

GUEST EDITORS' INTRODUCTION

ENCOUNTERS OF THE POSTSOCIALIST KIND: THE MOVEMENT OF GOODS AND IDENTITIES WITHIN AND BEYOND THE FORMER SOCIALIST WORLD

Lale Yalçın-Heckmann

Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Halle/Saale, Germany

&

Hülya Demirdirek

University of Victoria, BC Canada

The focus of this special issue had been central to a panel with the same title which we organized within the European Association of Social Anthropology (EASA) biannual conference in Vienna in 2004. Some of the authors included here were part of that panel while others were recruited subsequently. Our point of departure was to follow in the footsteps of the ethnographic approach that is critical of transitology and to explore the micro-processes of postsocialist transformations from an anthropological perspective (cf. Burawoy and Verdery 1999; Hann, Humphrey and Verdery 2002). Although we share most of the criticisms put forward by these authors to the effect that transitology, path dependency and shock therapy theories and models do not adequately explain the uncertainties and ambiguities of transition – especially at the level of micro-processes – we sought to encourage all the participants to think beyond these ambiguities and uncertainties to see whether they could discern any structures emerging a decade and a half after the end of socialism. This critical approach is certainly shared by others who recommend going beyond the concept of “postsocialism” and suggest looking for common structures and processes as well as other parallels with developments elsewhere in the world (Peters 2006; Hann 2006). The essays in this issue are intended to provide illustrations of this critical anthropological approach to postsocialism, remaining aware of the tensions associated with continued usage of the term but at the same time evaluating its usefulness critically.

Another point of emphasis that we highlight in the anthropology of postsocialism – with a focus on micro-processes – is the concern with everyday life, encounters of various types and face-to-face relations. The essays in this special issue are concerned not only with encounters between members of the former socialist systems and people, goods and systems from the non-socialist world, the West, market economies and capitalist democracies; they also consider encounters with their own societies, their local fellow citizens, their former

Soviet ‘brothers’ and ‘sisters’. Hence, the common question posed by the contributions here is not only how people encounter, react to and adjust to the new market conditions in this period of – prolonged – exit, but also how they encounter the conditions, people and objects of the former ‘ours’ – in other words, encounters between people who were part of the same social and economic space and everyday life.

Markets and the mobility of goods and persons are the main areas of encounter that we explore in this issue. These seem to have changed crucially after the dissolution of the socialist system. Socialist markets involved the delivery of goods and movement of people across huge distances, of course primarily within the socialist space, but they were centrally organized and controlled more or less closely, depending mainly on the type of goods. Furthermore, the peripheral or central positionality of the receiver and the supplier necessitated clear rules and norms, which in turn could be circumvented in equally well-defined ways. The emergence of postsocialist markets brings new types of encounters, risk taking and knowledge and new forms of relationships between the former and new participants in these markets. Not only are the goods themselves new, they are also differently accessed and distributed, sometimes requiring new routes and destinations. In “path dependency” models already established networks, shared values and interests are givens that shape the institutional framework for determining social and economic action (Burawoy and Verdery 1999: 6). Articles in this issue show that paths in space could have a particular significance that differs from the paths assumed in “path dependency” arguments. Although transnational movements in the aftermath of socialism may have modified the experience of national borders, geographical proximity might also have influenced the direction of social and economic exchange. The existence of direct borders between various nation states has implications – as is clearly illustrated by several of the papers here – for barter relationships,

power brokerage, infrastructures and administrative structures. Paths in space, as Don Kalb contends, can coincide with the geopolitical interests of the particular political powers in promoting certain outcomes in countries with shared borders, as with the case of Western interest in Poland even before the dissolution of the socialist regime (Kalb 2002: 328). Indeed, exploration of the spatial linkages illustrated in the ethnographic accounts contained in these articles enables us to identify intermediary and micro-level formations, such as humanitarian aid trips and the shuttle trade between Greece and Bulgaria discussed here by Georgios Agelopoulos. Moreover, the type and nature of such spatial linkages can influence the process of incorporation into larger-scale formations, e.g. whether the movement of goods and people becomes part of capitalist flows and the degree to which they become part of them. As discussed by Michael Burawoy and Katherine Verdery (1999: 2), innovation is only one possible response to unstable transition conditions; other possible outcomes are reversions to or ruptures in the previous spatial linkages. The distances may still be as vast as in the former system, but journeys are often more cumbersome and risky even if alternative routes and strategies have proliferated.

Lale Yalçın-Heckmann's own research illustrates just what we mean by these new encounters with the old. Azerbaijanis had participated in vegetable trading within the former Soviet Union since the late 1980s (Derlugian 2005: 150-154; Humphrey 2002: 90-93). This was due to the opening up of market opportunities and the availability of state-supported infrastructure for the transportation of certain fruits and vegetables to markets in Russia. Yalçın-Heckmann's informants from a small rural settlement in western Azerbaijan, known for its vegetable production, report having taken persimmon (*karalok*), eggplants, cucumbers and even tomatoes to Russian markets as far away as Moscow and St. Petersburg (the then Leningrad), at the time by train or on lorries. Towards the end of the 1980s and early 1990s, when the entire economic and political system was not only becoming more liberal but was also breaking down, some risk-hardened and entrepreneurial villagers and village 'elites' (primarily those in administrative and technical positions of kolkhoz and sovkhoz structures) apparently took other kinds of products (primarily alcohol) – with much higher risks but also huge profits – to far-away Russian markets, again transported by train. All of this trade seems to have been organized through the use of still functioning 'private links' based on friendship, kinship and patronage between state employees (border guards, railway officers and administrators of the sovkhoz-

run wine factory) and individuals who were able to offer them goods, services, money or favours. This period is remembered as being a time of 'rip-offs' when many such entrepreneurs – who knew exactly with whom it would be possible to cooperate – made 'loads of money'. This is something that Yalçın-Heckmann was able to observe on wedding videos made in those years, when money – hundreds of rubles in notes – was symbolically showered over the heads of the bride and the groom at weddings.

The border regime between Azerbaijan and the surrounding republics started to change significantly during the early 1990s; first, in 1991, came the independence of one southern Caucasian Republic after the other; then, the borders became contested due to wars within and between some of these new republics. Now that tensions have calmed down (even if only through ceasefire agreements), the border to the north of Azerbaijan has become a 'difficult' one, as travelers say, because of the politically unsettled situation in Chechnya, Dagestan and Ingushetia – all within the new Russian Federation. Those traveling by train via Derbend or on the motorway through Georgia and then Vladikavkaz need to organize connections and personal contacts at many more international control posts, checkpoints etc. over which it is not always clear who has authority or power and whether those stopping the vehicles are doing so on a formal or 'informal' basis (warlords, bandits etc.). Hence the conveyance of goods, especially vegetables in need of rapid transportation, has become risky, complex and costly. Even so, the appeal of markets in Moscow and St. Petersburg is stronger and continues to draw more and more people. Many young men with some education but no job are willing to take the risk if they know how to organize the transportation and of course have the necessary trade links and know-how in Moscow. The economic difficulties at home, lack of jobs, rising consumption pressures as well as the urge and imagination to escape declining modernity – i.e. what they see as the deterioration in the social, material and cultural services and infrastructure in their localities – all contribute to this strong desire to engage in such trade. While the possibilities for selling goods and making healthy profits continue to be alluring to many men and some women too, the trade has become transnational, relations international, their identities that of non-citizen and their encounters multinational and racialised.

Trajectories

The papers in this issue seek to explore questions such as these: to what degree are new types of knowledge necessary in new markets and new market relations? What sorts of values and norms are

being created, reshaped or challenged through these new encounters within and beyond the postsocialist markets? How are new identities, relationships and communities created through the goods exchanged, encounters made and connections established or redefined?

In tackling the above questions most of the papers here historically contextualize the mobility discussed in their ethnographic accounts. The common pattern that emerges – whether from people's recollections of legal and structural arrangements under socialism, the history of an object or narratives of mobility after the fall of the socialist regimes – the common pattern has been to engage in intensive, short-term, opportunistic and hectic activity, often involving performative creativity yet hardly sustainable through time. It manifests itself in recently 'rediscovered' and revived ethnic identities, the formation of new diasporas, the exchange of goods and objects, new trade routes and new means of making money. The markets or shuttle trade (as in the case of Mongolia discussed by Morten Pedersen and between Greece and Bulgaria discussed by Agelopoulos in this issue) disappear as they are subsumed by larger capitalist flows. Migration flows tend to take place in more formalized structures and to be subject to stricter controls, as in the Moldovan, North Caucasian and Central Asian examples discussed here (Demirdirek, Heintz, Popov and Sancak). Despite such institutionalization and integration into transnational circuits the interdependence between the formal and informal prevails. In some instances we see that the informal serves the needs of the formal and the legal (as in the case of Turkish bureaucratic circles using dubious Moldovan connections in order to promote economic and political relations, see Demirdirek in this issue) or the institutionalized needs its 'other' (as in the case of the Mongolian drunkard market serving as an 'alter-ego' for the other market, see Pedersen in this issue). All this does not mean that formalization and institutionalization is a smooth process. The power differentials as well as the contested nature and overlap between private and state-run interests circumvent this process of formalization.

The processes which affect the flow of migration and the return of diasporas evolve in a similar manner. The 'push' and 'pull' factors have usually been quite powerful when borders are first opened, as in the case of Kazakh migrants coming from China (Sancak), the Krasnodar Pontic Greeks migrating to Greece (Popov), and Krasioties Greeks migrating to Bulgaria (Agelopoulos, all in this issue). Elsewhere in the world, just as Mexico, for example, embraces its migrant population's interests in the USA as a way of obtaining support for nationalist

ends at home, the established nation states open their arms to diasporic populations either without realizing the consequences or with a short-term trajectory.¹ As the process of restructuring legal and political institutions and regimes continues, the constellation and contestation of power and influence in national and international politics become visible. Anton Popov's paper, for example, illustrates how EU membership dictates adopting stricter visa regulations for countries with a shared cultural heritage, as in the case of Greece welcoming Greek diaspora populations worldwide.

Continuity is a leitmotif throughout all the papers, with ruptures experienced as both devastating and liberating. Ideas about trade – whether embodied in the legacy of communist notions of 'speculantee' (see Reeves and Popov) or in the socialist practices surrounding outdoor activities which promote the commoditization of leisure activity in the new capitalist market (see Kvasnička, all in this issue) – all remind us of the interplay between past and present. Particular forms of continuity, especially the way in which Mongolia's markets operated differently compared to the rest of the socialist landscape (see Pedersen in this issue), might tempt us to echo the contentious question of whether the socialist system could be understood as state capitalism (Cliff 1974; Haynes 2002; Resnick and Wolff 2002). The dominant role of the state in controlling the production and distribution of goods which are also produced for and within the capitalist system leads us to ask this question.

In his contribution on outdoor cultures in the Czech Republic, Tomáš Kvasnička asserts that outdoor equipment had to be produced by individual consumers and outdoor enthusiasts themselves since the state did not allow access to capitalist markets. Yet it was precisely these skills and tastes acquired through individual production that enabled the same enthusiasts – who practiced outdoor sports in collective structures – to become the first successful entrepreneurs in the postsocialist market economy. By taking into account the existence of these discrepancies and the cohabitation of capitalist and socialist formations within the old and new systems, we might be able to better uncover the role played by agency and structural limitations in the incorporation of such petty entrepreneurship into global markets. Going beyond these general trajectories of the contributions included in this issue, we have grouped the more specific themes dealt with under the two headings of 'Markets' and 'Mobility'.

I. Markets

One emerging issue here can be described as **the creativity and force of markets**. The question

which Monica Heintz and Tomáš Kvasnička explore in their contributions is: is there such a strong urge to consume and if so, why? Why does Heintz's Moldovan woman informant tell her that she is ready to take the risk of being deported from Italy and then having her passport taken away for the next three years if she can only go there for some time to earn enough money to build her house? This compelling question leads us to reconsider whether this urge should be explained as an attempt to make up for the consumption deficit throughout the socialist years. Alternatively, is it simply the same process as in other non-socialist but economically less developed parts of the world, i.e. the desire to consume and to be free – and a member of the free market system – through consumption (cf. Berdahl 2005; Rausing 2002)? Or, as is the case elsewhere in the industrial world, does consumption become an expression of identity (c.f. Miller 1987)?

Kvasnička explores how certain ideas and patterns of consumption are intricately related to lifestyles and how they could fit, change and re-mould themselves according to major ideological and political/economic changes. He looks at outdoor activities and the 'culture of outdoors' and traces how these changed from their origins in romantic national periods through the socialist years and into the postsocialist period. By illustrating how the production of, access to and organization of the equipment used functioned in the socialist era, he is able to track both the continuities and discontinuities. He offers an original analysis of the success enjoyed by small-scale producers of outdoor equipment, who followed communal and egalitarian principles under the socialist regime but had no difficulty converting into producers of the now fashionable outdoor lifestyle products under the new capitalist system, hence promoting individualist and meritocratic values through the consumption of outdoor fashion.

Morten Pedersen, who is also fascinated by the process of how markets transform goods and people, studies urban markets in Mongolia and finds them to have specific qualities that differentiate them from those in other postsocialist countries. The Mongolian people were excluded from markets not only under the socialist regime but also in the pre-socialist period, when the country was under the colonial rule of the Manchu Empire. This exercised complete control over the various sections of the population, not allowing them to engage in trade and exchange relations through markets. Nevertheless, the Mongolians still had a market existence in pre-revolutionary times, although these markets were at the fluid borders between nomadic and sedentary groups. Pedersen initially examines the emergence and functioning of the first large black market which

came into being on the outskirts of Ulaanbaatar soon after independence. This was famous for its seemingly total lack of organization, despite apparently having some implicit structures of power and influence. He indicates that even as this market became increasingly formalised throughout the 1990s, a second black market was opened in the capital – this time still more orderly and organised – and became the busiest and largest. Even if both of these markets are black markets, and hence disdained by the new rich, customers praised the second market for its order and cleanliness. The sellers, however, measured the two black markets by another criterion: for them, the new market was 'private' and under the control of many influential people – akin to a mafia – , whereas the first market was seen as having been 'public', more or less accessible to everyone; one trader described this as everyone being able to "do what they wanted themselves. No one was eating us from behind." In his discussion Pedersen draws attention to the existence of the 'private' in the 'public', i.e. the greater equality offered by the older market through the entrepreneurial (private) freedom which guaranteed everyone the opportunity to do what they liked.

While discussing the creativity and formation of markets Pedersen also touches on the relationship between **gender and markets**. He shows how the creativity of the market allows for different values and significances to be attached to different goods which are sold on the market; furthermore, the selling of these goods is classified according to gender and social background. If a young woman from a middle-class background starts selling vodka on the market, for instance, this is approached with ambivalence even if she herself may be deriving personal satisfaction and pleasure from her trade. The story of this young woman is also quite revealing when it comes to the emergence of 'vendor corporations' and 'collectives', which organise themselves so as to monopolise access to as well as the selling and prices of certain commodities in the 'private' black market; these systems are not gender-neutral but nor are they gender-exclusive.

In addition to the gendering of commodity and trade roles, Madeleine Reeves argues in her contribution that the **movement** of bodies across borders is **gendered** too. In her discussion of border-crossing activities on the Uzbek-Tajik border in the Farghana valley, Reeves tells us how Uzbek women were horrified by the idea that they might be body-searched by Kyrgyz border guards and how they tried to avoid this 'gendered remapping of territorial transgression'.

The second group of themes, which we turn to below, has to do with the (interconnected) mobility

and migration of goods and people. Reflecting on the increased **scale of trade and new migrations**, Heintz writes that remittances from migrants living abroad are put at three times the level of the state budget in Moldova. Another such striking example was the market in Sadakhlo, which formed part of the local illegal informal economy and existed throughout the 1990s until about 2006 on the border between Georgia and Armenia. The then Armenian finance minister is quoted as saying in 2001 that traders at this market alone 'were doing business worth between 300 and 400 million US dollars a year – equivalent to Armenia's entire budget revenue.'ⁱⁱ Hülya Demirdirek describes how 70% of the working-age female population of a Gagauz village in Moldova is abroad, primarily in Turkey. Hence we are talking about transactions and movements of goods and people on a massive scale that cannot be ignored. The scale of trade and migration has in fact become part of local models of 'normality'. In her discussion of how the local villagers justify 'illegal' migration, i.e. migration to other countries without the legally required and obtained documents, Heintz argues that the scale of such migration causes the phenomenon to be viewed as part of 'normality', requiring no specific justification or moral judgment.

II. Mobility

All the contributions to this issue relate to the fact that these are **new states with new borders**. In Anton Popov's discussion of the Pontic Greeks' efforts to acquire documents to migrate to Greece, the state is imagined as an obstacle and limiting factor which people try to surmount and circumvent in order to migrate. This differs from attitudes and imaginations that envisage the state as a provider and polity commanding loyalty. How can we explain this kind of encounter with the state? Is it because of Soviet legacies that the state is perceived as a foreign and distant body – especially when personified in apparatchiks, rayon leaders or customs officers – which should best be avoided? Or is it that people have given up on the state and no longer have the same expectations? Popov links such ideas on the changing nature of the state to changing citizenship regimes and new identity constructions. His discussion brings out the way in which **migration and the positioning of the state** are interlinked. In Popov's paper migrants move through transnational space and this movement has an impact on the ethnic or civic character of the state. Popov uses the term **transnational migration** for the kind of movement that he is describing between the North Caucasus and Greece, and Demirdirek joins him in defining the social space created between Moldova and Turkey through the movement of Turks and Gagauz as **transnational space** (see also Glick Schiller 2004).

Can the exploration of transnational space that grew out of migration movements in other regions of the world help us to understand the phenomenon of migration in the former Soviet space? Popov argues, for instance, that transnational Pontic Greeks in his area of research (Krasnodar), in common with examples from other transnationalism studies, hardly think of themselves as 'transnational' and underline 'their attachment to particular territorialized nations' because they 'routinely deal with the nation-state' as illegals in another country (e.g. Greece in Popov's case), 'while their national, ethnic and cultural identities are constantly being renegotiated.' Hence he correctly stresses that the nation-state continues to be a point of reference even if the space and movement have become transnational.

Madeleine Reeves' contribution also examines the **movement of people and objects** across former Soviet borders. In her analysis of the movement of objects across borderlands, Reeves is concerned with 'the way objects are used to navigate postsocialist transformations'. She points out the disjunction between how things circulate and how people think they should circulate. Underlining the border regimes' inherent character of promoting closure when in fact openness is needed for the national and local societies and economies, she looks at a region with multiple international boundaries. The boundaries in this region have gained new political meaning, especially due to international security concerns as well as the economic and political realities after the dissolution of the former Soviet Union. In former times these had few local or economic functions, since the Soviet state could implement infrastructural measures and policies such as building canals across the republics' borders. The contemporary visa regimes affect people's daily lives and mobility. Encounters with the law are often experienced as encounters with corrupt – albeit thankfully so, for practical purposes – border officials.

Reeves talks about the discursive navigation of these tensions, where gossip, jokes and daily opinions regarding one's own and the other's polities, border regimes and economies are exchanged. People are also concerned about material goods, their quality and movement, and they feel that their wealth is being siphoned off at the borders. She claims, however, that there is a difference between notions about the flow and movement of goods and those concerning the movement of dead bodies. "The unburied corpse is...a multiply unstable object – polluting and tormented, collapsing social relations until harmony can be restored in the act of burial." With her case studies of transporting live and dead

bodies, she shows how local people develop strategies for creating space for action and interconnecting across otherwise impassable borders, and she illustrates where these strategies fail and how the failure is interpreted. Reeves points out that above and beyond open accusations of ethnic and national discrimination and confrontation, one could attribute the impassability of borders to their multiple historical and social meanings and practices; what is more, to some actors they are simply illegitimate since they hinder access to ancestral burial ground. Such are the ways of encountering the state...

The movement of people and goods across new borderlands is inherently linked to the production and assertion of **new identities** – a theme that is central to some of the contributions in this issue. The authors ask how these new encounters and opportunities for travel, immigration and trade affect the creation of new identities. Popov asserts, for instance, the state has some agency here as it develops techniques for documenting and manipulating identities in order to permit or deny travel and immigration. Yet agency also accrues to individuals who ‘discover’ their long forgotten or publicly ‘unused’ ethnic identities, as they develop strategies for acquiring and documenting these ethnic identities. This can even lead to a commoditization of these documented identities in which some documents are devalued as they are forged or ‘bought’ in order to immigrate to Greece and hence become a fake proof of authentic ethnic belonging. Furthermore, ethnic organizations seem to have taken up the role of mediators in these encounters between visa applicants and Greek immigration bureaucracy by filling out forms for applicants, providing them with information about the procedures or about coach firms traveling between Greece and Russia, hence arousing suspicions that they are ‘trading’ in ethnic identity in exchange for the membership fees that they require for these and other services.

Georgios Agelopoulos also talks about ‘the revival of Greek identity’ through contacts between the Krasiotas, a community which was divided between Bulgaria and Greece. Agelopoulos sees this stress on ‘revival’ as being linked rather closely to specific factors – for instance, it was particularly evident among families where both parents were Krasiotas (of which there were few) and among those living in a historically developed community on the Greek side. However, the extent, nature and probably the reciprocal quality of these contacts as well as the gradual improvement in the Bulgarian economy all seem to have contributed to the fading of the Greek identity revival and, in fact, a decline in relations of all kinds. As Agelopoulos describes it, people changed their ideas about their ‘cousins’ in Bulgaria.

New identities are also produced in encounters with **new diasporas**: the contributions by Anton Popov and Meltem Sancak discuss the repatriation of ‘potential citizens’ from among diasporas. Here, encounters between the ‘homeland populations’ and the others, the ‘diasporas’, have the potential both to convert the repatriated diaspora into citizens and challenge concepts of citizenship and notions of belonging and identity. Both Sancak and Popov show how policies aimed at encouraging the return of repatriates could result in a backlash of sentiment for national belonging.

Sancak describes the repatriation of Kazaks from different parts of the world (but mostly from China) and their settlement in a specific locality. In this process, where newcomers are integrated into and adjust themselves to a new country, albeit with co-nationals, any discontent with or challenge to the existing social, economic and political conditions seems to be articulated in discursive strategies along the lines of “are you a real Kazak?” Sancak argues that neither the origins of the newcomers nor their ‘status’ as Kazaks was in question. Rather, ‘how Kazaks should be’ was the issue at stake. Traits like hospitality, traditions such as ornamenting the house with handmade felt carpets and decorated chests, or Islamic customs like not drinking alcohol and having separate graveyards for Muslims and people from other religions could all become objects and arenas of contestation for this question of ‘how’. Hence tradition, language, attire and even cleanliness standards in housekeeping could all be objectified in order to challenge the right to belong. This links interestingly with the point raised by Reeves, who cites similar tensions between persons from two different ethnic groups (Uzbeks and Tajiks) and notes how the frustration about the lack of cooperation between Uzbek border guards and Tajik passengers was attributed to Uzbek/Tajik incompatibility by her informants. Reeves sees this as a questioning of the legitimacy of the border, rather than simply as ethnic confrontation. Faced with inequalities of wealth, status, differences in language and the difficulties of securing their livelihood, the Kazaks in Sancak’s study use similar discursive strategies of ‘othering’ (e.g. Kazaks from China criticize local Kazaks on the grounds that ‘they have become like Russians’, while local Kazaks reproach those arriving from China for being ‘backward’) despite the fact that the conflicting groups are of the same ethnicity. Sancak concludes that even shared histories of suppression and a common national background and ideology, normally part of the conceptual bundle that goes with being an ‘imagined community’ (Anderson 1983), may not ensure smooth co-existence. Sharing day-to-day life and social space opens up as much of a potential for

fission and differentiation as it does for convergence and assimilation.

Agelopoulos, who looks at the different phases of relations between Krasioties Greeks living in Greece and Bulgaria, presents another account of encountering diasporas. The difference between the diaspora and 'homeland' encounters in Agelopoulos' account and those described by Popov is that the former are between communities from neighbouring countries. The contacts and relationships have been organized around and embedded in historical and personal relationships in the form of divided families. While the Pontic population described here by Popov was being deported from the North Caucasus during Stalin's repression, the Krasioties community discussed by Agelopoulos could at least correspond through letters in the period 1926-1939 despite being split between Greece and Bulgaria. Visits again became possible among the latter from the early sixties onwards. They intensified after 1991 and especially during Bulgaria's economic and infrastructural crisis; a 'food supplies mission' with humanitarian aid was then organized from Greece for the diaspora in Bulgaria. This humanitarian aid – organized at the grassroots level but certainly enjoying institutional backing – gave rise to further kinds of contacts and encounters: illegal seasonal work, business and tourism. The first of these was quite rare and usually organized through personal links. Tourism occurred on a reciprocal basis, with people visiting in both directions (i.e. unlike the North Caucasus Pontic relationships). Business partnerships also drew on some form of kinship link, and they ideally took place between 'cousins'. Eventually, these business connections seem to have become more institutionalized and formalized. The incorporation of Bulgaria into the world market and capitalist economy led to a decrease in and ultimately the demise of petty trade. The difference compared to the Pontic case can thus also be attributed to structural disparities between the countries in question, i.e. the gulf between Greece and the North Caucasus is huge compared to that between Greece and Bulgaria. Hence, physical proximity and neighbourly relations are not the only important factors in the maintenance or decline of contacts and exchanges.

Hülya Demirdirek highlights how the ethnic consciousness of the Gagauz-Moldovan temporary migrants and their tendency to see themselves and their employers in a more individualized manner obscure the social inequalities originating from class distinctions. She argues migration and newly created transnational space facilitate relations between the members of different classes who would not otherwise encounter each other if they were to be in

the same national space. In the case of university-educated rural Gagauz women, these relations are manifested in their employment as domestics by upper middle-class Turks. Occupying such a role, being employed by 'free-market-oriented, modern Turks', is made possible as a result of migration and neoliberal trends. In the case of male Turkish entrepreneurs in Moldova, the meeting of different classes gives rise to a transgression of moral boundaries: a rural/urban Turkish lower middle-class and Gagauz/Moldovan middle class substratum is created with an amalgamation of both sets of values. Being part of new transnational circuits, the members of this new substratum may be a potential source of influence on economic and political affairs.

The different attitudes towards migration to Western Europe show both similarities and differences between the **new and old ideas about migration**. Heintz's contribution includes comparative points about how migratory movements arouse ambivalent feelings and opinions regarding migrants and their reasons for migrating. In Romania, once the prospects of joining the European Union became stronger, illegal migration started to be publicly criticized by intellectuals and the national press for endangering Romania's chances of full integration into the EU and for conveying an unfavourable image of Romania to the West. In Moldova, on the other hand, illegal migration seems to have the support of at least the independent media since it is seen as an outcome of unsuccessful government policies and the inefficiency of economic changes. Hence it was possible to instrumentalize migrants, Heintz argues, for the purposes of criticizing or praising government policies. Here again we can see a similarity to the public debates about labour migration from southern European countries and Turkey to Germany, France, Switzerland, Austria and the Benelux countries in the sixties and seventies. Although the labour migrants were at the time coming from economically weaker countries, the individual migrants still had to justify individually to their hosts why they had migrated – can there ever be a universal scale for judging who is economically deprived? Furthermore, they had to justify why they should stay on in the countries of migration even if – according to some – they had accumulated enough to 'return'. That migration is a process which changes people's perceptions, orientations and social worlds throughout the period of seeking and performing jobs abroad is a sociological insight that needs to be acknowledged in the migration process from former socialist countries as well.

Finally, the mobility of goods in trade and persons in migration has given rise to **new notions of**

illegality and new moralities. How should and could a village community in Moldova cope with and explain prostitution and trafficking for the purposes of prostitution, Heintz asks. She argues that moral concepts are re-negotiated and attributed different values for behaviour occurring 'abroad' in opposition to the 'moral behaviour' expected within the village, as if the dissociation of home and abroad enables members of the community to maintain different moral systems. In a way, her example is a classic illustration of how immoral behaviour has to be imagined as being located outside the community. This is typical of all sociality: any community would want to envisage itself as a moral community, especially if there is an imagined contrast between *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* in the Weberian sense. The rural community described by Heintz could be seen as imagining itself as a *Gemeinschaft*, where immorality needs to be excluded as pertaining to the society outside, the 'othered' *Gesellschaft*, where different norms and social rules are thought to exist.

Such an observation can serve as yet another reminder of the scope for comparing mobility and economic/political restructuring in the former socialist countries to other parts of the world and/or for using other frameworks such as postcoloniality. However, without denying the need to be open to such perspectives, it is important to remind ourselves that anthropology is a cumulative knowledge-producing enterprise. It is the intensive focus on postsocialism that has brought us to the current point of desiring other frameworks. Anthropologists have never agreed on the status of comparison or its desirability, yet most of us compare. Whether it is done implicitly - being informed by description - or explicitly - by putting two or more objects of study beside each other -, we need to think about other places and other experiences. The articles in this issue identify elements of continuity and rupture in the legacy of socialism. Yet they also bring out processes of integration into larger markets, as can be seen elsewhere in the world. If the authors included here had avoided using 'postsocialism' as a temporal and qualitative category, would this have changed their analytical choices and conclusions? It is not a matter of changing the labelling, but rather of using newer modes of contextualizing and conceptual tools to arrive at fresh analytical perspectives.

Notes

ⁱ This is of course typical of all state-led and state-planned migrations; it is a fallacy to think that migratory movement can be fully controlled and

anticipated.

ⁱⁱ This was reported in the Caucasus Reporting Service, an electronic news report prepared by the Institute for War and Peace in London. The news item written by Karin Ter-Saakian and Lela Iremashvili was entitled "Armenian-Georgian market losing its role", Report no. 240, July 1, 2004. http://www.iwpr.net/?p=crs&s=f&o=160232&apc_st ate=henicrs2004 accessed on 19.03.07

For more on Sadakhlo see also Yalçın-Heckmann, forthcoming.

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