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**TRANSFORMATION OF RESEARCH PROGRAMMES ON  
MIGRANTS' COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES**

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*Abstract*

The article presents analysis of the transformation of research programmes on migration and the communication strategies of migrants. It justifies the relevance of studying the displacement processes, which is accounted for the fact that the twentieth century turned out to be a century of migration that defined the global nature of the phenomenon. The thesis of the interdisciplinary nature of studying migration and the role of economic knowledge are revealed. The purpose of the article is to identify and to analyse the dynamics of migration process conceptualization in economic theory. A study of the transformation of theoretical knowledge on migration issues is connected with correlating the ontological and methodological approaches of classical science, the neo-classical research programme, and institutional, structural and historical approaches. Such scientific principles as individualism and holism are also applied to analyse the methodological base of the conceptualization. Analysis of the dynamics of the migration processes conceptualization discloses significant changes in the migration research methodology, which are determined primarily by the fact that the homogeneous social ontology, on which classical and neoclassic theories relied, is giving way to a more complex description of economic reality. Such perceptions are associated with the idea that social ontology can be likened to dynamic chaos, where people, involved in economic relations, present complex objects, whose choice is determined not only by their natural world but also by deep cultural, historical and ideological contexts. Such understanding should be reflected in modern economic research on migration processes and the communication strategies of migrants.

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## **1. Introduction**

Migration is a long-known and significant phenomenon in the history of humankind. Geographical movements of population have always accompanied demographic growth, technological changes, political conflicts and wars. However, the twentieth century turned out to be the age of migration. (Donato & Massey, 2016). International migration flows, forming now a sort of the "nation of migrants", which turns out to be among ten world's most populated ones, have essentially embraced all the countries of the world. Specialists from different spheres give controversial estimates of socio-economic consequences of these population movements. The most optimistic ones view it as the most important manifestation of progress in the various areas of public life and an imperative of modern society, while others perceive it as a threat (Dijstelbloem & Broeders, 2015). The transformation of migration flows into a large-scale phenomenon affecting all aspects of the world community life has boosted interest in international migration on the part of scientific community, statesmen and politicians, as well as general public (Willekens et al., 2016; Massey, 2012).

## **2. Problem Statement**

Firstly, despite the obvious relevance of studying migration processes, at this stage it is difficult to speak of a single migration theory, which would provide opportunities to solve any key research issues, delineate the boundaries of the object and subject of the migration processes study, provide theoretical approaches, models for describing and interpreting migration and the effects associated with it. This situation is related primarily to the complex nature of the migration phenomenon itself. The diverse effects of migration processes have an impact on almost every sphere of social life. As a result, study of migration issues is largely incorporated into a certain area of scientific knowledge (economics, demography, political science, sociology, history, social geography, legal sciences, anthropology, gender studies, etc.).

Secondly, over time, one observed the evolution of guidelines, statements, hypotheses, which represent the conceptual core of research programmes related to the study of migration processes and communication strategies of migrants. In this regard, analysis of research programmes' dynamics which is aimed at identifying possible vectors or trends of migration processes in the future is a relevant research issue.

## **3. Research Questions**

Research questions on migration highlighted in the article are focused on theoretical concepts that have been formed in the framework of the economic theory. In addition, the thesis, which underlies the study, is that the basic concepts, prerequisites and approaches of researchers are predetermined primarily by the broad socio-philosophical context that forms the basic scientific world picture, the ways of world cognition and the scientific criteria. The scientific picture of the world is not constant, but it is transformed as knowledge is gained and new ways of obtaining it are developed. Since its inception, economic theory does not only have characteristics of a certain economic reality in its knowledge structure. As any other developed knowledge, it also is loaded with meanings from the realm of

philosophical ideas about human cognition, as well as principles and general perceptions of the ontological reality from other sciences, and from the cultural context. These perceptions are, on the one hand, represent a form of "prerequisite" knowledge that constitutes the metaphysical basis for human and society models on which the theory is built (Belskaya, 2016).

Secondly, a study of transformation of theoretical knowledge on migration issues is linked to correlating the ontological and methodological guidelines of classical science, the neo-classical research programme, and institutional, structural and historical approaches.

Thirdly, the analysis of the dynamics of migration processes conceptualization gives an opportunity to evaluate the logic of the development of theoretical knowledge in the process of studying migration in economic theory.

#### **4. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the article is to identify and to analyse the dynamics of migration process conceptualization in economic theory.

#### **5. Research Methods**

In the article, the study of migration is connected with correlating the ontological and methodological principles of classical science, the neo-classical research programme, and institutional, structural and historical approaches. Universal scientific research principles such as individualism and holism are used to analyse methodological rationale for conceptualizing.

#### **6. Findings**

The theoretical scientific research of the problem was initiated in the late 19th century. In that period, the rapid industrialization in Western European societies and the process of changes in the socio-domestic, cultural and demographic spheres have led to emerge of theories aimed at explaining the causes and articulating the basic principles of migration. In 1885, British geographer E. Ravenstein published in the Journal of the Statistical Society an article, headlined as "The Laws of Migration", which became the starting point for many researchers of migration. In his study, E. Ravenstein relied on statistics of the UK population census. The laws are formulated as follows: 1. Most migrants move short distances. 2. When migrants move to absorption centres, they leave gaps that are filled with migrants from more remote areas. Thus, migration flows are emerging. 3. There is also a process of dispersion which is opposite to the process of absorption. 4. Every significant flow of migrants produces a compensating return flow. 5. Migrants, moving long distances, are usually attracted by large trade and industrial centres. 6. Urban residents are less likely to be displaced than natives of rural areas. 7. Women are more prone to migration than men.

It should be noted that the attempts of E. Ravenstein to find universal migration laws were akin to attempts to discover universal "natural laws" in the sciences. This approach is based on the ideas of classical philosophy, which is oriented to nature and the sciences. At the end of the 19th century, the most powerful context that affected development of social science was presented by the ideas of physics and

Newton mechanics. It was quite natural to search for patterns and order not only in the physical world, but also in the world of human relations. In the best scientific traditions of his time, E. Ravenstein analyzed migration processes to explain their nature and discover its patterns.

Despite the general limitations of such approach, the laws of migration developed by E. Ravenstein had a significant impact on further research in this area. Although the researcher succeeded in answering the question "How do people move?," he left the important question: "Why do people move?" without an answer.

An attempt to answer this question was made by E. Lee in the 1960s in the theory of "push" and "pull" factors. Lee. According to this theory, the decision to migrate and the migration process itself are influenced by the combination of factors which E. Lee marked as follows: 1) "Push" factors associated with the territory of departure. 2) "Pull" factors associated with the territory of arrival. 3) "Intervening obstacles". 4) Personal factors associated with a person who makes the decision to migrate. For the author, migration is a balance of pull and push factors at the place of departure and at the place of arrival, which is formed under the influence of intervening obstacles. So for a migrant, it is a subjective evaluation of a range of circumstances in the situation when a decision on migration is taken. In his theory, E. Lee obviously refuses to search for universal and non-historical general laws. The focus is put on a single individual. The factors themselves represent a universal set of external circumstances, but the evaluation of these factors is always individual and depends on the person who evaluates. To a certain extent, the "pull-push" theory of E. Lee is a part of the migration study in the framework of the neo-classical research programme, which was being developed in the economics at that time. The widespread neo-classical economic theory is characterized by the following theoretical and methodological guidelines. In free market, every individual is small and insignificant and represents an indivisible unit "atom" of the economy. This idea corresponds to a reductionist view of the economy (and society as a whole) as a simple aggregate of economic units which is divided by them "without a remainder". A market economy is seen as a balanced and relatively harmonious system, in which selfishness of all its members leads to the greatest welfare of the society as a whole via free competition. Such perception is based on the universal philosophical method of "methodological individualism". The principle of methodological individualism, together with the rationality hypothesis and maximization hypothesis, form a rigid core of the Neoclassical research programme. For a long time, the Neoclassical research programme took a significant place in research practice, including the study of migration processes.

A fundamentally different answer to the question about the ways and the reasons in the process of making decisions about migrating was offered by the theory called "New Economics of Labour Migration". While remaining generally in the framework of neo-classical paradigm, the focus of the new economic migration theory is not on an individual decision maker, but on the family or household. According to O. Stark, the decision to migrate is taken collectively by family members, and it is part of the overall family strategy (Stark & Bloom, 1985).

In this context, the migration of one (or several) family members is viewed not only as a way to maximize the expected individual income, but also as an instrument for managing economic risks related to the household management as a part of the overall family strategy. Unlike the neo-classical theory, which focuses on the permanent residence abroad, this theory puts in the limelight circular migration and

the repatriation of income - in the form of remittances or savings. Instead of moving abroad permanently to maximize incomes, people move temporarily to increase the income of their household or to accumulate money, with the intention of solving some specific economic problems that induced them to move. The analysis of Bank statistics and the volume of remittances made via the Internet gives clear evidence that this money of immigrants saturate the economies of poor countries. The advantage of remittances made by migrants is the targeted receiving of funds. In many countries, migrant workers' remittances are the first or second source of foreign currency which gives opportunity to finance imports, to implement infrastructure projects (construct roads, hospitals, schools, etc.), to provide small loans to the local population and to establish private enterprises. These types of human migration are named transnational movements in special literature (Xiang, 2016).

Further research on migration reveals an important shift in the research position of scientists regarding the subject of the study and the rationale for its conceptualizing. Migration researchers do not concentrate only on the motivation of the individual economic agent (or family), but on the special social structures, which are built into the migration process. In the view of Palloni A., Massey D., these ideas were conceptually designed in the theory of social capital. Special structures represent social networks of migrants which extend through continents and decades and constitute interpersonal ties that unite migrants, former migrants and non-migrants with ties of kinship, friendship and belonging to one community (Palloni et al., 2001). The decision to migrate, as well as what to do in a new place, is largely determined by the ethnic, kinship and friendly networks of people (Mulder, 2007; Tonkiss, 2016). Thus, migration researchers do not only focus on separate individuals, their families, but also on the networks of the nearest social environment, as well as on macro-level structural forces, which are powerful sources of migration flows (McKenna et al., 2016). This shift to studying macro-factors is linked to the idea that there are social structures which are above an individual level and which determine behaviour of people, including displacement-related behavior. This position is determined by a different universal scientific methodological principle, holism.

In economics, this means that a study should begin with defining laws of the whole economy and then proceed to description of the single individual behaviour. The implementation of this principle in economic theory is associated with an institutional approach. Within the framework of institutional economic theory, the unit of analysis is the institution which is defined as the result of social evolution, as a set of rules that serve to limit the behaviour of economic agents and to organize the interaction between them. The institutional approach can be expressed in the desire to see every economic agent as some complicated whole, whose behaviour is influenced by both its internal structure and institutions of external environment. The economy and its people are seen to be inextricably linked with a great deal of different institutions which are available in the society. In migration studies, this transition determined the shift of the focus from individuals and their immediate social environment (the family, households and mobilising social networks) to examination of large-scale, institutional factors which drive migration processes, by influencing individual motivation resulting from the decision to move.

In migration studies, structural, institutional factors affecting the processes of human displacement, following the terminology offered by D. Massey, can be divided into "structural forces in

countries of departure that determine people's need for migration" and "structural forces in countries of arrival that determine the demand for migrants" (Massey, 2015).

These considerations, in one way or another, are found and developed in a number of theories which seek to explain migration processes in a broader context of social transformation and institutional changes of global scale (McCarthy & Puffer, 2016). This structural and historical approach to the migration study emerged as a contrast to neoclassical theory. Its aim was to describe the impact of the global structures, which are above the individual level, and social forces, which influence displacement processes. Theories of this approach define behaviour of people who are involved in migration as predetermined by global external force. Methodologically, this corresponds to a holistic approach in describing and explaining the socio-economic reality, where behaviour of every individual is determined by the society.

Active migration studies within the framework of structural and historical perspective were conducted in the 1970s and 1980s. International migration was interpreted as a result of asymmetric development caused by spread of capitalist industrial relations and as a factor contributing to a greater inequality. This view is very much the same as that of I. Wallerstein and his world-system theory. Since the 1960s, he worked at the general theory of socio-economic development. I. Wallerstein considers the world system as a inter-cultural territorial division of labour, where the production and exchange of basic goods and inputs are necessary for the daily life of all its inhabitants. The labour division is based on the modes and conditions of production and leads to selection of three regional zones: *core* or central, *semi-peripheral* and *peripheral*. The selected areas differ geographically and culturally, with some of them being fixed on labour-intensive production (peripheral) and with others - on capital-intensive production (core). Semi-periphery plays the role of a buffer zone and represents a mixture of both types of activity. A more powerful core exploits weak periphery. The expansion of the economic core can, however, change the peripheral technology towards a reduction in the share of labour and result in the emergence of a mobile workforce ready to move to other regions of the world.

In addition, people are becoming involved in the migration movement because the traditional structures they existed in turn out to be destroyed as a result of their entry to the global economic system. Thus, the theory of world systems suggests that the cause of the migration movement is not simply the wage gap, but also the general conditions of economic inequality and the crisis situation in the peripheral countries. This theory is actively used in discussions about issues of globalization (Sager, 2016). However, the version of the historically predetermined global order was partly refuted by the recent "restructuring" of the world system, when a number of former peripheral countries, whose population, which used to moved extensively to more successful countries, have achieved impressive economic progress. Countries of southern Europe and "Asian tigers" are among the advanced countries of the world, due to being included in the process of capitalist globalization and, possibly, their active participation in the world labour market. At the same time, migration flows that link them to other countries have become more diversified and multi-directional. The shifts, taking place in the world economic system, as it was outlined by I. Wallerstein, suggest that the prospects for a nation's economic development are more dependent on the conditions in which they take place. In particular, they depend on the way in which this development is consistent with institutional structures, on the degree to which inter-state integration has

been developed in the region, and finally on the chosen economic strategy (Castles, 2004). Depending on these circumstances, the inclusion of countries in the world system of capitalism may have both negative and positive consequences. So, labour migration cannot be interpreted merely as a desperate escape from poverty, because people choose migration not only as a survival strategy but also as a development strategy. And this development really takes place through the return flows of remittances, experience, ideas and people (return migration) (Xiang et al., 2014).

## 7. Conclusion

In conclusion, when evaluating the transformation of the migration processes conceptualization in the economic theory, it is important to point out significant changes in the methodology of the process study, which are determined primarily by the fact that the homogeneous social ontology, on which the neoclassical theory was based, gives way to a more complex description of economic reality. Such perceptions are connected with social ontology, which can be likened to dynamic chaos, where people involved in economic relations are complex objects, whose choice is determined not only by their natural world, but by deep cultural, historical and world outlook contexts. This understanding itself should be reflected in modern economic research on migration processes.

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