

An interdisciplinary approach to migration processes

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Abstract. *We can certainly call the era in which we live an era of migration. Human migration is the companies' reply to the considerable development differences present in the worldwide geo-economic context. Migration occurs because of a metamorphosis in the society. The unprecedented proportions of the migration process reveal that migration is the most popular strategy to avoid poverty, persecution or to gain a faster access to higher living standards. Migration or the territorial mobility of the population is not just about changing one's residence but is a more complex process that brings into the equation several factors. Regardless of the mechanisms that trigger or influence its manifestation, the process of migration generates a broad spectrum of consequences.*

Keywords: *international labour migration, migrants, labour market, remittances, migration policy, migration network.*

The study of migration processes involves analysing a series of social and economic phenomena. This is the reason for which it becomes one of the objects of study in many disciplines: economics, sociology, demography, political science, psychology etc. Analysing the scientific approaches to the international migration of the labour force, we

found that because of the multidimensionality of this phenomenon, scientific approaches have a complex interdependence, intersecting and complementing each other. In order to grasp the essence of *migration* as a socio-economic phenomenon, we will investigate it from the historical and dialectical perspectives elaborated by a number of scientists.

The Demographic approach has an essential role in the analysis of the migration processes. In the frame of this approach, K. Marx, M. Weber, A. Sovy, Noutstein F., A. Landreau D. Valenti and others have conducted research, establishing that migration has an impact on the birth rate, mortality and population health. This approach highlights the role of population growth and its quality as determinant factors of social and economic development. Still the current period has witnessed a massive increase in the size of the population, 80% of which is living in the developing countries. During last time, European countries register both a decrease in the indicators of population reproduction and the demographic ageing. This demographic crisis constitutes one of the factors of workforce migration, especially from developing countries to developed countries. Although the Republic of Moldova is not a developed country, it registers a reduction of its population. According to experts' estimates, the size of the population may decrease till the year 2050 by about one million people, reaching 2,5962 million people, an essential decrease in population forecasted after the year 2026 [10, p. 126]. Hence migration proves to be not only interconnected with the level of the society's development but also organically integrated into the demographic processes.

The Sociological approach examines the correlation between migration and socio-economic situation in donor and recipient countries. In this approach, a special focus is put on the "push and pull" theory and migration network theory, which investigate problems related to migrants that adapt to the new socio-cultural and ethnic environment. Among the variables of the "push and pull" theory is the poverty in the origin countries and the

comparative advantages for the labour force of the countries of destination. The economic factors hold the biggest share in the series of refusal factors: unemployment, low wages, drought, hunger, overpopulation etc. Taking into account these factors, the British scientist E. Ravenstein has developed a model based on the variables from the origin country, being opposed to the respective variables from the destination countries [12]. This model is considered as one of the most valuable theoretical achievements focused on the refusal and attraction factors. In his work "The laws of migration", which analyses the information concerning twenty countries, E. Ravenstein developed eleven laws for the labour migration:

1. Migration takes place gradually, step by step.
2. Most migrations are made over short distances.
3. Each migration flow has a corresponding anti-flow, compensating it.
4. Economic factors are determinant in taking the decision to migrate.
5. Migration volume increases with the development of industry, trade and transport.
6. The bigger territorial centre is, the more attractive it is from the migrants' point of view.
7. The growth of large urban centres is due to the population migration, not due to the natural population growth.
8. The urban population is less active than rural population in terms of migration.
9. Most migrants from rural localities are heading to major industrial and commercial centres.
10. Most migrants are individual adults; families rarely migrate abroad;
11. Women more frequently migrate within the country, while men mostly migrate abroad.

Developing E. Ravenstein's ideas, in the 60's of the twentieth century, the scientist E. Lee elaborates the „push and pull“ theory, studying internal and international migration at the microeconomic level. According to this theory, the determinant factors of migration are of four types:

- Factors related to the origin country of migrants;
- Factors related to the destination country of migrants;
- Conjectural factors, which serve as intermediate barriers (e.g. travel expenses, legislative prohibitions, insufficient information);
- Personal factors related to migrants' personal characteristics [6].

Migrant networks are one of the main themes in the research field targeting the subject of international migration. The theory behind it was founded in 1990 by D. Massey and studies the internal and international migration at both the micro and macro levels. Migration is explained by family relationships, friendships with migrants from the destination country. Most migrants choose the destination country considering the presence of relatives or of a diaspora. This factor has a great importance for migration with the purpose of family reunification. According to data from Eurostat, 90% of women of Egyptian origin immigrated to Italy because of this [18]. Diaspora existence in destination countries is a factor considered, especially, by low-skilled migrants that tend to accommodate in the new society preponderantly by means of social relations. The existence of a network of migrants is an amplification factor in increasing the migration flows between countries and in supporting migration processes even under unfavourable conditions (for example, the economic crisis in the destination country).

The economic approach to researching the subject of population migration targets the essence of this complex phenomenon, highlighting its common laws and

particularities, as well as the development of regulatory and management measures. The classical economic theory sees the phenomenon of population migration as being linked to the deployability processes of the population and to the development of productive forces. Determining the laws of the migration processes, over the last two centuries, has been the subject of research of representatives from different economic schools.

The Cumulative Causation Theory, founded in 1957 by G. Myrdal, postulates that migrants are usually skilled, educated and motivated people, contributing, on one hand, to the increase in the productivity of the destination countries, which determines the economic growth of the recipient countries and, on the other hand, the economic stagnation of the origin countries, which, in turn, will further intensify the process of international migration. The Neoclassical Theory of Migration attributes the foremost role in explaining the emergence of migration flows to the economic factors. O. Stark, M.P. Todaro, J.R. Harris analyse both the internal and international migration phenomena at the microeconomic and macroeconomic levels. According to the ideas found in the neoclassical economic theory, the main cause of the emergence and development of migration flows is the difference between the wages level in the countries that 'donate' workforce and those that 'receive' it. According to the Human Capital Theory (Th. Schultz and G. Becker) migration is explained by the tendency of each individual to enrich the human capital, namely to enhance income generation capabilities during the lifetime as a result of migration [15]. The *segmented* (dual) Labour Market Theory examines the international migration of labour force at the macroeconomic level. It suggests that migration is due to the structural demand of the developed countries for foreign labour force in two economic sectors: the *primary* sector - which guarantees stability and the high remuneration for nationals or immigrants with high qualifications and the *secondary* sector, characterized by instability, lack of conditions for professional growth, a reduced

remuneration [11]. The Social Capital Theory was developed by D. Massey and his colleagues. In his work "Return to Aztlan: The Social Process of International Migration from Western Mexico" (1987), Massey examines for the first time the migrant networks as a form of social capital. In 1998, he places the Network Theory and the Institutional Theory in the frame of the Social Capital Theory, arguing that, over time, individuals and organisations become institutionally stable and well known to immigrants, becoming a form of social capital that migrants rely on when seeking to enter a foreign market [7]. Overall, in the light of this theory, migration is seen as being a process that results from the disparities between the origin and the destination countries.

To summarise, based on the analysis of theories discussed above, we can say that specialists who focused on the economic approach to the study of migration highlight different and often contradictory factors as being determinant in the process of international migration. This could be explained by the fact that migration is a multidimensional phenomenon. Studying the approaches to the phenomenon of migration, one can establish a number of contradictions between different economic theories. P. Stalker tried to overcome these contradictions by analysing the peculiarities of the contemporary migration from the following perspectives:

- **individual**, based on the concept of human capital, migration is studied as an investment in this form of capital;
- **structural**, based on the study of individual mobility in the context of living conditions Social, political and economic structures can either attract or repel a person from living in a certain environment;
- **systemic**, studying international migration as a result of individual decisions, depending on various structural factors in the context of the global flows of capital, goods, as well as on the action of political, social and economic factors [17].

The politological approach. Its foundations were laid in the works of G. Freeman and A. Zolberg, which suggest that migration should be regulated by the state through a system of migration policies. Political scientists examine migration from the perspective of cooperation between states, consisting of population movements and developing the necessary legislation. From this perspective, the state's role is to exercise control over individuals' *inputs* and *outputs*, to determine criteria of belonging to the society through procedures for obtaining a citizenship, to influence political systems and institutions regarding migration regulations [4]. In the CIS countries, especially in Russia, a new politological direction is being formed concerning the analysis and regulation of migration. This direction is being outlined in the works of A. Vishnevsky, A. Vozjenikov, G. Vitkovskaia and other researchers. At the same time, migration policy is treated both as a sub-area of the demographic policy and of the social policy. An important feature of migration in the former Soviet space is its ethnic and political determining factors. The low levels of socio-economic development, as well as the ethnic and political conflicts in the CIS countries, have generated massive migration flows, stimulating the formation of immigrant communities in different countries.

The psychological approach is presented in the works of researchers Perevedentseva V., T. Zaslavskaja, V. Moiseenko etc. This approach looks at the internal and international migrations, examining both individual and group-related reasons determining the migration behaviour of an individual.

The systemic approach based on the concept of migration systems was first examined at the end of 1980 by M. Critz, X. Zlotnik et al. This approach suggests that a so-called migration system consists of a group of countries that have stable and strong migration relations. A migration system is formed because of a migration flow and represents a unique space

encompassing countries that donate and receive labour force, respectively. To explain the operating principles of migration we need to examine the system as a whole. The direction of migration flows is usually determined by the existence of the historical, cultural, economic and political relations between donor and recipient countries [5]. Nowadays, there are a few distinct migration systems in the world: North American, European, Asia-Pacific, Eurasian (which was formed in the former Soviet Union) etc.

Conclusions

There are several approaches and theories targeting the subject of labour migration that explain various aspects of this phenomenon. In the work „Worlds in Motion: Understanding International Migration at the End of the Millennium” scientists D. Massey, J. Arango, A. Koucouci, A. Pelligrino, E. Taylor presented a new theory of labour migration - The Synthetic Theory, which explains the emergence and features of the phenomenon of international migration at the beginning of the new millennium [7]. According to this theory, in a global context in which countries are transitioning towards a market economy and new regional economic spaces appear, a collapse of traditional social and economic relations is taking place, which increases the mobility of certain population groups seeking new ways of deriving income for their survival. Thus, migration flows do not arise in isolated regions, but in regions undergoing economic transformation and attempting to integrate into the international economic circuit. The phenomenon of migration is, therefore, not a deficiency of the mechanism of market development, but its consequence. In this context, international labour migration is an important factor in determining globalisation, which connects migrants' destination and origin countries and influences the economic development of these countries, as well as the development of the global economy as a whole.

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