

## **Abstract of the doctoral dissertation**

Reconstruction of the transition experience of becoming a retiree. Analysis of autobiographical narrative interviews using the Fritz Schütze method

Key words: retirement, symbolic interactionism, transformation of identity, meaning-making.

Retirement is a significant turning point in the life of a mature person. It affects an increasing part of the population due to demographic trends. This is one of the reasons why the experiences of contemporary retirees are important for social research and social policies. Technological acceleration in transport, communication and trade, as well as the acceleration of the pace of life and acceleration of social changes, more severely affect older generations who have spent most of their lives in other circumstances. This certainly contributes to their greater vulnerability to various types of exclusion: professional, digital and social, and exposes them to the feeling that their knowledge and experience is outdated. This may directly influence into their relationships with people from younger generations and their attitude towards themselves. The aim of the study was to reconstruct the process of ending the professional career of modern retirees, i.e. to answer the following questions: What is the experience of retirement for an individual? How can the diversity of individual experiences of the end of professional career be explained? In order to answer the questions, the author chose the perspective of symbolic interactionism and the methodological and theoretical approach of Fritz Schütze. Based on many empirical studies, Schütze identified four elementary biographical process action. These are: 1) biographical action schemes, when individuals actively and intentionally shape their lives, 2) institutional expectations patterns, when they follow established, social career paths expected in a given phase of life, 3) metamorphosis, when they experience a positive change in their lives , 4) trajectories of suffering when, as a result of difficult events, they lose control over their lives and begin to react passively instead of taking active action. These biographical process structures do not form sequential sequences, but create various configurations - they interpenetrate, reinforce, or, on the contrary, displace each other. The empirical material of the study consists of autobiographical narrative interviews, supplemented with written memories describing the experience of retirement. The authors of the narratives and memories were generally people with higher technical education, which is the prism through which the identified regularities should be perceived. The narrative analysis allowed us to identify three models of retirement: *Easy*, *Difficult* and *Intersectional*, as well as

common and distinctive features of people for whom retirement is an expected process and does not pose any difficulties (Model I *Easy*) and those for whom it is associated with suffering (Model II *Difficult*). The Intersectional Model describes the situation in which the experience of retirement is combined with other difficult experiences, such as a serious illness or the death of a loved one. The analysis of biographical narratives proves that retirement is a complex social process embedded in the economic and historical situation, and at the same time grounded in the actions and decisions of people directly affected. The answer to the question of how it can be explained differently by different individuals signals the decisive role of the diverse hierarchy of cultural values and the meanings that individual people give to the biographical phases of life, the end of professional work and retirement. The mechanisms of socialization and the adoption of a not very positive image of an older person, as well as changes in the perception of time and shortening of the temporal perspective experienced in this phase of life are of considerable importance here.