

# How do Migrants Turn Out to Be Extremists? Theoretical Models for a Sociological Analysis of Inclusion and Social Exclusion of Transnational Migrants in Everyday Life

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**ABSTRACT:** Current publications in professional literature often discuss terrorism and extremism in the system of coordinates developed by jurisprudence where the different phenomena are eclectically combined and grouped for analytical purposes. Charles Tilly in his works insisted that the terms terror, terrorism, and terrorist do not identify causally coherent and distinct social phenomena but rather strategies that recur across a wide variety of actors and political situations. This paper tries to depict basic theoretical models and methodological framework for doing field sociological inquiry on the hottest issue in current migration studies which is how the reality of social exclusion in everyday life turns immigrants to the practices of ideological extremism.

**KEYWORDS:** transnational migrants, extremism, everyday life, social inclusion and social exclusion of migrants

## Introduction

The paper is oriented towards an exploration of several basic hypothetical presuppositions:

- 1) 'Traditional' (old) transnationalism that makes a stress on traditional forms of social interconnectedness and relations with relatives, and establishment of normal relations with a country of "exodus" in the XXI century is mixed with new ideological extremism that finds its milieu in the Internet
- 2) Transnationalism that is related to radical ideological (religious) organizations also (this way or another) propagates ideological extremism
- 3) The second generation of immigrants have different and lower level of traditional ties with the countries of 'exodus' and are more likely to be inflicted with ideological extremism
- 4) The most vulnerable group to be influenced by ideological extremism is the 1,5 generation of immigrants.

## Theoretical and methodological substance

The theoretical and methodological approach that we apply in this paper has been developed in the framework of a neo-weberian historical sociology (Tilly, Mann, Lachmann, Collins). Further, in terms of theory we make a stress on new understanding of 'transnationalism', "new assimilation theory", new paradigmatic shift in sociological sciences (shift toward social existence). Theoretical shift from nation-states and formal institutions to everyday life and informal practices requires additional analytical tools. We refer to the works of P. Sztompka (the concept of social existence), R. Collins (theory of interaction rituals), A. Rawls. We agree with Sztompka that everyday life is constituted by routine interactions in social contexts. Therefore, analytics of human interaction is a clue to comprehension of everyday life including day-by-day inequalities. Structural and cultural factors should be "translated" into "language" of everyday worlds of migrants.

At the same time, we perceive everyday life as a reality of interpersonal/social relations, as opposed to the approaches based on the notion of "culture" ("culture of everyday life"). A similar idea was realized by A. Papakostas in the comparative study of trust and public sphere in Greece

and Sweden. Following Papakostas we treat everyday worlds, or "alternative life", as specific combinations of social relations with fuzzy boundaries. Just as social relations determine those groups, individuals and organizations being recognized as credible or not credible, everyday worlds (characterized by different interaction structures) isolate from each other not because of some intrinsic properties, but due to particular constellation of relations. For example, migrant workers interact with each other, authorities (the police, the Federal migration service), representatives of the host society in different ways.

Basic theoretical research problem is connected with conceptual understanding of how macro - and micro levels phenomena and processes of transnational migration interrelate with each other. On the one hand, the macro perspective of transnational migration flows is rooted in the capitalist system of relations, global and regional inequality and the division of labor in the twenty-first century, in the diversity of capitalist regimes in Eurasian and American continents. On the other hand, transnationalism is produced and reproduced in everyday life of local groups and communities, in everyday interactions of migrants and host societies. Thus, we face the need to study both social relations and (relatively) independent everyday life.

The pilot research that has been organized by USA-Russia research Lab "TANDEM" in 2018-2019 has showed the necessity of the field research to be guided by the following conceptual tools: interaction ritual chains theory by Randall Collins; Anne Rawls' theoretical and empirical findings on interaction order(s); cultural trauma and social performance theories by Jeffrey Alexander; as well as by institutional ethnography by Dorothy Smith. Amalgamating these concepts and approaches we frame everyday life as an ensemble of interactions in different social contexts (at home/dormitory, at work, at street, etc.) that constitute typical sequences ("chains") and are constituted by specific interaction orders.

One of the most fundamental theoretical problems of current comparative studies in race and ethnicity is the shift of conceptual focus: instead of explaining existing phenomena (searching mechanisms of conflicts as such) the researchers define a limited set of factors that determine (in a probabilistic or deterministic sense) the result. Meanwhile, this approach seems to be quite limited. The mechanism by definition cannot be entirely determined by the result that is produced by this mechanism: the same mechanism can produce an unlimited number of consequences. Furthermore, attempts to isolate the abstract (necessary and / or sufficient) mechanism are incorrect due to presence of stochastic elements for each case. Finally, the dominant approaches to identify mechanisms usually formulate "Why?" question, while the strategy of search mechanism requires its analysis of a series of successive "How?" questions about the structure of this mechanism.

We believe that three principles are crucial for comprehension of everyday interplay : 1) to analyze emotional dynamics of interactions in a variety of contexts; 2) to explore what social Self is constituted in social interactions; 3) to distinguish between "voluntary" and "forced" social interactions: former is practiced with goodwill and for social intercourse's sake, at least in part, while to latter human is impelled by the way of production of his/her life and it could be rather traumatic (including "lonely crowds" in urban areas). Therefore, social interaction research looks towards the issues of 'Self' and identity, on a one hand, and the mechanisms of how social bonds, communities and networks arise and reproduce, on the other hand.

### **Transnationalism as a new vision for studying migration**

There are basically three approaches to study of migration phenomena. First, the traditional one (Castles and Miller 2009; Jasso and Rosenzweig 1990) implies analysis of migration as human movements; this approach has dominated in the second half of the 20th century. The second approach - a post-migration studies / dynamics / situation (Martiniello 2012) – is a relatively new trend that suggests analysis of what happens to people after their migration. The third approach, that we propose to implement this project, involves integration of research perspectives of the first and second approaches with the focus on specific phenomena of transnationalism - simultaneous

inclusion of migrants in social networks of countries of origin and the host community, the constant movement of migrants between different national spaces and everyday worlds, the financial participation of migrants in the country of origin and their economic activities in the host country. At empirical level, these new phenomena are the emergence of expats, transit migrants and transit host communities, return migrants, migrants-expatriates.

New social phenomena of migration require their reflection and analytics through a new conceptual apparatus. The concept of "transnationalism" needs a clear and theoretically grounded definition, and this definition should be clarified for different levels of social reality (supra-national flows, social relations, everyday worlds). Otherwise, the term "transnationalism" is to suffer from "blurring" of its meaning and to become a catch-word, buzz-word like "globalization" or "communication". Equally urgent is a task to clarify the concepts of "social inclusion / exclusion / non-inclusion", "social integration", "assimilation", "new assimilation", "acculturation", "ghettoization"

As it has been noted the "transnationalism" entered into migration studies lexicon in the 1990s. However, there no evidences that transnational approaches form a coherent theory or set of theories yet. They can be more adequately described as a perspective for studying cross border phenomena (Faist 2010).

A brief history of the concept "transnationalism" is reconstructed by Remennick (2002). The notion of transnationalism was coined with the purpose of description of the flows of capital and economic resources across and beyond national borders and then was adopted for the studies of migration and citizenship. In the 1990s social scientists also debated the historical novelty of transnationalism as an empirical phenomenon. Now it is probably commonly accepted that transnationalism of our contemporary, enabled by historically recent developments of the cheap means of transportation and communication, is qualitatively different in its scale and impact from transnational networks that existed earlier in history. During the debates some interesting distinctions have been made, e.g. between transnationalism-from-above and from-below: the former referring to the activities of global corporations and international organizations, the latter to the grassroots transnationalism – activities of small businesses and ordinary people, cultural and economic exchanges and interactions reaching beyond national borders. Further distinctions can also be made, e.g. between formal and informal aspects of transnationalism, etc. In this project the authors treat transnationalism in terms of the everyday life, thus being close to Remennick (2002) analysis of "transnational lifestyle."

### **Further research**

The desk research and pilot research project allows us to formulate the general hypothesis of the further field research: under certain conditions and specific models of social inclusion and social exclusion ideological extremism and terrorism can be promoted among transnational migrants. Thus, the specific goal for a sociological field research is to find out the conditions and mechanisms that determine manifestation and development of ideological extremism and practices of terrorism in everyday life of the cities with transnational migrants. Remennick in her works has demonstrated that transnationalism can affect the life strategies of migrants in various ways and has ambivalent effect on their inclusion / exclusion in the host society (labor market, social system) that may vary in different generations of migrants (Remennick 2017). The impact of transnationalism on the extent and character of the migrants' integration into the host community is largely independent on their ethnic or cultural background but it is determined by the context of social relations in the host community.

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