

— SPECIAL SECTION —

# Introduction: Migration and Mobility in the Context of Post-Communist Transition in Central and Eastern Europe (Part 2)

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Here we present the second part of the special section of the Central and Eastern European Migration Review entitled *Migration and Mobility in the Context of Post-Communist Transition in Central and Eastern Europe* (cf. Górny and Kaczmarczyk 2019). This focuses on intra-EU mobility from Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) to ‘old’ EU member countries following the EU enlargements in 2004 and 2006, they being among the many consequences of post-communist transition in the CEE region. Notwithstanding, contributions to this part of the special section elaborate not only on the specificities of emigration from the CEE region but also on its more universal characteristics, seeking to find a place for this research in the broadly understood discipline of migration studies.

Such an attempt is clearly visible in the article by **Paweł Kaczmarczyk** and **Douglas S. Massey**, *The Ethnosurvey Revisited: New Migrations, New Methodologies?* which is devoted to the applicability of the ethnosurvey method in various migratory contexts. The article examines methodological observations from a number of studies on emigration from Mexico to the US (initiated in the 1980s) and from Poland to various countries, the first of which was conducted already at the beginning of the 1990s – thus at the beginning of the post-communist transition – and continued until the mid-2010s. The authors claim that the ethnosurvey method proved to be very useful in building up an understanding of the complexities of migration as a social and economic process but feel that it should not be treated as a universal methodology for migration studies. Its strengths materialise, firstly, in exploratory studies, especially when the character of the migratory processes is not properly captured by the official data – be this due to deficiencies in these data or the novelty of processes underway. However, the method does not usually allow for national-level estimations of the size and composition of migration and is not fully effective in the case of migration which is weakly embedded in the social

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context of the sending areas, such as urban spaces, especially where highly skilled migration is concerned. Nevertheless, as is clearly evident in the article, the application of the ethnosurvey method in research on emigration from Poland at the time of post-communist transition was a milestone in the unravelling of its mechanisms – causes and consequences – although political leverage of the studies in question was not fully satisfactory (like the ethnosurveys completed in the context of Mexican–US migration). In both cases, linking two sides of the migration story through parallel sampling was a particularly promising – but at the same time also a challenging – aspect of the methodology.

A discussion on approaches allowing for a better understanding of processes embedded in emigration from the CEE region is continued in the article by **Aleksandra Grzymala-Kazłowska** and **Jenny Phillimore**, *Superdiversity and Its Relevance for Central and Eastern European Migration Studies. The Case of Polish Migrants in the UK*. The article, analysing Polish migrants in the UK, demonstrates that the application of the concept of superdiversity to the case of CEE migrants allows researchers to highlight the intra-categorical diversity of migrant groups, to reconstruct the encounters of CEE migrants with superdiversity in the destination countries, to explore processes of adaptation to a superdiverse difference and to consider superdiversity as a resource in itself. The authors argue that superdiversity offers an alternative social paradigm to the nation-centric and static one based on the fixed groups categorisation. In this way, this contribution attempts to place studies on CEE migration in the broader conceptual and theoretical framework developed, originally, in the West European context (Vertovec 2007).


The article by **Polina Manolova**, *‘Going to the West is my Last Chance to Get a Normal Life’: Bulgarian Would-Be Migrants’ Imaginings of Life in the UK*, focuses more on the specificities of emigration from the CEE region and, in particular, on the example of Bulgarians planning to settle in the UK. However, its claim of providing a more nuanced perspective on push and pull factors extending beyond purely economic aspects has a more universal theoretical relevance. The article examines future migrants’ perceptions of Bulgaria as a state placed in a ‘post-transitional’ temporality with limited opportunities for individual progress and social and economic development. These perceptions are compared with prospective migrants’ views on the UK as a country offering ‘normality’, in terms of everyday life and avenues for social advancement. The author thus identifies the specificities of post-communist transition reality operating as push factors in East–West intra-EU mobility. She argues that the ability of migrants to imagine a drastically different life in the UK, when compared to Bulgaria, has been the main impetus for emigration. This claim deserves further research both in relation to CEE migration and in other contexts.


The final contribution to the special section, by **Alexandra Voivozeanu** – *Precarious Posted Migration: The Case of Romanian Construction and Meat-Industry Workers in Germany* – also refers to a universal topic: the precariousness of posted workers. However, while analysing Romanian migration to Germany, it focuses on the peculiarities of such migration in the case of East–West intra-EU mobility and addresses the weight of the post-communist context in the country of origin. The author argues that Romanian workers accept the precarious working conditions and high levels of risk in posted employment in Germany and remain in such a state, due to the comparatively very low wages and the insecurity of work back in Romania. The article also demonstrates the varying degrees of precariousness in posted employment, claiming that these depend on the duration of the migration and the occupational engagement and on the practices of companies. In particular, workers employed on short-term contracts are in a more precarious situation than other posted workers. Overall, this article addresses a topic of high social (and recently also political) relevance in the context of East–West intra-EU mobility. It also relates to the practices and structures of the European labour market, alongside the active role of recruitment agencies in shaping labour migration to the EU, as discussed in the first part of the special section by Meszmann and Fedjuk (2019).

### Conflict of interest statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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