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Some characteristics of labour migration and the Central European buffer zone

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Claire Wallace in association with Vasil Bedzir, Oxana Chmouliar and Elena Sidorenko

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Abstract

Despite the high unemployment in most post-communist central European countries, there is nevertheless an influx of labour migrants from further East and South. These migrants or guest workers are attracted by the relatively high rates of pay and economic prosperity in the "buffer zone" relative to their own countries and the distinctive development of the post-communist labour market which offers opportunities for skilled, professional and highly paid workers along with business people as well as low paid workers. These workers come also from Western countries. The influx of casual migrant workers at the bottom of the labour market is matched by an outflow of people from the buffer zone countries doing similar jobs in the European Union. Many of these workers are recruited on an informal basis and many are illegal, making social capital, or connections, a particularly important factor in the organisation of the labour market and this in turn reflects historical and cultural links within the region which the opening of borders have facilitated. The paper examines a number of models of labour migration which have been developed in other contexts and the extent to which they can be applied to the situation in post-communist Central Europe. Based upon a comparative qualitative study of migrants in Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary, the paper makes the argument that these particular patterns of labour migrants should be seen in terms of segmentation in the post-communist labour markets of the Central European "buffer zone" region. For these reasons, the paper argues that this is not just the latest instance of the traditional patterns of East-West migration but needs to be seen differently, in terms of the flows of capital, goods, people and information around the region.

Zusammenfassung

Ungeachtet des hohen Niveaus an Arbeitslosigkeit in den meisten postkommunistischen, zentraleuropäischen Ländern gibt es einen Strom von Arbeitsmigranten aus Osteuropa und Südosteuropa hinein in den zentraleuropäischen Raum. Diese Migranten oder 'Gastarbeiter' werden durch das relativ hohe Lohnniveau und die wirtschaftliche Prosperität in der zentraleuropäischen 'Pufferzone' angezogen. Der wirtschaftliche Vorsprung der Pufferzone im Vergleich mit den eigenen Ländern und die unterschiedliche Entwicklung des postkommunistischen Arbeitsmarktes ist für diese Arbeitsmigranten sehr attraktiv und öffnet ihnen Möglichkeiten für qualifizierte, professionelle und hoch bezahlte Tätigkeiten, für selbständiges Unternehmertum, aber auch für niedrig bezahlte, weniger qualifizierte Berufe am zentraleuropäischen Arbeitsmarkt. Die in die Pufferzone wechselnden Arbeitsmigranten kommen aber auch aus westlichen Staaten. Das Eindringen von temporären osteuropäischen und südosteuropäischen Arbeitsmigranten am unteren Ende des Arbeitsmarktes findet seine Entsprechung durch das Abfließen von Personen aus der zentraleuropäischen Pufferzone, die vergleichbare Tätigkeiten innerhalb der Europäischen Union durchführen. Viele dieser Arbeitsmigranten werden auf einer informellen Basis angeworben und sind in

großer Zahl illegal tätig. Dieses Schwergewicht des informellen Sektors macht die Existenz von 'Beziehungen', von 'Sozialkapital' zu einem besonders wichtigen Faktor in der Organisierung des Arbeitsmarktes, was sich wiederum in historischen und kulturellen Bindungen innerhalb von spezifischen Regionen wiederspiegelt, die durch die Öffnung der Grenzen wieder aufleben konnten. Diese Arbeit untersucht eine Reihe von Modellen der Arbeitsmigration, die in anderen historischen und territorialen Kontexten entwickelt worden sind und analysiert das Ausmaß, in welchem diese Modelle in Bezug auf die Situation im postkommunistischen Zentraleuropa Anwendung finden können. Auf der Grundlage einen vergleichend-qualitativen Studie von Arbeitsmigranten in Polen, Tschechien, der Slowakei und in Ungarn stellt diese Studie die These auf, daß die spezifischen Muster der Arbeitsmigration am besten terminologisch in Bezug auf den Begriff der 'Segmentation' der postkommunistischen Arbeitsmärkte innerhalb der zentraleuropäischen Pufferzone erfaßt werden können. Aus diesen Erwägungen heraus behauptet diese Studie, daß es sich bei dieser Form der Migration nicht um ein traditionelles Mustern der Ost-West-Migration handelt, sondern daß diese Form der Migration deutlich unterschieden wahrgenommen und interpretiert werden sollte, in Bezug auf die Mobilität des Geldes, von Gütern, Personen und Informationen innerhalb dieser spezifischen europäischen Region.

Keywords
Migrant labour market, Central Europe, Post-Communism

Schlagworte
Arbeitsmarkt von Migranten, Zentraleuropa, Postkommunismus

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The Central European band of countries which border the European Union (Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and Poland) have benefited from having a special and privileged position in relation to other post-communist countries. They are generally the most successful transition countries and their open borders with the European Union mean that they have a unique position for migrants. Generally, their citizens can cross the borders into the EU relatively easily, whereas citizens of other post-communist countries can cross into these countries but can not easily go further West. For this reason, I have termed these countries the "buffer" or "middle" zone between East and West Europe (Wallace, Chmouliar, & Sidorenko, 1996).

Models of labour migration

The Central European buffer zone is both a source of migrant labour to Western Europe but also receives migrant workers from the East and South. This follows a tradition of East-West migration which has been established already for centuries (Castles & Kosack, 1973). Such patterns of labour migration have been explained in various ways. They can be studied in terms of "push-pull" models whereby a list of factors attracting migrants are made alongside a list of factors which encourage them to leave their own countries. This model has been criticised as being a-theoretical (Schmitter Heisler, 1994) although it can be helpful to list such factors in sending and receiving countries as a starting point for an analysis. Another model is the classical economic model of the individual economic actor trying to maximise their economic potential. This has recently been modified to take into account the "rational choice" of not only individuals, but also of households as part of a migration strategy (Stark, 1991). The problem with this model is that it is economistic and assumes that actors do make rational choices based upon good information. Piore (Piore, 1979) has suggested a more sociological modification of the neo-classical theory to take into account the way in which labour markets are segmented and the subjective hierarchy of status with which the migrant compares him or herself ; they may be in the lowest jobs in their destination countries, but as a result raise their status back in the country of origin. The segmented labour market model posits that there is a "primary" sector of high paid, secure and protected jobs and a "secondary sector" comprising low paid, unskilled, insecure jobs with high turnover (Doeringer & Piore, 1971). This model has been applied in a number of international contexts, where migrant workers are typically found in the secondary labour market sector. A further model is to consider the tradition of "guest workers" who stay for longer and longer periods and are eventually joined by their families (Rudolph & Morokvasic, 1993). This is specific to certain European countries, such as Germany and Austria at a particular stage of post-war history. However, this cannot be applied without modification to the Central European "buffer zone" countries because these countries have not explicitly set out to recruit foreign workers to fill gaps in the labour market in the post-1989 period. Rather, they

are simply trying to cope with an influx of job-seekers of various kinds for whom there was previously little provision.

These are all models which have been applied elsewhere and could also be applied to the new situation in Central Europe. However, I would propose a different way to see this phenomenon - one of the flow of people in all directions around the world as part of the globalisation of labour markets with cities as poles of attraction (Sassen, 1988; Sassen, 1995) and also in terms of the circulation of goods, capital and people around the region which was facilitated once the borders opened up. To this I might add, in the terminology of Lash and Urry (Lash & Urry, 1994), the circulation of information. Whilst Lash and Urry interpret the circulation of information mainly in terms of mass media and the circulation of "signs", I would add to this the circulation of information through human networks and experiences which is also facilitated by the easing of restrictions on borders and upon inter-personal communication in post-communist countries. The advantage of this model is that it takes into account a range of interactive factors which include culture and communications networks as well as economic criteria. In addition we need to take account of legislation which is imposed by states to limit or control migration but which may or may not be effective and can even be counter-productive (Bauböck, Heller, & Zolberg, 1996). For example, legislation making border crossings more difficult may encourage migrants to stay on a permanent basis rather than return home, in order to avoid the risk of being permanently excluded in the course of crossing the border.

The model proposed here poses several challenges to traditional concepts of migration. Migration is usually assumed to consist of the one-way movement of people for permanent settlement. Such people are usually assumed to come from poor countries to rich ones and their numbers can be counted. Most East-West migration was indeed traditionally of this sort (Castles & Kosack, 1973). However, modern communications and mass media, along with better possibilities of transportation and the opening of borders in Eastern Europe have meant that there is the possibility of new forms of migration (Castles & Miller, 1993). Elsewhere, I have argued that this perhaps better perceived in terms of mobility rather than migration to take account of people moving on from one place to another, the increased rapidity of movement and the fact that they often return after a period of time to their countries of origin, or maybe move on somewhere else (Wallace et al., 1996). Educational scholarships have encouraged such mobility (intentionally so) as has the vast increase in tourism (Urry, 1990). A lot of people are on the move in different directions and for different reasons and this can be traced through the escalation of air travel, the increasing numbers of border crossings and the increased movement of freight around the world. As Lash and Urry (1994) indicate, it is perhaps better to speak of streams rather than places, in terms of flows rather than stocks.

If we take this model into account we have to see migration not just in terms of people moving to jobs, but different ways in which jobs also move to people (Wallace, 1998). In other

words in terms of the interaction of flows of capital and labour in different directions. Furthermore, this model implies that migration is not a permanent and one-way settlement of people moving from East to West (as in the centuries old tradition) but rather a flow of people around the region for different lengths of time and for different purposes. Migration is replaced by temporary or on-going mobility which is open ended. There are circuits of mobility around the region operating with different speeds, different distances and different durations. However, there are some patterns in these circuits, which I explore in this paper. Where these mobile bodies actual settle is not yet clear and it may form a tendency towards increasing mobility generally as communications improve and borders are opened. Furthermore, my model involves taking into account not just the classical economic models of supply and demand and the maximisation of economic potential but rather the communication of ideas and life-styles(Bourdieu, 1984) which make create the incentives for upgrading housing and improving living standards. Also, this model allows for non-economic incentives such as adventure or "life stage" mobility as possible motives for mobility.

This is the general context for the perspective on labour migration for which I am arguing. In this paper however, I shall concentrate specifically upon labour migration into the buffer zone and shall attempt to match the accounts of migrants themselves with general labour market trends and statistics.

General trends in economic development in the buffer zone

The opening of borders after 1989 meant that many citizens of the „buffer zone" countries began to work in the European Union, especially Germany and Austria, where they replaced the traditional sources of migrant labour from Turkey and Southern Europe (Rudolph, 1996). The main buffer zone country exporting workers to other parts of Europe is Poland. Thus it was estimated in 1994-5 that some 250 000 to 300 000 Poles were working abroad, mainly in Germany. Poles are also working in the Czech Republic and more recently, in Russia. Many are also abroad as a result of joint venture and business arrangements between Polish and foreign countries (OECD/SOPEMI, 1996). Horakova estimates that half a million Czechs are estimated to be working in Germany (Horakova, 1993), but the tendency for Czechs to work across the border in European Union countries peaked in 1992 at 23 000. Since then it has declined to 12 000 in 1993 and 3 400 in 1995, reflecting the fact that there were better opportunities for employment and business in the home economy during the mid-1990s. In addition, the 10 000 commuters from the Czech Republic has fallen from 20 000 in 1993. From Hungary, 7000 workers working in Germany and an additional 2 800 seasonal workers (OECD/SOPEMI, 1996).

The calculations of the number of workers abroad is based upon official statistics and should also take into account the fact that there are a range of different kinds of contractual arrangements (Hönekopp, 1997). Also, many people work informally without entering the official statistics and these may number as much as two times the number of official workers (Rohn, 1997). The Germans and Austrians have introduced quotas for guest workers from each country in order to try to control this. Nevertheless, because citizens of the buffer zone are allowed to cross as tourists into the European Union for between 30 days and three months (depending on the country) they are also able to seek work in the "informal" labour market (Rohn, 1997). However, although these flows of migrant workers have been important for the sending countries, from the point of view of the receiving countries they make up a rather marginal proportion of the total influx of working foreigners (Hönekopp, 1997). The tendency has been for citizens of the buffer zone to move backwards and forwards rather than to settle permanently in the European Union and even some who have permission to settle in Germany, choose not to exercise it (Ronge, 1997). The closer that the buffer zone countries come to the European Union, the less likely it seems that workers are likely to move on any permanent basis.

The Central European buffer zone countries were formerly ones which are termed „sending" migration countries. This has recently changed and their role is now one of receiving countries, as well as sending ones. Despite their economic problems and in most cases, high unemployment, their relative level of prosperity and growth is still higher than those countries to the East and South (see table 1). Furthermore, the general direction of economic change has been positive whilst in the Eastern and Southern European countries it has been in many cases negative or growth has been from a very low initial position. In addition, legal and other reforms have provided a relatively stable and favourable environment for new business activities, providing openings for migrant capital as well as migrant labour. This has made the buffer zone countries into poles of attraction for a variety of migrants for a variety of reasons.

The country which has attracted by far the largest number of migrant workers has been the Czech Republic. If we look at the official number of work permits registered in each country, there were 67 000 work permits granted in the Czech Republic in 1995, 2 700 in Slovakia, 20 000 in Hungary and 11-12 000 in Poland (figures from OECD/SOPEMI 1996). In the Czech Republic, by far the majority of work permits (40 000) were issued to Ukrainian workers and this reflects a great increase during the 1990s (Drbohlav, 1996). Ukrainians seem to have become the main source of migrant labour in the buffer zone countries and in many respects they fit the classic model of migrant workers (this is analysed later in the paper). However, a consideration of the dominant nationalities of migrant workers yields some surprising results.

In Poland, the dominant nationalities of migrant workers are Ukrainians followed by Vietnamese, Belarussians, Britons and Russians. In the Czech Republic, the dominant nationalities are Ukrainians, Poles, US citizens, followed by those from Germany and the UK.

Table 1. Comparison of economic conditions in post-communist countries using selected economic indicators (1996).

	Change in GDP since previous year, percent	GDP per capita (purchasing power parity measures)	Percent unemployed	Change in average monthly income since previous year	Consumer price rises (inflation)
Czech Rep	+4.4	10.460	3.5	+8.5	8.8
Slovakia	+6.9	7.997	12.8	+7.2	5.8
Hungary	+1.0	6.827	10.7	-5.4	23.6
Poland	+6.0	5.933	13.6	+5.7	19.9
Slovenia	+3.1	11.143	14.4	+4.5	missing
Bulgaria	-10.9	4.123	12.5	-9.3	123.3
Romania	+4.1	4.614	6.3	+7.6	38.8
Croatia	+3.5	4.266	15.9	+6.4	missing
Ukraine	-10.0	2.206	1.6	-5.1	80.2

Source: WIIW No. 167 May 1997 pp 324- 337

In Hungary, they are Romanians, followed by people from the Former Soviet Union, the Former Yugoslavia, Poland and then OECD countries, especially USA, UK and Germany. In Slovakia, it is Ukrainians, followed by Poles, US citizens and those from the Former Yugoslavia (data drawn from OECD/SOPEMI 1996). It seems that the neighbouring, less developed countries are one source of migration. But other sources are developed countries and particularly three of them: the USA, the UK and Germany. All these countries are dominant investors in the buffer zone and many firms bring personnel with them from the home country. However, the presence of people from the USA and the UK requires perhaps some special explanations, something which is addressed later on.

At least as many are working illegally as are are officially registered, since it is rather troublesome to apply for working and residence permissions and many workers see themselves as only temporary residents. Many also prefer to work illegally in order to avoid paying taxes and social insurance (which the employer of course also avoids) and in these buffer zone countries, taxes and social insurance make up a relatively large part of the wages bill. Like the buffer zone citizens travelling into Western Europe, many arrive as tourists and then seek work. Here we can define a number of categories of illegal workers:

1. Those who have arrived legally as "tourists" but are working without a working permit.

2. Those who arrived legally and did have working permissions but have outstayed their working/residence permission periods.

3. Those who are illegal migrants.

4. Those who have working/ residence permission but are doing additional jobs on the side.

5. Those who have residence permission but not working permission. Many of these are registered as something other than workers - for example as students or businessmen with trade licences.

In the case of respondents in the research reported here, many were legal in some respects and illegal in others, or worked to legalise their status after a period in the illegal labour market, so that in practise they are difficult to classify when we take into account their careers as migrants workers, as we are able to do through the use of biographical interviews.

However, we should bear in mind that all the countries shown in table 1 have also been receiving labour migrants from elsewhere. What makes the buffer zone countries special in this respect is that they have received relatively more labour migrants than other countries and that they have a special position in relation to the European Union, especially as the Eastern border of the "Schengen" group of countries. We should also bear in mind that it is not the first time that these countries have received labour migrants. Under the communist period, Vietnamese workers and those from other developing socialist countries were recruited to work in factories in the buffer zone countries. In most cases these labour contracts were terminated soon after the collapse of communism, although some of these workers nevertheless stayed on.

Methods of Research

The research is based upon the collection of interviews with 350 migrants of whom 201 were migrant workers. These interviews were carried out between 1993 and 1994 in the Czech Republic, and between 1994 and 1996 in Poland, Hungary and Slovakia. Where possible interviews were carried out in the native language of the migrant as research workers were asked to go and seek interviews with foreigners in the above countries. The researchers themselves were research students living in the region and were often of the same nationality as the foreigner. Some of the interviews were with traders (Wallace, Chmouliar & Bedzir, 1997) and others were with migrant workers of various kinds. The initial quotas for different nationalities of migrant workers were based upon the numbers of foreigners estimated to be

present in the country drawn from official statistics. However, the number of interviews also reflected the dominance of particular nationalities which were not necessarily represented in the official statistics. For example, illegally working Americans in Prague who were as often as not unregistered and the presence of large numbers of young people who had fled from the countries of the former Yugoslavia, but may likewise not have been registered or have been registered under business licences rather than working permits. This flexibility also had the advantage of recording the migrants which really existed "on the ground" rather than only those who were registered and of providing us with rich and multi-faceted accounts of a more ethnographic kind. However, it had the disadvantage that we were not always able to systematically cover the various nationalities of migrants in the same depth and were limited by the research workers on whom we could draw. Therefore, despite considerable efforts we were not able to penetrate the Chinese or Vietnames communities of migrants and other groups may also be under-represented.

A special study of Americans in Prague was undertaken by my seminar group of Czech students at the Charles University in 1994. They interviewed 90 American English teachers in Prague using biographical interview methods.

All interviews were transcribed into English and delivered to me on diskette and were later analysed qualitatively. Given that this was not a representative sample survey, we cannot draw generalisable conclusions about labour migration in the region. However, we can get some ideas about general patterns and motivations of migrants which could not be collected in systematic surveys. Furthermore, since we draw upon the accounts of the migrants themselves we have a "bottom up" view of their own motivations and strategies, of their roles as economic actors rather than passive units following the laws of supply and demand, as they are often portrayed in labour market and economic models. We are able to draw upon their motivations as actors working within a given set of structural constraints and who themselves have an impact upon those labour market structures (Giddens, 1984). In this way we can start to build up a picture of labour migrants in the buffer zone and point the way towards models and explanations which might be more appropriate for explaining their presence and behaviour, models which are contextually sensitive.

This style of research has two further advantages which are reflected in the data described in this paper and in my perspective on labour migration. Firstly, it enables the collection of information about informal as well as formal styles of work organisation and labour recruitment and allows us to see the interaction of the two. Secondly, it allows a processual approach. Although, the respondent was interviewed only at a particular point in time, they were asked to explain their situation in terms of their past pattern of employment and their position in their home country. Thus, we can consider migrant careers and the relationship they may have to jobs and social status held by the respondent in the sending country.

Why are there migrant workers?

In the following section the relevant "pull" and "push" factors in the labour market are considered in terms of the supply and demand for workers in the buffer zone countries.

The supply side

The main reason that there are migrant workers is that with the opening of the borders it became more easy for people to travel, and this they did for a variety of reasons, some economic, some non-economic. Travel, which was previously reserved for a privilege few, became a mass phenomenon. But this brought travellers from the East as well as from the West. Some of the first waves of travellers from the East came to sell goods in the buffer zone to supplement their salaries - they were traders (Wallace et al., 1997).

Some of the migrant workers from the East came from countries which were less prosperous, where wage levels are generally lower and where in some cases the factories have been closed or where they are no longer paid. This is the case with many of the Ukrainian migrant workers, especially those from Transcarpathia and Western Ukraine. Despite their very low rates of remuneration, they nevertheless managed to take money home with them.

Many had high aspirations for consumption and migrant worker remittances were often used to build large and splendid houses as investments for the future as well as supplementing subsistence. In this way, migrant work was perpetuated as living standards and expectations grew and families could become dependent upon this source of income as was formerly the case with migrant Yugoslav workers elsewhere (Rudolph & Morokvasic, 1993). Such a strategy made sense in an uncertain economic climate with very high inflation where investing in buildings was preferable to investing in banks. The rising cost of living was accompanied by increasing use of fees for University, schooling, health care and so on, so that migrant workers wages could be used to subsidise other members of the family. In those countries such as Ukraine and Bulgaria where there was a very rapid collapse of the economy and of people's living standards during the period of the research, the acute problems which this posed for families pushed them more strongly towards thinking of migration than might otherwise have been the case.

In the case of the western migrant workers, these were often young people either embarking on careers or taking time off before finding a career in the West. The decline of the labour market for young people in all OECD countries, along with a more prolonged and indefinite period in education and training with no certain outcomes, has encouraged them to regard travel or working abroad as part of the development of an "individualised" biography (Wallace & Kovatcheva, 1998). There is a large pool of unemployed youth in all Western European countries, but according to our research, it does not seem to be the most disadvantaged who

trek off to seek their fortunes elsewhere with their knapsacks on their backs. Rather it seems to be the most privileged and highly educated who do this. This cannot be explained only in economic terms, and we develop some other explanations later in this paper.

The demand side

Although the privatisation of large industries in the buffer zone has had only varying success (Frydman, Rapaczynski, & Earle, 1993) a thick undergrowth of small business ventures have sprung up and small privatisation could be said to be one of the success stories of the marketisation of the buffer zone (Earle, Frydman, Rapaczynski, & Turkowitz, 1994). These small businesses are traditionally the sources of employment for migrant workers (Piore, 1979) and are often started by foreigners themselves (Modood & Werbner, 1997). In the buffer zone countries, there is the additional incentive that a business licence is one of the easiest ways of obtaining a legal residence permit for foreigners. Small businesses, in contrast to large firms, are not subject to control from organised workers movements such as Trades Unions but since their profit margins are small, they are forced to economise in whatever way they can and one way of doing this is by employing a flexible, migrant workforce and perhaps also by not paying insurance and taxes for their workers. Small businesses also traditionally operate partly or wholly in the informal sector (Fullerton, Sik & Toth, 1995) and use formal, rather than informal methods of recruitment and work management. For this reason, they can compensate for their low level of financial capital by investing or exploiting social capital (Rose 1997) (Sik 1994).

One classical example of this is the construction industry. In the buffer zone there has been a construction boom. The privatisation of property in the cities has created a need for the renovation of many public and private buildings after many years of neglect and the upgrading of hotels and other facilities to international standards. In addition, there has been a growth in private house construction and repair, something increasingly outsourced to migrant workers. Whereas in the past (in the absence of a well-functioning private sector) families usually built and repaired their homes themselves from their own family resources, they now increasingly use these external sources of labour which they are able to pay for from their higher earnings (see table 1). As in public building construction, there is a desire to upgrade housing to higher standards by including better kitchens, garages, swimming pools and so on. The restitution of property to the former owners (however limited) also provided encouragement for these trends as private owners tried to maximise the potential of their properties or sold them off.

However, we can also see the cities as drawing in migrant workers in order to service the higher paid salariat, either as domestic help, as baby sitters, caring for elderly people, working in catering or other labour intensive servicing sectors. The increasing tendency to outsource domestic work, visible in Western European countries, has its counterpart in the

buffer zone. However, it is often the resident westerners who are employing such domestic help. The market for domestic workers is still relatively underdeveloped in the buffer zone, although the loss of various childcare and maternity privilege for women in post-communist buffer zone countries may serve to help create such a market.

Thus far, the demand for migrant workers in the buffer zone appears to be very similar to that in Western Europe and elsewhere in the world such as the USA (Sassen, 1995). However, there are also some important differences. The rapid expansion of the service sectors in the buffer zone countries as a result of privatisation and increased consumption creates a demand for a range of workers, not just as labourers but also organising tourism, communications, media and so on which also attract foreign workers. In addition there is a demand for more skilled and professional workers at the upper ends of the labour market as well as the lower ends of the labour market. Hence there is an influx of international managers, consultants and business people, often from Western European countries or the USA.

In communist economies, the productive sector was deliberately more developed than the service sector and the large industries in the productive sector, despite having had to rationalise, are still in a relatively privileged position, retaining many of their workers. Buffer zone citizens in protected jobs have little incentive to change their work place even if they have relatively low wages - for them security with low wages may be preferable to a private sector job which is higher paying but insecure (Roberts & Jung, 1995). Those who prefer the latter kind of jobs tend to be young people, highly educated and living in urban areas (Wallace, 1997). Moreover, their geographical mobility is limited due to lack of flexibility in the housing market, so that people may be unwilling to leave the regions where large industrial plant are located, even if they are unemployed. Therefore there were gaps in the labour market (even in the context of high unemployment) especially in the expanding service sector, often in cities. These jobs were more open to foreigners because there was little competition with native job-seekers. Labour market organisations which could exclude foreigners had not yet been formed and Trades Unions did not concern themselves with these new sectors. Furthermore there were also opportunities in higher status sectors of the labour market where there was an insufficient supply of suitably qualified native workers.

However, rather than seeing the labour market as a one-sided model where the demand for labour is filled by a limitless source of mobile units of labour, including migrant workers as recommended by Piore (Piore, 1979), we can see the labour market as an <u>interaction</u> of supply and demand. Thus, the boon in private house building may have been facilitated by the fact that there was a pool of Ukrainian migrant workers to help with construction. A better example would be the ex-ex-patriot community, such as the Americans in Prague, who created a whole range of services such as book shops and laundries which recruited other foreign workers (mainly Americans and Serbians) to service their own community. Furthermore, as shall be argued more strongly later in the paper, the active strategies of

economic actors in the labour market also helped to shape the way in which the labour markets worked.

In the last section the economic push and pull factors were considered. However, next it is necessary to move on from this descriptive account to consider more analytical models of the labour market for migrant workers in the buffer zone.

Two models of migrant work

a. Labour market segmentation

In the segmentation of the labour market, migrant workers traditionally occupy the lowest layers as low paid, casual workers (Doeringer & Piore, 1971). However, the kinds of jobs to be found in the secondary sector can be very variable depending upon the character of organised labour in the country and upon strategies of exclusion by native or other ethnic minority groups in the labour market (Piore, 1979). In Europe it is possible to discern very different patterns of insertion of migrant workers in the labour market - it varies from country to country - but in all countries the migrant workers tend to be concentrated into particular sectors (OECD/SOPEMI, 1996). Discrimination and lack of skills may keep them there and in the case of the Central European countries, the fact that they are on temporary contracts or illegal. However, even within these layers, they may develop ethnic "niches" with certain ethnic groups dominating particular kinds of work (Portes, 1995). There have been a number of studies illustrating the very different economic strategies of different ethnic groups depending upon their sources of social and financial capital (Waldinger, 1995). This certainly seemed to be the case with the Ukrainian workers in many construction jobs who fit very well into Doeringer and Piore`s model of secondary labour market workers. The role of Romanian casual labourers in the buffer zone is also often of this character. This ethnicisation of certain parts of the labour market is encouraged by legislation which forces people to obtain work permits before they enter the country and by the phenomenon of agents, known as "clients", who recruit the workers and organise the work, and usually the accommodation as well.

However, these latter examples illustrate that we need to take into account not only the structure of the labour market in the host country, but its interaction with social and cultural factors which are regionally specific. The structuring of the labour market reflects various flows of communication which are to some extent based upon cultural and historical connections which the communist-imposed tight borders only briefly severed (Wallace, 1998). Thus the links of many Ukrainians with Poland and with Czech and Slovak Republics, goes back many centuries. For these reasons there are also often family and friendship connections spanning the countries in the region which can form sources of social capital and assist information flows. On the other hand, new mass communications links, overlaid with

personal communications links through newspapers, TV, email, fax, telephone and so on draw in westerners from much further afield, who may not have had any previous links with the region. These communications flows also serve as labour recruitment channels and in themselves help to create labour market niches and pockets which may not otherwise have existed or would have taken a different form.

However, it is more helpful to look beyond the borders of the host country and to consider these phenomena in terms of the globalisation of labour markets and the post-Fordist strategies of employers in out sourcing and sub-contracting their labour needs, often to different countries (Rudolph, 1997). It is often the case that the jobs move to the people when industries from Germany and Austria relocate across the border in search of a cheap labour force, as well as people moving towards the jobs. The labour market for migrant workers needs to be seen in terms of flows of communication around the European region.

Another factor which purely economically-founded models are not able to account for is the inclusion or exclusion of various nationalities through legislation. The countries of Central Europe have attempted increasingly to control the flow of migrant workers and their model of how to do this reflects the German/Austrian model of using temporary "guest workers" with restricted contracts and rights rather than the British/Dutch or North American model of controlled immigration. It is felt that the migrant workers should go back "home" rather than remain in the receiving country. It is very difficult indeed for these migrant workers to obtain permanent residence, which is usually only possible by marrying a citizen of the country. The exception to this general rule is the case of the Hungarian Romanians who have preferential terms for gaining citizenship (Fullerton, Sik and Toth 1997) and Slovaks in the Czech Republic likewise have a special status.

As the number of migrant workers has grown, there have been increasing attempts to control them. Quotas were introduced for migrant workers from different countries and residence and working permissions were made more stringent (for example by making it necessary to apply for these things before entering the country). Increasingly stiff fines were introduced in each country for employers employing illegal workers (OECD/SOPEMI, 1995). However, as we shall see in our empirical data later, the way in which this legislation is enforced differs from country to country, and from one period to another, at least in the perception of migrants.

The buffer zone countries, as the eastern borders of the Schengen countries, have been under increasing pressure from the European Union to control their eastern borders at the same time as more crossing points have been opened up. For this reason, visas have been introduced for citizens of Belarus and Russia who until quite recently could cross relatively freely. The restrictions this brought to the profitable cross border trading between Poland and her eastern neighbours (a significant contribution to Poland`s GDP) prompted a popular

protest from people on the Polish side of the border who rely on this trade (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Newsline Vol 2 No27 and No30, February 1998).

The popular protest described above illustrates the fact that whilst there may be an economic demand for cheap migrant workers (and also expensive ones), these economic needs may conflict with the political needs to be shown to be cracking down on immigrants as they are blamed for rising crime and made the scape goats of nationalist and xenophobic political rhetoric[1]. In the buffer zone countries there is also the political need to show themselves as being worthy potential members of the European Union.

b. The family economics model

The work of Oded Stark (Stark, 1991) has already been mentioned. He has applied a "new family economics" model to migration by looking at the economic rationality of migration not only in terms of individual actors but also in terms of the contribution which migration may make to households back in the sending country. Thus, what may not make sense in terms of an individual economic strategy, could make sense if we take the household as a whole into account. To this we would we would add a more sociological variant of the "household strategies" perspective developed by Pahl (Pahl, 1984) and applied to the situation of labour migrants on the Mexican border by Roberts (Roberts, 1991). In this model, households strategise to maximise their resources, but they could include non-economic goals, such as consumption, raising their social status, saving for a wedding and so on, as well as economic ones. However, both the economic and the sociological versions tend to assume a rational mentality towards household goals and a degree of consensus amongst the various actors in the household which would need to be proved rather than assumed (Wallace, 1993).

Many of the migrant manual workers in ours sample formed part of a household strategy whereby they endeavour to support families in the home country rather than in the host country. By far the majority of labouring migrant workers arrived on their own and brought money home to their families. They may also bring other things back such a consumer goods (television sets, microwaves, computers etc.). The migrant themselves represented only one part of family situation which spanned the two countries (Wallace et al., 1996). In most cases it was the man was the migrant labourer and the women crossed the border in order to trade. Often this was a husband wife-strategy since he would bring goods home for her to sell. She may also do some additional trading herself. This was the basic survival strategy of many Ukrainian households. This might be combined with house building and peasant small holding to supplement living standards. Therefore, it is necessary to understand the relationship between the worker and the household in the sending country rather than seeing

[1]A recent example of this would be the claim by Hungarian Prime Minister Gyula Horn that there was a need for a "crackdown" on foreigners because 80 per cent of crime was commited by them. The following day the President's office quickly corrected this reporting that in fact only 3.5% of all crimes were committed by foreigners. (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Newsline Vol 2 No. 31 16 Feb 1998)

these as atomised individuals maximising their own profit (as in the classical migration model) (Stark, 1991) and this approach is useful for explaining at least some groups of migrants, particularly those in the bottom layers of the labour market.

The Characteristics of Migrant Workers in the Buffer Zone

At this stage we need to look in more detail at the data collected on the project to consider to what extent it fits the different kinds of models outlined above. Some estimations of the characteristics of respondents were made in order to give a rough impression of proportions, although this cannot be taken as representative. The majority (two thirds) of ours sample were men and the average age was 30 - the oldest was 60 and the youngest 19. This fits the pattern of migrant workers elsewhere in the early phase of migration. The majority of workers were in their 20s and 30s.

What was more surprising was that the majority had had some kind of Higher or extended education, so these were not people from the bottom of the social hierarchy in their own countries. This count was high because a number of the exiles from the war in the former Yugoslavia were highly educated. However, many of them had not completed their education. Typically, young migrants had dropped out of education courses at home in order to work abroad or were aiming to continue their education in the buffer zone or in another country.

The large number of migrants came from the former Yugoslavia - especially from Bosnia, Croatia, Serbia and Kosovo. Another large group came from Ukraine. In Hungary the largest group came from Romania and many of these were ethnic Hungarians. Other countries were Russia and the Baltic States (most common in Poland) and the Caucasus. Many of these were countries with borders to the buffer zone or traditional links. Nearly all migrants were from inside Europe. Only 3 were from outside of Europe altogether - one from Nigeria, one from Japan and one from Vietnam.

A large number of people from the former Yugoslavia could be found in the buffer zone countries at the time that the research was carried out, because of the consequences of war and the international embargo on Serbia. Young people who were escaping military service, the consequences of economic collapse or inflation or the destruction of their homelands or who did not fit into the new territories created from the former Yugoslavia (for example because of a cross-ethnic marriage) fled to the buffer zone. After 1992 it was increasingly difficult to enter the European Union as an asylum seeker and the rate of acceptance of asylum seekers in the buffer zone was similarly low (about one in ten). Therefore, many of these young people stayed and found jobs or started businesses. People from the former

Yugoslavia in the buffer zone were normally young, highly educated and multi-lingual. We could assume that at least some of them might later return home or go elsewhere. Most of these were not sending money home to their parents or partners and some were indeed supplemented by money which parents had sent them. Their goals were not so much to support their families as to survive somehow until the war ended and to continue with their educational and other projects which had been ruptured in their home country. These migrants did not fit any of the models outlined above. Insofar as they were members of households, they did not support their parents, and nor were they confined to the bottom layers of the secondary labour market. Rather, as shall be described later, they created new opportunities for themselves out of the post-communist economic flux and change.

In terms of their next plans, many were quite uncertain. 9% wanted to go to the New World (America, Canada, New Zealand) and a further 3% said they simply wanted to go to the "West". 10% wanted to go to European Union countries. However, the largest number, 43% wanted to stay in the buffer zone countries and 3% wanted to go to other East European countries. 28% wanted to go home. 6% simply wanted to go somewhere else - it was not clear where. Sometimes they opted for more than one of these possibilities, or contradicted themselves in the interviews, reflecting the ambivalence of their plans and positions. Many were not even trying to learn the buffer zone languages and were not attempting to integrate themselves, but rather lived in expatriate communities. At one extreme were the Westerners in this position who saw their stays as temporary, as did the exiles from the former Yugoslavia. At the other extreme, the Ukrainian and Romanian building workers, living in segregated accommodation, also saw themselves as temporary migrants and mixed also mainly with their own kind.

In many countries, migrants are downwardly mobile, being unable to exercise their educational human capital in the new labour market. However, in our sample the majority were neither upwardly nor downwardly mobile, although they may have switched from state to private sector in their migration. Twelve per cent were definitely downwardly mobile and one percent were actually upwardly mobile. Many of these upwardly mobile migrants were ethnic Hungarians from Romania who were able to find better job prospects in Hungary than in their native country where their mobility was blocked. Others had become upwardly mobile, by becoming business men in the buffer zone - especially those who moved from being building labourers to becoming recruiting agents and organisers.

All migrants worked in the private sector, which is a distinct contrast to the native population, many of whom are still employed in the public sector. Altogether, 16% had professional jobs - as translators, engineers, writers or artists, computer programmers and so on. A further 18% worked in the business sector, either in their own business or with a company. Interestingly enough, these were entirely foreign companies who employed them, rather than local companies. 5% had white collar and secretarial jobs and 18% worked in bars, as waiters, in restaurants or as prostitutes. A further 8% worked in the unskilled service sector, mostly in

sales. Only 5% worked in factories and the majority of these were also foreign factories and 2% were cleaners or nannies in private households. A large number - 18% - were builders or labourers of various sorts and an additional 2% were agricultural workers. 4% had found specialised craft jobs, such as working as a mechanic or a specialised wood carver or carpenter and this included two professional street musicians. A large number of employees were working for foreign employers.

Another untypical characteristic of the jobs undertaken by these respondents when compared with traditional migrant workers elsewhere, was that they were nearly all working for small companies or for small subsidiary branches of multinational companies. Although small employers are typical of the secondary labour market employment for migrant workers in other countries (Piore, 1979), these also employed migrants in white collar, professional and business-oriented jobs. These latter kinds of jobs represent part of the tendency towards post-Fordist globalised labour markets described by Rudolph (Rudolph, 1997).

Table 2 Employment by sector of native workers in Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary: 1996

	Poland%	Czech Republic%	Slovakia%	Hungary%
Agriculture	21	6	missing	8
Mining	3	2	2	1
Manufacturing	21	29	30	24
Power and Water	2	2	3	2
Construction	6	9	9	6
Trade and Catering	14	16	14	17
Transport and Communication	6	8	8	9
Financial Services	2	7	6	6
Health and Education	13	12	16	15
Public Administration	5	5	8	7
Other Services	6	3	5	5

Source: OECD data base

Although this is not a representative sample, it gives some indication of patterns of employment. It is very different from the normal structure of employment in the buffer zone countries and we can compare this with the general structure of the labour market in these countries in 1996.

We can see that the majority of the native workers are still working in primary and secondary sectors of production: manufacturing, mining and agriculture. This contrasts with just 7% o our own sample. Less than 10% of the native workforce were working in construction, compared with some 20% of our sample. A small number of the native workforce worked in financial and other services, or trade and catering, as compared with two thirds of our own sample. It is not possible to draw too many conclusions from this because our data which was collected in quite a different way of the OECD is not claiming to be representative. Nevertheless we could say that in general native workers worked in large firms, the public sector, in manufacturing and related industries. In general, our sample, by contrast, worked in the private sector, in small firms using informal relationships and in service industries.

Different classes of migrant workers

Migrant workers enter different sections of the labour market depending both on their own skills and upon the needs of the labour market. Since some 40% of our respondents were illegal migrant workers (although many of the legal workers had begun their careers in the buffer zone as illegal workers), they were automatically consigned to particular parts of the labour market. However, they were not necessarily disadvantaged in their position in the labour market.

They can be divided roughly into two categories: non-manual and manual workers and then we can subdivide each of these categories

a. Non-manual workers

A total of 39% of our respondents were non-manual workers. The data may be skewed in their favour because most of our interviewers had a higher educational background and may have had greater rapport with those from a similar background. Indeed, official statistics in Hungary indicate that only one quarter of work permits are issued for skilled workers (Juhasz, 1997). However, from these data we can get some idea of the kind of non-manual jobs which migrant workers in the buffer zone were performing. Non-manual workers were usually workers with Higher Education and/or managerial backgrounds in their countries of origin. As we have seen many of our respondents had higher and continuing educational backgrounds, but not all of them were able to use these skills. However, some of them were able to capitalise on these skills. Some had the command of very specialist skills which were much in demand and for which there were not enough indigenous workers - language skills

and computer skills are examples. It is notable that they were often working in the new sectors of employment - in service and communications sectors and were therefore less likely to be competing with indigenous workers. As a result they were able to find jobs which were commensurate with their qualifications - or at any rate not too far removed from them. Non-manual workers often used Higher Education as a means of mobility - by applying for scholarships or educational places in their destination country they were able to live there legally. Many were business people. Non-manual workers can be divided into several further categories:

1. People working for international companies/ institutions.

Often these were recruited from outside of the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland or Slovakia moved there only because the international company or institution wanted them. In these cases the international institution took care of all arrangements. These migrants were highly paid and often able to bring their families with them because special provisions were made for the families. They were clearly valued workers of the company/institution and cared for by the institution. People working for the Central European University in Budapest are one example, but also a Russian working for a Western computer company in Warsaw would be another. One Romanian found a job as a language teachers with International House, one of the main language schools. Rudolph and Hillman (Rudolph & Hillmann) have made a study of Western professionals working in countries such as Poland and the Baltic States. They found that these were usually younger managers at the beginning of their careers and the majority of western managers came from the USA or Great Britain, although these countries were not the only ones from which foreign investors came. Rudolph and Hillman also found a range of "freelance" professionals from these countries who were not attached to companies. Some of these were the sons and daughters of emigrants who also spoke the local language (Salt, 1992). However, in the long run there was a tendency for these imported professionals to be replaced by locally trained employees who did not need additional enhancements for living abroad and also recieved lower salaries (although still higher than was usual in their own country). These professionals fit neither the secondary labour market model, nor the household strategies model. Although they may have had a household strategy it was not usually one which involved supporting a family in the country of origin.

2. Businessmen/women

These are people who managed to successfully establish businesses in the destination country. They may have moved there originally in order to escape economic collapse (in the case of the Armenians and some Ukrainians), to avoid anti-Semitism or to avoid being a national minority (in the case of the Hungarian-Romanians). However, once they arrived, they were able to establish businesses, which may actually take advantage of their migrant status

- for example using import/export trading or acting as middlemen and go-betweens for their compatriots. For many, getting a business licence was a way of also gaining legal residence. In our sample, 18% were either business people or were working for small private businesses. This was clearly a dynamic sector in which foreigners had a role to play. Other migration studies have indicated that ethnic business was a method of upward mobility for ethnic minorities who are excluded from the normal labour market (Modood & Werbner, 1997) (Waldinger, 1995). However, there seemed to many such opportunities in the post-communist countries where the small business sector was still developing. In Hungary this potential was harnessed in an ingenious scheme to encourage refugees and asylum seekers to start their own small enterprises rather than to live on state handouts and this scheme appears to have been successful (Labreveux, 1997). These business people do not fit the secondary labour market model. In some cases they may fit the household strategies model, since a business often requires self-conscious economic strategising and the need to involve other family members.

3. Professional and white collar workers.

In our sample, 16% were professionals, employed according to their specialist talents. They included opera singers, self-employed artists and a professional footballer. Usually they had some language skills which they were able to use to find such jobs or with which they were able to integrate themselves. In some cases they were also working illegally. Often they were able to earn quite reasonable salaries. Examples of this would be Russian teacher of English in Poland, Hungarian Romanians who found jobs in organisations or in computing and communications, and the woman of Polish extraction from Kyrgizstan who followed her American boyfriend to Poland to act as translator on an international research project for an American foundation. Some 5% had found white collar or secretarial jobs, often jobs which required some foreign language skills. These workers did not fit the secondary labour market model since they were often earning more money than native workers, although perhaps in insecure jobs. Their motive for migration may have included a household strategy, but usually their families travelled with them.

4.. Post-modern migrants

Post modern migrants differ from other migrants in that the purpose of their trip is most often fun, adventure or self-fulfilment rather than earning a living. Post-modern migrants often have lower salaries in their destination country than they would have had back home and often live on money which is sent form home. The large ex-ex-patriot American community in Prague, numbering about 12-20 000 would be the main example. Post-modern migrants mostly gravitated towards cities and adhered mostly to their own communities. Americans in Prague worked in bars and cafes (although they were usually highly educated) or they started businesses serving people of their own community such as laundries and cafes.

They intended often to travel further and theirs was a temporary orientation to the buffer zone - for them, work migration was blended with tourism. It was an extended holiday. There were not many post-modern migrants amongst those travelling from the East, but there were some. Post-modern migrants are generally young and without any family responsibilities which is why they are able to prioritise their own rather hedonistic goals and aspirations. Migration for this group can represent part of an extended process of growing up which may include periods in and out of Higher Education (Hartmann, 1995). For this reason we have also termed it "life stage" migration similar to studying abroad on scholarships for a period of time. Although post-modern migrants are partly the product of a shrinking and increasingly flexible labour market for graduates in Britain and America, this does not entirely explain their presence in Central Europe and might lead us to expect graduates from labour markets where they were even less likely to get jobs - for example Spain or Italy. Part of the economic explanation also lies in the he fact that these graduates could use their experiences abroad for constructing a flexible "CV" which they believe would work to their advantage back in Britain and America where employers they hoped might value this wider experience as an enhancement of their human capital. Also, the opening of the borders brought English as the lingua franca of post-communist countries so that English speakers were able to use their skills more easily.

Post-modern migrants do not fit the secondary labour market model - they may have been in the secondary labour market working as waitresses or barmen but they were not destined to stay there indefinitely. For them it was a temporary interlude before pursuing more high status careers elsewhere. Nor do they fit the household strategies model, because they were not usually supporting anyone else but themselves - indeed they were being supported by families in many cases.

Some of the young Eastern European migrants were starting to develop post-modern aspirations in this direction. The reason why post-modern migrants were from western rather than eastern countries can partly be explained by a study by Inglehart and colleagues. According to the "World Values Survey" materialist values associated with economic survival are characteristic of many developing countries and most of post-communist Europe (Basanez, Inglehart, & Moreno, 1997). However, post-materialist values associated with self-fulfilment and pleasure seeking are found in consumer capitalist countries of the West. We could say that many of the post-modern migrants from the West embodied post-materialist values, whilst the migrants from the East and South into the buffer zone embodied materialist values and these were reflected in their motivations for migration.

b. Manual Workers

Manual workers represented 62% of the sample. Many of the manual workers had manual working backgrounds in their own countries, although some were students doing seasonal work and some were more highly educated but unable to use these skills in the new labour

market, or perhaps lacking in appropriate language skills. Female manual workers worked in the service sectors in sales, cleaning, waitressing and bar work, but by far the majority of the heavy manual workers were men, since it was mostly muscle power which they were selling. The majority of these workers were driven abroad by the plunge in living standards at home and the need to support their families. They were working mainly in the following fields:

1. Construction

In each country many construction workers came from abroad. Since there is much construction work begin carried out in Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic, there seems to be a steady demand for them. They mostly came for a period of time and went home again for a period of time rather than staying continually. Most of the construction on which they were working was in building private houses for individuals, although they were usually working in an organised group for someone who informally found the work and the accommodation for them. As well as working extremely long hours (10-14 hours per day plus weekends), they often undertook additional casual jobs in their spare time.

2. Agriculture

Some people in each country were doing seasonal agricultural work either in vineyards or in greenhouses. There seems to be a demand for this kinds of periodic help, but in fact their numbers were few.

3. Factory work

Some migrants were employed in factory work. The Bardejov shoe manufacturing company in Eastern Slovakia employed a troupe of Ukrainian women officially. However, many respondents were unemployed illegally in factories in the buffer zone and forced to hide from inspectors. Interestingly enough, many of these factories were themselves subsidiaries of foreign companies.

4. Personal services

Many migrant workers worked in cafes and bars as domestic helpers or as domestic cleaners in private households. The rise of the service sector had lead to the opening of many small shops, bars and restaurants, many of these also catering for tourists and foreign visitors. As in other parts of the world, this seasonally fluctuating and unstable employment sector offered opportunities for migrant workers. What was unusual was that this was itself a relatively new and expanding sector in the post-communist countries.

A small number worked in private households as domestic help. It seems that the rising prosperity in Poland, Slovakia and Hungary enables wealthier households to employ domestic helpers to look after children or elderly parents. An illegal status can be easily concealed in this kind of work. Some women working elsewhere also took on cleaning jobs for extra money during their time off from their main job. However, this practice was not as widespread as it might be because in the wealthier households the wives tended not to be employed themselves and they did not therefore necessarily need any domestic help. Most work was for male migrant workers and there was little work for women - what there was, was generally very low paid.

One form of employment for migrant women was prostitution. In some cases women worked full time as prostitutes for a period of their stay, or part time. A common strategy (because wages for women workers was very low) was to live as the mistress of a local man or to allow visits from a local man in exchange for accommodation. This was in addition to other work the woman might be doing. In the words of a Ukrainian woman in the Czech Republic:

> Usually in order to make money, a woman has to work in a few places -12 hours per day, without weekends - then they may have as much as 10 000 Crowns per month. Even with this money, they can save something only if they have a rich lover. In other words it is work in three shifts - two shifts at the working place and one shift with the lover. Lovers are usually used for free accommodation, because otherwise it is necessary to pay 3000 Crowns per month for accommodation.

5. Ukrainian seasonal workers

Ukrainian seasonal workers can be found in several of the above categories but they are worthy of a description in their own right because they were a significant phenomenon in all the countries under consideration.

There has been a long tradition of people from Transcarpathia working seasonally. Since there were few industries, but people were anchored by their houses, their small plots of land and their families, they traditionally went elsewhere to seek work. However, it is an indication of the economic crisis in the Ukraine that these traditional migrant workers are joined by people from other parts of Ukraine who were not traditionally migrant. Previously they went to Russia or Siberia, often working in logging camps and they were able to earn very good incomes. However, this has become more difficult now due to the break up in relations between the two countries and due to the unreliable nature of payment in Russia. As one respondent put it: you might get a lot of money or you might get nothing at all if the boss refuses to pay you. Or your money might be stolen by the Mafia. Another place they might go would be Eastern Ukraine to help with the harvest, but some respondents pointed out that they were no longer paid in cash there so much as in kind and it was sometimes difficult to

get the grain or wood back to Transcarpathia. Now most migrants go to the Czech Republic where there is still a strong demand for workers and low unemployment and where wages can be higher. Others go to the other "buffer zone" countries which we have considered here, typically as construction workers. They have many building skills because they have often built their own houses at home or helped other people to build theirs. However, they have no intention of staying the buffer zone, and certainly not of going further west. They prefer to work for a couple of months at a time and then to return home to build their houses, grow vegetables, cut wood for the winter and attend to their animals. Many of them mentioned having houses as well as these small-scale peasant activities, which were particularly important sources of survival in the present climate. They generally lived in barrack-type accommodation with several people to a room or on site in the building works, reflecting their lack of commitment to staying. In the Transcarpathian and border regions of Western Ukraine, there is a curious mixture of lifestyles. On the one hand there is great poverty in daily living conditions but on the other hand there is the construction of enormous private houses which are erected in stages as family projects. Whereas the previous waves of migrant from this region up until 1939 were very poor people who emigrated abroad altogether, what we see now is a different pattern. Now these are not the poorest people, the migrate temporarily and they own property which they are unwilling to leave. They expressed no intention of emigrating.

According to the Transcarpathian authorities, the numbers leaving for work away from home had reached record proportions by 1996. Around 12 000 people each year leave the country for the nearest abroad, about 18% of the workforce. An estimated 32% of the workforce in the region (232 000) is no longer officially employed. However, many of these are moving within the Ukraine. The majority of our respondents from Ukraine working in the buffer zone in fact have jobs but are on unpaid "vacation" from enterprises or receive rather symbolic salaries of $15-30 per month.

Despite this significant outflow of migrants, the local administration has an agreement for only 200 workers to go officially to Slovakia in 1994 working for international firms, when the real numbers are obviously much larger. In 1995, such agreements covered only 75 workers. The working regulations have not been revised since 1991 and therefore these workers abroad are unprotected by any legislation or formal diplomatic agreement. Those who had difficulties and went to the Ukrainian Embassy were simply sent away and told to look after themselves or go back to Ukraine. Quotas for Ukrainian workers have been agreed with Germany, but according to Dietz and Segbers (Dietz & Segbers, 1997), these quotas have not been filled. However, since 1996, Ukrainian workers have been going increasingly to Russia and to European Union countries such as Italy and Greece where wages are higher than in the buffer zone.

One participant observation study of the experiences of Ukrainian workers in the Czech Republic carried out by one of the interviewers on this project, found some workers who were

teachers or public servants but were now doing casual construction work. Many of these were very discontented with their lives, but saw no better uses for their skills. The author of this study concludes that the labour market niches in which these Ukrainian migrant workers found themselves, especially in the secondary labour market was continually reinforced as the workers were recruited through networks, co-national "agents" and this kind of work became a tradition amongst Ukrainian workers. Even on the construction sites, Ukrainian workers undertook mainly the heaviest and least skilled tasks (Kartamyshev, 1995).

Dusan Drbohlav and his colleagues have made a systematic study of Ukrainians in the Czech Republic, and he found that the majority were working in or around Prague (Drbohlav, 1996). Most of them were single, or had left their families behind in Ukraine. Many were from rural parts of Ukraine. The majority of them intended to return home.

Those people working in the manual jobs in the labour market described above, would fit the segmented labour market model, since they could all fit within the secondary labour market. Furthermore, many of them would fit the household work strategies model, or family economics model, since they were supporting families in the sending country which were using a variety of survival strategies by different family members. However, an additional factor which is mentioned, but not stressed, in both of these models is the role of informal relationships within the formal labour market and it is to this that we now turn.

The importance of social capital and informal ties in work organisation

It has been mentioned previously, that the labour market for these migrant workers, many illegal, depends very much upon social capital - or the network of ties and contacts held by a person and which tended to reinforce particular niches in the labour market.

Only two of our respondents had emigrated entirely alone without any networks. Most of them had received information through networks of friends and family. Information flowed through both loose and tight networks of ties. Families found jobs for each other or even worked together at the same place(there were an umber of examples of this). Often the arrangement would be that when one member of the family goes home he was replaced by another member of the same family.

In the case of some groups of workers, ethnic ties were very important - for example Hungarian-Romanians operated a very effective network of ethnic ties. Our impression was that the main communication was through networks of friends, but such networks often corresponded with ethnic affiliations because of links with the home country and because it was easier to talk to compatriots in the same language.

Probably the most important source of social capital were friends and "connections" in useful places. Connections could be used for helping with getting across the border without paying fine, for finding accommodation and for finding jobs. The use of agents amongst the Ukrainian workers was also dependent upon connections.

> At first I came across the border to do business, I concentrated on my studies, especially since I did not have the right connections. Without connections you cannot make a profit.... I came back to Hungary because I could not get a job in the Czech Republic last summer, I do not know the language and without connections I had no chance. You know: in order to find a job you should know somebody. Maybe somebody from the University you went to, or from the town you came from or some countryman of yours abroad. So that's why I am here now (Romanian student who works during his vacations in Hungary)

As in the quotation above, some workers had first come to the buffer zone as traders and later, having established connections there, became workers. This also coincides with the decline in profits from trading after 1992 and the need to search for new sources of income. This was often the case with Poles going to Germany and based on this information, Okolski (1997) argues that this could be termed "incomplete migration" because there was a pattern of first coming and going for trading, then staying longer periods to work and finally, he assumes that this will become settlement. Our evidence did not seem to suggest this, but suggested instead mobility as a normal condition. However, it is necessary to distinguish between different groups of migrant workers, some of whom may fit this concept better than others.

The people from the former Yugoslavia used networks and connections which they already had from back home - often fellow students - but which were transported to a new context. This is the reason they often ended in the same kinds of niches - selling tourist souvenirs, acting as tour guides or in tourist agencies. Americans also used informal connections to find jobs for one another, but this was semi-formalised by notice boards in the relevant meeting places.

Sometimes, however, these flows of information were rather inaccurate. The potential migrant was given a false impression about the wage levels, the working conditions and found to their surprise that no working permission was organised for them or that that much of their money was extracted by the "agent" as a fee or in return for paying for the fare, or that they were simply not paid at all by unscrupulous agents. There were many examples of this amongst our respondents. The problem with social capital is that it can also be used as a form of exploitation (Rose, Mishler & Haerpfer, 1997). When this happened there was no form of redress on account of the informal nature of the labour arrangements.

Other groups, however, such as Hungarian-Romanians were able to use more formal methods such as newspapers and job agencies because of their command of the language. Another method of job search which was less reliant on connections was to simply stand in a particular place early in the morning where employers go past and pick out likely workers which they employ immediately. This is what Sik (Sik 1998) terms "slave markets" and they seem to exist in most major cities. Even this relied on flows of information because these "slave markets" often changed location to avoid inspectors.

Differences between countries

Until now I have described the buffer zone countries as one group. However, there were also important differences between them, and it is to this that I now turn.

a Poland

Poland has a high unemployment rate - 14.9% at the end of 1995 (WIIW (Wiener Institut für Internationale Wirtschaftsvergleich, 1996a). However, there are still migrant workers working in Poland. The following nationalities were interviewed: Russian, Ukrainian, Armenian, Kyrgiz (of Polish origin), Japanese. People from Russia and Ukraine had little difficulty adapting to life in Poland, learned the language easily and assimilated.

> Everyone goes to the place about which he has at least some information, or the opportunity to find a job. Some people went to Russia, others to the Czech Republic. I chose Poland. I'd been there before, when I took goods to sell from Ukraine. I have relatives on the Polish Baltic coast. There were four of us who spoke very good Polish. We got together and following some advice from acquaintances, we went to Wroclaw, as far away from the Ukrainian border as possible. Finally, our good command of Polish and our building qualifications helped us to find a good job.

They complained about occasional anti-Soviet jokes, but this did not claim to have experienced overwhelming prejudice. Many people had Polish relatives and friends which is why they had considered coming to Poland. As in other countries, these people who were between nationalities often became professional mediators or middlemen for their countrymen. A quantitative study of population attitudes to migration, found Poland to be the most tolerant country in East-Central Europe (Haerpfer & Wallace, 1997).

The following respondent is a Ukrainian who having tried exporting cars from Poland and then working in Moscow for a while came to Poland. He was previously an engineer, head of design in one of the largest plants in Western Ukraine, which has now ceased production. He attempted a management buy out with some colleagues but this was not successful. He is

quoted at length because this case study exemplified many of the themes described so far and shows how they cohere together.

> I met some Poles in Moscow who also worked on the construction sites there and they suggested I come to Warsaw, promising they would help me find a job. The racket stalked Moscow (although he was earning much more there than in Poland). There were cases of cheating the Ukrainian work teams as well. As for Poland, I have been familiar with this country a long time, I have relatives there. Earlier in the 1990s I went trading there several times. I speak very good Polish. My Polish acquaintances helped me to find a job, although the salary was lower than I expected. But I was glad to be closer to home and satisfied with a quieter environment.... I drive here by car...I drive all over Warsaw looking for jobs, collecting various commercial information. I can also bring back some sizeable things. Last time I brought home a Zanussi washing machine. According to my calculations, I saved about $150 this way. In the beginning I worked in a small private building firm, where the owner was one of my Moscow acquaintances. I still work with him but now as an equal partner. I work as foreman. There are 6-7 people under my management at the moment. They are mostly my relatives from Ukraine, or my close acquaintances. There is one Pole who is working with us. ... Mostly its private houses, sometimes small industrial buildings. Its me who looks for the jobs or my Polish colleague, Maryan. We agree with the customers on the costs of the work, its quality, supping necessary materials and equipment. We build simultaneously several buildings, so down time (through delays in deliveries) is rare. On our part, we try to do a high quality job so that our customers will not complain. High quality and fast - that's our business card. If a job is well done in one place, it is easier to find another one. My earnings are about $20-25 per day. The members of my team get less. Everyone gets the amount corresponding to his qualification. When choosing people for my team, I give them an estimate of what they can do and who much they can earn for that. ... For a while I went to Poland using invitations from my relatives, but now I buy vouchers <This means that his workers entered legally but worked illegally>. More recently, we didn't need any documents except a passport to cross the border. So our stay in Poland can be considered legal. ... but we are working illegally. We are not registered anywhere. It suits us. It suits the people who hire us. Neither us nor them pay any taxes. We keep a low profile in Poland and we are not distinguishable from hundreds of other building brigades in Warsaw. I am fluent tin Polish, so it is difficult to single me out from the Poles.

In Poland the unskilled workers were mainly from Ukraine and Russia and the women worked as private domestic housekeepers, the men in construction. Many people held two jobs and combined working with trading. In Poland there were a number of professional and middle class migrants. Some middle class migrants were able to develop good businesses or

find good jobs in Poland, mostly in the computing and communications industries - i.e. the new industries which are developing there. The next respondent is an example of this.

There was also a category of "post modern" migrants. These are people who migrate for adventure rather than for necessity and who are often living on money sent from home, rather than sending money home, although they were not so numerous as in Prague.

Although many workers were illegal in Poland, many argued that they preferred it that way because they did not have to pay tax and social insurance. This seemed to be an accepted and normal thing to do:

> *You work illegally. What is needed to legalise your status?*
>
> I haven't been very interested in this question. I just know that a work visa should be arranged, a contract between employer and worker is signed. But the owner of small firms don't make such arrangements. It's not advantageous for us either. A foreigner who stays in Warsaw has to be registered at his address. One can be fined for failing to do so. But I don't visit places where police raid from time to time. Those places are mainly market grounds and railway stations at night.

They did not therefore seem to want to legalise their status and were not particularly worried about the police - they went about their lives in a normal way. Some illegal migrants were reluctant to return home in case they had difficulties with re-entering Poland.

Our research indicated that Poland was a country where informal work was unofficially tolerated and where visitors from the Former Soviet Union were more welcomed than in other buffer zone countries. This is confirmed also by quantitative survey research (Haerpfer & Wallace, 1997). The long border with the various countries of the former Soviet Union and the many border changes and population transfers which have taken place between Poland her Eastern neighbours mean that there are many networks and ties which cross the borders.

b. Slovakia

Slovakia had an unemployment rate of 12.8% at the end of 1995 (WIIW (Wiener Institut für Internationale Wirtschaftsvergleich, 1996a) and does not have a high demand for foreign workers. In 1995 there were officially 2357 foreigners registered and these lived mostly in Bratislava, Kosice and Bardejov. Of these, the majority (429) were Ukrainians and 328 Polish. There were in addition 228 American citizens (mostly teachers of English) and 186 from the former Yugoslavia.

The workers in Bardejov are officially employed in a shoe making factory, and one of our respondents was amongst them, but there were also Ukrainian sports instructors. In Kosice as steel works officially employed some Ukrainians too. The legally employed workers in Bardejov actually earned somewhat less than the illegally employed building workers.

However, these figures significantly underestimate the real numbers. Only two of our workers in Slovakia had official registration permits; most were working illegally. The majority of our respondents were Ukrainians who worked in construction firms whilst their families remained in Ukraine. There are in fact long historical ties between Transcarpathia, where most of them came from, and Slovakia.

Most of this work is organised through middlemen (known as clients") who recruit workers in Ukraine and take half their wages as payment. They never paid workers more than 32 Kr per hour ($1.2) and in addition arranged accommodation for them. The accommodation was quite wretched as they usually stayed in barracks with one washroom/toilet for 50 people, 5 people per room sleeping on mattresses with no pillows or blankets, no cooking facilities except for a burner in the room. Men and women were put together, although the majority of employees were men. The workers preferred usually to take only a small amount of spending money for their stay and to collect the bulk of their salary at the end of their stay. The middlemen profited from this by getting interest from the bank and in some cases did not pay the workers at all or only part of their salaries. Given their illegal status, the workers could do nothing about this.

Migrant workers in Slovakia were in the worst conditions of all the workers found in the research. They were afraid of leaving their barracks in case of being stopped by the police and then having to pay a fine or be deported (in which case they would lose their pay). What they feared most was receiving a stamp in their passport which would prevent them from travelling abroad. They claimed that the police could spot them immediately form their appearance and would ask for papers. One building worker put it this way:

> *Why are whispering? Are you afraid of someone? Did you do something wrong in Slovakia?*
>
> I did not violate anything and did not do anything wrong here in Slovakia. But I am not sure that the Slovak police won"t stop me and ask the reason I am here. I cannot explain anything to them if they do not want to listen.. I do not have money to bribe them in order to let me go...I heard from others that once they get their hands on you, they treat you like a criminal, or you have to pay a fortune to get yourself freed.....I am afraid of my own shadow. Soon I will no longer think of myself as a human being. Our independent Ukraine has shamed us. The Slovak Republic is much poorer than Ukraine but they treat us badly.

Usually workers stayed for about 2 months and then went home. At the border they would have to pay a fine for outstaying their voucher period which was for one month only (this fine was usually between $10 and $30).

In a quantitative study of public attitudes to migrants related to this project, Slovaks were found to be the most hostile and concerned about migration even though the numbers of migrants are the lowest of all the buffer zone countries (Haerpfer & Wallace, 1997). Slovakia had relatively few migrant workers, or indeed any kind of migrants, but in public opinion surveys they felt the considerably threatened by the presense of foreigners. Foreign investment has been relatively low in Slovakia, which may account for the small numbers of foreign workers, but it also seemed as though there was little unofficial or official tolerance of migrant workers.

c. Hungary

Hungary had an unemployment rate of 10.31% at the end of 1995 (WIIW (Wiener Institut für Internationale Wirtschaftsvergleich, 1996a) but had had the experience of very large numbers of migrants after the opening of the borders in 1989 and as a result of the war in former-Yugoslavia to the south. Most of the immigrants to Hungary come from Romania. At the end of 1995, the majority of work permits (46.7%) were for Romanians, but this had sunk from 82.7% in 1990. Other categories of official workers were Poles (6.6%), Chinese (4.3%), former Yugoslav (6.9%) and former Soviet(12.6%). The majority of these were manual workers (66%) although the share of non-manual workers has increased since 1990 (Sources OMK, Hungarian Labour Market Information Centre).

However, our research showed that a significant sub-fraction of these were Hungarians from Romania who formed a very distinctive group. They were mostly young, male and middle class with some Higher Education. Their strategy was often to undertake another Higher Education course in Hungary and to remain in Hungary to become Hungarian citizens and this reflects a relatively high rate of naturalisation in Hungary, but it has become more difficult for ethnic Hungarians to naturalise since 1993. This group were able to speak the language fluently already and saw many advantages to being in a place which they regarded as having a higher cultural level (at least for Hungarians) than Romania. Furthermore, they were no longer in the position of a national minority. Within a few years they lost their regional accents and were more or less assimilated as Hungarians. This group usually had many friends in Hungary, had visited often and found jobs through the labour exchange or the newspaper. They took advantage of scholarships which were available to them. Many of them were therefore students and working at the same time. Usually, whatever their specialisms were previously in Romania, they moved towards computing and communications studies in Hungary and were able to find good jobs as a result. They had little interest in going back to Romania especially since many of their friends had also emigrated.

The difference between these and other Romanians can be illustrated by the case of one couple where the Hungarian-Romanian woman had found a good job with an international company in Budapest and dragged her reluctant Romanian husband with her. He claimed that he could earn much more in Romania repairing computers and was not very happy in Hungary. However, Hars (Hars, 1997) more systematic study of the Hungarian labour market found most Hungarian Romanians in unskilled jobs, so our sample was probably biased.

Romanian-Romanian nationals mostly worked in unskilled jobs, on construction or in agriculture as did Ukrainians. They often supplemented their income with trading. The main problem for other nationalities working in Hungary was the language barrier, since Hungarian does not resemble any Slavic language and is difficult to learn. Many had to do jobs where the language was not a barrier to them, which limited what they could do. In international organisations, knowing the local language was no particular advantage because the lingua franca was usually English, even if the organisation itself had no connections with an English-speaking country. The people in such organisations felt themselves to be in a cosmopolitan environment and at no disadvantage and generally earned higher salaries than the native population.

The illegal workers were normally allowed to stay one month as "tourists". Rather than pay a fine, many of them would go home across the border at the end of the month and then come back with a new stamp in their passport or a new voucher and this way avoided being seen as illegal workers.

The presence of migrant workers in Hungary can be explained partly by the historical links of Hungary with its own ethnic minorities in Romania, Slovenia and Serbia. However, there has also been a long and partially tolerated (or at least recognised) traditional of informal economic activities into which migrant workers are absorbed. Western investment per head has been highest of all in Hungary which may also have drawn in workers at different levels of the labour market.

d. The Czech Republic

Most of our respondents were from the Czech Republic, but this also seemed to be the country which attracted the majority of migrant workers. Although Ukrainian building workers tend to head in large numbers for the Czech Republic, and especially Prague (Drbohlav, 1996), there were also opportunities for other kinds of workers. The huge influx of tourists (Prague was one of the top European tourist destinations in the early 1990s, attracting some 60 million visitors per year) meant that many services for tourists also had to be developed. Therefore, hotels, shops, tourist kiosks, restaurants, night-clubs and bars (including sex tourist industries) all sprang up around this time and offered opportunities for foreign workers. These industries not only offered low paid, casual work of the kind which is often performed

by secondary labour market migrant workers, but also jobs where speaking other languages apart from Czech was a distinct advantage. These areas offered opportunities for entrepreneurship as migrants were able to establish businesses which catered for tourists and foreign businesses or foreign residents. Thus, there is an English speaking community with their own newspapers and also a Russian speaking community which had their own facilities. Foreigners were not excluded from these new sectors of business, because they had not yet become dominated by natives, and with more or less full employment, native workers also had less incentive to change jobs or to change sectors.

Prague was in a rather unusual situation of having become a very fashionable destination for post-modern migrants and hence hosted a large American community. However, the boom conditions in the Czech Republic of the early 1990s in that country and the complete underdevelopment of the service sector compared with Poland or Hungary, also accounted for its attractions for migrant workers. However, the authorities were not very tolerant of illegal working arrangements and "slave markets" for instance, were constantly being moved. In the Czech Republic there was a strong and self-conscious attempt to regularise informal migrant work.

What kind of labour market for migrant workers?

From the preceding data it is now possible to draw together various points about the characteristics of migrant workers in the post-communist buffer zone labour markets.

Firstly, we could say that the jobs of migrant workers are very dissimilar to the jobs of native workers. Migrant workers work almost exclusively in the private sector, whereas the public sector is the dominant one for native workers. Also, migrant workers work mostly in small firms, often very small firms. The forms of recruitment in these firms, as well as the styles of labour management tend to be informal rather than formal ones, reflecting the fact that many jobs are partially or wholly illegal.

Secondly, like in other countries, the migrant workers work in sectors of the economy where jobs are insecure and unstable. Many of these are in manual work, the classic migrant jobs such as construction, tourism and catering. However, following the trend towards flexibilisation in the labour market we can find many insecure jobs also in the white collar and professional sectors, where migrants work too. Not all of these jobs could be described as secondary labour market - rather they are a flexible sector within the primary labour market. These sectors have been expanding and offer often well paid, if insecure, jobs which are less attractive to locals than to foreigners. Therefore, rather than primary and secondary sector as postulated by Doeringer and Piore (Doeringer & Piore, 1971), it would be better to talk about the flexible and inflexible sectors. In many countries it is argued that the flexible sector has

become larger relative to the inflexible sector (Amin, 1994) These are in particularly stark contrast in post-communist labour markets since many of the traditional large industries are particularly inflexible and jobs are protected by unions and organised interests.

Thirdly, the majority of migrant workers are young and either single or have left their families behind. They are therefore temporary in their orientation and this is exacerbated by a large number of displaced persons from areas affected by war or economic collapse. Many are uncertain about their future and would like to go home or go on to other countries. This may therefore be a transient population characterised better by mobility than by migration. Their final destinations are not obvious at present. Those with families to support tend to travel backwards and forwards. However, Drbohlav (Drbohlav, 1996) and others have argued that this may be only the first phase of a wave of migration which may later prove more permanent. Temporary guest workers have a tendency to become longer term residents with time (Piore, 1979) which is why Okolski calls this "incomplete migration".

Fourthly, we could argue that migrants work in some of the most dynamic and expanding parts of the post-communist economies. They find distinct niches in the labour market at all levels, where they do not necessarily compete with natives: rather these niches are in new sectors which did not previously exist. These include sectors such as communications, business, tourism. Furthermore, the movement of capital investment to the buffer zone involves not only importing professional workers (at least on a temporary basis) but also employing other kinds of foreigners in the buffer zone. Many of the migrant workers were themselves employed by foreign firms, presumably because native workers were unable to develop strategies of exclusion in new firms; foreign capital brought with it foreign workers.

Thus, migrant workers in buffer zone countries appear to fill specific sectors of the labour market, ones in the private sector and ones which are expanding under contemporary conditions of exposure to market capitalism.

Conclusions: labour migration

To return to our first models of labour migration, we could conclude that in the Central European buffer zone, the tradition of East-West migration whereby workers were drawn from the under-developed rural hinterland into the industrialising areas (Castles & Kosack, 1973) is no longer appropriate without some modification. Rather, it was the de-industrialisation of much of Eastern Europe which left a surplus of workers and they were drawn by service sector employment more than by industrial employment towards western and central Europe. This reflects a new phase of capitalist globalisation.

Many of the "push" and "pull" factors on both sides of the labour market have been described along with their particular attributes in different central European countries. However, I have also tried to explore the more analytical models of the segmented labour market and "family economics" model along with its more sociological variant of household strategies. Rather than there being a secondary and primary labour market sector, with migrant workers found in the latter, we have a flexible and inflexible sector, with migrants found in the former. These sectors reflect tendencies towards flexibilisation and post-Fordism generally as Rudolph (Rudolph, 1997) has argued since the inflexibility in the main employment sectors in the buffer zone countries and more developed European countries can be displaced onto the flexible sector in the buffer zone. Employers can avoid labour legislation in their own countries by setting up factories or sub-contracting services to the buffer zone. Furthermore, the areas where migrant workers work reflect the expansion of the service sector generally, which has been particularly dramatic in the buffer zone countries.

Both the secondary labour market model and the household economics model could be applied to particular groups of workers, but not to all groups of workers. In order to provide a complete explanation of labour migration in the Central European buffer zone, we have to bring in non-economic motivations such as the historical and cultural ties which actors in the labour market might have and in some cases hedonistic or life-stage goals which are individualistic rather than tied to household strategies. In addition, we need to take into account the different forms of political and legislative control of labour migration introduced in different countries and the way in which this may or may not be implemented in different contexts.

The post-communist labour market has specific gaps in expanding areas, so that even in spite of high unemployment there are opportunities for migrant workers, both at the bottom of the labour market in the form of casualised labour, but also elsewhere in the labour market for those with language or new technology skills. Social capital is particularly important for the semi-formalised or wholly illegal engagement of foreign workers and this tends to reinforce the tendency towards particular sectors being dominated by particular ethnic groups. However, since the labour market is very dynamic, this may not become a continuing feature.

I have argued that the situation of migrant workers in the buffer zone countries reflects the increasing mobility of people, capital and goods and also new flows of information from East to West and from West to East. This should be seen in terms of mobility rather than migration and not all of it can be explained by economic arguments.

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