Labour Relations in Research of Socio-economic Systems


Abstract:

The article is concerned with the study of the theoretical and methodological patterns of the genesis of labour relations during evolution of socio-economic systems.

The approach developed by the authors makes it possible to single out the basic blocks of the labour relations system, considering the actors and objects of the relations. Adopted as a basis, such an approach makes it possible to describe the labour relations of any economic system.

The allocation of mandatory elements (objects) and subjects in the structure of labour relations makes it possible to disclose the content of the category “labour relations”.

The relevance of theoretical studies of the characteristics of the economy at a substantial level, the increased interest in the methodology and theory of economic knowledge is due to the inconsistency and alternativeness of the current stage of development of the world economy and global society.

For Russian society, such studies are determined by the exceptional complexity of transformation processes and the prospects for its evolution.

Keywords: Research methodology, labour relations, the structure of economic systems, the reference and basic relations, subjects and objects of labour relations.

JEL Classification: J00, P23, O15.

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1. Introduction

The problem of the original relation is directly related to the method of ascent from the abstract, which incorporates genetic differences in the structural levels of economic relations and reflects their transformations and historical perspectives in the development of economic systems (Kolmakov et al., 2015; Korableva et al., 2018). The above method is the most pronounced form of the system, logical method in economic research. Its application makes it possible to establish the interdependence between the categories, to reproduce the world of economics as a product of self-development, to understand it historically, to carry out the synthesis of the concepts into a coherent subordinated system (Akhmetshin et al., 2018b; Shaikhelislamova et al., 2012; Ekimova et al., 2018).

2. Methods

Recognizing the priority of abstract analysis, as economic theory approaches the economic practice, its object should be not only general patterns of development, but also specific mechanisms for the functioning of the economic actors. Thus, the method of ascent from the abstract allows the entity to explain the form of its manifestation, which incorporates all the wealth of the most developed state of this object (Cohen, 2014).

This approach to the laws of development of the structure of socio-economic systems is based on the concept of labour as a type of human activity inherent in a specific historical period in the development of an economic system (Saifullova et al., 2018; Korableva and Kalimullina, 2016). Social labour is the basis for all types of expedient activity. Labour is the content of the original category as the epistemological form of establishment of cause-consequence dependence, which dominates all the others and determines the quality of the economy, its substantial characteristic. Considering the complexity and debatability of the problem, as well as the absence of a single concept of the reference economic relation and the reference economic category in the economic theory, the authors will express some methodological principles that in their opinion could serve as a justification for their point of view (Sycheva, 2003).

1) The reference category is the ultimate scientific abstraction, in which the measure of the phenomenon is still preserved and from which all other relations are being derived, developed. At the same time, the reference relation is such an abstraction, behind which a real object is visible.

2) The reference relation establishes the condition and form of functioning and development of the system of economic relations. The basic attitude determines the purpose and social orientation of functioning and development. The reference and basic relations link all other relations into a single system. The reference
relation has the carrier: the first acts as a specific content, the second one acts as a form. The authors use these terms as synonyms.

3) Considering the labour as the reference category, the authors consider the decisive role of production in relation to distribution, exchange and consumption. Since labour relations are formed in connection with the production of material goods, they appear in a materialized form, that is, they have a tangible content and reflect the unity of the material and the ideal. Material wealth created by its inner substance always has labour, and the original attitude, in the end, is always the labour relation.

4) Labour encompasses the germ of contradictions in a given socio-economic system. It expresses the basic genetic relation of the latter, forming a link between different economic systems, and is a prerequisite for the formation of the basic economic relation. With this approach, the basic relation is derived from the original, carries its features, but is not identical to the original relation. The implementation of the reference relation is aimed at the implementation of the basic economic relation, and the development of the reference relation into the basic one should be considered as the basic vector of self-movement of socio-economic systems.

3. Results

The similarity, other than the identity of the socio-economic form of the reference and basic relations, lies in the fact that they characterize the labour process in the same social conditions of production, and the basic relation expresses the deeper essence of the labour process (Kurbanova et al., 2018). The reference relation is considered by the authors as the relation arising between people concerning the implementation of their ability to work (Shaykhelislamova et al., 2014). Labour as the ability to work, the abstract level of labour consideration through the definition of the nature and mechanism of the combination of factors of production in the labour system, expresses the content of the original category. Any labour process involves a certain method and nature of the worker’s connection with the means of production.

The form in which the employee is included in the process of social production is the content of the reference relation. The way of connecting the worker with the means of production is the obligatory, reference and most significant moment of the formation and functioning of the economic system. Thus, the most abstract definition of the reference relation as the relation between people regarding the implementation of their ability to work finds its more particular expression in the method of connecting the worker with the means of production (Ling and Yumashev, 2018; Usenko et al., 2018). The original relation does not exist by itself, it is realized, on the one hand, through the whole system of production relations. On the other hand – through labour relations. Production and labour relations are
different levels of abstraction: production relations are the concretization of labour relations. In the basic relation that arises about work as a fact due to the need to maximize the satisfaction of society’s needs, the nature and method of connecting the factors of production are realized in the activities of economic entities (Shaykhelislamova et al., 2013).

The basic trends in the movement of the labour system, as an internal source of self-development of a socio-economic system, are revealed in the formational concept of development (Korableva et al., 2017). As a socio-economic (substantive) criterion for distinguishing between the formations (or production methods), a method of combining producers and the means of production was taken. The universal economic basis, the determinant of the nature and method of combination of the factors of production is the form of ownership of the means of production. An important methodological prerequisite for the study of the method of combining factors of production is the theoretical separation of the socio-economic and production-economic aspects of the method of combining factors of production.

The combination of personal and material factors of production in the production process itself, their joint production use without defining the nature and method of this combination of socio-economic relations, covers only the production and economic side of the method of connecting factors (Rudoy et al., 2015). It is mandatory in any economic system and is implemented everywhere. The socioeconomic combination of material and personal factors of production is also obligatory and takes place in all methods of production, but it is unequal in its social form. The essential side of this method is represented by the relations developing in the process of separation and combination of the personal and material factors of production on the scale of the economic system.

Following the formational concept of development, it can be noted that the currently popular concepts of the civilizational development of mankind (according to which the development of economic systems occurs under the influence of not only economic factors (internal), but and non-economic (external to the economy factors), post-industrial, information society, etc. Based on the foregoing, the authors consider them complementary and do not oppose them to each other. Thus, the reference attitude arising between the workers regarding the implementation of their ability to work determines the quality of the economic system and its substantial characteristic. It is a gnosiological form of establishment of the cause-consequence dependence in the economy and it dominates all other relations.

How is the reference relation implemented at the “subject” level and developed into a theoretically consistent system and appears on the surface of the economy? The logic of the implementation of the reference relation in the structure of socio-economic systems can be traced along the chain: the socio-economic system – the structure of the system – the system of production relations – labour relations – elements (objects) of labour relations.
The possibility of the perception of the essence of an object as a system is carried out through the study of its structure and functions, provided that taken not separately, but through mutual influence, interdependence, that is, in unity. The essence of the object cannot manifest itself outside of its functioning. The latter is the source and the basis for the development of the system, since it is at the stage of operation that prerequisites arise for the transition of the system to a higher stage of its development (Sycheva et al., 2015). At the same time, the structure is an expression of the essence mediated by the functions, a kind of organizational, inverse function of the system. A function is the ability of a system to satisfy a specific need. Thus, structural and functional research methods complement each other and only in their totality, unity, provide the most complete knowledge of the essence of the object (Burmeister, 1980).

The multiplicity of criteria for the classification of economic systems is based on an objective variety of its properties. In enlarged form, the criteria of economic systems can be divided into three basic groups: 1) structure-forming (criteria related to the structural elements forming the subject of economic theory); 2) socio-economic (criteria based on the allocation of the basic aspects of the content of the economic system, which can be considered as: the method of combination of the workers and the means of production; the method of combination of production and consumption (method of coordination of the economic activity) etc.); 3) volume-dynamic criteria (characterizing the complexity of the economic system and its variability: static or dynamic system, homogeneity or heterogeneity, etc.).

As the structure-forming criteria of classification of socio-economic systems under consideration, the researchers usually consider: 1) production relations systems; 2) functional communication systems; 3) institutional systems (Johnson, 2010; Toms, 2006). It should be noted that, all the above criteria are intertwined and superimposed on each other, therefore a complete view of the economy as a self-developing system can only be given by a consideration of the entire set of criteria and classifications.

4. Discussion

When analyzing the economic systems at any level, a socio-economic approach is required, that is, a study of production relations and the allocation of the structure-forming factor of the economic system, in which labour relations are considered. Labour is the basis of the integrity of socio-economic systems; production relations are always labour relations, the specificity of which in the system is determined by the ownership relations, the method of combination of the production factors (Oswald, 1993).

In this sense, it is possible and necessary today to speak on a certain continuity of development of all socio-economic systems, despite all the contradictions of the individual. In the development of all systems, there is the “common” and there is the
“special.” What is the priority? It is well known that the special is always a form of manifestation of the general. Today, the global integration process, a high degree of internationalization of production and exchange gives rise to general trends in economic development, while detracting from the role of the shaping the type of socio-economic system (Mallick, 2010). Therefore, today, in our opinion, the “special” cannot be considered as the “structural”. Freedom of choice in determining the prospects for the development of any economic system is limited by the achieved socio-economic potential, which, first, predetermines the system of property and labour relations proportionate to it (Voronkova et al., 2018).

Continuity in the development of economic systems is created by this successive movement of the productive forces. Psychological motivation for economic behavior is an essential attribute of any rational management system. The economic principle, that is, the principle of achieving maximum results at the lowest cost, always requires a comparison of the economic benefits against each other and with the necessary labour costs (Osadchy and Akhmetshin, 2015). This understanding of production efficiency suggests that the human person is placed at the center of the economic system. At the same time, modern economic thinking is increasingly paying attention to higher values and higher motives (Pigou, A. Marshall, and others). In this contradiction lies the contradiction of all the laws of rational management, implemented through a monetary comparison of the costs and the result obtained. The contradiction between the immediate goal of production and the goal of social production, in general, is the deep contradiction of any economic system, which determines the source of its self-development and the limits of functioning (Conover and Shizgal, 2005).

It appears that a qualitatively new phenomenon – the conscious formation of a goal on the scale of the whole society and its implementation – is characteristic of modern economic systems (Akhmetshin et al., 2018a; Pavlyshyn et al., 2018). The conscious forms of goal-setting activities on the scale of the socio-economic system accelerate the development of precisely those areas of social life where progress still lags the rapid development of engineering and technology (Addison et al., 2014).

An objective goal is invariant in this quality with respect to any economic system, such important points as specific means and methods of its achievement, the presence of a certain contradiction between some specific goals, one or another idea of the principles of social justice, etc. At the same time, this continuity requires a deeper qualitative study of the issues of coordination and comparison of the goals of various socio-economic subsystems, social and economic interests of groups of the population. This would contribute to enrichment and concretize modern ideas of the authors about the level of social freedom and economic well-being as a criterion for the development of the society (Schöb and Wildasin, 1997).

Second, the transition from one formation to another is carried out dialectically through the contradictory unity of denial and continuity, since a change in the
properties of social relations is a historical process, in principle, irreversible as a qualitative characteristic of the state of the economic system.

Third, each formation passes three basic phases through its development: formation, maturity and the phase of dying. These phases are real, because they are based on a certain change in the quality of the productive forces within the boundaries of a given formation, which predetermines the state of all social relations, first, production.

Fourth, the transition from one formation to another is a combination of evolutionary and revolutionary paths of development without absolutization of each of them.

Fifth, each new formation has one or another fundamental advantage over the previous one; its historical progressiveness is determined by the ability to solve those problems of humanity that the previous formation could not solve in principle (Cherkovets, 2006).

The authors believe that both the formational and civilizational concepts (the advantage of which is the multidimensionality of analysis and its incompatibility to narrowly economic dimensions) of the development of economic systems make it possible to detect the existence of common prerequisites for the formation and functioning of the structure-forming elements of the system (Wolter et al., 2018). As the latter, the authors consider labour relations, and the study of the structure of economic systems is carried out in the aspect of the development of labour relations (Horvat, 1989).

The authors consider the differentiation and genesis of economic systems and their structural elements through the development of labour relations, which makes it possible to single out the uniform laws of social development and is the basis of self-preservation and self-development of any economic system. The development of systems occurs through the transformation (qualitative transformation in contrast to quantitative changes, meaning growth) of its structural elements due to both exogenous and endogenous factors and functions of the system, to which the authors refer to the development of labour relations. Having selected the latter as a structure-forming factor of economic systems, the authors turn to the definition of the content of labour relations and the consideration of its elements – subjects and objects. Each element of the system of labour relations should be described according to a single principle, so that at any time a general picture of labour relations of both Russia and any other economic system could be compiled from the “puzzle” (Trunin, 2007).

In each of the labour processes, as well as between different labour processes, the relations arise that can be viewed as a system of labour relations. At the highest level of abstraction, two basic reference series of labour relations: “man – nature” and “man – man” can be distinguished. If we consider these “global” relations from the position of a more private classification, then they will be: the relations between the
owners and the employees about the conditions and prerequisites of labour; the relations developing in the labour process; the relations regarding the distribution of results (Sy and Tinker, 2010).

It should be recognized that at the levels of general and private classification, labour relations are in a certain way subordinated. This means that the “man-nature” relation is the interaction of the two elements of the production process. Proceeding from the subordination of the two sides of the mode of production – the productive forces and production relations in the formational concept of development – the primary is the “man-nature” relation, and the secondary, derived from it is the “man-man” relation. The matter of primacy-secundariness at the level of a private classification is solved in the same way. In this case, the primary will be the attitude about the conditions and prerequisites of labour, the secondary will be the relations that develop in the process of labour and arise about the results of labour.

These considerations make it necessary to decide on such a fundamental point as the ratio of the functioning and genesis of the economic systems and the laws of their organization, functioning and development. Such an approach assumes the consideration of the laws of functioning and development as identical, unified (Foley, 2000). Only in this case – recognizing the unity of the laws of functioning and development as unified – a historical-logical study will allow realizing the logic of successively replacing economic systems for the study of labour relations in a market economy (Akhmetshin et al., 2018c).

At the first stage, the authors abstract the general elements of labour relations from their developed state and analyze them in the form of separate, completely independent, but simple properties of the object under study. In the dynamic aspect, the system of production relations is represented as a unity of labour relations and property relations. Moreover, this unity is inseparable these relations do not exist alone in isolation from others. Labour relations are direct forms of development of the productive forces and change under their direct influence.

The changes in productive forces established by labour relations are evidence of the existence of a process of conditionality of production relations by productive forces. It is through them that the impulses of changes in the productive forces of property relations are perceived (Akhmetshin et al., 2017). Therefore, labour relations create, presuppose, determine one or another qualitative state of the system of property relations, underlie the changes in these relations both within the framework of a given socio-economic system, and during the transition from one economic system to another. Compared to property relations, labour relations are deeper (Straoanu and Pantazi, 2011). The coherence between labour and property relations can be described as an interaction, since mutual changes are caused due to their mutual influence on each other. Because of this interaction, property relations act both as primary, defining (since it is their state that establishes the specifics of the system of
labour relations), and as secondary, defined (as the change of states of the system of property relations is determined by the labour relations).

On the other hand, by understanding the labour relations to include workers in labour and production and economic activity, the labour relations can also be defined through a set of more specific characteristics that are designed to reveal the characteristics of the functioning of workers in a given socio-economic system. In the most general form, the basic elements of the labour relations in the pre-industrial economic system are hardly very different when using wage labour or the labour of slaves, serves, therefore, in our opinion, 1) means of production; 2) labour incentives and motives; 3) division and cooperation of labour; 4) forms of distribution of the results of labour (social product) should be considered as the elements of labour relations common to all economic systems (Sycheva, 2000).

As a criterion for the maturity of the economic systems, it is necessary to consider the degree of adequacy of social production of the multifacetedness of development of an employee’s personality, based on labour relations. The labour relations are defined by the authors as a structure-forming factor and the basis of the integrity of socio-economic systems. The relation between the development of the labour relations system and the type of economic systems is manifested in the fact that the content and social form of labour genetically and functionally determine the type of socio-economic system (Bortis, 1996).

Labour relations can play the role of a catalyst (transition to technologically and socio-economic more progressive stages of economic systems), or as a stabilizer or antidegradant, restraining the ongoing development of the socio-economic system and its structural elements (Lebedeva et al., 2016). The importance of labour relations as fundamental ones in the social organization of any production lies in the fact that they lead to the foundations of the socio-economic structure of society (Schmid, 1993). The developed research methodology allows identifying the units that form the system of labour relations, considering the objects and subjects of the latter. This approach makes it possible to describe the system of labour relations of any economic system.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, it should be noted that in the domestic literature of the recent period, various combinations, versions, theories about the “diffusion” and the “synthesis” of scientific political economy with the “neoclassical synthesis”, marginalism, Keynesianism, institutionalism, neo-Ricardianism and neoclassical are proposed. At the same time, no single “synthetic” version of them has been proposed by the economic schools either in the field of subject or in the field of research method. Moreover, according to some researchers, the reality of the historical development of the world economic thought is the existence of a maximum of two economic schools – Marxist and neoclassical (Lyubinin, 2012). Life shows that today is the...
time for the dialectical-labouring classics, since the most reliable source of development of any socio-economic system is an increase in labour productivity based on neo-industrialization and vertical integration of the productive forces of society.

The labour paradigm was formed through analysis and synthesis; it establishes labour as the fundamental basis of all production relations and value forms. Moreover, it is classical political economy that throws the bridge from the “capitalist present” into the post-capitalist future. By the law on the socialization of the productive forces, the general tendency of modernity is the formation and expansion of social relations directly. It is to be recalled that Karl Marx introduced the dichotomy of the indirectly public and the directly-public, while showing the primacy of the indirectly public under the capitalist mode of production. Under capitalism, due to the domination of private-capitalist property, the public property is objectively mediated by the private property. This is what classic political economy teaches us. By the foregoing, the private capitalist and price method of appropriation must, sooner or later, give way to the public and non-price. Consequently, there is a renaissance of classics and a labour paradigm ahead.

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