

To deploy our research, we consider it appropriate to take the existing definitions of the concepts of “academic mobility” and “brain drain”, in order to avoid semantic ambiguities in the further rationale of author’s ideas. In general, the academic mobility is understood as the possibility of learning and/or researching in another educational (research) institution within the framework of an individual educational (research) trajectory. However, it should be noted that in the context of globalization and integration processes in education, the academic mobility as an object of research has become the object of research in various sectors: economics, pedagogy, management and marketing of education, and sociology, but at this stage there is no clear and officially established definition of the concept content of ‘academic mobility’ in modern educational discourse”<sup>4</sup>.

The documents of UNESCO give the following definition of the essence of the phenomenon of “academic mobility”: “Academic Mobility” implies a period of study, teaching and/or research in a country other

---

<sup>3</sup> A. Albuquerque, *Academic Mobility: a non-Machiavellian means to global citizenship*, [http://recipp.ipp.pt/bitstream/10400.22/2974/1/COM\\_AlexandraAlbuquerque\\_2013.pdf](http://recipp.ipp.pt/bitstream/10400.22/2974/1/COM_AlexandraAlbuquerque_2013.pdf) (19.09.2017).

<sup>4</sup> Н. Калинина, *Индивидуальная академическая мобильность студентов в условиях развития открытого образовательного пространства*, Сибирский торгово-экономический журнал 16 (2012), с. 101.

than a student's or academic staff member's country of residence ('the home country'). This period is of limited duration, and it is envisaged that the student or staff member return to his or her home country upon completion of the designated period. The term 'academic mobility' is not intended to cover migration from one country to another. Academic mobility may be achieved within exchange programmes set up for this purpose, or individually ('free movers'). Academic mobility also implies virtual mobility"<sup>5</sup>.

Having clarified the essence of the concept of “academic mobility”, let us turn to the disclosure of the essence of such a sociocultural phenomenon as the brain drain. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary gives the following generalization in its definition – the departure of educated or professional people from one country, economic sector, or field for another usually for better pay or living conditions<sup>6</sup>. As we see from the definition, the economic situation in Ukraine is a favorable factor for aggravating the ideas of the departure of professionals to the more healthy countries of the globalized world. Speaking specifically about academic mobility, the desire of students or scholars to overcome the limitations of the domestic educational area, which was created as a result of hybrid transformations of the Soviet tradition and almost external modernization enforcement, becomes clear. This imitative condition, which causes dissatisfaction with the quality of domestic educational services, and, accordingly, activates the processes of academic migration (brain drain), described by S. Klepko through the metaphor of pseudo-universities: “A person in Ukrainian pseudo-university does not become a University Person, does not get the key qualifications required for the conversion of Society, which fell into a deep crisis. A pseudo-university, directing social power on observance of formal signs, appears the basic means of its blocking”<sup>7</sup>.

### **Methodological approaches for interpretation of academic mobility as “brain drain” phenomenon**

The starting point for interpreting the academic mobility as a factor of the brain drain processes activation is a broad international discus-

---

<sup>5</sup> *What is mobility?*, [http://www.unesco.org/education/studyingabroad/what\\_is/mobility.shtml](http://www.unesco.org/education/studyingabroad/what_is/mobility.shtml) (19.09.2017).

<sup>6</sup> Definition of “brain drain”: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/brain%20drain> (19.09.2017).

<sup>7</sup> С. Клепко, *Філософія освіти в європейському контексті*, с. 255–256.

sion that deals with the assessment of threats to academic mobility for modern societies. In particular, the works by M. Beine et al.<sup>8</sup>, A. Mountford<sup>9</sup>, A. Oleksiyenko<sup>10</sup>, P. Schaeffer<sup>11</sup>, D. Svyrydenko<sup>12</sup>, A. Weslynnne<sup>13</sup> and others seem to be prominent.

We stressed that our research also uses Ukrainian higher education system as a main empirical case. According to this methodological position, we take into account the fact that Ukrainian higher education is an arena of contradictions between the globalization ideas and local educational tradition. Mentioned social and cultural background influences on the academic mobility ideas realization on the educational practice. The contradictions at the binary opposition of “local-global” are supercharged by the specific post-colonial status of Ukrainian cultural space as a whole. Gomilko et al. appeal to productive concept of hybridity to define the pathological changes at contemporary higher education of Ukraine (HEU): “The double totalitarian trauma is complicated also by the colonial past of Ukraine. The effects of three repressive practices still block the movement of HEU towards modernization. It was found out that without significant human effort to eradicate them, their tracks cannot be erased. Instead, having got into the context of market relations, they have demonstrated a flexible capacity for hybridization. The totalitarian has taken root firmly in the grip of the bureaucracy of HEU, while the colonial shows itself in its complexes of inferiority and humiliation”<sup>14</sup>.

According to our vision, academic mobility phenomenon is extremely demonstrative at this context and hybridity can cause or enhance the “brain drain” actualization: in contrast to true essence of academic mobility as a tool of internal development, compliance with the formal requirements of carrying out the academic pilgrimage in order to reduce the anthropological stress of the own stay in a different academic

<sup>8</sup> M. Beine, F. Docquier, H. Rapoport, *Brain drain and human capital formation in developing countries: winners and losers*, The Economic Journal 118 (2008), p. 631–652.

<sup>9</sup> A. Mountford, *Can a brain drain be good for growth in the source economy?*, Journal of Development Economics 53 (2) (1997), p. 287–303.

<sup>10</sup> A. Oleksiyenko, K. Cheng & Y. Hak-Kwong, *International student mobility in Hong Kong: private good, public good, or trade in services?*, Studies in Higher Education 38 (7) (2013), p. 1079–1101.

<sup>11</sup> P. Schaeffer, *Human capital, migration strategy, and brain drain*, The Journal of International Trade & Economic Development 14 (3) (2005), p. 319–335.

<sup>12</sup> D. Svyrydenko, *Mobility Turn in Contemporary Society as an Educational Challenge*, Future Human Image 3 (6) (2016), p. 102–108.

<sup>13</sup> A. Weslynnne, L. Wagman, *Marketing educational improvements via international partnerships under brain drain constraints*, Education Economics 23 (6) (2015), p. 713–734.

<sup>14</sup> O. Gomilko, D. Svyrydenko, S. Terepyshchyi, *Hybridity in the Higher Education of Ukraine: Global Logic or Local Idiosyncrasy?*, Philosophy and Cosmology 17 (2016), p. 182.



environment, or for touristic, financial or other reasons, gives grounds to speak about immersion into academic mobility in its unproductive, hybridized sense, in which the processes of transformation of the individual, self-development, creativity or freedom are driven to the periphery<sup>15</sup>.

### **Authentic and non-authentic academic mobility**

In our opinion, the ideas of negative and positive freedom can be used to study the phenomenon of academic mobility. We believe, that mobility can be understood as "mobility from" (on the analogy of the negative freedom), and also as "mobility for" (on the analogy of the positive freedom). When a student goes to study abroad to escape from the drawbacks or limitations of the domestic education system; when a graduate student leaves his native university because of a lack of progressive ideas in his university; when a young Ph.D. is looking for a place for a "post-doc" for the purpose of further employment – these are all examples of negative academic mobility, – the "mobility from". But when he goes to study abroad to get knowledge and competence that are inaccessible in his country, and comes back; when a graduate student, having carried out research abroad, introduces it in his native country; when a young Ph.D., after passing the Western "post-doc", comes back in order to enrich the training of his Ukrainian students – these are all examples of positive academic mobility, – the "mobility for".

So, there is a reason to talk about the authentic ("mobility for") and non-authentic ("mobility from") academic mobility. In this respect, the desire to participate in academic exchange programs can be motivated by the desire of a person to get rid of the "external" limitations of the process of getting higher education in the form of specific features of the national education system that do not allow the implementation of an individually colored educational trajectory, and to join the achievements of other academic systems and so on. There are grounds for proposing the concept of "academic mobility from", the essence of which is to understand academic mobility as a release from the limitations of the national education system, and consequently, this demonstration of mobility personifies the participant receiving negative freedom. However, the "academic mobility from" (on the analogy of the "freedom from") is only the first step to realize academic mobility in its true sense<sup>16</sup>.

<sup>15</sup> Ibidem, p. 191.

<sup>16</sup> Д. Свиріденко, *Академічна мобільність: відповідь на виклики глобалізації: монографія*, с. 114–115.

If we consider the academic mobility as an opportunity for its participant to carry out his life project, realize his individual educational trajectory, the academic mobility is not only a tool for liberation from the limitations of the usual academic environment, but it is also an opportunity to develop in creative way in another academic environment, building fruitful communication with representatives of this environment. A connection with a person's getting of a qualitatively different level of freedom (on the analogy of the "freedom for") is conceptualized by the notion of "academic mobility for". It stands to reason, that a person, becoming a participant in the processes of academic mobility, must have a high level of self-awareness, the ability to preserve the fundamental outlines of his Ego, updating knowledge and personal qualities, rather than "clearing" them and then filling with cultural and academic achievements of another culture.

By offering to consider the academic mobility through the prism of the concepts of "academic mobility from" (unproductive mobility) and "academic mobility for" (productive mobility), it seems logical to identify unproductive mobility with a tendency to brain drain. As a matter of fact, when we talk about productive academic mobility, we understand it as a conscious process of updating knowledge, skills, competences, worldviews, which should lead to the growth of the individual's heuristic potential. We understand that this phenomenon in its "true" sense is actualized by the individual as a component of his life project, as a result of which a person returns to his native educational institution, becoming a bearer of new academic approaches, traditions, etc., becoming a party to the renewal processes of the environment in which he returned, embodying the growth of social capital.

Based on these provisions, it seems justified to refine the notion of "academic mobility", when this phenomenon is understood as an opportunity for learning and/or researching in another educational institution, the criterion of authenticity of which is the growth of the individual's heuristic potential in the process of its implementation. But when we actually have the facts of implementation of the concepts of academic mobility in its "false" form, such phenomena as brain drain, through which the society bears losses, become widespread: "Eliminating from the population structure the most socially active part of it, – its brainpower – the passionarity of the Ukrainian ethnos is reduced. All of this represents an immediate threat to the security of society, the prospects for its social and economic development"<sup>17</sup>.

---

<sup>17</sup> М. Слюсаревський, *Психологія міграції: навчальний посібник*, с. 39.



## Discussion and Conclusion

Throughout the research article, the authors noted that against the backdrop of a general theoretical study of the problem of brain drain in connection with the actualization of the ideas of academic mobility, the Ukrainian system of higher education also appears as a specific case for a society of a transitional type. Unfortunately, it is difficult to illustrate quantitatively, in terms of numbers, the dynamics of brain drain precisely in the context of implementing academic mobility programs, when a person consciously chooses the path of changing the country for a study. Empirical studies, related to the search for statistical information in the matter under inquiry, were not carried out for Ukraine.

Partially demonstrative in this regard can be information on the total number of Ukrainian students in foreign higher education institutions, published by the analytical center CEDOS in 2016. The report contains the following information: "The number of Ukrainians, who studied in foreign universities as of 2014/2015 academic year, was 59 648. Among the countries, which are the most desired for studying, are still Poland, Germany, Russia, Canada, Italy, Czech Republic, USA, Spain, Austria, France and Hungary. The growth rate from 2009 to 2015 was 129%. If we compare the last two years, the increase is almost 29% or 13 266 people. And 2/3 of this increase was made by Ukrainians, who study at Polish universities. They showed the most rapid growth, both in absolute and relative terms – from 14 951 to 22 833 individuals"<sup>18</sup>.

The study showed that the search for effective strategies for the implementation of academic mobility, which allows minimize the threat of outflow of social capital from Ukraine, appears as a complex multidimensional task. The modern system of higher education actively implements market ideology, making it difficult to find these strategies that have been balancing between the principles of public goods and individual freedoms. In this regard Ukraine is not unique, which emphasizes A. Oleksiyenko: "Public and private values and functions have been overlapping ever more in higher education, because students simultaneously function as intellectuals, economic agents, citizens and donors. Thus, universities are compelled to take into account the diversity of stakeholder roles while strategizing on academic responsibilities"<sup>19</sup>. In

---

<sup>18</sup> О. Слободян, Є. Стадний, *Українські студенти за кордоном: скільки та чому?*, <https://cedos.org.ua/uk/osvita/ukrainski-studenty-za-kordonom-skilky-ta-chomu> (19.09.2017).

<sup>19</sup> A. Oleksiyenko, K. Cheng & Y. Hak-Kwong, *International student mobility in Hong Kong: private good, public good, or trade in services?*, *Studies in Higher Education* 38 (7) (2013), p. 1081.

addition to this, the pre-crisis level of Ukraine's economic development determines the direction of the movement of human capital, and not in favour of our state.

The study has demonstrated that academic mobility is a phenomenon that initiates the aggravation of a number of contradictions in the development of modern higher education. First and foremost, the academic mobility leads to activation of brain drain processes, making it possible to move to a more developed cultural environment in terms of economic, scientific and other conditions. Providing students and other members of the academic community with ample opportunities for implementing academic mobility processes and the related potential migration processes, raise a wide range of issues for assessing the benefits of spreading the practices of globalization in education against the backdrop of possible losses for some countries. Ukraine's integration in the world civilizational process, in the modernization of society in the context of the development of information (knowledge, smart, etc.) types of society will actualize the problem under study with more interest, which is noted by S. Terepishchy<sup>20</sup>, V. Voronkova and O. Kyvliuk<sup>21</sup>.

On the one hand, the problem of the outflow of social capital in the context of the implementation of academic mobility programs has a common theoretical value for research and it is a reflection of the worldwide trend to globalization in higher education. For this reason, the authors did not pretend to be unique in the problem field under study for the modern philosophy of education. At the same time, we managed to demonstrate that the search for effective strategies to minimize brain drain threats in the context of implementing the principles of academic mobility must take into account the specific transitional, post-colonial (post-Soviet, etc.) sociocultural landscape in Ukraine, against which there are favorable opportunities for implementing ideas of academic mobility in an unproductive, hybrid sense. The academic tourism, the imitation of mobility (the "mobility from") instead of productive renewal and growth of the individual's heuristic potential in a multicultural academic and cultural environment (the "mobility for"), as well as the general ineffective nature of modernization steps in higher education, should be in the focus of further research strategies for preserving and multiplying the social capital of Ukrainian society under the conditions of the intensification of the globalization processes.

<sup>20</sup> S. Terepishczy, *Futurology as a subject of social philosophy*, Studia Warmińskie 52 (2015), p. 63–64.

<sup>21</sup> V. Voronkova, O. Kyvliuk, *Philosophical Reflection Smart-Society as a New Model of the Information Society and its Impact on the Education of the 21st Century*, Future Human Image 7 (2017), p. 154–156.

## MOBILNOŚĆ AKADEMICKA JAKO FENOMEN „DRENAŻU MÓZGÓW” WE WSPÓŁCZESNYM SZKOLNICTWIE WYŻSZYM

(STRESZCZENIE)

Autorzy zbadali wyzwania „drenażu mózgów” w kontekście realizacji idei mobilności akademickiej w ukraińskim systemie szkolnictwa wyższego. Problem zbadany został pod względem dwóch pozycji metodologicznych. Po pierwsze, w kontekście ogólnoswiatowych trendów globalizacji, co pozwoliło umieścić badany problem w skali światowej. Po drugie, w kontekście postkolonialnych (posttotalitarnych itp.), społeczno-kulturowych uwarunkowań dzisiejszej Ukrainy, który pozwolił uchwycić specyficzny wymiar badanego problemu. Na podstawie przeprowadzonych analiz autorzy wskazali kierunki do dalszych badań fenomenu utraty kapitału społecznego, który jest istotnym skutkiem realizowania programów mobilności akademickiej.

## ACADEMIC MOBILITY AS “BRAIN DRAIN” PHENOMENON OF MODERN HIGHER EDUCATION

(SUMMARY)

The authors examined the challenges of “brain drain” in the context of implementing the ideas of academic mobility in the Ukrainian higher education area. The problem was examined from the point of view of two methodological positions: firstly, in the context of the global trend of globalization, it actualizes the problem globally; secondly, in the context of the contradictions of post-colonial (post-totalitarian, etc.) sociocultural landscape of Ukraine, which gives the problem under study a specific nature. The authors proposed a methodological tool for the further study of the problem of social capital loss as a result of the implementation of academic mobility programs.