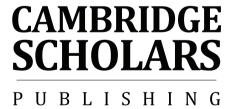# Selling One's Favourite Piano to Emigrate

Selling One's Favourite Piano to Emigrate: Mobility Patterns in Central Europe at the Beginning of the 21st Century

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P U B L I S H I N G

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Part II: Spatial Aspects of Mobility in Contemporary Central Europe

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

Tables

Figures

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

INTRODUCTION

JAKUB ISAŃSKI AND PIOTR LUCZYS

This book is the fruit of an international conference held in a Central European city–Poznań, organized by the Poznań Division of the Polish Sociological Association. The title of this book makes reference to the following real situation. One of the would–be migrants mentioned in this work had to sell her favorite piano in order to procure money for her travel. The decision was a very tough one, and so were the first days in exile. Luckily, however, the owner of the piano can now be happy with her decision, enjoying a significantly higher socioeconomic status (SES) than before. It can be said that a similar story (not necessarily with the same ending, though) can be recounted by any migrant.

Although migrations are nothing new in the history of human societies ("international migration is a constant, not an aberration in human history" Castels and Miller remind us, see Castles and Miller 2009, 299), never before have humans been as mobile as they are today. Also, never before have the understanding and description of the contemporary world been so closely connected with human mobility. In one way or another, the history of the world development has always been related to different kinds of mobilities such as those of armies, goods, people, ideas, religions, etc.; however, today's mobility seems to be a far more complex concept. It brings into focus the global processes which make the tasks of determining the directions of flows and identifying their sources or consequences far more challenging. To describe migrations, therefore, is a very complicated endeavor.

The respective chapters that follow are authored by scholars representing different European countries, where various aspects of contemporary processes related to migrations and social mobility can be observed. In particular, the volume features the authors focusing on the migration theme in relation to Central Europe, with the majority of texts pertaining to Poland (both as a sending area and as a receiving area) and Poles (both the migrating ones and those who stay in their home country but experiencing various consequences of migration–related processes). Europe has a long history as a migrant continent. Presently, however, it is

perceived more as a receiving area and an area of internal migration. It can be said that the contemporary situation started to resemble that of America's "permanently unfinished society" described by Portes and Rumbaut (see Portes and Rumbaut 2006, XV). Migrations of the early twenty–first century are, therefore, representative of a whole array of social processes taking place today–ranging from the riots in France, political tensions in Holland, irregular migration to Southern Europe and many others (see Castles and Miller 2009, 1–3) The authors of the bestselling book "The age of migration" discuss various types of contemporary migrations: "people migrate as manual workers, highly qualified specialists, entrepreneurs, refugees or as family members of previous migrants". Castles and Miller support their claims with data which shows that in 2005 1/3 out of the total number of almost 200 million migrants i.e. individuals living outside their country of birth, were to be found in Europe (ibid. 4–5).

Along with the progressing European integration and ever fewer barriers, the scope of social processes related to migrations is considerably greater than in the previous years. These can no longer be limited to individual countries or even regions–the East and the West. In recent years, Central Europe has become the part of the continent where a whole range of processes related to migration can be observed.

When reading the book, it is worth remembering that the notion of social mobility encompasses much more than just migrations. From the sociological perspective, migration is just a vehicle, while the real purpose is social mobility (defined by Sorokin as every change of one's position in a social structure, see Sorokin 2009). Consequently, the vast majority of migrations come into effect because the individuals who decide to take the challenge to migrate treat their journey as an opportunity to advance their social positions. Admittedly, this is the primary motivation for the greater number of those who choose to leave their current place of residence in search of a better life.

The first part of the book consists of six texts treating migration as a pretext for reflecting on social mobility. The authors point out the consequences of migration in the context of a general demand for upward mobility. The book opens with a text entitled "Highways and staircases (Mobility & Inequality)", written by prof. Sławomir Magala. With the help of two metaphors–the highway and the staircase–Magala presents the status of contemporary social mobility. In the first case, the horizontal mobility is defined as both a privilege for people who can afford an exclusive vacation in exotic countries, as well as the manifestation of social inequalities exemplified by the millions of immigrants arriving each

year in Europe and the USA in search of a better life. Discussing the vertical mobility, the Author points out that it is not as open–ended and unlimited as the vertical mobility. What is more, in the case of vertical mobility, the number of people interested, even in the intergenerational dimension, considerably exceeds the absorption capacity of a society. With every advancing individual, the value of their advancement gets depreciated due to the growing number of people aspiring to improve their social positions in like manner. The above described mechanism can be compared to the situation in a train where more tickets have been sold than there are seats, so each additional passenger, despite having a ticket, has to travel in worse conditions (assuming they manage to get on board at all). Further, Magala recalls another, sociologically important problem: the globally poor–globally exploited, and globally excluded, subscribing to Fraser's notion of a "transnational precariat". The neologism formed from the combination of "precarious" and "proletariat" is supposed to denote the situation affecting a considerable majority of those who are excluded from global migration mechanisms–far from providing equal chances for all the participants of international migrants' diaspora. Mobility, according to Magala, opens up the possibility to escape from a world of limited opportunities. Through the example of mass emigration among young educated Poles after Poland's European Union accession, the Author illustrates, the consequences, somewhat neglected in the literature, of limiting the opportunities for advancement by corporations in prestigious legal, medical or academic professions. Nevertheless, education remains the best way available to vertical advancement, which, in turn, offers access to the limitless possibilities for horizontal mobility.

The next Author, Andra–Dina Pană, overviews theoretical conceptions related to the consequences of human flows in our times and attempts to define the notions illustrating the social processes accompanying migrations such as: transnationalism, cosmopolitanism, multiculturalism and supranationalism. With contemporary examples from literature, the Author aims to expound upon the social consequences of contemporary migrations in Europe such as the emergence of increasingly diverse and difficult to define forms of social existence that have been accompanying the progressive integration in recent years. Also, in this case, the shape and direction of these changes depend on the mobility of people and the creation of networks between their places of origin and destination. As Pană admits, the text is intended as a review of theoretical conceptions relevant for the contemporary descriptions of the social world and processes occurring in contemporary Europe. The Author declares:

"I conduct my analysis under the framework of the mobility turn, new

> mobilities paradigm and the paradigm of trasnationalism with the aim of advocating a possible European turn in the study of mobilities as a consequence of understanding the EU as a space of flows"

Consequently, in line with the above declaration, the text can be qualified as an interesting attempt to categorize the contemporary migration processes in Europe, with an emphasis placed on the consequences of these processes.

In the following text, Renata Seredyńska–Abou Eid deals with Polish migrants arriving in recent years in the UK. It is the first of several texts in the present volume devoted to the Polish migration to the British Isles, focusing on the Poles residing in the UK. The problems of acculturation are investigated by analyzing the use of online portals clustering the community of Polish immigrants. The Polish diaspora on the British Isles is one of the largest and most active ones. Poles, lured by higher wages than at home, have been massively emigrating to the West in recent years (mostly by following a circular migration pattern), taking up jobs regardless of their qualifications and interests, and irrespective of what they did earlier in Poland. According to CBOS (Public Opinion Research Center) data, an estimated number of 1 to 2 million Poles have emigrated for work to the West after Poland joined the EU in 2004, with the UK being the most frequent destination. Polish migrants have appeared in many other countries as well, for example in Iceland where they constitute the largest of the minorities. So significant, in terms of numbers, the Polish communities have brought to the host country not only language, customs, Polish cuisine, Polish shops and a black economy but also various manifestations of social life. The majority of these are focused around the Internet and Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) devices for social networking, interpersonal support, and organized social activity (which brings to mind the principle formulated by Castells: "the network is the message", see Castells 2009, 339). It is difficult to estimate how many Poles have been staying in Western Europe for profit, enhancing multicultural western societies, predominantly British society. Residing in different parts of the UK, the Poles have started the process of acculturation with the aid of the Internet i.e. webpages, social networking sites or online newspapers. In this context, the Author raises the question of "identity" as a tool for differentiating between "us" and "them". Seredyńska–Abou Eid also mentions belonging "in aspects of mobile times and migrant communities". With tools such as mobile devices, immigrants can create communities independently of geographical constraints.

The next article, written by Susanne Gerstenberg, concerns employment flexibility in the context of spatial mobility in East and West

Germany after reunification. Drawing on the whole range of statistics, the author presents the differences that prevail on the labour markets in Germany more than 20 years after its reunification. The spatial mobility of the labour force is treated here as an indicator of a multidimensional development of individual regions. Gerstenberg presents the historical situation of Germany after the unification by referring to the common understanding of the process:

> "from the international perspective, East Germany looks like an example of luxury transition in a small and strongly supported region, where a complete adaptation to West Germany is just a matter of time"

The author highlights the ramifications of the shock therapy which are still visible in the Eastern part of the country–with its higher unemployment rate, poverty rate and accompanying depopulation caused by disparities in living conditions and the labour market potential compared to western Germany. According to Gerstenberg, the best remedy for the situation is a turnaround of the mobility processes. This type of mobility is widely supported and developed, as evidenced by a number of examples from the area of the former German Democratic Republic. These activities help to reduce the costs of social tensions surrounding migrations, although, as the German example illustrates, it is a very lengthy process which requires significant financial investment and good governance. Further, the author presents the initiatives undertaken by German companies that try to encourage employees to take up positions outside their place of residence by offsetting the inconveniences related to migration with a number of benefits such as help in house hunting, financial help with respect to moving or journey costs, and childcare or even work offers for partners. In spite of the above–mentioned benefits, the Eastern labour market still lags behind the West in terms of development.

Following a very systematic presentation of the data, the author proceeds to discussion. As she points out: "this paper explored the spatial mobility processes in Germany from the perspective of employment organizations". Although many phenomena described in Gerstenberg's text are present in other countries of the region, the case presented may be regarded as unique in Europe.

Polish contemporary migration is also the subject of Jakub Isański's article, who explores the topic from the sociological perspective. The author attempts to approximate the description of social processes accompanying migrations both in the sending and the receiving areas. Presenting a series of examples from earlier stages of the Polish migration and comparing them to the American experience, Isański illustrates the

peculiar situation of both emigrants and those who stay in the country and indirectly experience the consequences of international migration processes. Some of the research questions posed by the author are worth mentioning here: Who exactly migrates? Are the contemporary migrants a homogenous group? And finally, what are the characteristics of the domestication processes in the receiving area, including such phenomena as "second generation", or "ethnic enclaves"? Although the scale of recent labour migration is unprecedented, historically, Poles have a considerable body of experience in this matter (see: Nowosielski in this volume). The previous migration waves had, obviously, a very distinct character; nevertheless, they offer a significant insight into the exiled communities which, by maintaining ethnic ties, facilitated the processes of cultural adaptation.

The authors of another text, Piotr Luczys and Ryszard Necel relate issues of migration in the context of talented individuals migrating from Poland. The authors review the literature regarding the methodology of research on the migration of high–skilled professionals, while taking into consideration the specificity of Polish migration in recent years. Undoubtedly, the phenomena described are of great interest, while the case of recent Polish migration provides the opportunity to reconsider the common understanding of such concepts as "the brain drain", "brain circulation" or "brain loss". The authors attempt to outline the theoretical framework of these processes, as well as illustrate them through Polish examples. The text features a number of terms such as: "skilled individuals", "talented individuals", "professionals" or "labour force migration", which are indicative of the complexity of the whole phenomenon (relative to a whole range of processes, with migration being the only common denominator here) as well as its consequences. The migration described by the authors differs significantly from the common understanding of migration and migrants–far fewer restrictions here. Some adverse effects are also considered, parallel to that of African countries, where there are fewer medical doctors working than there are immigrant doctors from these countries in New York. The authors use both the scientific literature, as well as statistical data, and attempt to "constitute the category of talented individuals" with reference to the Polish seasonal migrant, travelling to different European countries.

The second part of the book is devoted to spatial mobility within Central Europe, with emphasis on its specificity in relation to the classically conceived "social mobility" and the mobility patterns typical of Western Europe. The leitmotifs of the articles in the second part are space, the strategies of its domestication and transformation into "places" (Tuan 1987), as well as the concentration on the migration processes as peculiar

"flows", situated not only in the experience of the migrants but also in the physical environment of the collective existence (see Mosk 2005; Maloney and Korinek 2011). All the authors in the second part of the present volume are in agreement about the social, economic and cultural consequences of different variants of migration processes and their impact on both the "immigration country" and "emigration country". Subtle differences related to economic abundance, openness and capacity of the labour market and geopolitical location do not nullify the universalizing spatial potential, the importance of which seems to be somewhat underrated in migration studies. Although the majority of the analyses related to the representation of intra–and interstate migration patterns draw attention to the spatial aspect, it is often blatantly played down and brought to a stack of obvious statements (the direction of migration, the state of the sending and receiving area, the migration balance). Their explanatory value for the understanding of contemporary migration processes remains significant; however, it does not provide an exhaustive description of their spatial aspect. The texts of seven cited authors take a step towards outlining these manifestations, which tend to be either ignored or dissociated by the mainstream issues, or considered to be marginal considerations.

The opening article, by Viktoriya Volodko, familiarizes the Reader with the situation of Ukrainian women on the Polish labour market in terms of activities established at the level of verbal communication as well as non–verbal activities connected with consumption patterns. Taking a classic set of perspectives as a starting point (transnational perspective, a structural–action approach and the gender perspective), the author generates a specific theoretical framework, extending the explanations in directions which tend conventionally to be marginalized. As Volodko puts it:

> "Here [in the Ukraine] the connection between the physical presence and social space is changed (…) The new forms of interactions between transnational migrants and non–migrants allow the co–ordination of social activity out of attachments to concrete social space and local context of actions"

Drawing on Gidden's structuration theory, the author develops the reflection on "interactional practices" whose formation is highly dependent on the socio–spatial context, thus favouring those individuals who are also in contact with societies other than those related to their country of origin. Migrating individuals of today may, therefore, become not only the disposers of respectable and sought–after skills, but also the embodiments

of Bauman's mobility patterns, with their open–enededness, infinity incompl{ion and dynamism. In the text we find a direct distinction between the spatial (e.g. a return visit to Ukraine) and non–spatial (e.g. telephone calls and electronic communications, sending of packages, letters) aspects of the lives of migrant women and an indication of their role in constructing the migrant situation. Citing the statements of the respondents (50 interviews carried out in 2008–2010 in Poland and Ukraine), the author unequivocally states that the importance of indirect and direct communication channels (sharing a defined space, e.g. by "drawing" other family members to the country of immigration) is significantly different. The communication between the spaces is not the same as "co–presence" in one specific area, which partially undermines many currently popular theories that proclaim the perfect reflection of space in communication reality e.g. the theory of "mobile hearths", by P. Levinson (see Levinson 2006).

The second article, by Katarzyna Andrejuk, focusing on the mobility of Polish students migrating to the UK to undertake training at local universities after May 2004, also leaves no doubt as to the relevance of the spatial context in migration processes. The stabilization of the educational context in Europe (Poland's accession to the EU, the Bologna strategy, the prevalence of English, etc.) in conjunction with the preservation of significant differences (among other things dissimilarity in the quality of education at Polish and British universities) creates a conceptual approximation of these spaces. The "contraction" of the European continent resulting from the expansion of the accession processes in 2004, with Poland being one of the beneficiaries, relativized the distances between particular spaces within the continent. Consequently, it is not the surface of the continent that we share today, but rather a mental construction of the concept of Europe (see Le Rider 2008; Michalski 2009; Nowicki 2009; Haftek 2009). Andrejuk argues that the categories of migration and return migration can no longer be considered as "failure", "squandered opportunities", or "wasted chances". Although the Author's main considerations focus on the educational aspect, one should not underestimate their spatial orientation, expressed in the description of the "membership in the European cultural space", or scientific treatment of the maxim related to the educational aspects of the journey. The reader should not remain indifferent to the fact that Andrejuk treats "spatial openness" as a synonym for "pro–Europeanism", "circulation" as a variant of "displacement" and "migration" in itself as a conglomerate of socio–spatial activities, related to the convertibility of the two contexts, or their variants. As in the previous text, we meet here with a conceptual treatment of the

migration space as an area of "increasing awareness", "broadening horizons", "increased life chances" and "sensitivity to the values of an enlightened and tolerant European culture". Although it would be an overstatement to speak of "a spatial turn" in migration studies, it cannot be denied that the category of space–both concretely and metaphorically understood–is now the axis of much consideration directly related to the theme of migration (see Warf and Arias 2009; Smith 2011).

The following text–dedicated to the migration patterns specific to the outermost regions, which due to emigration of its inhabitants are facing new affordances and limitations in connection with regional development– focuses on the specific local situation of the Lublin province in eastern Poland. Topical (and also: spatial) circumscription of the above–mentioned reflection appears to be all too clear. The Author, Katarzyna Kowalczuk, based her text on questionnaire interviews carried out over April–June 2010 in all districts of the Lublin province (3000 respondents). Apart from the comprehensively described labour and educational migration (mainly external), re–emigration and the associated potential in the local labour market supported by a number socio–demographic variables, it is space that turns out to be of importance as well. First of all, by questioning the conventional sociological concept of "residence", the importance of space determines the structure of the applied research tool (e.g. addressing the people present with questions about those staying abroad or questions about personal experiences related to being in a different area in the past, etc.). Secondly, as an auxiliary analytic category, it allows for diagnosing the kind of "shift" in the labour market that has taken place and highlights the companies' practice of driving out the costs related to employee investment. As the author puts it:

> "Among migrants employed before migration only one in four (27%) resigned from his/ her job to go to work abroad. Most of employed migrants used other opportunities allowing them to work abroad and keep their job in Poland. About one in four (24%) applied for unpaid leave and one in ten (10%) used their holidays. Some (6%) were sent to work abroad by their employer"

In this way, re–emigration processes can saturate back the space of Lublin province with relatively young, but a much better qualified (e.g. in terms of language skills), army of workers. The lack of similarly profiled professional–spatial analyses constitutes an important gap, not only in research but also in the area of practical scenarios for changes implemented by public institutions.

The fourth of the texts in this part of the book, titled "Polish migration to Germany: the past, present and future" by Michał Nowosielski, establishes a bridge between historical and contemporary migration. Although the history of Polish migration to Germany with its various "waves" and "periods" goes back over two hundred years, the spatial relationship between the two countries should not be disregarded. The category "nearest neighbourhood", explored, until now, either through the prism of seasonal migration to Germany, or the evolution of the identity of Polish migrants in Germany, falls short of such issues as: Polish settlement in the eastern part of Germany, the creation of social networks and forms of self–organization of migrants, assimilation of various forms of citizenship, as well as the temporary update of familiar problems, phenomena and processes in which data become quickly devalued. Portraying the history of Polish migration to Germany (from the early XIX century to the beginnings of the XXI century) and the plurality of its respective forms (political, labour, military, seasonal, etc.), the Author emphasizes the "decolonizing" and "colonizing" nature of today's migrations to Germany. The decisive factor is, therefore, the temporal variability of these trends and their linkage to particular spaces within the German state–geographical regions, cities, and urban areas. Contemporary Polish migrations to Germany seem to be evolving from the general, "wave–type" processes, to the "point–type" migrations oriented at specific geographic locations. Nowosielski admits that talking about the contemporary Polish emigration to Germany involves talking about the flow of human capital between two abstract (because of their size) entities. Today's migrations on the German–Polish axis, are constituted by precise, targeted, spatially varied flows, in which the dominant role is played by specific cities or regions. By describing the migration through the prism of space, the author exploits space itself as the explanatory prism–an essential and necessary element in describing the Polish–German migration.

In her article, Agnieszka Ignatowicz examines travel space and its narrative coverage by the Polish migrants to Britain. The text recalls the category of the family home and the spatial maintenance of relationships (see Volodko in this volume) between migrants and members of their families, with particular emphasis on the so–called VFR migration ("visiting friends and family"). More than half of the "new" immigrants from Poland (i.e. arrived after 2004) lead this kind of life in England. This, according to the Author, is connected not only with the desire to sustain family ties, but also with the negotiation of status and the construction of new patterns of mobility. The Author adopts the idea of the universality of mobility in the modern world, with migration being its basic variant–an

approach which constitutes a direct application of the main theses of Urry's "sociology of mobility" for empirical purposes. In the course of the empirical work (27 in–depth interviews), Ignatowicz demonstrates the spatial layout of a migrant's "life–story" from the family home, through airports, waiting rooms, urban transport services, up to the mental migration routes. The Author concludes: "Migration, alongside the physical action of moving countries, is also a metaphorical and emotional journey to be travelled". There is no doubt that both the physical and the conceptually constructed space together account for the migratory movement between the "immigration country" and "emigration country". At the same time, the author points out an element which seems to be quite often overlooked in the so–constructed reflection, namely, the preferences and spatial choices made by migrants, mainly in relation to their economic situation (e.g. postponing visits to the dentist or the hairdresser until the next visit to Poland, searching for cheaper flights between the countries, motivation of the migratory movements by family events and ceremonies etc.) This dual attitude to space–both as a "mediator" of traveling and also as a travel destination–reveals once again, the diversity of conclusions that can be formulated through the category "space" (see Kowalczuk in this volume). Ignatowicz believes that contemporary migrations have more to do with status creation and the navigation through self–development than with solving embarrassing life situations (see Andrejuk in this volume).

Also the following text, "The integration of refugee women on the Romanian labour market", authored by Georgiana–Cristina Rentea, emphasizes the importance of the spatial dimension in the conceptualization of contemporary migration. Based on interviews with NGO workers and female refugees, conducted from September, 2009, to February, 2010, Rentea reconstructs the tension between "deportation" and "settlement", "staying" and "residing", or continuing to migrate and undertaking certain adaptation strategies that have a direct bearing on the possession of citizenship or lack of it, the scope of cultural competences or the ability to participate (to some extent) in the labour market. The text, apart from sketching the profile of the statistically most common type of migrant in Romania i.e. migrant–refugee, reflects the isolation of the refugees–either voluntary or forced. The spatial aspect of this issue (i.e. the distribution of refugee aid offices, the availability of services, the closeness or distance in relation to other refugees or their groups, etc.) is closely correlated with the typical refugee mentality, but also with the lack of confidence in the Romanian public institutions. The author also recalls the well–known figure of woman as a "guardian of hearth and home" closely related to "educational" space as separated from male dominated "work" and "bread

winning" spaces. The strong emphasis on these and other similar socio–spatial stereotypes makes us realize that the contemporization of migration narratives cannot lead to the elimination of the "classic" issues, which–although well known in the literature–are still an inherent feature of the changing social reality.

The final text in this part of the book, authored by Katarzyna Wolanik Boström and Magnus Öhlander, reveals to the Reader the issue of the migration of medical staff, through the example of Polish representatives of this profession in Sweden. The authors analyze the career of Magdalena–a surgeon–through the prism of her professional experience and related life choices (mainly connected with migration) in order to articulate the ideas, practices, work habits as well as principles of constructing identity narratives in her capacity as a surgeon. Again, the spatial environment and strategies of adaptation to its socio–cultural requirements play an important role. Moreover, the adaptation is a twofold process which occurs in relation to: the global migratory environment (country: Poland, Sweden, France) and the micro–space of the professional environment (in this context: a doctor's office, operating room, clinic and the images of them constructed on the basis of the knowledge gained in the country of origin, and, later on, on the basis of the knowledge gained in exile). Both environments were found to be of importance in the process of constructing the status of a migrant–doctor (as well as: a professionally–active woman with a child). Boström and Öhlander attempt to sketch the combination of various situations, choices and circumstances that lead not only to becoming "a chronic migrant", but also to defining oneself as "Me–the migrant" i.e. as an individual dependent on exploration, movement, experience and the acquisition of competence on the route of a continuous circulation between the different socio–spatial contexts. Particularly noteworthy is the conceptual frame adopted by the authors, according to which Bourdieu's field–capital theory and the theory of transnational networks creation can be applied to formulate a more comprehensive explanation for the migratory mobility of professionals, specialists and disposers of rare skills (see Luczys and Necel in the first part of this volume).

Following Ryszard Kapuściński's statements about the need to close, enrich and complement the texts by the readers, it goes without saying that the present work contains a lot of open–ended issues and unanswered questions, or more or less clearly articulated doubts. The dynamics of social life, and–particularly interesting in the context of the present work–the dynamics of migration are governed by similar principles in that new scenarios are being continually added and those well–known and seemingly

established in the literature are subject to on–going revision. What is crucial, therefore, is not only the tracking of recent developments in the "new migration", but also looking into what has already happened and what has already been written on the subject (despite the differences in time perspective, political and conceptual conditioning, cost weights, etc.). However, what is much more important than the answers or regular updates, are the unarticulated questions or those which reach us only indirectly from the individual articles. They would constitute a mere inkling, a thought that has been discovered in between the lines, or a feeling accompanying the Author. In the context of the present volume, these can be exemplified by the following queries: to what extent is the unemployment among returnees more strongly correlated with the tendency to continue education or the time needed to create self–employment as opposed to the inability to find work? Is it possible to set up special investment compartments for the participants of migratory movements? Where is the line between needs and opportunities related to educational migrations and how to estimate the "development barriers" associated with them? What is the relationship between the currently changing status symbols and migratory mobility? To what extent is the reality of the migrant more strongly dependent on the local valorization of socio–spatial context, rather than the values brought by migrants themselves? Does being a migrant actually entail existence in a qualitatively different space? Where to draw the line between conceptual fiction and the auxiliary role of concepts associated with migratory flows in the conceptualization of the social world? And above all–how many of these questions will become obsolete with the diversely motivated migratory flows of the future that will surely roll over Central and Eastern Europe (and other areas) in the 21st century?

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PART I:

SOCIAL ASPECTS OF MOBILITY
IN CONTEMPORARY CENTRAL EUROPE

CHAPTER ONE

HIGHWAYS AND STAIRCASES
(MOBILITY AND INEQUALITY)

SŁAWOMIR MAGALA

"The introduction of a notion of European citizenship based on national membership within the European Union, i.e. incorporating everybody who is already a national citizen in any of the member states, and excluding anybody, however permanently settled and economically and culturally integrated, who comes from extra–communitarian spaces, produces something like a European apartheid, a reverse side of the emerging European community of citizens" (Balibar 2010, 319)

What are we talking about when we talk about mobility? I think that we are usually intuitively busy with one of the two major metaphors we live by when thinking and talking about mobility–namely the highway and the staircase. The interstate highways system of the United States of America, as well as the highways built in Germany, in the 1930's and 1940's, have impressed on our unconscious minds a vision of a huge network of regulated "channels" for standardized vehicles moving at a considerable speed in order to bring their drivers to their individual destinations quickly and comfortably. Mobility has come to be associated with the ability of the individual and larger groups to change places, to move from high–rise office buildings of the downtown part of a city to a suburban family house outside, or to other destinations, for instance holiday resorts or states, where the air is cleaner, taxes lower, jobs more numerous, schools offer better education, immigrants have not yet come in large numbers, and the lifestyle remains nostalgically less stressed. It is usually a horizontal mobility, an ability to cover long distances, usually by car–the vehicle, which has acquired a dominant status as the preferred means of the individual's mobility. This mobility is what we have in mind as a matrix, when we think about job seeking immigrants who escape

Africa, Asia or Latin America in order to find better jobs and living conditions in Europe (mostly European Union member states) or North America (predominantly the USA). This mobility is what we have in mind as a matrix, when we think about tourists, that huge crowd of temporary immigrants, who navigate around the world in airplanes, cars, buses, trains and boats, filling hotels, restaurants and places like the Taj Mahal, Machu Picchu, Luxor or the Serengeti National Park, but also places full of art museums and theatres, ostentatious consumption and fashion trends, like London, Paris or New York.

Let us recapitulate: highway–like mobility is horizontal and involves individuals moving in large streams of permanent or temporary immigrants between continents and state borders. Job–seeking immigrants and tourists are cases in point. There is a difference between the two. Becoming a tourist for a few weeks per year changes the status of a person visiting foreign places as a tourist only to a limited degree (a European tourist, from, say, Greece, would feel much richer than a Gambian when riding through Banjul, and much poorer when driving through Beverly Hills, but he or she would recover after a return to Athens). Becoming a job–seeking immigrant outside of one's own native country usually means a loss of status or a switch between a low status in one's own country and equally low if not lower in the country, where a male or female "Gastarbeiter" seeks a better paying job.

However, thinking in terms of horizontal mobility, we downplay another, vertical one, which is closely connected, but less neutral and comfortable to think about. Another sort of mobility is associated with the matrix of a staircase. When an ambitious son or daughter of a working class family acquires education, fortune or fame, or all three at once, and social honours, airs and graces are imposed on him or her–we say that this person has "climbed" up the stairs of the social hierarchy, that he or she has become a "nouveau riche", an "arriviste", an accomplished social climber, a case of a successful upward social mobility. When millions of US American ex–soldiers made use of their educational–vouchers (the so–called "G.I. Bill" after World War II), they climbed up the educational ladders and co–started an educational revolution, which has never since stopped. All societies simply went on involving, recruiting, and enlisting increasingly broader social circles within the institutional fold of educational bureaucracy, which grows with every new grammar school, every high school and college, every university and every post–experience permanent education center. When a recent immigrant from a poorer African country (say, Morocco or Algeria) manages to put his or her children through a Dutch or French school, when he or she manages to

help them get through a university, and when these children succeed in getting respectable jobs, we can say that an upward social mobility has been accomplished within two generations (the first generation moved to another country, the second managed to compete for education and jobs with the "natives"). In the post–World War II, Soviet–dominated Central and Eastern Europe, an operation very similar to the "G.I. Bill" went on. The new communist rulers, busy with legitimizing their Russian–backed political power, opened educational channels up for the sons and daughters of the peasants and industrial workers, who were traditionally underrepresented in the cohorts of university students (the latter used to come mostly from the higher and middle classes). Once educated, these brand new citizens of the brand new people's democratic states were invited to fill the job slots in state bureaucracies–industrial, military, political. They were encouraged to become civil servants, professionals and party–state functionaries. Upward social mobility was considered essential in keeping the masses satisfied with the new rulers, even if ideologically speaking, most of the Poles or Hungarians, Czechs or Lithuanians, Bulgarians or Romanies were against the communist system, either for national, religious, political or historical reasons (the communist parties have never been a dominant political force before World War II and the direct Soviet military occupation in its aftermath).

This second type of social mobility, namely the vertical, upwardly bound one, is not as open–ended, as "unlimited" as the horizontal mobility. Many cars can move in many directions at once without preventing the others from doing the same and intricate multi–level crossings can be constructed to allow for many un–conflicting choices. The upward social mobility, however, has the tendency to push former occupants of higher positions aside and/or downwards, or to decrease the value of the position recently won by so many of the new competitors. Before World War II, having a high school/college diploma was a status symbol of belonging to the middle class with its better, higher education. Following World War II, having a bachelor's or master's degree has already become the minimal condition for being considered professionally educated. By the way, much less attention is devoted in the research literature to the downwardly bound mobility, so that we have many more analyses of the upward traffic on the social mobility staircase than of the one which goes the other way–downwards. De–professionalization of some professionals is a case in point–but it is rarely debated in public (until it becomes too obvious to be ignored, as was the case with the medical doctors in France, who decided to join the workers, feeling "over–managed" and under–recognized by the new "professional managers of

health care organizations"). Not many politicians or social researchers are willing to tell their constituencies or audiences, sponsors and clients–frankly–that every creation of new educational slots for the young devalues education as a social status symbol, or that in pushing new masses upwards we shall have to fill the evacuated underdog positions with some new groups (for instance, the upward social mobility of the western working class has been paid for by the immigrant labor filling the jobs left by the upwardly mobile "native" working class on its way to the middle class status and lifestyles).

Here we arrive at the very interesting junction of both horizontal and upward mobility: the global poor (globally exploited, globally excluded), i.e. the job seeking immigrants from Africa, Asia and Latin America to–primarily–the EU and USA, who are victims of a triple exclusion (see Fraser 2010):

- from a redistribution of economic resources (they are poor and discriminated against in job markets),
- from a recognition of cultural and personal values (they are made scapegoats and ritually blamed for being victims in the media and by common gossip),
- from a representation in the political system (they are underrepresented and under–involved in civic initiatives and social activism).

Fraser concludes that the global poor should be called globally vulnerable individuals in a precarious situation, suggesting we call them "transnational precariat":

"Forms of exclusion at issue arise from the convergence of multi–scaled processes, as when global economic structures intersect with local status hierarchies and national political structures. To speak of those who experience such injustices as if they existed on one plane alone is to reduce them to a global abstraction stripped of the particularities in and through which sociality is lived. Once again, they would be better served by an expression that recognizes the full complexity of their humanity, by situating them in the context of such multiple intersecting scales of justice. Although it may not itself be fully satisfactory, the modifier 'transnational' strikes me better than the adjective 'global' at signaling such complexity. I propose, therefore, to replace the expression 'the global poor' with 'the transnational precariat'." (Fraser 2010, 370)

There are only two principles, which could probably guide us out of the complexity, in which the twisted tracks of horizontally and upwardly mobile individuals and groups crisscross one another, leaving a dense