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Morawska, Ewa

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East European Westbound Income-Seeking Migrants: Some Unwelcome Effects on Sender- and Receiver-Societies

(A Report on a Study in Progress)

Ewa Morawska
University of Essex

Abstract

This report on a study in progress examines some thus far uninvestigated aspects of Europe's post-1989 transformation and, specifically, developments related to greatly increased Westbound work-related migration of East Europeans. It is informed by three arguments. First, that East European, especially low-skilled, migrants' income-seeking sojourns in the West sustain or even reenergize some of the entrenched mindsets and coping practices formed under the previous regime and known as the *homo sovieticus* or beat-the-system/bend-the-law syndrome as the effective strategy of economic action in the new situation. Second, that as East European (im)migrants negotiate the circumstances they encounter abroad in the pursuit of the purposes by engaging receiver-society native residents and institutions, their old-regime practices and orientations become integrated over time into the local cultural and social_relational patterns in the West European countries where they settle. And third, that as East European income-seeking migrants travelling to the West return to their home-country localities, they transplant there their hands-on experience of the daily operation of capitalism acquired through its everyday "participant observation" during their Western sojourns. As they do this, they re-implant in their home-country local societies the old-regime *homo sovieticus* coping strategy now enhanced as effective tools in negotiating the capitalist system.

Keywords

income-seeking East European migrants in the West, *homo sovieticus*, coping strategies, two-way transplanation

This is a report on a study in progress which examines some thus far uninvestigated aspects of post-1989 Europe's transformation and, specifically, developments related to greatly increased Westbound work-related migration of East Europeans. The project consists of two phases. Its first part has had a twofold focus: on the effects of East European migrants' post-1989 work-seeking sojourns in West European countries on their orientations and practices in pursuing the goals that make them seek income abroad, and on the impact of these coping strategies on receiver-society native-born citizens and institutions involved in dealings with the migrants. The initial (not yet complete) investigation related to this phase of the study has been conducted in 2002-04 in Berlin, Germany and Philadelphia, U.S.A., and a pilot study focused on the same group in London, Great Britain was executed in the summer of 2006. Depending on the availability of funding, I consider extending this part of the project to include Polish income-seeking sojourners in Rome, Italy. After the completion of the first phase of the study (planned for the summer of 2009), I intend to conduct a follow-up investigation of the impact the returning migrants have on preferred strategies of economic action and political culture in their (selected) home-country localities.

The study is informed by a set of two arguments. I argue, first, that East European, especially low-skilled migrants' income-seeking sojourns in the West sustain or even reenergize some of the entrenched mindsets and coping practices formed under the previous regime and known as the *homo sovieticus* syndrome as effective strategies of economic action in the new situation. In particular, two integral elements of this old-regime "cultural kit" (Swidler 1986) formed under centralized political management combined with the notorious inefficiency of the state-socialist economies in providing and distributing consumer goods, have proven expedient in negotiating "from below" postindustrial capitalist economy based on the decentralized, flexible production of consumer services in areas/sectors un(der)regulated by legal-institutional frameworks. They are, first, a popular entrepreneurial spirit of the opportunistic-*debrouillard* (rather than modern-rational) kind based on an "unofficial" (informal/extra-legal) means of making everyday life possible—in this case, to earn/save as much money as possible to be taken home--and turning this behaviour into the social norm. Second and related is accustomed reliance on patronage and informal networks, rather than on individual skills and formal infrastructure. (On these definitional components of the *homo sovieticus* syndrome and its everyday operation, see Los 1990, Schopflin 1995; Grossman 1989; Wedel 1986.)

Of particular concern here is the claim concerning the impact of East European work-seeking migrants on the receiver, Western societies. It holds that as East European (im)migrants negotiate the circumstances they encounter abroad in the pursuit of the purposes by engaging receiver-society native residents and institutions, their old-regime practices and orientations become integrated over time into the local cultural and social relational patterns in the West European countries where they settle.

The second, related argument informing my study—a hypothesis, more precisely, as I have not yet conducted this part of the investigation-- is that as East European temporary income-seeking migrants travelling to the West return to their home-country localities, they transplant there their hands-on experience of the daily operation of capitalism acquired through its everyday "participant observation" during their Western sojourns. As they do this, they re-implant in their home-country local societies the old-regime *homo sovieticus* coping strategies now enhanced as effective tools in negotiating the capitalist system.

The project's scholarly contributions are threefold. The first two, more specific, are each related to the particular claim/hypothesis informing the investigation. Regarding the impact of coping strategies East European income-seeking migrants use to negotiate their West European sojourns on the receiver-societies' native residents, the study shifts the near-exclusive attention of immigration specialists from the alteration of new arrivals' identities, concerns, and commitments in the process of their integration into the host society, to the transformation of the latter under the influence of (im)migrants' everyday participation therein. At a more general sociological level, an investigation of the forms and contexts of a transplantation through the transnational work-related migration of people of habituated strategies of action from one region to another provides an empirical illustration of *glocalization*--the process of mixing and blending of global, regional, and local phenomena which, although convincingly defended theoretically, has thus far been little studied in its actual embodiments (Robertson 1994; Featherstone 1995). In this particular instance, the expected glocalization process is even more intriguing because it occurs in a direction contrary to that taken for granted: from East to West Europe or against the flow of the major economic and political influences on this Continent during the last decade and a half.

The expected contribution of the second part of the study consists, too, of its shifting the customary focus of scholars' attention to the un(der)investigated aspects of the phenomena they research, here, the post-1989 transformation of Eastern Europe. Since the collapse of the Soviet communist regime, the Western model of liberal democratic capitalism has been the end goal and the evaluative reference framework for the post-communist transformation in East Europe. In particular, it has been expected that the incorporation of post-communist countries into the European Union and the accompanying economic and political reforms will debilitate the old-regime *Weltanschauungen* and, of special concern in this project, that among this transformation's many agents, more than 2 million East European work-seeking migrants travelling to the West every year will contribute to the transition to democratic capitalism of their home societies by providing a "demonstration effect" of its working through their practical experience. Without denying some evident positive effects of East Europeans' post-1989 Westbound migrations (see the final section), this study highlights the other, less attractive side of the process.

The third contribution of the study has the most general scope, and as such lies beyond the purview of this paper. I nevertheless note it here. Although this project focuses on a particular group and a specific region--East European migrants seeking work in the western parts of the Continent and returning home--its implications concern, I believe, a much larger population and much larger parts of the world. The beat-the-system/bend-the-law coping strategies of which the *homo sovieticus* syndrome is a time- and place-specific subvariety, is, I would argue, a weapon of the poor and the disempowered across the globe. Their ingenuous appropriation of the gaps and loopholes in the inimical societal surroundings represents what Robert Merton (1968) calls structurally induced "innovative" behaviour--going around the rules in order to achieve (culturally approved) objectives by those whose opportunities are structurally constrained from within their own societies and by the (semi-)peripheral position of their countries/regions in the world-system. The rapid globalization of the contemporary world which mass international migrations are at the same time a product of and an important contributor to, unavoidably transplants this "weapon" with the arriving income-seeking migrants to highly developed core countries where the conditions of postindustrial capitalism and spreading immigration restrictions help it to thrive and, then, it gets reimplanted into the sender countries with the ebb and flow of travelling migrants.

The remainder of this report consists of three sections. The first and longest, because I have nearly completed research on the issues it involves, presents the features of East European post-1989 work-seeking migrants' experience with western capitalism which encourage them to use their habituated beat-the-system/bend-the-law coping strategies as they pursue their goals in West European receiver countries. The second section identifies in a summary fashion—I am still collecting the pertinent data and working out their interpretations--the main effects of the strategies East European income-seeking migrants use as they seek the realization of the purposes that brought them to the West on the receiver-societies' native residents and local institutions. In the last section I note the observations regarding the impact of returned East European migrants on their home-country localities gathered from the available studies and media reports, with special attention to the “unwelcome” aspects of these effects.

East European Post-1989 Income-Seeking Migrants' Experience with Western Capitalism

Although the collapse of the Soviet regime in Eastern Europe opened the door for the accelerated incorporation of that region into the global system, the long-term processes of capitalist *perestroika* to overhaul and bring up to date unproductive state-socialist economies have not thus far diminished the long-standing gap in economic development between the eastern and western parts of the continent. Measured by per capita GNP, the economic performance of East Central Europe in 2004 was only about 40 percent of that of Western Europe and the United States combined (a minimal improvement since 1910 when it was 30 percent), whereas the ratio of (average) wages between these two parts of the world was 1:5 to 10 (in 1910 it was 1:4-6). (Berend 1996; Chirot 1989; Berend and Ranki 1982; Perczynski et al. 2004; International Labour Office 2000, 2005; Statistical Yearbooks 2000,2005: Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia,Romania, Bulgaria).

On the receiver side, the core Western economies have already nearly completed what the post-communist ones have only begun, that is, postindustrial restructuring, or a shift to short-term production of services based on small and versatile companies, and the accompanying rapid growth of an informal sector offering variable, usually substandard, wages and no employment security, and unattached to the legal-institutional structures of the fiscal and welfare systems. (On the economic restructuring of core economies, see Piore and Sabel 1987; Portes, Castells, and Benton 1989; Sassen 1991; on the related development of the informal labour markets in member-countries of the European Union, see Hjarno 2003.) Work-seeking migrants from (semi-)peripheral SE parts of the world, including members of the lower echelons of the socioeconomic structures of EU new member-states, have provided the bulk of the labour force in Western informal economies. At the same time and important, the postindustrial transformation of core Western economies has greatly increased the demand for a highly skilled workforce which well-educated but poorly paid members of (semi-)peripheral societies, including middle- and upper-level white-collar employees in the “transitioning” economies of EU new member-states have been eager to take advantage of. Rapid advances in global transportation and communication technologies; the diffusion via global media of the titillating images of material affluence in the core, Western parts of the world, and, important, political facilitation of exit and entry on both East and West European sides of the international migration circuits; and the allowance of official employment for work-seeking migrant-citizens citizens of selected new EU member-states by some receiver-country governments have provided additional enticements for transnational travels.

There have been two common types of post-1989/90 income-seeking East-West international migrations (hereafter E-W). One of them, *Arbeitstouristen* or quasi-tourists who remain abroad and engage in work without appropriate immigration documents, has been represented by migrants from countries most recently admitted to the European Union (Bulgaria and Rumania), and also increasingly Ukraine whose citizens are not (yet) granted official permission to undertake gainful employment in Western Europe, and also work-seeking travellers from the earlier admitted East Central European countries whom the receiver governments (Germany, Austria) have not granted such privilege. The other kind are East Central European migrant-citizens of EU member-states whose shorter or longer working sojourns in the western part of the Continent are officially permitted by receiver-society governments such as Great Britain, Ireland, Sweden, Spain and Italy. (The latter destinations are now chosen by a majority, about 55 percent, of the total number of East Central European work-seeking migrants to the West –after Kepinska 2007.)

The “typical” sociodemographic profile of E-W *Arbeitstouristen* is a slight prevalence of men over women, low education and skills in manual, lower-level service, and agricultural work, high incidence of un(der)employment, and primarily small-town and countryside home-country residence. This group also contains some white-collar workers, especially Polish and, in much lesser numbers, Czech and Slovak women, who travel to the neighbouring western countries to earn additional income. The majority of E-W male tourist-workers find employment in construction, agriculture, and in a wide variety of service trades. Women on tourist visas without work permits are commonly occupied in domestic services (as maids and housekeepers, babysitters, caregivers to the elderly), as seamstresses in “underground” garment shops, and, in increasing numbers especially in Germany, Austria, and Scandinavia in West, and in Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic in East Central Europe, as prostitutes. “Staffed” by young and middle-aged (often married) women, *Prostitutiontourismus* takes the form of shuttle travels in the border regions. Clearly conducive to this income-earning activity has been a high-rate of female unemployment along the borders between East Central European countries and their Western neighbours. (Information about migrants employment abroad from Ivakhniouk and Iontsev 2005; Antoniewski 2002; Pyrozkhov 2001; Iglicka 2003; Jazwinska and Okolski 2001; Okolski 2004; Slany 2005; Hjarno 2003; Morokvasic 2004; Bunda 2006a, 2006b; Kaczmarczyk 2006; Fihel and Pietka 2007; Milewski and Ruszczak-Zbikowska 2008.)

Undocumented political status of a large number of tourist-workers who overstay their permitted (3 months) visitor sojourns and undertake unauthorized work, and their employment in the informal sectors of economy detached from the “official” legal and institutional infrastructures of the receiver societies, almost naturally mobilize migrants’ accustomed coping strategies habituated under the communist regime. As indicated by my fieldwork in Berlin (the findings in Philadelphia have been similar), particularly useful in negotiating their situations turn out to be beat-the-system/bend-the-law or working-the-system-by-going-around-it modes of operation in the pursuit of desired purposes, and the reliance on *dojscia*, connections, and *kombinacje*, unofficial or shady arrangements as in wheeling and dealing (rather than on individual skills and formal infrastructure).

In doing so, E-W migrants ingeniously appropriate openings and loopholes in the receiving societies. Three kinds of *dojscia* or connections in trying to “arrange” illicit employment, working conditions, and remuneration abroad have been most popular among *Arbeitstouristen*. First are family and friends, either in the home or the destination country. (Particularly “rich” in the kin-and-acquaintance resource are Poles and also

Hungarians, Czechs, Lithuanians, and Ukrainians whose national groups participated en masse in turn-of-the-twentieth-century westbound economic migrations and then in political exoduses during the post-World War II era.) "A friend's uncle lived [...] in Stuttgart. He invited me to come; he told me he had some work for me. So I left for Stuttgart." This Polish woman worked first as a kitchen helper in a restaurant in an ethnic community and then, recommended by an acquaintance, in a team of fellow nationals (all undocumented like herself) cleaning offices at night, a much more exerting job that, nevertheless, paid better. (Information from Morawska 2003; for similar statements indicating the importance of in-group social support networks in emigres' work-seeking pursuits, see Jazwinska and Okolski 2001; Siewiera 1998; Karpiuk 1997; Poplawski 2002; Morawska 2002, 2001; Korczynska 2003; Koscic and Trandafyllidou 2004; Bunda 2006a, 2006b; *Bye, By Poland*-emigres blog.)

Ethnic parishes and foreign-language newspapers in the host country have also served as a popular source of employment information, contacts, and references for *Arbeitstouristen*, both undocumented migrants and those authorized to undertake employment. "Work wanted" and "seeking workers" ads are placed on parochial announcement boards in Berlin and in Polish-language papers in that city; "Seeking two experienced carpenters. Call evenings at...", "Waitress for a cafe needed. German not required," "Seamstress seeking work. Does not have to be in my profession...", "I'll buy work for a man..." Such announcements are checked and "job contracts" negotiated and signed after mass on Sundays or in bars frequented by immigrants in the neighborhood. If not family members or friends, fellow nationals from the neighborhood, a local bar, or an ethnic parish serve as paid intermediaries-referees, *posrednicy*, in these contacts and negotiations. "Good references," whether from acquaintances or from *posrednicy*, are "the key for finding a good job". (Quotes from an announcement board in a Polish church in Berlin, and this author's interviews with Polish *Arbeitstouristen* in that city. See also Mydel and Fassmann 1997; Jazwinska and Okolski 2001; Siewiera 1998; Karpiuk 1997; Sipaviciene 1999; *Bye, Bye Poland*—émigré blog, for similar observations about E-W undocumented migrant-workers' coping strategies in other European cities.)

The presence in the destination localities abroad of established colonies of fellow nationals and, among them, of large numbers of fellow undocumented migrants effectively using --and openly talking about--well-tested resources to "beat the system" in pursuit of their objectives reproduces across the border the familiar home-country ambiance of crony opportunism and *debrouillard* entrepreneurship. Host native employers have collaborated in sustaining these orientations. Direct connections to host-country native employers have been the third most common *dojscia* and way to arrange illegal work for *Arbeitstouristen* from the East. The products of and at the same time contributors to the expansion of informal economies in the migration-receiving countries, native employers have been actively seeking cheap and dispensable labour for construction work, personal services, and small shops. When satisfied with the performance of their workers, those employers often form an informal hiring network on their own as they recommend "their" *Arbeitstouristen* and, upon request, their fellow nationals, to friends and acquaintances in need of repairmen, carpenters, waiters and waitresses, seamstresses, babysitters, and so on (from this author's fieldwork in Berlin; see also Korys and Antoniewski 2005; Jazwinska and Okolski 2001; Gesemann 2001; Miera 1997; Mydel and Fassmann 1997; Karpiuk 1997; Siewiera 1998; Elrick and Lewandowska 2008.)

Dojscia and *kombinacje* are the sine qua non strategies for East European migrant tourist-workers not only to find employment abroad but, as importantly, to "organize" a better job somewhere else or to arrange for a replacement when the time comes to return home.

Such an arrangement can be done either by a personal agreement with a friend to whom later a reciprocal "favor" will be due or, in a more "businesslike" way (although still informally), by selling it to someone else for *odstepne*, an agreed-on sum of money to be paid upon assumption of the position. Thus, a tourist-worker can maintain the right connections for the next sojourn. In all these *kombinacje*, as several E-W migrants interviewed in this project pointed out, not the law or the "real contract" but mutual trust, "sticking by one's word" for fair play or from the fear of group ostracism, is of crucial importance.

The structural circumstances of E-W *Arbeitstouristen's* situation in the receiver countries--their undocumented political status and confinement to the informal labour market resulting therefrom--provide the evident "contextual" explanation for their reliance on habituated beat-the-system/bend-the-law coping strategies in their pursuit of the purposes that made them migrate abroad after work. Much more intriguing is the continued use of similar negotiating tools by a large proportion of East Central European migrant workers who can legally undertake employment in westernmore EU countries which permit it. My observations in this matter come from the earlier-noted pilot study in London. Some students of Polish income-seeking migrants in Great Britain, the largest group of East Central European travellers, argue that the legalization in that country of new EU member-states citizens' employment and welfare entitlements has led to a replacement of migrants' accustomed reliance on informal *dojscia* and *kombinacje* with public and formalised forms of searching for housing and employment, such as foreign- and English-language newspapers, websites, and radio station programmes (Garapich 2008). I agree that the latter forms are probably on the rise among East Central European work-seeking migrants negotiating their situations in countries which grant them official access to employment, especially among higher-skilled people. I do not, however, perceive migrants' reliance on formal vs. informal support networks as alternative, but, rather, as a complementary coping strategies.

The circumstances facilitating continued reliance on crony *debrouillard* strategies in negotiating their employment in the receiver-country by "legitimate" E-W migrant-workers exist on the side of the employees and the employers. The former include inability to speak English by a large number of East European income-seekers in London (and elsewhere across the UK), especially in the low-educated group, and the presence in the city of a sizeable population of earlier-arrived and better-established fellow nationals with their own churches, ethnic associations and newspapers, small shops and service establishments which provide a ready informal support infrastructure for the newcomers who "naturally" seek from it assistance in the realization of their goals.

On their side, native (British) employers, such as small-scale entrepreneurs in a variety of services (particularly construction, food services, and "back-stage" restaurant work, and private citizens seeking plumbing, renovations, and repair as well as cleaners and baby-sitters for their homes are eager to employ workers with whom they can negotiate reimbursement and who are willing to accept wages below the UK national average which still translates into large earnings in their home-country currency. As I was reading board announcements at one of the Polish parishes in London in the summer of 2006, I was approached by a man who asked me in a clearly British accent whether I would be interested myself or knew somebody who would "help" in his small shoe and watch repair shop as a cashier. Before declining his offer I asked how much he was prepared to pay for this service: the amount he quoted was slightly more than two-thirds of the average remuneration for native cashiers in London's service establishments (I checked). I have no reason to doubt this was not an isolated instance of such informal hiring practices of

migrant-workers at subminimum wages by native employers. More interestingly, although most of the recruitment proceeds through formal job advertisement channels (accessible also on the web to interested candidates in East Europe), the hiring for lower-level positions in large retail chains has not uncommonly, according to my London respondents, relied also on informal *dojscia* provided by the already-employed migrant workers who are told about forthcoming openings which have to be filled. The importance of informal social interactions or weak ties, often involving “unofficial” positive or negative recommendations conveyed by mouth in private interactions, in hiring high-skilled personnel has been reported among Hungarian and Romanian professionals seeking employment in West European companies (Csedo 2008).

I expect this migrant-native collaboration in applying unofficial “under-the-table” forms of negotiating employment in the receiver-society labour market to be more widespread and the resulting reenergizing effects on E-W post-1989 income-seeking migrants’ habituated practices of the *homo sovieticus* provenance more pronounced in countries such as Italy—the country I would like to extend my study for the comparative insights it may provide—whose economy is considerably more “informalized” and whose popular orientations towards the system of laws regulating the operation of the labour market more nonchalant than the respective features in Great Britain and Germany. (On the informal economy in Italy with a particular focus on (im)migrants’ participation in this sector of the labour market, see Ambrosini 2005; D’Ottavio 2005.)

The Impact of E-W Migrants’ Crony-Debrouillard Coping Strategies on Receiver-Society Native Citizens and Institutions

I have already almost completed the collection of information in Berlin on the impact on the local receiver society of *crony-debrouillard* strategies used by E-W work-seeking migrants in negotiating their situations while abroad. The initial evidence I have gathered in London suggests a similar tendency. The Berlin findings seem particularly ironic considering a long-standing Prussian tradition in that region of the *Hochachtung fur das Recht*, high respect for the law. I summarize below the main findings of this part of the study in two points.

One impact of the reciprocal engagements of E-W work-seeking migrants and their Western employers who rely on informal and often illegal *dosjcia* and *kombinacje* in obtaining/offering employment has been the “normalization” of such practices in the pursuits of native citizens of West European receiver societies. A natural impulse of capitalists, also the smallest ones, is to lower the costs of their operations—in the case considered here primarily wages paid to employees, and often also taxes and insurance costs paid to the state. In the era of the postindustrial decentralized economy whose operation is based on the bottom-line principle and with a continuous supply of a cheap(er) and willing foreign workforce, this rational preference of Western employers turns into the routine everyday practice. First sought by E-W work-seeking migrants or, more commonly, by their better established fellow-national mediators, Western employers then begin to seek such workforce themselves, thus unselfreflexively engaging bend-the-law methods of hiring and remunerating.

While the above development concerns the informal-sphere behaviour of the receiver-societies’ citizens engaging East Europeans residing in their countries, the other effect of the latter’s collaboration with representatives of the receiver societies has involved institutional practices. I observed particularly telling instances of a corruption

of receiver-country institutional norms of behaviour during my investigation of the adaptation of Russian Jews in Berlin in 2003. A large, more than 35,000-strong, Russian Jewish population resided in that city in the year 2000, lured by the German government's granting Jewish settlers permanent residence, medical care, housing, old-age pensions, and substantial resettlement aid.

As I visited different municipal offices in Berlin to find out what kind of assistance and on what terms was offered to the émigrés, I noticed ubiquitous decorative objects of evidently Russian provenance on the officials' desks, shelves, even (amber jewelry) on women's necks and wrists. I enquired about it among my Russian Jewish respondents. "We needed an apartment (doctor, school for the children) in a better neighborhood (hospital, educational district), so, just as a token of our gratitude, I handed in this...." were the typical replies. The exchange of gifts for the sympathetic attention of persons employed in an official capacity was an integral element of building *dojscia* and arranging *kombinacje* to access goods and services notoriously in short supply under the communist regime (I did it myself like everybody else). I did not dare to ask municipal officials Berlin where their ornaments came from and, especially, if they realized that by accepting these innocent-looking gadgets they were being drawn into the *homo sovieticus* game of potlatch. I do not believe they did.

I have thus far located only a couple of instances of similar, and apparently as effective, manipulation of native officials by E-W work-seeking migrants in London. An example is a department manager in a large London store who, as I was told by a young Polish woman trying to find a job for her good friend still at home, was offered—and accepted—a bottle of Polish schnapps "especially brewed by my brother" to "express my appreciation for your looking into a possibility" of hiring extra help in the bakery division.

The Effects of E-W Migrants' Income-seeking Travels on Their Home-Country Transformation

There is no doubt that the increased work-seeking migrations of East Europeans to Western European countries in the post-1989 era have had several positive effects on their local home societies. Most commonly identified among such have been large amounts of monies coming into migrants' communities and the accompanying emergence of a new middle-class, visible improvements in the appearance of houses/apartments and their residents, and welcome transfers of Western patterns of material culture and lifestyles to the East. The following description of the small town of Siemiatycze in northeastern Poland, one of the active *Arbeits tourismus* centers in that region, is fairly typical of other reports: "The very appearance of Siemiatycze shows the improvement. The architecture is becoming prettier. By looking at the houses one notices not only practical but also esthetic elements. These are no more simple gray houses. The Western influence is obvious. During their sojourns in Brussels (the customary destination of income migrations from this area), the Siemiatycze residents see the looks of the houses there and then want to live in similar houses at home. Regarding even little gardens around the houses, there has been a considerable change. Before they served mainly for planting some vegetables. Now one can see well-kept lawns, decorative tables, chairs, a grill" (Karpiuk 1997, 61; the insides of the houses also resemble Western middle-class patterns--see Siewiera 1998; Cieslinska 2002). Less welcome has been the growing economic inequality in migrant-sending localities in post-communist Eastern Europe which, as some argue (and others contest quoting the example of Scandinavian countries), is an unavoidable side-effect of the capitalist

transformation. Of concern here has been the demonstration effect on local residents of returned migrants' (or their families') visibly improved standard of living. It evokes both appreciation and envy among neighbours who ask, and ask again, the returned migrants how, precisely, they went about amassing money during their working sojourns abroad. The returned migrants point out that, as they found out through practical experience with the late-capitalist and political structures of the receiving societies the familiar *crony-debrouillard* coping tools, well-tested under the previous regime, are also reward-winning resources for realizing the migrants' projects in the capitalist environment, and they offer assistance in linking prospective followers with their national communities abroad or even with specific employers there. The most successful returned migrants become role models in their communities and are often elected to local offices as their public representatives. The demonstration effect sets in, stimulating more people to look for and find possibilities for travel abroad. The practical experience-based reassurances from the prospective migrants' kin and neighbours who had already travelled and the social status derived from the visibly augmented material standard of living of their families perpetuate westbound income-seeking migrations of large masses of people and, with this back-and-forth movement, popular coping strategies of old-regime, *homo-sovieticus* derivation.

It seems the "economic society" (Linz and Stepan 1996) pervasive under the previous regime and based on the bend-the-law/corrupt-the-officials syndrome of orientations and practices survives in local East European societies in no small part as the result of the influence of international migrant-returnees from their work-seeking sojourns in the West. Their visibly improved standard of living and the practical advice they offer to their neighbours serve to reimplant into their local communities the familiar *dojscia* and *kombinacje* practices as reward-winning resources for coping in a Western democratic capitalist system--the "role model" for East European political leader-reformers and rank-and-file citizens alike.

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