Internal and external movers: East-West migration and the impact of EU enlargement

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THE ECONOMICS AND POLITICS OF EAST–WEST MIGRATION

The growing intra-EU mobility of West Europeans, that is the principle focus of this book, has been a largely unremarked – if not almost invisible – phenomenon in most countries of residence. This is decisively *not* the case with migrants and movers from East and Central Europe. In the run-up to the two EU accessions of 2004 and 2007, there was a great deal of media coverage of these other 'pioneers of European integration', in often very hostile terms. EU enlargement, of course, notionally changes the migration/mobility relationship of East and Central European citizens to the West, from *external* migrants to *internal* movers. Supposedly, some day, Polish or Romanian movers (for example), should simply become indistinguishable from their mobile West European counterparts, in rights and opportunities, if not in reality.

For the moment, this outcome has been stalled, despite the twin accessions, by the maintenance of certain transitional limitations on mobility to most of the older member states, although one by one the barriers are coming down. Initially only three countries – Ireland, Sweden and Britain – opened their borders with no transitional barriers to the new A8 members in 2004. This included Poland, with the largest population of potential movers. From May 2006, Spain, Portugal, Greece and Finland followed suit. Belgium, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Italy also reduced barriers for the first wave of new members, with only Germany and Austria saying they would maintain them for the duration of the transitional period (until 2011). However, led by the decision of Britain and Spain – two of the primary recipients of East–West migrants – to keep doors shut, transitional barriers remained in place for workers from the two new member states that joined in 2007, Bulgaria and

Romania. But formal barriers do not mean that doors are really shut. All new member states now enjoy visa-free tourist travel. And by themselves, legal barriers do not prevent much of the migration, which has been and remains mostly informal in nature, such that bringing down formal barriers is, in effect, a form of regularization of migrant status (see also Jileva 2002; Lavenex and Uçarer 2002).

Despite these realities on the ground, crude fears in the West about East–West floods have not abated. The spectre of the 'Polish plumber' played a significant negative role in the rejection of the EU constitution in France in 2005; hostile reports about the people smuggling of Roma and Slavic migrants, or crime associated with them, still fill the tabloid press in Britain and Italy. Notwithstanding upbeat theories about a wider European integration following enlargement, there is still a growing anxiety – across all of Western Europe, and in both economic and cultural terms – about the consequences of free movement from East and Central Europe.

Early in the design of the PIONEUR study, it was decided to take advantage of the timing of the research (around the years of the accession), and the burning topicality of East–West migration in Europe, to ask questions parallel to the EIMSS of comparable East–West movers. Practically all the reputable scholarship, and most of the advocacy on immigration and free movement policy, suggests that there is little to fear from a full opening of Western Europe's borders to the East (Hille and Straubhaar 2001; Wallace and Stola 2001; Favell and Hansen 2002). Indeed, most studies extol the dramatic economic and political benefits of this integration, while chastising the negative attitudes of politicians and public opinion (see for example the reports by ECAS 2005 and 2006 and Kelo and Wächter 2004, as well as the arguments advanced during the European Commission's 2006 'European Year of Mobility'). In this view, flows are likely to be increasingly governed by supply and demand forces; East and Central Europeans pose few questions of cultural and racial difference from their host societies; and their increasingly temporary and circular migration patterns remove the probable longer-term costs to welfare states that some immigration is thought to bring. In sum, European integration is likely to lead to a new and stable continent-wide European migration system, in which East–West mobility is likely to be no more or less significant than current intra-West EU mobility, as well as filling gaps in the labour market that would otherwise have to pull in non-Europeans to the continent.

If we are to believe such Panglossian-sounding predictions, the patterns and experiences of the intra-West EU movers surveyed in this book should be the best guide and forerunner to the present and future patterns and

experiences of East–West movers. This should apply as much to quantitative forecasts as to the qualitative experiences of migrants, and the kind of reception they are likely to receive in new host countries. The most convincing scholarship on East–West migration has indeed specifically suggested that this particular enlargement should be no more dramatic or difficult in its impact on free movement/migration than previous enlargements to Spain, Portugal or Greece – and hence should over time follow the same demographic and social trajectory (see especially Kupiszeski 2002).

But this is certainly not how most member states are evaluating the scenario *politically*. That most member states have ignored the combined weight of scholarship and advocacy – the facts and arguments as they have been presented above – and maintained cautious barriers as well as a hostile political stance, shows that the political calculus at stake here is being governed by other reasons. Perhaps these governments argue correctly that support for further integration is so fragile that it cannot sustain this particular extension of free movement, regardless of how beneficial or benevolent the economic consequences of open borders can be. Perhaps, too, there are other *sociological* aspects to this question – that might be thought of in terms of 'exclusion' and/or 'exploitation' – that are not reflected in the theories of economists or findings of demographers on which the upbeat scholarship and policy prescriptions are founded.

Our chapter then sets out to evaluate which of the scenarios in fact applies to the new intra-EU migrants from Central and Eastern Europe. Are their experiences qualitatively comparable to the kinds of experiences, documented elsewhere in the volume, that West European movers have? Or do their experiences in fact point to a persisting differentiation in their access, treatment and experiences as migrants in the West? Our interviews-based data allow us to ask these questions through the eyes of East–West movers themselves. Though perhaps fulfilling economic expectations by moving West, they also bear the brunt of negative social and political reactions to their presence in new host countries. If their experiences are not positive, then the EU integration process after the 2004 and 2007 enlargements – as theorised by the Commission and scholars alike – is not likely to run as smoothly as predicted. For they are – as are the internal movers surveyed in the rest of the book – the real life, flesh and bone avatars of the broad macro-processes of European integration theorized by others. Their similarities to and their differences from the West European intra-EU movers will thus provide a very good guide to the prospects of intra-EU movement in a wider, more inclusive Europe (see also Favell and Elrick 2008).

METHODS AND DATA

In Autumn 2004, 40 in-depth interviews were carried out with Polish and Romanian migrants in the five PIONEUR countries. Poland is the largest new accession country, and a major net supplier of labour to the West; Romania was at that moment the largest of the candidate countries (excepting Turkey), and had signed a number of pre-accession and visa-free travel agreements. These rights were particularly seen as worrisome for the West, because of Romania's large Roma population and slow adaptation to the EU *acquis*. The worries have not abated with Romania's eventual accession as a full EU member in 2007. The migrants interviewed were residents with a legal work contract who had been residing in the host country for at least one year and no longer than ten years at the time of interview. Eight interviews were conducted in each country: four with Poles, four with Romanians. In each setting, one high-skilled woman and one high-skilled man (with university/college degree) as well as one low-skilled woman and one low-skilled man were included in the sample.

For internal comparative purposes, the sample was deliberately skewed towards high-skilled movers: in fact, more than half of the population in Poland and Romania do not hold university/college degrees. In several of the models, though, it is assumed that higher-skilled 'talented' people are more likely to move (Borjas 1999; Csedö 2008). Respondents were found through a mixed range of snowball strategies: through expatriate associations, Polish/Romanian churches, online networks, consulates and personal networks. These loose procedures were in fact needed to fill all the categories in question; it was deemed important to get hold of interesting, individual cases who might exemplify and embody some of the archetypal experiences or mechanisms at work in this migration. Interviews were almost all conducted by native speakers and co-nationals at the interviewees' home, workplace or in public, lasting between one and two hours, and were fully transcribed and translated into English for analysis.

Questions were asked about the same wide range of issues as for West European movers. What will concern us here are the migrants' subjective experiences of moving, their motivation, the barriers they encountered, their employment, their experiences of housing, bureaucracy and public services in the host country, their self-reported assessment of their own mobility in relation to their initial aspirations and expectations, and their experience of the host population in terms of reception, integration and discrimination. The questionnaire followed a broadly similar pattern to the qualitative pilot study interviews done

with Western EU movers, although in practice it was more loosely structured (see Appendix C). A contrast and comparison can be made between these interviews.

It was initially thought that some kind of systematic content analysis might be viable, but the interviews offered a more varied, uneven set of findings that made this impractical and counterproductive. In fact, with semi-structured interviews that sometimes go off in highly interesting yet personalised directions, it makes as much sense to focus on them as individualized narratives or voices, illustrating and embodying broader trends that could be found across and within the populations in question. Individual examples are particularly good for identifying case-specific mechanisms producing certain outcomes that may add up in aggregate terms to a structural pattern or trend. The work done here is broadly analogous to the interviewing and analysis strategy used by Favell (2008a) in his study of internal West European professional migrants, minus the more city-focused context and interview selection procedures. The sample allows therefore for interesting contrasts and comparisons across class and education, gender, nationality and age. The goal here essentially is to typologize, identifying archetypes in which particular variables might be relevant to certain examples of migrant. The chapter should be read as a pilot study, offering pointers to future research on the new 'pioneers' in Europe.

EXCLUSION AND EXPLOITATION: STORIES OF THE NEW PIONEERS

The analysis of our findings leads to a mass of quite complicated observations about the subjective experiences and objective social trajectories of the migrants in question. Here we group some of the most salient findings under a number of headings, before in each case offering a broader discussion of their significance.

Crossing Borders is Easy but Settlement Abroad is Hard, and Discrimination is Perceived by Many

For all the East–West migrants, the main barriers to integration in the country of residence are formal papers, that is, formal residence and work permits. The problem lies in finding a place to stay and a job rather than in crossing borders. Many migrants entered legally (for example, on a tourist visa) but went into illegality for varied periods. Prior to EU enlargement, there was no great difference here between Poles and Romanians, and the

incomplete accession procedures in the majority of member states has left it that way. Due to continuing restrictions on free movement for Poles, the difference between Poles and Romanians in terms of their perceived difficulty of settling in are not pronounced. It should be noted that all the informants moved to the PIONEUR countries before enlargement, but the interviews took place after May 2004.

The problems shared by our Polish and Romanian interviewees over formal procedures centred on difficulties reported in association with the respective national bureaucracies – that is, getting papers of all sorts – and finding a regular job. Also, in most countries, they encountered specific regulated labour markets in varied sectors where Eastern European diplomas are not recognized. The formal EU enlargement as yet makes no difference to the perceived relative value of East European education, even if in many cases it compares favourably in quality to that of Western Europe. The differences here with intra-EU West European migrants are thus still striking.

Let us look at Maria's trajectory – that is representative of many others – to breathe life into these findings. Maria is a 26-year-old who came to Italy after finishing business school in Poland. When she could not find a job with Andersen consulting or any other large multinational corporations in Warsaw, she decided to move to Bologna as an au pair to improve her language skills. During that year she met her fiancé. When it became clear that there was still no amazing job awaiting her in Warsaw, she decided to move in with him in his native Southern town. 'And then the hard part began', she says, about the professional path that followed. Her first job was doing some office work in a call centre.

Maria: The job was really great, well paid and very interesting. Yes, they were interested in my working for them, because of my education, foreign languages, skills etc. But it came out that employing me wasn't that simple. I didn't have a residence permit. I just didn't have it. That's why I couldn't be employed.

Interviewer: So you were on a tourist visa . . .

Maria: I was still on a tourist visa then, of course. Well, what to do? The circle closes. As you don't have a residence permit, you can't be employed. You can't be employed as you don't have a residence permit. You won't get a residence permit, if you're not employed.

So after just one month, it turned out that Maria's new employers couldn't keep her. The immigration quotas for secretaries and translators were exhausted, and Maria could not regularize her situation. She then found a position in the sewing room of a garment factory.

> The whole thing started once again. 'Do you have a tax code?' This is the equivalent of Polish NIP. I didn't. [. . .] 'No, we can't do it this way. We can take only the foreigners who already have a residence permit'. So I say 'But how can I get a residence permit, if nobody wants to employ me, goddammit?!' 'I don't know, but we're a cooperative and we can't take you, because we have controls here all the time. If they found you, you know, with your situation . . . I can't employ you. I'm really sorry, because you're a good worker. When you have a residence permit, please come back'. 'If I have a residence permit, I will surely work as a needlewoman'. I thanked him, took my salary and I was left out in the cold again.

Maria next took on a job as an in-house carer for an elderly noblewoman. This time it was her who left the job after a few weeks: 'The countess started to be really troublesome. I even started to fear for my health.' Soon her boyfriend arranged work in a restaurant with a bowling alley for her, still without a work contract. When Maria attempted once more to regularize her situation under Italy's lenient regularization campaigns, asking her employer to apply for the necessary papers, he said: 'What for? You'll be soon in the European Union, so you won't need a residence permit'.

> It was difficult to convince him, but in the end he filled in the application form. I had to pay 800 euros. It was a fee an employer had to pay for an employment, but in reality no employer did it. If a foreigner wanted a job, he wouldn't eat to have the money to buy his freedom. Like in the apartheid, like in the slavery. You were buying your freedom for 800 euros. So I paid it with the rest of the money I had, the savings I brought from Poland . . . It was horrible in that job. I was humiliated, I was treated like an inferior being . . . I was treated in a horrible way, including sexual harassment [pause] . . . in a workplace. But as I really wanted to get that residence permit, I had to endure it.

After having waited for almost one year – continuing to work under terrible conditions, no weekends, no holidays and an unpleasant workplace – Maria found out that her employer had simply ignored the letter he had received from the *questura*. He didn't want to retrospectively pay the taxes for those ten months Maria had already been working with him illegally. After several fights and much back and forth, Maria finally signed a part-time contract with her boss's wife (to work full-time of course), and received her work permit. Now she says:

> At this moment I swear I'm happy. I'm a happy person . . . At this moment I'm consistently going ahead. My main goal now is to find a better job, with a higher salary, to improve a little my standard of living, to find a bigger apartment, to have a normal family. Because everyone wants that.

Maria's case shows how difficult it can be for these external movers to obtain a work/residence permit, even when they are highly skilled. In

general, there are stark differences among the East–West movers in the difficulties they experience when trying to get their papers together, finding housing and trying to find a regular job. These depend clearly on educational/skill level. Moving and settling is much easier for better-educated or higher-skilled people, regardless of whether they are Polish or Romanian.

Net of this factor, moving and settling is easier for Poles, and easiest in Britain. However, (perceived) discrimination is a factor everywhere, even for the Poles. It appears strongest in Italy, followed by Spain and France (where they are more likely to be viewed as 'clandestine'). The majority – even among Poles – feel they are the 'second-class citizens' of Europe, as one Polish high-skilled woman put it. 'We are . . . a lower race, second category . . . We are just Poles, workers', says another, who is in a low-skilled category. They report encountering discrimination in finding jobs and housing, verbal attacks and strange looks, and talking behind their back.

> Maybe if I were English, they wouldn't have treated me like that. If I were German. Generally Poles are treated worse. Poles, Albanians, Romanians, Russians, Ukrainians. These are lower nations. These are poor nations that migrate for economic reasons, to better their standard of living. Englishmen don't need to do it. Dutch and other so-called rich nations neither. That's why the attitude towards us is very racist, very discriminatory in many situations. [High-skilled Polish woman in Italy]

> The worst thing is . . . I have realised how [pause] . . . xenophobic are the people here. I did not wait [expect] that . . . Not so much in professional life, but I say to you also in private life. [High-skilled Polish woman in Spain]

There is, on the whole, less discrimination perceived in Britain (where migrants feel more 'valued') and Germany (where they are often recognized as legitimate 'co-ethnics'). Note that many Polish and Romanian migrants in Germany in fact hold *Aussiedler* status.

> I honestly tell you that I was never hurt since I have been here. I often said . . . I don't know, I hear so many negative issues, so many things . . . [but] I was never hurt. Not at work, not here where I live . . . If in the morning, if I had a very high temperature and I gave Mrs X [her landlady] a call and she came upstairs . . . And I had backache she immediately called the doctor on call, he came, gave me an injection into my back. Things like that. [Low-skilled Romanian man in Germany]

It is interesting to note that feeling discriminated against comes with a certain level of cultural acquaintance and language skills. Once you know your way around, and are able to interact, you are more likely to notice

things. For many of those who have little or no connection with the host society, they note only the superficial friendliness of the host community.

> Respondent: Me personally . . . maybe if I understood the language – I am sure I have been in such a situation before [a discriminatory situation] but I simply did not understand.
> Interviewer: But in such ordinary situations, when you go shopping – do you feel that you are treated differently?
> Respondent: No, no. [Low-skilled Polish woman in Britain]

The fact that jobs pull in migrants regardless of the EU governance structures suggests a more informal labour market governed process than one controlled by a well-managed EU migration system. It is interesting to note, however, that this 'free market' scenario perhaps does not persist over time. Migrants can experience exclusionary reactions from the host society, and inclusionary mechanisms linked to the EU status of the sending country can become more relevant over time, particularly in the difficult settlement process faced by migrants. The East–West migration system is thus a short-term market-based system, limited by longer-term political and sociological effects. Discrimination is a factor of sociological 'exclusion', but it is arguably a secondary phenomenon. Whatever the case, this is certainly not free movement in a unified European space, and nor is it free movement in a policy vacuum: the distinctions in labour market regulation and effects of sociological exclusion between countries of reception suggest that national differences continue to be more important over time than the general EU frame. Negative experiences vary a lot across the sample, although higher-skilled migrants are clearly better off in this respect.

Not all External Movers Move for Economic Reasons; Few Experience Upward Social Mobility and Many Experience Downward Mobility

The inclusion of East and Central European movers in a wider Europe poses questions about the political economy of such migration of the following kind. How does the market work to select people to fill jobs, and what difference do certain policies make? Are they the proverbial 'brightest and best', or are they mismatched to the jobs they find? Is their move a success? And who reaps the net benefits – the country of origin or country of reception, or both? These questions may help us work out whether the market-governed system in question tends to be more 'exploitative' or 'liberational' in its character.

For the market to work (according to theory), migrants have to move with economic motives – that is, calculating in economic terms to reap certain benefits. On the whole, all the Poles, without exception, seem to

have moved on this basis: to buy a house back home, to support their family, to have a better life and so forth. A Polish driver in Britain says:

> Interviewer: Why did you decide to move abroad? What were the reasons?
> Respondent: Above all, money. One says: money cannot bring you luck, but without it the situation was just tragic. Especially when you have a family to support, having no money is terrible. Unfortunately, the situation in Poland was simply awful and it was getting even worse. Therefore I was forced to migrate. [Low-skilled Polish man in Britain]

Among Romanians, only the less-educated could be said to have moved with these kinds of clear material motivations uppermost. Romanians instead reported that they moved: (a) to escape the political situation at home:

> Respondent: We left, left immediately after the revolution. Thus, I could say that there had been political problems before the revolution. You couldn't, could not say what you were thinking, during that time before the revolution. Well, you could not dare to say what you wanted to say because there were . . . You would have immediately been sent to prison.
> Interviewer: And this was a reason to say: 'let us leave'? [Pause] Was this important?
> Respondent: Ahm [pause] . . . In the first place for my husband. Because he was of Romanian origin and he, ahm . . . had problems, some political problems because he often said things which you were not allowed to say and they interrogated him then. He was ordered to come to the police a few days afterwards, and they interrogated him about some issues, you did not know where, ahm, they have heard it from . . . You worked with your colleagues and maybe you said something which for you . . . you didn't notice . . . Those issues weren't so important, not big ones, but the *Securitate* was very harsh . . . especially with Saxons. Such it was. This is the truth. [Low-skilled Romanian woman in Germany]

or (b) for romantic reasons:

> I came here to get married. I met somebody from here and we considered that it would be better for both of us to come and live here. [Low-skilled Romanian woman in Britain]

or (c) or to claim the *Aussiedler* status in Germany:

> It is very clear that if my wife was not, ahm, a German, and we went to any other country, it would be more difficult for us. Well, ahm, what Germany did, well, at least for the *Aussiedler*, but even for others, too . . . I think that there

> are not many countries doing this. I think so! And, ahm, you had to understand some issues because nobody was waiting for you with open arms. I told you at the beginning, as a Romanian I actually didn't have great expectations. It was much harder for the Germans from Romania. Thus, they were, ahm, Germans in Romania and here they are Romanians. [High-skilled Romanian man in Germany]

For high-skilled movers from both countries of origin, the 'utilitarian' reasons for migration were thus often supplemented by secondary motives such as having new cultural experiences, learning a new language, having an adventure and so on.

The migrants thus generally actively *chose* a particular country of reception (that is, there were additional 'cultural' reasons for migrating to one or other PIONEUR country). Low-skilled migrants often 'ended up' in a host country 'by chance' (especially in France), via agencies (especially Britain), because of special citizenship provisions (Germany's *Aussiedler* policy), or because an acquaintance provided them with a job (for example, in Spain, where it is perceived to be easy to get by as an illegal immigrant and ultimately get legalized).

> I knew that it is Europa's only country where it is possible to do . . . the residence, out of [apart from] Italy. In Italy it is possible to do the same thing. They do the papers to you . . . Since there I had the possibility . . . I knew a few friends and I was thinking that I was going to have great help of their part . . . [High-skilled Romanian man in Spain]

In all these cases, where a strict economic 'match' is not taking place between the migrants' expectations and the receiving host country's labour needs, we can expect 'distortions' in the labour market outcomes that will be seen in various negative outcomes, either in terms of the net benefits on either side of the migration, hostility in the host country's reactions, or negative experiences among the migrants.

One indication of these outcomes is the prevalent downward social mobility experienced by migrants. Very few have had clear personal betterment in employment status through their migration, even if they are positive about other aspects such as salary.

A Romanian woman who previously held a skilled job in Romania now works as a kitchen help in an old-people's home. She says:

> I had, ahm, had, ahm, worked at a comprehensive secondary school and a technical veterinary school in Romania. I had a good job. But here I had the possibility to, to send my children to school, each of them to gain a profession. [. . .] It is much better than in Romania. Well, with the salary you get here, you can afford to live, to pay the rent . . . Of course, we, ahm, are working much

> more, ahm, with mechanical instruments. That's it [laughs]. But, ahm, with the salary you earn you can afford to live a much better life [pause] . . . To afford much more than at the time . . . ahm, with the respective salary you got there in Romania. [Low-skilled Romanian woman in Germany]

There are many stories of diplomas not being recognized, and of higher-skilled movers – especially women – taking up unskilled jobs in EU15 countries, such as care for the elderly, working as a kitchen helper and the like. Our very first example above, Maria, is a graphic case. In addition, relative to where they came from, Poles seem more fond of their home country than Romanians and often also more disappointed with the moving experience.

> In Polish culture . . . Poland as a value. Poland as my blood . . . Do you understand? Poland . . . for me the white eagle is the white eagle. I have it always in a jacket label. These are things . . . I feel Polish. I was born Polish and I will die Polish. [High-skilled Polish man in Italy]

Several migrants reported being resigned to Western European class structures, and their inability to move up within them. Having rejoiced over higher pay (compared with Poland or Romania) in the beginning, they soon realized that the cost of living is also higher in the West, and that society is also more stratified than in Central and Eastern Europe (that is, the formerly communist societies they knew). Many migrants thus seemed to experience discrimination not due to their nationality but due to their class position.

> I changed a couple of jobs, but I cannot complain. Of course, the prices are much higher here, but one gets also decent money. You cannot do many things with the money that you get, but at least you have a normal life . . . Ehh, you know these things, of course. Nobody tells you to your face, they are not crazy, come on. [But] You see them . . . I guess . . . They look at you as if you were a piece of shit. I do not know . . . You know how these things go . . . Or maybe not [to the interviewer] 'Cause you are student, you are 'dottore' [short giggle] . . . You are 'dottorato', isn't it? [Low-skilled Romanian man in Italy]

Conversely, the success stories are found among the highly skilled, particularly where they hold 'Western' university degrees. Below, we cite a Romanian medical doctor in the UK with a PhD from Oxford. Similar statements were made by a Polish man who holds a French engineering degree, and by a Romanian with an MBA from Cyprus.

> I found relatively easy a job in a good hospital because, maybe, I had already a PhD degree awarded by the University of Oxford, but I think that it would have

> been different if I would have only my Romanian diploma. I also had to pass a test, called PLAB, in order to have my medical degree recognized here. I am convinced that although the system tries to be impartial, the candidates from the UK are preferred, and even among them there is a hierarchic preference system regarding the school of medicine they graduated. I wanted to find a position in a certain specialisation [plastic surgery] but this was achieved with a lot of effort because a candidate from a foreign country has to be two times or three times better than a candidate from this country. [High-skilled Romanian woman in Britain]

But upward social mobility is also reported by some of those married to a EU15 country national or by some who 'worked their way up':

> So, we've achieved . . . Today, I can say that we've achieved things we would have never achieved in Poland, you understand? [High-skilled Polish man in Italy]

Some do feel recognized in the country of reception:

> In France we are taken into consideration because we are a good working force, aren't we? They need us. We don't have health assurance; we aren't paid for holidays, for vacations and so on. So we are very good workers. And if you make them some problems, they can send you home. So for these reasons, I think we are taken into consideration here. [Low-skilled Romanian man in France]

These findings indicate that the free labour market is working, but in biased ways – cultural affinities and non-economic motivations introduce distortions in the matching process. The system will be inefficient if only the Western educated are successful. It will also be a big problem for the Panglossian ideal promoted by the European Commission if these most talented don't go back, along the lines of the dreaded 'brain drain' outcome. Those who are Eastern educated are most liable to be blocked, undervalued and thus exploited when they move – especially in highly regulated labour markets. For example, to be a plumber in Germany you need several professional exams and membership of the guild of plumbers, and you cannot just open your own company, even with 20 years of work experience. Similar problems exist in other countries.

> Interviewer: Do you believe that . . . that your qualifications has served you to find work here?
>
> Respondent: No, not for nothing . . . To obtain something, I need to be employed at two low works do you understand? And I cannot work as electrician. I know how to do many things, know masonry, know painting, gardening, plastering . . . many things. Many things. But I cannot work. [High-skilled Romanian man in Spain]

High-level skills alone are not enough: having the right (Western) diplomas is a very heavy burden. The disappointment and frustration experienced among the better placed and qualified (such as our first case, Maria) suggest that the matching process is not so efficient. Their downward mobility suggests that much talent and human capital is being wasted. East–West migrants are more likely to find themselves in exploitative scenarios, rather than ones in which they fully benefit from their move, even in an integrated EU.

Cultural 'Affinity' is no Guarantee of Low Discrimination

We might expect that perceived cultural similarity ('affinity', that is, between 'Latin' countries) would tend to lead to less experience of discrimination. Decades of sociopsychological research on the so-called similarity–affinity hypothesis have supported this claim. However, this is not the case with the Polish and Romanian migrants interviewed for the PIONEUR project. Cultural similarity between migrant and host population is not a good predictor of levels of perceived discrimination. As noted above, levels of perceived discrimination were highest in Italy and Spain. Yet the perceived (cultural) similarity of Poles and Romanians is also highest in these countries.

> I am not sure . . . With Italians, well, they are a little bit like us . . . I do not know, I mean, Latins, you know, not cold and rigid like the Nordics . . . maybe. They are more open, Italians, Latins . . . and then they like football, like us. [Low-skilled Romanian man in Italy].

> Spanish people [have] . . . an extraordinary similarity with the Romanian personality . . . They are Europa extremes and so similar as the attitude in front of the life. [They are both] fighters, proud . . . but open minded, the same thing! It's for this reason so many Romanians come here, because they feel very good . . . Not like France . . . The mentality [here] is identical. The temperament. [High-skilled Romanian woman in Spain]

Yet the feeling of discrimination expressed in both Spain and particularly Italy is a constant refrain.

> People look at us as if we grew up in Africa. . . . Romania is like . . . banana-republic . . . and they are scared that we are some kind of savages and that we are going to cheat on them . . . Let me give you an example. For instance when we were looking for a flat. 'You are from Romania? No, thank you, there are no flats for you'. [Low-skilled Romanian man in Italy]

On the other hand, considerable cultural differences are perceived to exist between Romanians and Poles and the Germans or British, with France somewhere in-between.

Interviewer: Perhaps you tell something about these 'cultural differences'. How is it? Are Polish and German mentalities different or are they similar? How do you see it?
Respondent: Different I think. Poles are more open-minded I think. And Germans are more closed and concentrated on themselves and not that spontaneous either. [. . .] That's a barrier.
Interviewer: Are there still other cultural differences?
Respondent: [After a pause] . . . There are cultural differences, when church is the point. At our place in Poland church belongs to the everyday life of an average Pole I would say. I don't say every Pole but average Pole. But here it looks differently. Ah, you know in the church . . . Who goes to church here? Nobody. And young people . . . not at all. [High-skilled Polish woman in Germany]

Englishmen are nice but it's very shallow and I don't like that. For me it's too cold and that's why it's difficult to integrate. [High-skilled Romanian woman in Britain]

Yet less discrimination at work and in private life is consistently reported in Britain and Germany, as mentioned above. A possible explanation for this phenomenon can be found in social identity theory (Tajfel 1981). Once a respondent feels that his/her in-group (say Poles) and his/her out-group (say Spanish) are similar, an automatic psychological mechanism called 'in-group favouritism' comes into play. The in-group strives to distinguish itself from the out-group and evaluate its own group favourably in order to gain a positive group identity. Where groups are perceived as different, they don't even bother comparing one another.

Among our interviewees, there was none of the hostility reported in connection with competition over jobs with existing ethnic and immigrant minorities in post-colonial countries like France or Britain, something that has been picked up in other studies (Garapich 2008). One peculiar finding from the data, however, was a 'Britain effect': external movers in Britain are, in line with the native population, more sceptical of the EU.

Circular Mobility is on the Rise

Many of our interviewees – especially among the Poles – stated that they would like to return home after some years in the COR. Once they have earned enough money, they plan to buy a home there, or be with their families. There could be a connection with the finding that Poles also seem to be more fond of their home country than Romanians:

Well, every Pole builds himself a house in Poland and we're building one as well . . . Yes, it's almost finished, but sometimes we wonder if we need it. Our children were born here . . . [Low-skilled Polish man in Italy]

> Now everything is a little bit different . . . In fact, I am already here for so long but the whole time I am missing my home and . . . practically I have decided that ahm [pause] . . . that I won't stay here for good, that I just want return to Poland and simply live there. I want to live there because, because I can't imagine to stay here, ahm [pause] . . . and all the time and to miss Poland and my home. [High-skilled Polish woman in Germany]

The main element that makes a move back home feasible seems to be economic development at home. Here, it is clear that the Polish and Romanian migrants are talking of different time spans:

> Probably in Poland the things go better in five years. [Things] are going to change and we will be able to return. [High-skilled Polish woman in Spain]

Conversely Romanians, who face a disadvantaged mobility scenario, and are not likely to necessarily be the 'brightest and best' (because of distortions in market selection), are more likely to stay. Many Romanians are not considering going home at all or at least not in the near future.

> If the life level is like here, I will return in Romania, of course. But it is not possible for the moment I think. Maybe after ten years, even more . . . [Low-skilled Romanian woman in France]

Yet the migrants' dream of quickly making money abroad in order to then go home and be able to afford a better life can be found in our data too (see also Anghel 2008).

> I do not know now [who are] the Romanian people who come, but I imagine that they do not come to remain. They come to work and to go away, return to Romania. For what I hear this way, that I know of Romania, they all go away to work, the house to be done, for . . . to fix up, I what I know, but not . . . to remain, none. [High-skilled Romanian woman in Spain]

Also, circular mobility across borders (for example, Poland/Germany) is a well-documented phenomenon. Many Poles living near the border work in Germany for several months a year 'in order to be able to stay at home'. Mobility of this kind is now becoming a routine feature of the European migration systems – for both Poles and Romanians (see also Okólski 2001; Morawska 2002).

> How do you imagine this work? To work for a month and then return and then again work for a month isn't it? [High-skilled Polish woman in Germany]

> I and my wife think that nowadays we have to be ready to move, not to stay in the same place for long time. For example, next year we will probably have to go to Brussels because of her job. [High-skilled Romanian man in France]

There are counter-examples of 'classic' immigrants, however: movers who clearly want to stay in the COR, generally to 'grant their children a better education/future'.

> I came for another motive, principally for my son. That I want that he has a free life and there he is not going to have it . . . in a hundred years possibly [laughs] or less, I do not know it but already I will not have age to see it [laughs] . . . I prefer that my son lives through a life . . . normally. There he is not going to have it, at the moment. In the economic sense he had it very well in Romania, very well . . . but not a better future. [High-skilled Romanian woman in Spain]

Many migrants see the price of their mobility as too high, and they eventually want to go back home. There is a high level of dissatisfaction on the topic of the enlargement and all the official rhetoric about 'becoming European again'. Migrants only 'did it for their families', or to 'save up for a better life when they come back home'. For these reasons, few admit to regretting the choice, and a strong work ethic keeps them going. The idea is to shut up, do your work, and leave as soon as you can.

These findings emphasize the increasing development of a circular system of mobility in Europe, rather than one-way immigration; it is more pronounced for Poles than for Romanians. Circular mobility, however, appears to be far from the optimistic predictions envisaged by the European Commission. Rather it appears driven by the short-term exploitation in the West of this labour force, reinforced by formal and informal barriers to settlement that persist and the sense that it will be better for all if they do not stay in the long run. The idealized scenario of a 'larger and more open labour market' appears to be unconvincing in the light of the mismatch of talent to jobs. However, longer-term developmental benefits might be accruing to the sending country because of the return mobility of migrants and their financial circulation. This is less the case for Romania, where it is more likely to be a case of brain drain. Overall, these new migrants find themselves in an exploitative relation with Western Europe, rather than one that benefits both sides as mainstream economists and EU policy makers have hoped.

CONCLUSIONS

> There's a kind of cliché here about the foreigner who profits, who's not fair to the game, and so on. So, if we can show that we have 100 000 Euros [in our pocket] to spend on a car and a big house, we do it. Without any hesitation. To show 'my Polishness'. . . I'd even put a flag on my car! In that way, I hope I'll be able to put out of my head the fact that somebody who hears my accent thinks I'm some kind of parasite. A crook and so on. If I could bring something to

> this country. Hire two, three people, or even more . . . So I must 'prove' something. When I prove it, I'll probably feel better about myself. This is what has happened to me in my professional life. Maybe I've tried to prove too much. I suspect this willingness to . . . to show that I'm better, didn't help me in my professional career. [High-skilled Polish man in France]

The voices of these Eastern movers do not sound much like those of Western intra-EU movers resonating in the rest of this book. While also differing from classic non-European migrants, both Romanians and Poles seem relegated still to secondary roles in the European labour market, that belie the formal EU citizen rights that they now have, or will have one day soon.

The new East–West migration system in Europe appears, in the short term at least, to be market-led, permitting short-term entrance and circular mobility, and to be operational regardless of EU attempts to govern it. It was well established before the first accession of May 2004, and operates for countries both inside and outside the EU (see also Düvell 2005). This applies as much to the highly skilled and educated, although for them very different channels of movement and recruitment may apply. But it is an incomplete market of free movement, that does not resemble the well-governed scenario of EU theorists and policy makers, largely because sharp national differences persist in the reception of migrants, and longer-term barriers of exclusion – both institutional and informal – still come into play. Where a more openly governed free market does exist (such as in Britain), the economy still offers little incentive for long-term stay and settlement; it takes, gives only short-term benefits to migrants, then spits them out. Britain, as always, offers an alternative in the European context, that works because of its economic asymmetry with the rest of the continent. Others achieve similar outcomes by different means: they maintain more obvious formal barriers, while cashing in wherever possible on informal labour markets (which are more formally recognized than in Britain) such as agriculture, domestic work, construction, small and medium-sized enterprises and low-end service sector work (see Samers 2004; Favell 2008b). There is a kind of equilibrium here, maintaining a stable system. In both Britain and other countries, it is generally an exploitative market, rather than a nakedly exclusionary one – except perhaps in the South of Europe, where other cruder kinds of discriminatory mechanisms are used to keep large numbers of new informal migrants out of society.

On the other hand, circular migration is taking hold, and it has some positive developmental aspects. But the likelihood is that Western European economies are going to continue to enjoy the benefits of an ethnically 'orientalized' concentric and hierarchical system relating East to West populations, even for those who are now full 'formal' members

of the Western club, with the same free movement rights and opportunities on paper. There are short-term benefits to be had by national economies from this system, but the mismatch and waste of East and Central European talent and human capital – that is encouraged to move, but then kept in secondary labour market positions – risks being of dubious utility to Europe as a whole in the long run.

Pioneers of European Integration

Citizenship and Mobility in the EU

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