The Malleable Homo Sovieticus: Transnational Entrepreneurs in Post-Communist East Europe

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The Malleable *Homo Sovieticus*: Transnational Entrepreneurs in Post-Communist East Europe

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Among the many worries of the observers of post-communist transformation processes in East Europe has been the concern that the entrenched popular mindsets and coping strategies formed under the previous regime and known as the "homo sovieticus syndrome" might undermine an effective transition to liberal-democratic capitalism (see, e.g., Kennedy and Gianoplus 1994; Linz and Stepan 1996; Kovacs 1994; Entrepreneurship in Transition Economies 1996). Thus threatened capitalism as the end-goal of East European reforms has been implicitly understood by the concerned commentators in the classical, Weberian sense as the encompassing system of sociopolitical institutions, cultural norms, and legal regulations that facilitate and control the rational pursuit of sustained economic growth and financial profit.

Contrary to this viewpoint, I argue that the post-industrial global capitalism into which post-communist East Europe is being "dependently incorporated" (Berend 1996; Sik 1994a), that is, capitalism based on transnational, decentralized, flexible production of consumer services in areas/sectors of the economy unregulated by legal-institutional frameworks, renders some features of the accustomed homo sovieticus syndrome into effective strategies of economic action in the new situation. The centralized political management combined with the notorious inefficiency of the statesocialist economies in the providing and distributing consumer goods fostered in the citizenry entrepreneurial spirit of the opportunistic-debrouillard (rather than modern-rational) kind forcing it to use "unofficial" (informal/extra-legal) means to make everyday life possible and turning this behavior into the social norm (Los 1990; Grossman 1989; Gabor 1994; Sik 1994a, 1994b, 1994c; for excellent ethnographic studies of state-socialist "shadow economy" see Kenedi 1985; Wedel 1986; Pawlik 1992). Three basic resources of the Soviet-style debrouillard entrepreneurship - a democratized variant of the Weberian "booty capitalism" for everyone - "fit" very well the conditions of late capitalism:

- (1) deeply habituated beat-the-system/bend-the-rules (rather than legal-institutional) modes of operation in the pursuit of desired purposes;
- (2) accustomed reliance on patronage and informal networks (rather than on individual skills and formal infrastructure); and
- (3) consumption- (rather than production-) oriented capital accumulation whereby immediate or short-term rewards take priority over long-term deferred gratification.

The focus of this discussion are small to midscale transnational or cross-border migrant entrepreneurs who are part of the emergent socioeconomic stratum thus far much less investigated than the top level economic elite in post-communist East Europe, namely, the propertied middle class and potential local elite in small to midsize cities. The consideration here of the operations of

transnational East European entrepreneurs who dwell, as it were, in-between the post-communist world with its "baggage" of accustomed outlooks and behaviors that represent at the same time characteristic features of the dependent late-capitalist development of (semi-)peripheral regions and the technologically and economically advanced core countries provides a good occasion to consider jointly the macroscopic, political and economic, and micro-social mechanisms and ambiguous consequences of these informal/illegal activities. Such discussion will contribute, I hope, to a closer intellectual exchange between specialists on post-communist transition in East Europe and students of unregulated economic activities in other parts of the world.

My primary aim is to identify the common features of the macro- and micro-level contexts and mechanisms that sustain the informal/illegal ways of the now internationalized operation of these debrouillard entrepreneurs from across the region. Within the limited scope of this paper, and to the extent the unsystematic data permit, when relevant for the issues under consideration here. the differences between East Central Europeans (ECE) and East East Eurpeans (EEE) and between particular countries are noted. The data used in this discussion come from scholarly and press reports on post-1989-9@ transformation in the region and, in particular, the informal/illegal sphere in the economy and the socioeconomic restructuring of post-communist societies, and from the social survey and ethnographic studies of current international migrations of East Europeans. I have included data from my own ongoing comparative investigation of these (im)migrants in Berlin, Germany, and Philadelphia, United States, and from my conversations with the authors of these studies concerning specific problems related to the subject matter of this paper.

Macro-level Mechanisms of EE Migrants'"Informal Entrepreneurship"

Although the collapse of the Soviet regime in Eastern Europe opened the door for the accelerated incorporation of that region into the global system, the long-term processes of capitalist perestroika to overhaul and bring up to date unproductive state-socialist economies have not thus far diminished the long-standing gap in economic development between the eastern and western parts of the Continent. Measured by the per capita GNP, the economic performance of East Central Europe in 1995 was only 32% of that of Western Europe and the United States combined (a minimal improvement since 1910 when it was 28%), whereas the ratio of (average) wages between these two parts of the world was 1:5 to 10 (in 1910 it was 1:4-6). In East Eastern Europe these

comparisons are even more dramatic: the East-West per capita GNP ratio in 1995 was 1:20 and that of wages 1:25 to 40 (Berend 1996; Chirot 1989; Berend and Ranki 1982²). This enduring East-West disequilibrium in economic performance has sustained or, more precisely, revived with the post-1989/90 lifting of international travel restrictions in East Europe of the early twentieth century geographic pattern of income-seeking migrations from that region and reflecting the worldwide "compass" or (semi-)periphery-to-core, SE-NW population flows. East European governments have recognized and tacitly approved of (ECEs uneasily in view of their pending inclusion into the European Union) these income-seeking circular migrations of their citizenry as a "safety walve" deflating possible outbreaks of popular discontent resulting from the painful perestroika experience.

The most common types of post-1989-90 income-seeking E-W international migrations have been short-term and back-and-forth "shuttling" cross-border travels of *Arbeits-* and *Handelstouristen* or quasi-tourists who remain abroad and engage in work without appropriate immigration documents or who circumvent customs regulations by hiding or misrepresenting the kind and/or quantity of merchandise they smuggle or carry. The available data reveal the typical sociodemographic profile of these migrants as mostly (65%-70%) of urban origin and, within this category, primarily from small-to-middle-size cities; more commonly (55%-65%) male than female; concentrated in 25-to-40 age and (55%-60%) middle-level educational categories; and frequently (20%-35%) unemployed at the time of migration (compiled from Fassmann 1996; Maresova 1996; Morokvasic 1996; Okolski 1996; Slany 1997; Sik 1995; Sipaviciene 1997; Dornis 1994; Bodrova and Regent 1995; Belozor 1996; Pyrozhkov et al. 1996).

This discussion is concerned with cross-border entrepreneurs in these two groups - between 30% and 40% of the total migratory flows - who have undertaken international income-seeking endeavors not merely to survive economically but to elevate considerably their own and their families' socioeconomic status at home and, in the perceptions of the migrants themselves and their local communities, have actually succeeded in this purpose. International Arbeitstouristen in this group are treated entrepreneurs because organizing and managing their undertakings requires dojscia (ins) and kombinacje (informal or shady arrangements as in wheeling and dealing) for which they use both the famililar language (the terms above are Polish) and methods of the Soviet-style debrouillard entrepreneurship, and because a large discrepancy between home- and host-country wages permits the international worker-tourists who are success-motivated and resourceful in dojscia and kombinacje to accrue savings that permit upward socioeconomic mobility at home.

The bulk of these clandestine income-seeking international travels from ECE has been directed to Western Europe (85%), especially to nearby Germany and Austria, and then to Scandinavia, France, and, increasingly, Italy and Greece; and across the Atlantic to North America (15%). In 1995 alone an estimateed 25-30 million "crossings" nearly equalled the volume of international economic migrations from that region during the thirty years preceding World War I. From EEE, excepting German Aussiedler and former Soviet Jews who emigrate permanently to the West or (the latter) to Israel, most of the semi- and illegal marchands ambulants and travailleurs pendulaires come to ECE. (For estimates of international migrations of ECEs see Frejka 1996; Trends in International Migration/SOPEMI 1996; Tourism in Central and Eastern Europe/ECC 1995; Morokvasic and de Tinguy 1995; Fassman and Munz 1995; Morokvasic 1996; for EEE migrants see Ardittis 1995; Pyrozhkov et al., 1995; Sik 1995; Markiewicz 1997; Iglicka 1997; Frejka 1996; Stola 1997; Sipaviciene 1997; Vishnevsky and Zayontchkovskaya 1994³)

The majority of westbound Handels- and Arbeitstouristen have been born between 1955 and 1975. The oldest among them have been socialized and worked for 15-20 years under state-socialist regime; the youngest shared their primary families' experience and received most of their public education in the late "crony communism." Since the early 1990s all of them have lived in a world in which several everyday stratagems - in particular, the informal/illicia coping strategies - bear a close resemblance to the accustomed ways of the old regime. As a number of observers of post-communist East Europe's affairs have argued, several features of the transformation processes have actually made of these strategies even more pervasive. A combination of the following factors has been of greatest consequence: a weak legal-institutional infrastructure and in particular, absent or frequently changing and ineffectively executed regulations and unavailability of adequate information and financial assistance for registered private business combined with the unsettling of the old N economic structures and significantly increased consumer appetites modelled after the Western images on the one hand, and, on the other, expanded profitmaking opportunities accompanying the internationalization of post-communist economies and, at the same time and reflecting the latter, the "informalization" of East European economies as the result of decentralization, sub-contracting and cost-cutting in production and labor (Sik 1994a, 1994b; Korzhov 1997; Entrepreneurship in Transition Economies 1996; see also Sztompka 1995).

In this situation, considering that the coping resources from the previous regime are readily available, citizens' involvement in informal/illicit pursuits either to make or to better their livelihoods has been all-pervasive regardless of their economic status. According to labor department statistics and public opinion surveys, the involvement of East Europeans in the mid-1990s in their

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countries' informal economies, including unregistered business, undocumented employment, and gray/black marketeering, ranged between 25% (for ECE) and 60% (EEE) of the adult employed population. (These figures, it should be noted, do not include either the unemployed population at home among whom the proportions of *indocumentados* have been considerably larger or international "tourists" illictly occupied abroad.) Current losses to the state treasury in each ECE country from unreported earnings and unpaid or falsified taxes have been estimated at billions of dollars annually; this disrespect for the law and the ensuing losses to the state are much greater in the easternmore nation-states that are former Soviet Republics.

Corruption and clientelism have been widespread and, as suggested by the matter-of-factness with which the respondents in public opinion surveys admit to relying on these strategies in the pursuit of their purposes, have retained their old-regime popular normative acceptance. Between 35%-40% (for ECE) and 70%-80% (EEE) of the respondents in national representative samples say either they or their friends have used informal "connections" and have relied on reciprocal "favors" and between 25% (ECE) and 60% (EEE) admit they have used bribes to "get things" (such as consumer goods, medicine, housing, job-related and children's education advantages, etc). (These and above figures have been averaged from data provided by Sik 1994a; Graczyk 1997; Pumpianski 1998; Szara Gospodarka w Polsce 1996; Roberts and Jung 1995; Praca Nierejestrowana 1996; Rose and Maley 1994; Okolski 1996; Witkowski 1995; Grabowski 1994; Handelman 1995; Konstantinov 1997; Dawisha and Parrott 1997.)

Not surprising in view of the noted legal and economic circumstances, studies of new private businesses - the hoped-for perestroika force in capitalist development - reveal the "beat the system" strategies to be even more ubiquituous than in the general population. The conclusion from a 1993 ethnographic study of the economic transformation in a small town of Suwalki in northeastern Poland is typical for the rest of the region: "It appeared from everyone's acocunts that virtually all small private businesses were breaking or circumventing the law in some way or another" (Roberts and Jung 1995: 73). Another, more recent study of the channels used by new entrepreneurs to manage their businesses has shown the predominance of informal "crony" over (available in this case) legal-institutional avenues (Frieske 1997). (The customarily friendly informal way of dealing with their clients by Western NGOs, a number of which are present in post-communist East Europe assisting in the transition, has had the unintended consequence of reinforcing rather than modfying the old ways of the natives - see Wedel 1992).

Such has been the home environment from which the international Handels- and Arbeitstouristen originate and to which they return after their sojourns abroad. Their experience during these sojourns not only does not modify their homebred debrouillard strategies of crony-communist/post-5 communist provenance but, to the contrary, rewards and thus enhances them as \(\frac{1}{3} \) the effective means for the realization of migrants' purposes. In the case of ECE $^{\circ}_{\circ}$ income-seeking travelers to the West, this enhancement is intensified by the o "demonstration effect" of the hands-on realization that the role-model Western ways are not much different from the orientations and practices prevalent in migrants' home countries.

The core Western economies have already nearly completed what the post-communist ones have only begun, that is, postindustrial restructuring, or a shift to short-term production of services based on small and versatile companies, and the accompanying rapid growth of an informal sector offering variable, usually substandard, wages and no employment security, and unattached to the legal-institutional structures of the fiscal and welfare systems of (see Gershuny 1978; Piore and Sabel 1987; Portes, Castells, and Benton 1989; E Sassen 1991). (Im)migrants from (semi-)peripheral SE parts of the world have 3 provided the bulk of the labor force in Western informal economies. Such has also been the location of Arbeits- and Handelstouristen from post-communist of East Central Europe. Shuttling between their permanent homes and temporary habitats in the West, quiescent because unattached to the receiver states' labor protective systems and because, translated into home-country currencies, their a Western earnings appear enormous, they fit very well the requirements of the informal sectors of Western economies.

The majority of indocumentado male tourist-workers in the West find employment primarily in construction, agriculture, and in a wide variety of service trades. Women on tourist visas without work permits are most commonly occupied in domestic services (as maids and housekeepers, = babysitters, caregivers to the elderly), as seamstresses in "underground" > garment shops, and, in increasing numbers especially in Germany, Austria, and $\frac{\varpi}{2}$ Scandinavia, as prostitutes. "Staffed" by young and middle-aged (often married) women, Prostitutiontourismus takes the form of shuttle travels in the border regions. Clearly conducive to this income-earning activity has been 40% \(\text{\Psi} \) to 50% female unemployment along the borders between ECE countries and > their Western neighbors. Working twelve hours per day on "busy" weekends can double an average monthly salary at home.

Trading migrants on short-term tourist visas can be divided into so-called ants and jumacze. Border-region peddlers or ants, men and women who shuttle. 5 ants and jumacze. Border-region peddlers or ants, men and women who shuttle back-and-forth, are bazaar-type marketeers trading in consumer items back-and-forth, are back-and-forth, a

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differently priced on two (sometimes three) sides of borders. The goods are then sold to the wholesalers or traded for goods lacking at the moment at home, mostly by "ants" from EEE where consumer shortagers, including basic foods, are still very common. *Jumacze* (a new Polish term for cross-border thieves) represent a criminal (rather than "gray" variety of cross-border traders who operate on a somewhat larger financial scale. These mostly young men steal better-quality bulk merchandise in host-country department stores, homes, and cars, and move it across the border.⁷

The politicization of contemporary international migrations by NW receiver-countries/regions - that is, of the decisions who can enter, how long they can stay, what activities they can undertake - has created in Western destination countries a large army of marginalized "illegal" migrants from (semi-)peripheral parts of the world, including East Europe (see Kritz and Zlotnik 1992; Goodwin-Gill 1993; Hollifield 1996; Cornelius, Martin, and Hollifield 1994; Weiner 1995). This insecure indocumentado political status, combined with what Wayne Cornelius et al. (1994) call the gap between the goals of national/regional (im)migration policies of receiver countries and the actual outcomes of policies in this area resulting from multiple, often contradictory concerns and interests of the different groups and lobbies involved in deciding the volume, composition, and specific entitlements of international migrants, have had an added effect of reinforcing the homo sovieticus-derived strategies of "beating the (now host liberal-democratic) system" by operating in the political "gray area" and relying on the familiar oldregime tactic of "dissimulation" (Jowitt 1992; see also Kharkhodin 1994) and informal networks of illicit assistance.

The foregoing discussion of the circumstances on the receiving side of westbound income-seeking flows from post-communist East Europe that have sustained migrants' accustomed outlooks and behaviors applies primarily to East Central European travelers. The economic mechanisms precipitating flows into East Central Europe of trade- and worker-tourists from Eastern East Europe have been by and large similar on both the sending and the receving sides of the migration circuit in that those income-seeking migrants, very much in demand by new capitalist enterprises in Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic, especially in agriculture, handicrafts, and services, work for considerably lower remuneration than that received by the natives for comparable work and are unprotected by union agreements or any other social coverage. Combined with widespread corruption of state officials, the yet unformed immigration policies in these ECE countries that have been caught legally (or otherwise) unprepared by the rising tide of (im)migrants from the easternmore parts of the region provide effective loopholes for these visitors to (re)enter and sojourn in these countries as they please (Frejka 1996; Sik 1995; Pyrozkhov et al. 1996; Mozolowski 1996; Hars 1997; Mizerski 1997).

Income-seeking transnational tourists have been maneuvering within the larger economic and political structures sketched above by appropriating the openings and loopholes in the receiving societies toward their purposes through ingenuously used dojscia, arrangements, and kombinacje.

Three kinds of dojscia or "ins" for shuttle and short-term international migrants trying to "arrange" for illicit employment abroad, working conditions, and remuneration have been been most popular among East European Arbeitstouristen. First is family and friends, either in the home or the destination country. As studies show, depending on the vitality of migratory traditions in the region, which often stretch back to the beginning of the century, between 33% and 66% of such travelers have relied on assistance from family members or friends in the home country who either had already worked in the West themselves or had "connections" there that could be used to help others. Between 40% and 70% have been helped by kin or acquaintance. others. Between 40% and 70% have been helped by kin or acquaintance sojourning abroad as temporary indocumentado workers or residing there permanently. (Particularly "rich" in the latter resource are Poles and also Hungarians, Czechs, and Lituanians whose national groups participated er masse in turn-of-the-twentieth-century westbound economic migrations and then in political exoduses during the post-World War II era. For example, every third Polish family today reportedly has either family or friends living abroad. and a total of about 18 million members of [non-Jewish] national minorities in the European part of the CIS have family or ethnic ties abroad. "A friend's o uncle lived [...] in Detroit. He invited me to come; he told me he had some work for me. So I left for Detroit." This Lithuanian woman worked first as a kitchen helper in a restaurant in an ethnic community and then, recommended by an acquaintance, in a team of fellow nationals (all undocumented like herself) cleaning offices at night, a much more exterting job that, nevertheless, paid better (Jazwinska and Okolski 1996: 141-53; Drbohlav 1997; Siewiera 1995; Karpiuk 1997; Morkovasic and Rudolph 1995; Poplawski 1995; quote after Sipaviciene 1997, 213).

Ethnic parishes and foreign-language newspapers in the host country have also served as a popular source of employment information, contacts, and references for Arbeitstouristen. "Work wanted" and "seeking workers" ads are placed on parochial announcement boards or in papers. "Seeking two experienced carpenters. Call evenings at...," Waitress for a cafe needed. [English, German,...] not required," "Seamstress seeking work. Does not have to be in my profession...," "I'll buy work for a man..." Such announcements are checked and "job contracts" negotiated and signed after mass on Sundays or in bars frequented by immigrants in the neighborhood. If not family members or

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friends, fellow nationals from the neighborhood, a local bar, or an ethnic parish serve as paid intermediaries-referees in these contacts and negotiations. "Good references," whether from acquaintances or from *posrednicy*, paid intermediaries, are "the key for finding a good, well-paying job" - the dojscia of East European tourist-workers in Vienna operate in a similar way in the rest of Europe and the United States. (Quotes from an announcement board in a Polish church in Vienna announcement board and about necessary references after Mydel and Fassmann 1997, 72-73, 69; I have seen similar advertisments in East European churches and newspapers and have witnessed informal work negotiations in Berlin and Philadelphia; see also Siewiera 1995; Karpiuk 1997; Sipaviciene 1997.)

The presence in the destination localities abroad of established colonies of fellow nationals and, among them, of large numbers of fellow indocumentado migrants effectively using - and openly talking about - welltested resources to "beat the system" in pursuit of their objectives reproduces across the border the familiar home-country ambiance of crony opportunism and debrouillard enterepreneurship. Host native employers have collaborated in sustaining these orientations. Direct connections to host-country native employers have been the third most common dojscia and way to arrange illegal work for Arbeitstouristen from the East. The products of and at the same time contributors to the expansion of informal economies in the migration-receiving countries, native employers have been actively seeking cheap and dispensable labor for construction work, personal services, and small shops. When satisfied with the performance of their workers, those employers often form an informal hiring network on their own as they recommend "their" Arbeitstouristen and, upon request, their fellow nationals, to friends and acquaintances in need of repairmen, carpenters, waiters and waitresses, seamstresses, babysitters, and so on (Cyrus 1995a, 1995b; Cyrus and Helias 1996; Miera 1997; Mydel and Fassmann 1997; Karpiuk 1997; Siewiera 1995; Romaniszyn 1997; and this author's personal interviews, summer 19978). In Germany and Austria East European undocumented workers are often sought and hired by earlier and now well-established Italian, Turkish, and Yugoslav emigres from the Gastabeiter era, especially for their "ethnic niches" in food and restaurant services and small repair shops in the large cities (Mydel and Fassmann 1997; Hillmann and Rudolph 1997; this author's interviews in Berlin, summer 1997).

Migrants from East Eastern Europe who come to ECE countries for short-term undocumented work - estimates of shuttle and short-term illegal EEE workers in Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic combined put their number at 700,000-750,000 in 1996⁹ - have relied primarily on dojscia through the mediation of their fellow nationals previously or currently employed in ECE or through direct connections to native employers. Tourist entry visas, if

required, are arranged from specialized agents in the border regions who for a fee prepare "private invitations." (At several checkpoints along Poland's eastern border I observed kiosks selling such documents in the summer of 1997.) They then organize cross-border "tourist" buses (*Biuro Kontroli Legalnosci Zatrudnienia* 1997; Pyrozhkov et al. 1996; Sipaviciene 1997; this author's field observations and interviews, summer 1997).

Dojscia and kombinacje are the sine qua non strategies for migrant tourist-workers not only to find employment abroad but, as importantly, to longanize" a better one somewhere else or to arrange for a replacement when the time comes to return home. Such an arrangement can be done either by a personal agreement with a friend to whom later a reciprocal "favor" will be due or, in a more "businesslike" way (although still informally), by selling it to someone else for *odstepne*, an agreed-on sum of money to be paid upon the assumption of the position. Thus, a tourist-worker can maintain the right connections for the next sojourn. In all these kombinacje, as several migrants interviewed in different projects pointed out, not the law or the "real contracts" but mutual trust, "sticking by one's word" for fair play or from the fear of group but mutual trust, "sticking by one's word" for fair play or from the fear of group ostracism, are of crucial importance (Mydel and Fassmann 1997; Poplawski 1995, Siwiera 1995; Sipaviciene 1997; Karpiuk 1997; this author's ongoing project).

Greatly facilitated by quick and easy transportation and by the fact that the majority of transnational Arbeitstouristen from East Europe seek work the countries neighboring their own has been the use of yet another coping device, that is, "situational shuttling" between the receiver and home country. When despite the application of all available resources there is momentarily satisfactory employment or when there have been warnings from neighbors of informal-sector employers about police raids on apartments known to house illegal (over)stayers of visas, or when their families need them for some reason, migrants return home and come back as soon as the situation in the destination place abroad looks more promising.

Blending tourism with illicit trading in Eastern Europe dates back to the early 1970s when communist welfare state-sponsored international vacation travels inside the Soviet bloc became a mass phenomenon. In an innovative adjustment to Soviet-style shortage economies intrabloc tourism was used as an opportunity for a huge-scale unofficial, in fact illegal, commercial traffic between the vacationing member nationals of Soviet-bloc countries. (The volume of this exchange was estimated in the 1980s at 25%-30% of the entire ocomec COMECON trade; see Los 1990.) In the circumstances of profound economic and legal-institutional instabilities accompanying capitalist transformation and, sespecially, widespread structural relocations combined with the opening of

money-making opportunities, the "domestication" of passports after the collapse of communist regimes in the region (in the previous era they had to be applied for on the basis of specific reasons and surrendered upon return to state authorities) and the abolition of visa requirements for East European tourists in most Western countries have made for the "natural" expansion - globalization, actually - of this *Handelstourismus* outside of the region.

Like that of the international tourist-workers, the success of the operations of cross-border "ants," "jumacze," and, less numerous but as effective longer-distance transnational operators depends on the skillfull use of dojscia, arrangements, and kombinacje. The cross-border travels of ants are prearranged very well. The ants have wholesale "contacts" nearby on the other side of the border, often fellow nationals or well-trusted natives who play the role of intermediaries. The merchandise they bring back is bought, within a hundred-meter radius of the border, by "their" wholesalers waiting by trucks and smaller buyers with private cars who then take it inside the (home-) country where it is "laundered" by inaccurately recorded sales, either to individual stores or in the giant international "bazaars." The quintessence of the postcommunist "entrepreneurial spirit" these open-illicit markets have since the early 1990s mushroomed across East Europe (Mizerski 1997; Solska 1998). The longer-distance commercial travelers - especially the most common dealers in wrecked and stolen cars that are disassembled, smuggled to Eastern Europe, and put reassembled to be sold - have their contacts and "special arrangements" at each juncture of the operation: the suppliers in the West, at the points still on the Western side, where the cars can be discretely disassembled, at the border pass, and, in the home-country, car mechanics and, finally, the buyers of the imported merchandise. As they expand their experience in Handeltourismus under capitalist conditions and (semi-)open borders, migrants develop professional know-how about the particulars and changes of cross-border consumer demand and supply, price differentials, traffic flows at specific border crossings, customs regulations and, more important, customary checks and strategies to circumvent them, and crossing points at which border officials accept "favors" (bribes) and the amounts/kinds thereof. (On widespread corruption among customs officials in post-communist East Europe, see Urbanek 1996; Grzeszak 1996; 1997; Wilk 1996; Balicka 1997¹⁰.)

As in the case of informal sector employment, however, all such grayarea or underground commercial operations require mutual trust among those involved: "There are no [legal] contracts in this business [cross-border commercial traffic]. Everything is based on one's word, on oral agreement [with the person dealt with] (Sipaviciene 1997, 212). Because of a widespread lack of confidence in state authority and institutions under the communist regime, personal trust rather than civic-legal guarantees served as the basis of social

interactions. The internalization and thus legitimation by default, as it were, of the informal economy that have been integral to the incorporation into global capitalist system of post-communist societies have retained personal trust rather than legal-institutional guarantees as the basic resource of economic action. The huge volume of international cargo moved illicitly by *Handelstouristen* and their trusted "contacts" by circumventing customs regulations and state fiscal authorities with falsified acquisition recrods for merchandise distributed inside the country testifies to the effectiveness of well-tested old-regime coping strategies used in new circumstances.

Willingness to work very hard at these undocumented activities has been $\frac{\overline{\phi}}{\phi}$ a personal resource without which neither macrostructural nor microsocial facilitators would have had an effect (just like hard work alone would not have brought the desired results either). Illegal worker migrants from Eastern & Europe, men and women, have been reported by the media in their host countries to labor "docilely" for 12-14 hours a day in conditions no native in worker would tolerate while the industrious ants accomplish between 5 and 🛱 of "loaded" border crossings per day. The combination of "old"-capitalism commitment to hard work in conditions promising good rewards (the incentive of absent in the state-communist system, even its informal sphere that served 5 survival rather than enrichment purposes) with the strategies adequate for some coping with "new"- capitalism structural features permits the majority of East 2. European international income-seekers to realize the goals that take the across the border. Provided their "connections" permit them to obtain and keep 5 a good job with long hours or to move smoothly between well "organized" O sellers and buyers with appropriate merchandise, the readiness to work very hard allows Handels- and Arbeitstouristen to earn four to six times their homecountry average monthly wage.

Most of it is saved to be taken back home. As studies show, short- middle-term tourist-workers' willingness to share the inconveniences of sovercrowded, often substandard quarters with fellow-nationals and to save drastically on food to lower the costs of living and to increase savings allows ECE and EEE income-seeking international migrants alike to save up to 70% of their average monthly wages. Some additional money-saving strategies augment those savings even more. Undocumented Ukrainian workers in southeastern Poland, for example, have been reported to return home near Lviv, one at a time, every ten days or so to buy much cheaper food there for the whole group and then to return to work. (Data about migrants' earnings and Okolski 1996; Pyrozhkov et al. 1996; Karpiuk 1997; Siewiera 1995; Jazwinska and Okolski 1996; Pyrozhkov et al. 1996; Karpiuk 1997; Sipaviciene 1997; this author's interviews in Warsaw, Berlin, and Philadelphia. 11)

When asked about the purposes of their international travels, nearly all respondents in studies of westbound Arbeits- and Handelstouristen conducted during the 1990s, returned and potential migrants, point either to the necessity to make additional money to "make ends meet" or - the category of concern here - to the desire of dorobic sie (Polish), to elevate their economic status or, more precisely, to accumulate material goods. And indeed, this is what 85% to 95% of those who left with the latter purpose actually do with their savings from incomes earned abroad. The most commonly purchased items include houses/apartments (under the communist regime rented apartments were the most common form of housing) and their furnishings, garden furniture, cars, color TVs (with satellite dishes) and stereo systems, computers, electronic kitchen equipment, fashionable clothing, and so on. To satisfy status requirements as measures of success for the new middle-class in postcommunist East Europe, these objects should be Western-made and osteantatiously displayed. (Information from Mydel and Fassmann 1997; Domaradzka 1996; Karpiuk 1997, Siewiera 1995; Jazwinska and Okolski 1996; Sipaviciene 1997, Pyrozhkov et al. 1996.)

A minority, about 15%, of income-seeking international tourists have invested their savings in establishing in (small) businesses. Most of the trade of these enterprises has been with (in the case of ECEs) or within (EEES) the former Soviet Union and, next in volume, with Western merchants, especially in Germany and Austria, often with EE fellow nationals who are permanently established in these countries. In both cases, however, the main purpose of business activity has thus far been to increase the material consumption of the owners and their families rather than - very much needed if the national- and local-level transformation processes in these new businessmen's homecountries are to progress - further investment and the expansion of trade. In trade with the former Soviet Union as a reule, and with Western merchants "under-the-counter" accustomed rather institutionalized methods of entrepreneurship have predominated (Entrepreneurship in Transition Economies 1996; Green 1998; Grzeszak 1997; Solska 1998; Doomernik 1997; Fijalkowski 1992; Kessner 1997; this author's interviews in Warsaw, Poznan, and Berlin, summer 1997).

Some ethnosurvey and ethnographic studies of international migrations in post-communist East Europe have also asked non-migrant residents of migrants' hometowns about the effects of these income-seeking travels for the local community. The evaluations have been generally positive but, like those of the migrants themselves, almost exclusively in material terms: the amounts of monies coming into the community (the latter understood as an aggregate of individuals/families rather than as a collective with common purposes), visible improvements in the appearance of houses/apartments and their residents or -

this, in my interpretation - the welcome transfers of Western patterns of material culture and lifestyles to the East. The following description of the small town of Siemiatycze in norteastern Poland, one of the active Arbeitstourismus centers in that region, is fairly typical of other reports: "The very appearance of Siematycze shows the improvement. The architecture is becoming prettier. By looking at the houses one notices not only practical but also esthetic elements. These are no more simple gray houses. The Western influence is obvious. During their sojourns in Brussels (the customary destination of income migrations), the Siemiatycze residents see the looks of the houses there and then want to live in similar houses at home. Regarding even little gardens around the houses, there has been a considerable change. Before they served mainly for planting some vegetables. Now one can see well-planting some vegetables also resemble Western middle-class patterns; see also Jazwinska and Okolski 1996; Siewiera 1995; Cieslinska 1992).

Ownership of middle-class status symbol-objects in migrant and nonmigrant households in the localities studies differ, on the average, by a tangible 25%-30% in favor of the former in ECE and 35%-45% in EEE countries. Some of the technologically most advanced paraphernalia is found only in migrans' 5 homes. (after Jazwinska and Okolski 1996; Sipavciene 1997). This difference % in the "aquisition pace," not to mention the quality of purchased goods, between the households of income-seeking international migrants and those who did not go is, of course, noticed by local residents - the migrants' of themselves make sure of that - and it evokes appreciation among their neighbors, but also envy. The demonstration effect sets in, stimulating more people to look for and find possibilities for travel abroad. Supported by the avidly watched Westernized media and the display of new (and newer) gadgets? by just-returned migrants, the "logic of late capitalism" (Jameson 1984) makes sure these consumer needs keep growing which in (semi-)peripheries of the global system that includes East Europe in the grips of transition, perpetuates. the the back-and forth income-seeking international migrations of millions of people. The same logic demonstrates, and demonstrates again, the effectiveness of the crony-debrouillard strategies toward the desired - now much "enriched" objectives East Europeans learned very well under the state-socialist regime.

Conclusion

The overall effects of the activities of transnational migrants who make "work in motion" into their occupation (Salt 1997) have been ambiguous. Their "gray" or illegal income-earning abroad, or what Robert Merton (1968) calls structurally induced "innovative" behavior - bending-and-breaking of the rules in order to achieve (culturally approved) objectives by those whose opportunities are structurally constrained from within their own societies and by the (semi-)peripheral position of their countries/regions in the global system - permits large segments of East European populations not only to supplement livelihoods threatened by structural relocations accompanying the capitalist transformation of their home-countries but also to elevate the socioeconomic status of their families.

In view of the large volume and the "democratic composition" of present-day income-seeking international migrations of East Europeans, the elevation of the social position of a considerable proportion of these travelers through the acccumulation of capital and aquisition of material possessions contributes to the socioeconomic restratification of post-communist societies and, specifically of concern here, of small-to-medium-size urban communities from which most migrants originate. A new, locally recognized middle-class replaces or at least significantly dilutes the influence of the old-regime *nomenklatura* stratum.

The material symbols of new middle-class status and Westernized lifestyles publicly displayed by returned migrants improve, in the appreciative local opinion, the previously dull and monotonous appearance of their towns and residents and diffuses these patterns through the demonstration effect.

Some other outcomes of the intense international traffic of "innovative" income-seekers, already observable today or forseeable in the future, have been ominous for the success of the "multitrack" transformation of East European post-communist societies. Three such effects appear to be of particular consequence.

First, the general increase of capital and changes in its social distribution in local communities with intense back-and-forth flows of income-seeking international migrants have not thus far become a foundation of self-sustained economic restrucuring of these towns and cities. With few exceptions, the savings accrued abroad by *Arbeits*- and *handelstouristen* are expended on ever-expanding individual/family material consumption rathr than on productive investments. While it is certainly in accord with the "cultural logic" of the postindustrial capitalism into which East Europe is being incorporated, such use of capital by the few who possess it does not contribute to the restructuring

and setting on the developmental track of backward and inefficient regional

Second, neither of the two simultaneous and closely interlinked transformations in post-communist East Europe - the economic and the political can successfully progress without the consolidation of what Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan (1996) call "the economic society," or a set of politically crafted and socially accepted regulations, policies, and institutions based on respect for the law, which mediate between the state and the market. Unlike the LDCs and especially, South America with whose recent poitical and economic developments it has been often compared, East Europe's pre-transition (communist) heritage has not contained either the institutions or orientations supportive of the economic society as defined above. (On comparisons of post communist East Europe's transformations with those in Latin America, see Linz and Stepan 1996; Linz, Stepan, and Gunther 1995; Levine 1994; Nelson 1994; Przeworski 1991; Killick and Stevens 1991.)

Instead, the "economic society" pervasive under the previous regime that has survived its demise and thrives in the perestroika has been based on the bend-the-law/corrupt-its-officials syndrome of orientations and practices. International migrants whose reliance in their illicit activities abroad on the familiar dojscia and kombinacje is rewarded by incomes several times larged than their home-country wages, upon their return to their local communities reimplant these reward-winning resources as the suitable tools for coping in a Western democratic capitalist system - the "role model" for East European political leader-reformers and rank-and-file citizens alike.

And third, should income-earning in the informal sectors of higher developed economies abroad and in growing domestic ones over time remains the primary means of capital accumulation for large segments of post communist societies, a real danger exists that rather than "moving closer to Europe" on increasingly partnerlike terms as the region's reformers expect, in the eastern parts of the Continent incorporation into global capitalism will consolidate at the semi- (ECE) and peripheral (EEE) levels.

I generally agree with those among the "transitologists" who argue, like Linz and Stepan (1996) that, although evidently important, it is not the accustomed Weltanschauungen of individuals but the institutionalized situations - economic, legal, and political - in which they operate that are the primary triggers and sustainers of longer-dure structural change. Therefore, the alteration of these situations, in this case, the construction of functional "partial regimes" (Schmitter 1995) or the economic, political, and civil societies founded on reasonable and stable legal systems in post-communist countries.

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should eventually modify also the popular worldviews and practices they guide. The big problem is that because the communist regime destroyed or, more accurately, replaced with its own distortions all these basic infrastructures, building them anew simultaneously presents an enormous difficulty, particularly because many an old arrangement "fit" very well the global-capitalist conditions in which East Europe now finds itself.

Endnotes

- 1. For good reviews of studies of the origins and pursuits of the emerging top-level economic elite in post-communist East Europe, including big-scale mafia operators, see Hanley et al., 1995; Best and Becker 1997.
- 2. It should be noted, however, that there exist considerable differences between countries in the level of economic development within Eat Central Europe: the 1995 per capita GNP, for example, in the Czech Republic was 46% and in Poland 30% of the average figure for Western Europe and North America combined (figures compiled from compiled Hamilton (1990); Biffl (1997); Berend (1996).
- 3. Of the three ECE countries: Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic and in proportion to the total number of international migrants from each of them, Poles have engaged in such *indocumentado* work and unreported commercial trade during their sojourns abroad considerably more often than have either Czechs or Hungarians. Between-country differences in the migration plans correspond to those in the volume of actual travels. According to 1994-95 surveys of ECE's intentions to migrate temporarily to Western countries to earn money, between 35% and 60% of Poles, 33% and 48% of Czechs, but only 10%-15% of Hungarians reported having such plans (after Juhasz 1996; Slany 1997; Maresova 1996; Fassmann 1996; Uhlirova 1997). No comparable data exist for EEE income-eeking migrations to ECE.
- 4. According to a recent report (Gordon 1998), only one million Russians or one-eightieth of the adult population in this countury, filed tax returns in 1997.
- 5. Cyrus (1995a, 1995b); Cyrus and Helias (1995); survey and ethnographic studies of westbound migrations of East Central Europeans marked with an (*) in the bibliography at the end of this paper; American, German, and Polish press reports, 1992-97; the author's interviews with Wladyslaw Misiak about Polish border migrations to-and-from Germany, with the representatives of Polnischer Sozialrat in Berlin about illegal employment of East Europeans in Berlin; with Polish, Jewish, Russian, and Ukrainian recent (im)migrants in Philadelphia.
- 6. On female migrants' emloyment in domestic/nurturing occupations, see bibliographic references to survey and ethnographic studies of contemporary westbound migrations of East Europeans marked with an asterisks in the bibliography. Information about migrant prostitution from Cyrus (1997); Hummel (1993); Schenk (1993);

series of reportages on cross-border prostitution in East Central Europe in *Wprost*, April-July, 1997; the author's interviews with women's counselors at the Polnisher Socialrat, Berlin.

Figures on female unemployment from E. Buchajer and B.Kortus (1995), pp. 231-38; and the author's interview with the legal counselor in the Ukrainian Embassy in Warsaw (summer 1997). During my research in Berlin in the summer of 1997 I was told, and my inspection of the site confirmed what I heard, that there "camp" at the Berlin Banhoff Zoo underage boys from western Poland who come there--it takes a few hours by train--to prostitute themselves in order to earn monies for consumer goods.

7. Information from Polish and German press reports, 1995-97, and from author's interviews with border guards along Poland's borders (summer 1997). The origin of new Polish colloquialisms for things stolen abroad and migrant-thieves: juma and jumacze, is not really known--they may have derived from the American western "15.10 to Yuma" depicting a lawless

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town and its normless residents--cf. J.Kurzepa (1997). Kurzepa, the author of a sociological study of young *jumacze* in a borderland town in western Poland, ascribes their illegal activities to the generalized sense of deprivation (see also in the same volume W. Misiak's article on social pathologies in border towns).

- 8. The author's interviews included scholars studying present-day East European migrants in Poland, Hungary, Germany, Belgium, and the United States included Andrzej Sadowski, Grzegorz Babinski, Wladyslaw Misiak, Leszek Goldyka, Judith Juhasz, Hedwig Rudolph, and Norbert Cyrus; government officials dealing with issues of (in and out) migration and ethnic-group representatives in Germany, United States, Poland, and Ukraine.
- 9. Calculated on the basis of information obtained by the author from the legal counselor at the Ukrainian Embassy in Warsaw and border guards at check-points along Polish-Ukrainian border (summer 1997); Drbohlav and Sykora (1995), pp. 225-26; Dovenyi and Vukovich (1996), pp. 263-84; Sipaviciene (1997), statistical appendix; Pyrozkhov et al. (1996), statistical appendix.
- 10. Also this author's observations at Poland's eastern, southern, and western border-crossing points, and interviews with border guards, tourist-traders, and their sending or receiving connections in Poland and Germany (summer 1997).
- 11.Information about Ukrainian Arbeitstouristen traveling home for food supplies from the legal counselor at the Ukrainian Embassy in Warsaw, Poland, (July 1997).

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