



Migration, consumption and work: A postcolonial perspective on post-socialist migration to the UK

Barbara Samaluk

abstract

This article explores the links between transnational migration, consumption and work within a postcolonial and post-socialist world. By exploring contemporary Polish and Slovenian migration to the UK through a postcolonial lens, this article aims to provide an understanding of the post-socialist space beyond the western knowledge production. The article exposes the historical orientalization of post-socialist central and eastern Europe (CEE) and its subjects, which, throughout history, has marked its peripheral status within Europe and evoked the (self-)colonial ‘catching up’ model that constitutes CEE imagined communities as well as informs CEE migrants’ agency, and defines their diversity and their positioning in the West. In particular, the article stretches the understanding of orientalism in relation to transnational consumption and migration processes, and the neo-colonial binary division of capitalism and socialism that characterizes the post-socialist world. The article demonstrates that this binary division acts as an orientalizing device that legitimizes the framing of neoliberalism as the modernizing project, and affects CEE migrants’ positioning in the UK and their strategies to reclaim their value. Ultimately the article contributes by offering a critique of neo-colonial epistemic violence that legitimizes the global expansion of neoliberalism to places and spaces previously shielded from unregulated market pressures.

Introduction

Under the current globalized neoliberal economy, consumption has become central to transnational employment relations and migration processes (Ong, 1999; Samaluk, 2016a). Consumption – transformed through commodity flows, promoted through culturally chosen ideas of consumer agency, and mediated through global and deterritorialized mass-media and information technologies –

has also become part of the capitalist civilizing process (Appadurai, 1996). This civilizing process informs contemporary imagination, fuels action, and can act as an important stimulus for migration. After the new wave of migration from post-socialist central and eastern Europe (CEE) to the UK, there has been plenty of research exploring the racial, gender and class segmentation of labor. This work has mainly looked at CEE migrants through the prism of economic immigration, exploring the managerial practices, customer service experience, and the shaping of workers' identity within the receiving country and in relation to native, other migrant, and black and ethnic minority workers (Anderson, 2000; McDowell, 2009a, 2009b; Wills et al., 2010). This work gives important insights on the complexity of a racialized class logic that drives the contemporary UK's economy; however it falls short in providing a more holistic picture of the on-going colonial logic underpinning transnational economy and CEE migrants' positioning, agency and diversity.

In order to better understand these processes, the exploration of CEE labor migration should start with migrants' places of origins that, I suggest, have been characterized by on-going colonial logic. This logic has been transforming existing structures of production and consumption within CEE and concurrently acts to inform workers imagination of the West, their exit strategies, and their positioning within diverse UK's labor market (Samaluk, 2014a, 2014b, 2016a). In order to take into account this often neglected history, the paper draws upon theoretical and empirical work that has utilized postcolonial approaches to study the post-socialist space (Buchowski, 2006; Böröcz, 2001; Chari and Verdery, 2009; Samaluk, 2014a, 2014b, 2016a; Stenning and Hörschelmann, 2008; Verdery, 2002). By exploring contemporary CEE migration to the UK through a postcolonial lens this article aims to understand the post-socialist space beyond western knowledge production, uncover how Polish and Slovenian migrant worker-consumers are positioned in the UK, and their strategies to reclaim their value. The article commences by elaborating on the theoretical approach and methods used. It then provides a historical overview of post-socialist space through a postcolonial lens, and further analyses Polish and Slovenian migrants' experience and strategies within transnational exchange and on the UK labor market. Finally, the article discusses its findings and contributions.

Understanding post-socialist space beyond the western knowledge production

A major contribution of postcolonial critique has been to challenge western knowledge production that represented colonial subjects through orientalizing discourse, and to redefine these subjects as agents in their own lives, who are to

speak on their own terms (Mohanty, 2003; Said, 1978/2003; Spivak, 1988). Postcolonial critique thus serves as an important inspiration to ask ourselves whether the post-socialist can speak within dominant western knowledge production or whether this knowledge production needs to be challenged in order to understand post-socialist subjects and their agency on their own terms. Post-socialism, in contrast to postcolonialism, has often been simplistically used as a geographical label rather than an analytical category that needs to be carefully scrutinized (Owczarzak, 2009). In order to challenge this, many authors have turned towards postcolonial approaches to analyze the complexity of post-socialist experience (Böröcz, 2001; Buchowski, 2006; Chari and Verdery, 2009, Stenning and Hörschelmann, 2008).

As Stenning and Hörschelmann (2008) argue, postcolonial critique can be useful for theorizing post-socialism because it encourages us to uncover the presence and persistence of a colonial binary logic within the East and the West, and makes us think about epistemology that keeps it alive. This coloniality is maintained by the soft power of western academic ideologies and paradigms that rarely recognize knowledge production coming from post-socialist CEE or explore the region or its subjects beyond this binary logic (Kuus, 2004; Miroiu, 2004; Owczarzak, 2009; Taylor and Śliwa, 2011; Slovova, 2006). A postcolonial approach makes us consider our methodologies and encourages us to give voice to those who are too often only objects of analysis rather than analysts of their own condition. This article thus seeks to challenge the simplistic marginalization of post-socialist experience to the discourse of globalization, and rather attempts to expose the complexity of history, geography, sameness and difference that characterize the post-socialist world.

One of the major concerns within postcolonial critique has been the orientalizing of colonized places and colonial subjects arising from them. For Said, 'orientalism' represents a set of mainly discursive practices that, in short, reflect the 'Western style for dominating, restructuring and having authority over the Orient' (1978/2003: 3). Engagement with postcolonial approaches can help us uncover the orientalizing of post-socialist CEE and its material effects. This demands engagement with a particular history that characterizes the post-socialist world and entails an epistemic move towards rarely recognized knowledge production (Buchowski, 2006; Chari and Verdery, 2009; Kiossev, 2010; Owczarzak, 2009; Samaluk, 2014a; 2014b; 2016a). Careful consideration of history within the post-socialist space enables the uncovering of how both, the recent and more distant past still shape post-socialist experience, internal diversity, its relationship with the West, and the West itself.

Unlike most of postcolonial theorizing that links the critique of on-going colonial power to spaces 'outside Europe', the scrutiny of post-socialism also turns towards marginalized spaces within Europe. Most applications of postcolonial theorizing to post-socialist experience have focused either on the process of decolonization after the end of the Soviet Bloc and also earlier European empires, or the process of neo-colonialism linked with global expansion of neoliberalism and enacted in CEE through transition and Europeanization process, foreign investment, trade and aid (Böröcz, 2001; Buchowski, 2006; Hipfl and Gronold, 2011; Samaluk, 2014a, 2014b, 2016a; Stenning and Hörschelmann, 2008). Apart from engaging with historical, cultural, political, and economic dichotomies of 'colonies' and the 'metropole', the application of postcolonial critique to post-socialist context demands also engagement with the binary logic of West and East, and capitalism and socialism (Owczarzak, 2009). Departing from this emerging scholarship, this article aims to provide a deeper understanding of the agency of moving post-socialist subjects, who have at the end of the 20th century again started migrating West, and their experiences within the contemporary globalized European metropolis characterized by super-diverse populations.

Method

In order to better understand these processes, this article departs from a macro historical and socio-economic context that characterizes the post-socialist world and CEE migrant workers' positioning, diversity and agency. The presented analysis draws upon primary and secondary data sources gathered within various research projects exploring migration from post-socialist CEE to the UK. On the macro level, it engages with literature, and provides examples from political and media discourse, and popular culture, in order to explore how post-socialist CEE countries and subjects have been historically positioned within the (post)colonial order. The micro level analysis draws upon 50 in-depth interviews conducted between 2008 and 2014 with Polish and Slovenian migrant workers and students, in and around London. The sample consists of 33 Slovenian and 16 Polish participants, amongst which were 33 women and 17 men, between 17 and 42 years old. Interviews explored reasons for migration, expectations before migration, and workers strategies within transnational exchange and in the UK. The gathered data was analyzed through the process of coding (Charmaz, 2006). Findings are presented further below.

Post-socialist space viewed through a postcolonial lens

What is today known as a post-socialist CEE has been distinctively characterized by a complex imperial rule that, on one hand, homogenized and demi-orientalised so called Eastern Europe and, at the same time, created a complicated set of internal ethnic stratification (Batt, 2007; Hipfl and Gronold, 2011; Wolff, 1994). Since the Enlightenment, the European East came to be identified as underdeveloped, poor, superstitious and irrational (Todorova, 1997). This perception was even further enhanced by the bloc divisions in the twentieth century, encompassing two spheres of interests based on the ideology of socialism, on the one hand, and capitalism, on the other. The Cold war dynamic was built around the dichotomies of East and West and capitalism and socialism (Verdery, 2002). In this binary position, the countries and people of socialist East were, from the Western perspective, supposed and imagined to be the same, and this imaginary was used in order to justify Cold War ideology and to idealize capitalist societies (Forrester et al., 2004; Stenning and Hörschelmann, 2008). This perception was quite different from the perspective of CEE countries themselves, which never ceased to feel distinct from one another (Marc, 2009; Todorova, 1997). During the socialist period, this distinction was, among other things, enacted through ‘nesting orientalisms’ (Bakić-Hayden, 1995), i.e. the local gradations of the Orient based upon historical and socio-economic imaginaries of what the East and the West consists of.

Unlike European empires, the Soviet empire ‘aimed to integrate its dependencies into process of accumulating not capital but allocative power through accumulating means of production’, and by creating closed zones that would disable or at least limit western influences and exchange (Verdery, 2002:16). Therefore, under socialism, nesting orientalisms were importantly linked to possibilities for movement, and the consumption of Western goods, that arose from variegated CEE socialisms. In this regard, there were considerable differences between former Soviet bloc countries that had closed borders, and former Yugoslavia that allowed free movement to the West. Moreover, there were also differences amongst the Soviet bloc countries, which importantly shaped possibilities for consumption and imagination of the West. For example, by exploring oral histories of Poles Taylor and Śliwa (2011) demonstrate that during socialism there was considerable movement of persons within the Soviet bloc countries and later also outside, which enabled access to different consumer goods. Moreover, Poles maintained (globally) extended family ties within large expatriate populations that were sending prestige consumption goods from the West, and shaping the imagination of it (*ibid.*).

Western goods also had great symbolic value in former Yugoslavia therefore free movement was exercised quite frequently by Slovenians bordering Austria and Italy. According to Luthar (2006), who researched the memories of Slovenian shoppers, these shopping trips had great symbolic value and meaning that offered Yugoslavs not only an escape from the culture of shortages, but also from a less pleasant encounter with feelings of otherness and inferiority when faced with the West. These consumption trips and diverse history have always served former Yugoslavs to differentiate themselves from, and construct their superiority in relation to, Soviet bloc countries (Marc, 2009; Todorova, 1997). For instance, in former Yugoslavia, the word 'Czech' was used as a derogatory marker for someone defined as less modern on account of their consumption capacity and their inability to access and possess Western goods. Capacity for consumption thus formed the basis for the judgment of taste that serves as the cultural distinction of groups, and can be embodied in dress or other symbolic signs (Bourdieu, 1984/2010). Judgment of taste was by former Yugoslavs used to orientalize the Soviet bloc countries and its people through their restricted movement and the lack of consumption of Western goods.

As did former Yugoslavs distance themselves from former Soviet bloc countries, so did countries within create their own local Easts. This is very evident in the concept of 'Central Europe' that has emerged as a Cold War appeal from the Czech, Hungarian and Polish dissidents to the West. In an (in)famous article, Kundera (1984) talks about Central Europe as a kidnapped, brainwashed, and displaced West, that insists in defending its identity by providing historical links to Habsburg Empire and by problematic distancing from 'the Eastern Europe', exemplified by 'less civilised' Russia (Kuus, 2004; Stenning and Hörschelmann, 2008). The above examples demonstrate how at the same time as orientalizing is taking place, occidentalization is also in progress, in which these demi-orientalized groups 'occidentalize' themselves as the West of the "Other" (Bjelić, 2002:4).

The peripheral status of these groups within European imperial history has always entailed an in-betweenness that cannot simply be explained by the traditional dichotomy of colonizer and colonized. In this regard, Kiossev (2010, 2011) talks about 'self-colonizing cultures' that not only traumatize themselves in relation to the West and willingly adopt its values, but have also constituted themselves upon European Enlightenment ideas of nationhood, rationality, progress, and racial hierarchy. For peripheries within Europe, the Europe did not only encompass an empirical encounter, but has always acted as a "master signifier" in the symbolic and cultural order and underlying values' (Kiossev, 2011: 2). This symbolic and cultural order did not only result in the mimicking of the norm, as explained by Bhabha (1991) in the case of colonial encounter, but

also has always acted as the constitutive element of the self. Within the European periphery, 'self-colonization was entwined with the act of imagining their "imagined community"' (ibid.: 5). On the one hand, post-socialist subjects have always perceived themselves as European, and have been constituting their imagined national communities upon the Eurocentric imperial model characterized by whiteness, maleness, and Christianity, which still today shapes local and global racisms towards black minority ethnic and religious groups (Imre, 2005; Ponzanesi and Blaagaard, 2011; Samaluk, 2014b). On the other hand, their in-between status also entails that CEE subjects have always themselves experienced racisms within Europe (Hipfl and Gronold, 2011; McDowell, 2009b; Samaluk, 2014a, 2014b).

These racisms within Europe are closely linked to nation building and national liberation struggles, which create all sorts of internal and external exclusions in an attempt to create an imagined community (Balibar, 1991). If this is not recognized, then the racial character of 'xenophobia' or 'intolerance' geared also towards the poor, white, religious or ethnic minorities or migrants can simply be denied and dismissed as stereotyping. In order to understand these complex racisms within Europe, it is important to go beyond ethnic and black and white paradigms, and take into account that racial difference, marked by embodied markers other than skin color, such as markers of ethnicity, language, nationality, religion or class, are equally important in the racialization process (Garner, 2006; Samaluk, 2014a, 2014b). The history of Europe is full of these ambiguous internal racisms, which took most extreme forms in prosecution and extermination of Jews, Roma, and Slavs during the 2nd World War, in war and violence against religious and ethnic minorities in former Yugoslavia, in the historical racialization of Irish in Britain, and the continuation of contemporary racisms against CEE migrants, Roma, or Muslims in many European countries, or in the current construction of 'lazy Greeks' living on the expense of other EU nations. The recognition of these racisms is crucial in uncovering the colonial logic of contemporary neoliberalism that does not forcefully challenge nation states' sovereignty, but is, amongst other things, expanding through foreign direct investment, Europeanization process, and global consumption and cultural flows (Appadurai, 1996; Böröcz, 2001; Samaluk, forthcoming; Sassen, 2010).

Towards the end of 1980s, socialist CEE countries represented one of the last obstacles for the global expansion of neoliberalism and the EU market. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, Western Europe was confronted with the challenge of defining itself and its new role in relation towards its East and the rest of the world. EU expansion eastwards should thus be explored in terms of the interests and power relations that have formed in this process between East and West. In this regard, Böröcz (2001) argues that EU enlargement eastwards was

characterized by institutional elements of colonial imperial mechanisms such as unequal exchange, coloniality, export of governmentality, and geopolitics. According to research analyzing European Commission (EC) opinions on applicant countries, CEE was reinvented in the process of EU enlargement, with the selective aggregation of facts and fiction drawing on the familiar ideological Cold War divide and on the selective assessment of applicants' economic and political development with regard to an idealized EU state (Kovacs, 2001; Kovacs and Kabachnik, 2001; Sher, 2001). CEE was, upon a Western ideal, was assigned a homogeneous, ideological and obsolete socialist history that needed to be overcome by modern capitalist forms of production and exchange. Since post-socialism operates within the binary logic of obsolete socialism and modern capitalism, it masks itself as post-ideological, while in fact it imposes capitalist ideology, which is represented as the only remaining solution (Kuzmanić, 2008). Rather than the European social model, it was neoliberal politics that penetrated deeply into the future vision of re-united Europe (Bohle, 2006; Stenning et al., 2010).

The main incentive behind the EU enlargement eastwards, first vigorously promoted by Margaret Thatcher's administration, was to secure the liberalization and deregulation of CEE's political economies and thus open up the CEE markets for trade and investments (Bohle, 2006; Vaughan-Whitehead, 2003). Privatization of CEE was coupled with tax preferences for foreign investments that enabled economic neo-colonization by EU-based corporations that are today the biggest investors in CEE (Böröcz, 2001). This neo-colonization was promoted and enacted by various powerful (trans)national actors through discourses of 'return to Europe' (Stenning et al., 2010; Samaluk, 2014a; 2014b). These discourses were also home grown, wherein the self-colonial logic present within CEE has always rendered the politics of import models and of 'catching up' with Europe (Kiossev, 2011). According to Močnik (2002), one of the mechanisms by which relations of economic oppression and exploitation were introduced by political means was the self-image of 'young democracies' that had to implement 'democratic' standards. Again the (self-)colonial logic of 'catching up with Europe' resurfaced, but this time the 'democratization' process of 'the return to Europe' was also defined upon a new access to consumer markets, consumer choice, and rights as democratic expressions of individualism (Berdahl, 2005).

Among other things this completely transformed retail and consumption landscapes. While production was closing down and unemployment rose, there was a rapid spread of hyper-markets featuring multinational brands that brought in different consumption and work practices (Smith, 2007). Structural changes implemented under neoliberal transition also dramatically transformed everyday life in CEE in the spheres of work, housing, and social care, which often resulted

in increasing social stratification, unemployment, and emigration (Fihel and Okolski, 2009; Śliwa, 2009; Stenning et al., 2010). Changes were also characterized by new forms of nesting orientalisms within CEE that turned towards the ‘losers’ of transition, i.e. the new poor and unemployed, who became constructed as uncivilized and themselves responsible for not making it within the capitalist market of ‘free’ choice (Buchowski, 2006). The ‘transcending of socialist past’ thus also entailed the transformation of a state-dependent post-socialist subject into a proper self-dependent entrepreneurial ‘European’ person, who constantly needs to work at self-improvement (Ozoliņa-Fitzgerald, 2015). I have elsewhere argued that this (self-)colonial logic also guides CEE worker-consumers’ self-making strategies to take up various low-skilled and low-paid working and training opportunities in the West (Samaluk, 2016a). In this paper, I will demonstrate how this neo-colonial logic affects the way CEE migrants are received and orientalized in the West and guides their strategies to re-claim their value.

Orientalization of CEE migrants in the UK

An analysis of the media discourse of the UK populist press found that CEE migrants are homogenized as ‘Eastern bloc migrants’ who are running away from the ‘bleak concrete slums of Iron Curtain Europe’ and coming to the UK for one and only reason, to better themselves by offering cheap labor, or as ‘welfare tourists’, ‘welfare spongers’ or ‘benefit scroungers’ (Devine, 2004; Eastham and Hickley, 2004; Nicoli, 2006). After the economic crisis, these media portrayals were reinforced and legitimized also through increasingly racist political rhetoric and immigration policies¹ that justified further closure of UK borders for non-EU migrants and the scapegoating of CEE migrants for economic troubles and the diminishing welfare state. The scapegoating of CEE migrants is legitimized through orientalizing discourse. Similar to the problematic Third World referent, post-socialist countries are in the UK simply homogenized, and regarded as poor and underdeveloped:

As soon as they know post-communist country, oh it was really horrible and they come from a poor sort of country, almost a third world country in their eyes. That’s how I feel people often react to, when I tell them, where I am from. (Alenka)

¹ The Government proposed a campaign to deter Bulgarian and Romanian immigrants, which was received with great criticism in these two states (Travis and Syal, 2013).

Alenka's example shows that the underdevelopment of the post-socialist space is constructed through the binary logic of capitalism and socialism. It is reduced to the imaginaries of the Soviet Bloc countries that are being portrayed as having a 'catastrophic economic situation' with high unemployment and only basic social security and medical provisions (Laughland, 2004: 59; see also Eastham and Hickley, 2004a). Since CEE workers are seen as coming from poor countries, they can simply be regarded as being satisfied with lower wage:

There were quite a lot of frictions of how much I was going to get paid. There was this stereotype idea; this one is coming from abroad, from a poorer country, so he will be satisfied with lower wages. (Jernej)

Jernej's case shows that orientalizing of CEE countries can serve employers to legitimize unequal treatment of CEE workers. The orientalizing of CEE workers is, within the media discourse, furthermore reinforced by fears that 'Britain could be inundated with unqualified doctors and nurses from Eastern Europe' that could put patients' lives at risk (Nixon, 2004; Sun, 2004; Yapp, 2004). The orientalizing discourse thus depicts CEE professionals as a threat to UK professional standards and norms and, according to Sonja, in general constructs CEE migrants as being less educated:

It's discriminatory, you know, like Eastern Europe is something worst then they the westerns and that we're something worst and less educated. (Sonja)

It is, then, no surprise that CEE workers often experience deskilling and devaluation and need quite sufficient labor time to acquire additional qualifications and work experience that are recognized in the UK labor market (Currie, 2007; Samaluk, 2015). As most of my informants were over time able to achieve professional mobility, some also remained fixed in low-skilled jobs assigned to CEE workers. These examples speak of the racist character of CEE workers' devaluation on the UK labor market, which is often hidden in mainstream research and also disables legal protection of CEE workers against discrimination, because national and class differences are, neither in the UK nor on the EU level, straightforwardly about discrimination.²

The stereotypical image of CEE worker, symbolized by the biggest Polish group, is that of a vegetable picker, plumber, domestic or service worker, and this is also how workers' bodies get symbolically consumed and utilized in the West (Anderson, 2000; Downey, 2008). For instance, CEE female migrants are one of the most common types of migrant domestic/care workers and they are often

2 Implementation of EU anti-discrimination law in the member states: A comparative approach: [http://www.era-comm.eu/oldoku/Adiskri/01_Overview/2011_04%20Chop in_EN.pdf](http://www.era-comm.eu/oldoku/Adiskri/01_Overview/2011_04%20Chop%20in_EN.pdf).

just as highly educated as women they relieve from domestic tasks (Anderson, 2000; Currie, 2007). Moreover, Zuzana's example demonstrates that CEE migrants' class position effected by their orientalizing is reinforced within local communities that mutually share new colonial subjects for various domestic servicing jobs:

I was au-pair ... and I was also ironing and washing their stuff... I found it a bit odd and too much. I felt, God, Zuzanna you've got master's degree, what are you doing... And the family had another couple of people who were living in the same area. And one day they said, because I only got paid 50 pounds a week, they said, would you like to clean our house for three hours. I said yes... (Zuzanna)

Zuzanna, a qualified and experienced Polish teacher, who entered the UK as an au-pair, with the aim to improve her English before searching for a job at her skill level, was turned into a (hired-out) cleaner. Despite obvious personal and professional devaluation, Zuzanna still took the cleaning job in order to improve her poor material condition. Due to their poor pay and work location, domestic migrant workers are particularly vulnerable to exploitation (McDowell, 2009b). Zuzana's example demonstrates that the economic exploitation and racial differentiation of CEE workers is reinforced also through consumption processes and, moreover, has important gender dimensions. On the one hand, CEE women in the UK have been historically utilized as a desired commodity in domestic and front-line service sector jobs (McDowell, 2009a, 2009b; Samaluk, 2014a, 2014b). On the other hand, their sexualized image can also pose a threat to the national body.

Prior to the 2004 EU Enlargement, the UK press expressed fears 'that the entry of 10 new states into the EU next year will make it easy for pimps in countries such as Lithuania, the Czech Republic and Hungary to send prostitutes into western Europe' (Chapman, 2003). This was accompanied by popular fears of epidemics of highly contagious diseases coming from the East, especially when 'East European vice girls' and 'criminal gangs controlling them will target Western European clients', as well as fears of 'health tourism' (Daily Mail, 2004; Eastham and Hickley, 2004; Hartley et al., 2004; Marsh, 2003). This orientalist discourse is also very prevalent in mainstream popular culture³ and affects the way CEE women are received in the UK. Irena explains her encounters with British men, who often regarded her as poor and in search of a rich male:

3 A movie called *Birthday Girl* shows a tale about a British bank clerk ordering a bride to arrive from Russia. Also Capussotti (2007) shows how Italian movies have helped to reinforce the sexualised image of CEE women. Moreover, award winning CEE movies usually deal with problematic issues, such as discrimination, trafficking, prostitution or ethnic conflicts (Marc, 2009).

I think mostly if I go out and I meet men... sometimes they make fun, like Eastern Europe, that women just come to pluck men of their money, this boyfriend that I have, he always keeps telling me that he has no money, that I wouldn't think for a second. (Irena)

This orientalist representation of CEE women translates into structural racism that affects their social status and determines the way they are received in the UK. For example, Agnieszka explains how she experienced a loss in social status when she arrived to the UK and became sexualized and perceived as easily available for dating:

When I arrived for the first time, definitively social status changed, because it was first time I ever came across labeling and across national stereotypes that were directed towards me as a Polish woman...I came across lots of very negative associations about Polish women, that they will be dating everybody, that they are very easy... I think this sexual labeling was quite strong. (Agnieszka)

This sexual labeling also affects the way CEE women are treated on the UK labor market. Sylvia, an au-pair, who was earning additional money working in a coffee shop, explains how she was kept off the books and harassed by her manager:

After one month working they still didn't want to give me a contract. And then I realized that this manager was kind of tricky, he wanted to go out with me...I kept refusing. And I think he realized that I won't do that... he called me once, telling me you haven't washed your kettle properly... you have no job anymore. (Sylvia)

Since she refused to go out with the manager, Sylvia was simply dismissed. Apart from employers, CEE women were also heavily exposed in relation to customers. This is vividly explained by Veronika, who did not have any guaranteed income while working as a fundraiser:

When I worked as a fund-raiser and they said: 'OK, I'll sign if you go out with me!' And I said: 'Well I can't do that!' (...) And I had a few guys saying: 'Give me your number'. No, no, no! ... I had a lot of male customers, who actually signed up. One guy, he was just staring at me and I was filling the form and he was just staring at me and he then asked for my number, he gave me a kiss at the end. (...) We were only paid upon commission. I barely made enough money to survive. (Veronika)

Veronika's example shows how unpleasant encounters with male customers can be, and that the choice to perform a sexualized identity for the orientaling gaze is primarily driven by an economic need. This can be particularly challenging for migrant workers who are required to re-learn cultures of emotional and embodied labor in the new context with different norms and expectations (Dyer et al., 2008; Samaluk, 2014a). Although most women I spoke to were resisting this newly imposed positioning, findings also demonstrate that some had little choice but to strategically perform the roles attached to them in order to enhance the consumption of their imaginary identities and thus earn a living wage.

CEE workers' strategies to re-claim value in the UK and across transnational markets

This section explores Polish and Slovenian workers' strategies to re-claim their value in the UK and across transnational markets. As shown in the previous section, CEE workers are orientalized through the binary logic of socialism and capitalism, often simply homogenized through the 'Eastern European' referent, and thus assigned a subordinate class position on the UK labor market. Most commonly CEE workers feel resentment, distancing themselves from these generalized perceptions or mocking this newly imposed positioning. They do so also by evoking the (self-)colonial logic:

I don't like being called Eastern European, it's just silly. I always kind of say, no it's actually Central Europe, because if you look at Ljubljana, it's to the West of Vienna. You wouldn't say Austria is in the East either, I always tell them that. (Alenka)

Alenka's example shows that she is trying to resist the 'Eastern European' referent by positioning Slovenia in relation to Austria on a geographical map. CEE workers often tend to use the positive image of Austria and historical link to Austro-Hungarian empire not only to establish a link to 'European culture' (Hipfl and Gronold, 2011), but as we see from Alenka's example, also to distinguish themselves in relation to the 'Eastern European' referent. This enables them to re-claim their value by portraying themselves as more Austrian/European/Western. By doing that they also start occidentalizing themselves as the West of the Other. Within the neo-colonial logic, this occidentalization is evoked by establishing links to capitalism and speaks of travelling nesting orientalisms, which are constructed upon the ability to 'transcend socialist past'. Marjan's example shows how Slovenian workers generate self-value by distancing themselves from former Soviet bloc countries:

It is a huge difference, we knew that, because we had a different system. We were allowed to travel. And the biggest difference between other eastern European countries and Slovenia was that we were allowed to have private businesses. So I had private business before democracy and they couldn't. We were a bit better adapted to capitalism. (Marjan)

Marjan's example shows how orientalization is built upon historical and socio-economic differences that encompass different relations to capitalist production and consumption. In this regard, Slovenians emphasize their ability to have private businesses, to travel, and to access Western goods during the socialist years. Also Vesna's example demonstrates that some perceive themselves as being better adapted to capitalism and as such more modernized:

I would say that Slovenian people are a bit more modernized... But these eastern countries and Hungary, they are still a bit like that, socialistic. (Vesna)

These examples demonstrate how nesting orientalisms, built upon the binary logic of socialism and capitalism, are used by Slovenian migrants to re-claim their value by distancing themselves from workers from former Soviet Bloc countries. Contemporary Slovenian migrants claim their superiority by presenting themselves as being more capitalist, although one could argue exactly the opposite regarding their structural origin. Unlike many CEE countries that went through neoliberal shock therapy that was rapidly eradicating socialist institutions, Slovenia took a gradualist approach to transition which enabled the preservation of more socialist elements within their transitional political economy (such as maintenance of public assets and services, and workers' standards and rights) (Mencinger, 2004). This indicates that, in the contemporary post-socialist world, the binary division between capitalism and socialism act as an orientalizing device that legitimizes the framing of neoliberalism as *the modernizing project*.

This modernizing project is also geared towards disciplining neo-colonial subjects through the means of globalized consumption. Although consumption trips to the West have lessened due to the opening of Eastern markets, they still continue and also today form an important part of valuation process. In this regard, Dyta explains how her social status has improved once she moved from Poland to London and was able to access and afford the style of a young person:

In terms of clothes or food, I would say that probably it was like a better status... it was easier to buy stuff that you would like to buy as a young person, but it was quite difficult with housing, because I was not able to get my own flat. (Dyta)

Although unaffordable housing was perceived by all my interviewees as a fall in social status, the increased choice for consuming fashion and cultural trends, and for self-making, was seen by many young workers as an incentive to move to the metropolis. This choice is often illusionary and limited to high earners and/or those who are willing to compensate in other areas of life, for instance housing or family life. Amongst my informants were hospitality staff and domestic workers who could earn as little as £10-15,000 per year and, on the other hand, various professionals, bankers, and managers who made over £60,000 per year. This difference of course affects their consumption capacity and strategies to re-claim their value. Accounts of my informants were often ambiguous, showing a love-hate relationship to London. On one hand, there was thrill and symbolic value behind the choices London offers, but there was also the anxiety behind their choice to migrate as some of them were facing economic hardship, poor housing, and personal and/or professional devaluation. In this

regard, Ong (1999) argues that there is a need to take into account the political economy of time and space which can expose class stratification linked to global capitalism and uncover that not everyone can take equal advantage of mobility and transnationality. Yet, regardless of migrants' life-quality, the western metropolitan location further also acted to enhance CEE migrants' value within their places of origin, as explained by Peter:

Well I guess everybody treats you with a bit more respect I think ...my friends treat me with a bit more like OK, he was abroad, he knows things. (Peter)

The self-colonial imagination of the West present within CEE thus earns migrant workers a particular form of respect and a symbolic prestige. Miha further explains how this symbolic value attached to the West can simply be interpreted as a success story:

When I go back people look at me as a great success and that I had great courage to move. And if you mention then that you live in the UK, they connect this with that you are already a millionaire or you will be soon. Let's say, I was interviewed for a local newspaper and in my interview, I tried to be like, I stated it's a piece of cake, you just go. (Miha)

As seen above, this (self-)colonial imagination of the West and the value attached to the metropolitan centers also pushes some migrant workers to exaggerate or paint a distorted picture within their places of origin in order to preserve this newly earned symbolic value. This not only maintains the superior image of the West but can also be used by migrant workers as a strategy to hide their true condition. Although this has been observed also in relation to migrants from other postcolonial spaces (Ong, 1999, Kelly and Lusia, 2006), there is specificity in relation to CEE subjects. This comes in the form of an explicit association with capitalist structures rather than an association with 'Western-ness', and hence implicitly capitalism, as in the case of migrants from the global south. For CEE workers, the opportunity of being trained within the proper Western capitalist organization represents a self-making strategy based upon the anticipation of future profits that will come once they transcend the socialist past (Samaluk, 2016a). This can also have very detrimental effects on those who are yet to migrate West and experience the true nature of its structural conditions.

Returning the gaze

CEE migrants' reflective encounter with the West also evokes a critical comparative gaze that challenges the (self-)colonial logic, offers new insights upon increasing social stratification in the UK, and retrieves memories of possibilities that are being erased through the neoliberal colonial project. Anna

recalls how she was surprised to discover so much poverty in seemingly developed West that is perceived as paradise in Poland:

I was surprised that West, that we see as paradise is not paradise at all. People live in poverty and apparently it is a better world. I just started realizing that people here are actually quite poor and they had less and everything is less quality. (Anna)

CEE migrants' reflective encounter with the West can thus challenge the (self-) colonial logic embodied in CEE migrants' history and the binary neo-colonial divisions still present within Europe. Most informants have expressed their bewilderment of the enormous distributive injustice they encountered in the UK. In this regard, Marjan describes the enormous income and wealth inequality he encountered in the UK as a low paid worker servicing the local and global elites:

They tailored us; bespoke suits, they spend hundreds and hundreds and they paid us minimum wage. This is this discrepancy. Only for one occasion, the Queen was invited. And for that occasion they paid tailors, just to properly dress us. They paid us peanuts; they paid so much for that. Such suits can cost 3000-4000 pounds. And the same in [international hotel chain], it was one party. They cost a few million pounds. It was for 400 hotel managers from all over... It never happens in Slovenia, so London is crazy place. (Marjan)

Marjan's account exposes the on-going colonial logic in which neo-colonial subjects are simply treated as commodified assets that act as hangers for the symbolic display of the wealth and status of modern masters consuming their bodies and services. Apart from segmenting diverse workforce in racial, class, and gender terms, UK managers also discipline workers to perform particular identities that define organizational corporate 'doxa' in terms of embodied labor towards customers (Witz et al., 2003). Service workers are thus groomed to enhance customers' higher status by performing to their distinctive taste embodied in uniform, language, and their subordinate class position. This gives wealthy modern master-consumers increasing power to enact colonial relations⁴ and to violate workers' rights without much consequence. There is an increasing divide in income and wealth distribution in the UK, and London in particular, as well as an emerging polarization of job quality and employment conditions, which makes it one of the most unequal societies in Europe (McDowell, 2009b; Wills et al., 2010). Moreover, Marjan's bewilderment over this inequality also offers a comparative gaze exposing that, in Slovenia, due to its socialist history,

4 For instance, currently the UK Equalities and Human Rights Commission investigates a case of a Rochdale minicab firm that allows customers to choose the race of their driver. Guardian: <http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2014/oct/22/equalities-watchdog-to-investigate-white-drivers-policy-of-rochdale-minicab-firm>.

this enormous distributive injustice is still publicly regarded as unacceptable and also somehow regulated.⁵

Furthermore, Aleš explains about differences in traditions of service work between Slovenia and the UK that result in very different relationships between customers and workers in these two countries:

Back home [Slovenia] is seen more like, it's more equal kind of relationship between customer or whatever kind of work you are doing. They don't see you as doing them a kind of service; they just see you providing them with result. (Aleš)

Aleš's example indicates more equal relations amongst the two in Slovenia, suggesting a less commodified view of services. These differences are a product of historically diverse forms of production and exchange present in CEE that can also result in CEE workers' quite distinctive display of attitudes towards customers, which are not desired in the UK economy where the customer always comes first. In this regard, McDowell (2009b) shows how hotel managers in London were often not satisfied with CEE workers' performance; i.e. they did not perform their identities in such a way as to sufficiently increase the symbolic value of customers. Just as some CEE workers display different attitudes towards customers, so do they often critique privatization and commodification of public services:

British people are the only people I've heard talking out loud about how... whether to go to university or not should be determined by your parent's earnings and not your intellectual potential... Even when we are talking to people who have been living here longer and are not that keen on leaving the country, they all say they will never have kids in this country... The country is divided. I think private schools are great, but you have to pay a lot and not everybody can afford it. (Magda)

Magda expresses her bewilderment of the distributive injustice she encountered in the UK, which segregates spaces, disables equal access to basic services, turns citizens into consumers of privatized and commodified services, and institutionalizes inherited privilege. Also, research shows that the 'elite' British class occupies leadership positions and has very restricted upward mobility into its ranks (Savage et al., 2013). The above example demonstrates that distributive injustice in accessing basic services also importantly shapes CEE migrants'

5 The Law prohibits managers in public enterprises for their salaries to exceed the 5 time of an average wage: <http://www.delo.si/novice/politika/lahovnikov-zakon-ostaja-tudi-za-banke-v-likvidaciji.html>. Recently the Minister for education had to resign due to public pressures, because as a University professor she was generating disproportionately high income through additional research project contracts: <http://www.rtvsl.si/slovenija/ministrice-v-odstopu-o-honorarjih-ni-bil-proracunski-temvec-trzni-denar/360099>.

decision not to raise children in the UK. Unlike in the UK, where class differences are awkwardly positioned in relation to other differences, because they are not straightforwardly about discrimination (Haylett, 2003), redistributive justice still forms an important part of CEE workers' history and thus informs their re-valuing and resistive strategies. This also has important gender dimensions, as is visible in Slovenian women's resistance against the poor work-life balance and childcare services in the UK that take away their historical ability to remain on the labor market once having children (Samaluk, 2016b). Many female informants thus revealed plans to return once they had children. Moreover, contrary to popular perceptions in the UK of 'welfare scroungers' from CEE, many informants have also been as consumers migrating back to CEE for better quality and cheaper specialist healthcare and other services. CEE workers' comparative gaze thus not only exposes how neoliberal colonial project increases divisions on various local and global scales, but also retrieves memories of possibilities grounded within socialist and feminist arguments that combine politics of recognition with politics of redistribution (Fraser, 1997).

Discussion and conclusion

By exploring contemporary CEE migration to the UK through a postcolonial lens, this article provided an understanding of the post-socialist space beyond western knowledge production and thus offered new insights on the on-going colonial logic underpinning the transnational economy, CEE migrants' positioning in the UK, their agency and diversity. It exposes on-going colonial processes that characterize post-socialist world and thus contributes to growing body of research that utilizes postcolonial approach to study the post-socialist space (Böröcz, 2001; Buchowski, 2006; Chari and Verdery, 2009; Stenning and Hörschelmann, 2008). The article exposes the historical orientalizing of CEE and its subjects, which has throughout history marked its peripheral status within Europe and evoked the (self-)colonial 'catching up' model that constitutes CEE imagined communities and informs various racisms and nesting orientalisms. Similar to Bakić-Hayden (1995) and Buchowski (2006), the article extends Said's depiction of orientalism by showing that the east and west binary is also importantly linked to the binary division of capitalism and socialism.

Particularly the article expands the understanding of orientalism in relation to transnational consumption and migration processes. It demonstrates that, during Bloc divisions, nesting orientalisms were importantly linked to possibilities for movement and the consumption of Western goods that arose from variegated CEE socialisms, and have further intensified with global

expansion of neoliberalism that dismissed class politics, while delivering diversity and identity politics to the market (Duggan, 2003; Lentin and Titley, 2011). In this regard, the analysis shows that post-socialist transition and Europeanization process was a form of neo-colonialism that again constructed CEE as obsolete and in need of modernizing; this time in the name of transcending the socialist past. The article demonstrates that this neo-colonial process, on one hand, results in the orientalizing of CEE migrants in the West. On the other, it evokes the (self-)colonial logic of 'catching up with Europe' that informs migrants' strategies to reclaim their value also through travelling nesting orientalisms. As such, the article exposes spatial and cultural class stratification amongst diverse CEE migrants and demonstrates that the binary division between capitalism and socialism acts as an orientalizing device that legitimizes the framing of neoliberalism as *the modernizing project*. This modernizing project is also geared towards disciplining neo-colonial subjects through the means of globalized consumption. The findings presented demonstrate that CEE workers' consumption of the West, and the (self-)colonial imagination of it, guides workers' exit and transnational strategies, and inform their choice to work and live in the West. In this it complements existing research providing a more in-depth understanding of CEE (labor) migration to the UK, various types of migration, and reasons why CEE migrant worker-consumers are, despite their often precarious condition, willing to work and live in the western metropolis (Samaluk, 2016a).

Nevertheless workers reflective encounter with the West also evokes a critical comparative gaze that challenges the (self-)colonial logic, offers new insights upon increasing social stratification in the UK, and retrieves memories of possibilities that are being erased through neoliberal colonial project. The postcolonial approach to studying post-socialist space thus offers a powerful critique of the epistemic violence grounded within within the on-going colonial binary division of seemingly modern capitalist West and obsolete socialist East that characterises also today's post-socialist world and suppresses any alternatives to global expansion of neoliberalism. Exposing this epistemic violence is thus important also in recognizing and giving voice to emerging struggles within the European periphery against the neoliberal-induced austerity, and in building (trans)national solidarity amongst diverse and often divided groups.

references

- Anderson, B. (2000) *Doing the dirty work? The global politics of domestic labor*. London: Zed Books.

- Appadurai, A. (1996) *Modernity at large: Cultural dimensions of globalization*. Minneapolis: University Of Minnesota Press.
- Bakić-Hayden, M. (1995) 'Nesting orientalism: The case of former Yugoslavia', *Slavic Review*, 54: 917-931.
- Balibar, E. (1991) 'Racism and nationalism', in E. Balibar and I. Wallerstein (eds.) *Race, nation, class: Ambiguous identities*. London: Verso.
- Batt, J. (2007) 'Introduction: defining Central and Eastern Europe', in Stephen White, Judy Batt, and Paul G. Lewis (eds.) *Development in Central and East European Politics*. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Berdahl, D. (2005) 'The spirit of capitalism and the boundaries of citizenship in post-wall Germany', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 47(2): 235-251.
- Bhabha, H.K. (1991) *The location of culture: Critical theory and the postcolonial perspective*. New York: Routledge.
- Bjelić, D.I. (2002) 'Introduction: Blowing up the "bridge"', in D.I. Bjelić (ed.) *Balkan as metaphor*. London: MIT Press.
- Bohle, D. (2006) 'Neoliberal hegemony, transnational capital and the terms of the EU's eastward expansion', *Capital & Class*, 30(1): 57-86.
- Böröcz, J. (2001) 'Introduction: Empire and coloniality in the "eastern enlargement" of the European Union', in J. Böröcz and M. Kovasc (eds.) *Empire's new clothes: Unveiling EU enlargement*. Telford: Central Europe Review.
- Bourdieu, P. (1984/2010) *Distinction*. London: Routledge.
- Buchowski, M. (2006) 'The specter of orientalism in Europe: From exotic other to stigmatized brother', *Anthropological Quarterly*, 79(3): 463-482.
- Chari, S. and K. Verdery (2009) 'Thinking between the posts: Postcolonialism, postsocialism, and ethnography after the cold war', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 51(1): 6-34.
- Charmaz, K. (2006) *Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide through qualitative analysis*. London: Sage.
- Currie, S. (2007) 'De-skilled and devalued: The labor market experience of Polish migrants in the UK following EU enlargement', *The International Journal of Comparative Labour Law and Industrial Relations*, 23(1): 83-116.
- Downey, L. (2008) *Racialization of central and east European migrants in Herefordshire*. Exeter: Exeter University.
- Duggan, L. (2003) *The twilight of equality? Neoliberalism, cultural politics, and the attack on democracy*. Boston: Beacon.
- Dyer, S., L. McDowell and A. Batnitzky (2008) 'Emotional labor/body work: The caring labours of migrants in the UK's National Health Service', *Geoforum*, 39(6): 2030-2038.
- Fihel, A. and M. Okolski (2009) 'Dimensions and effects of labor migration to EU countries: The case of Poland', in B. Galgoczi, J. Leschke and A. Watt (eds.) *EU labor migration sine enlargement: Trends, impacts and policies*. Surrey: Ashgate.

- Fraser, N. (1997) *Justice interruptus: Critical reflections on the 'postsocialist' condition*. New York, London: Routledge.
- Garner, S. (2006) 'The uses of whiteness: What sociologists working on Europe can draw from US research on whiteness', *Sociology*, 40(2): 257-275.
- Haylett, C. (2003) 'Culture, class and urban policy: Reconsidering equality', *Antipode*, 35(1): 55-73.
- Hipfl, B. and D. Gronold (2011) 'Asylum seekers as Austria's other: The re-emergence of Austria's colonial past in a state-of-exception', *Social Identities*, 17(1): 27-40.
- Imre, A. (2005) 'Whiteness in post-socialist Eastern Europe', in A.J. Lopez (ed.) *Postcolonial whiteness: A critical reader on race and empire*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Kelly, P. and T. Lusic (2006) 'Migration and the transnational habitus: Evidence from Canada and the Philippines', *Environment and Planning A*, 38(5): 831-847.
- Kiossev, A. (2010) 'Notes on self-colonising cultures', *Kultura*. [http://www.kultura.bg/media/my_html/biblioteka/bgvntgrd/e_ak.htm]
- Kiossev, A. (2011) 'The self-colonizing metaphor', *Atlas of Transformation*. [<http://monumenttotransformation.org/atlas-of-transformation/html/s/self-colonization/the-self-colonizing-metaphor-alexander-kiossev.html>]
- Kovacs, M. (2001) 'Putting down and putting off: The EU's discursive strategies in the 1998 and 1999 follow-up reports', in J. Böröcz and M. Kovacs (eds.) *Empire's new clothes: Unveiling EU enlargement*. Telford: Central Europe Review.
- Kovacs, M. and P. Kabachnik (2001) 'The shedding light on the quantitative other: The EU's discourse in the commission opinions of 1997', in J. Böröcz and M. Kovacs (eds.) *Empire's new clothes: Unveiling EU enlargement*. Telford: Central Europe Review.
- Kundera, M. (1984) 'The tragedy of central Europe', *New York Review of Books*, 31(7): 1-14.
- Kuus, M. (2004) 'Europe's eastern expansion and the reinscription of otherness in East-Central Europe', *Progress in Human Geography*, 28(4): 472-489.
- Kuzmanić, T. (2008) *Prispevki h kritiki managerske paradigme*. Ljubljana: Mirovni Inštitut.
- Lentin, A. and G. Titley (2011) *The crisis of multiculturalism: Racism in a neoliberal age*. London: Zed Books.
- Luthar, B. (2006) 'Remembering socialism: On desire, consumption and surveillance', *Journal of Consumer Culture*, 6(2): 229-259.
- Marc, L. (2009) *What's so Eastern about Eastern Europe?* Harpenden: Oldcastle Books.
- McDowell, L. (2009a) 'Old and new European economic migrants: Whiteness and managed migration policies', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 35(1): 19-36.

- McDowell, L. (2009b) *Working bodies: Interactive service employment and workplace identities*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Mencinger, J. (2004) 'Transition to a national market and a market economy: A gradualist approach', in M. Mrak, M. Rojec and C. Silva-Jauregui (eds.) *Slovenia: From Yugoslavia to the European Union*. Washington: World Bank Publications.
- Miroiu, A. (2004) 'State men, market women: The effects of left conservatism on gender politics in Romanian transition', *Feminismo/s*, 3: 207-234.
- Močnik, R. (2002) 'The Balkans as an element in ideological mechanisms', in D.I. Bjelić (ed.) *Balkan as metaphor*. London: MIT Press.
- Mohanty, C.T. (2003) *Feminism without borders: Decolonising theory, practicing solidarity*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Ong, A. (1999) *Flexible citizenship: The cultural logics of transnationality*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Owczarzak, J. (2009) 'Introduction: Postcolonial studies and postsocialism in Eastern Europe', *Focaal*, 53: 1-17.
- Ozoliņa-Fitzgerald, L. (2015). 'The moral economy of post-Soviet neo-liberalism: An ethnography of a Latvian unemployment office', *Central and Eastern European employment relations in perspective: History, geography and variegation*. University of Greenwich.
- Ponzanesi, S. and B.B. Blaagaard (2011) 'Introduction: In the name of Europe', *Social Identities*, 17(1): 1-10.
- Said, E. (1978/2003) *Orientalism*. London: Penguin Books.
- Samaluk, B. (2014a) 'Racialised "price-tag": Commodification of migrant workers on transnational employment agencies' websites', in M. Pajnik and F. Anthias (eds.) *Work and the challenges of belonging: Migrants in globalizing economies*. Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Samaluk, B. (2014b) 'Whiteness, ethnic privilege and migration: A Bourdieuan framework', *Journal Of Managerial Psychology*, 29(4): 370-388.
- Samaluk, B. (2016a) 'Migrant workers' engagement with transnational staffing agencies in Europe: Symbolic power guiding transnational exchange', *Work, Employment and Society*, 30(3): 455-471.
- Samaluk, B. (2016b) 'Neoliberal moral economy: Migrant workers' value struggles across temporal and spatial dimensions', in C. Karner and B. Weicht (eds.) *The commonalities of global crises: Markets, communities and nostalgia*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Sassen, S. (2010) 'A savage sorting of winners and losers: Contemporary versions of primitive accumulation', *Globalizations*, 7(102): 23-50.
- Savage, M., F. Devine, N. Cunningham, M. Taylor, Y. Li, J. Hjellbrekke, B. Le Roux, S. Friedman and A. Miles (2013) 'A new model of social class? Findings from the BBC's Great British class survey experiment', *Sociology*, 47(2): 219-250.

- Sher, A. (2001) 'A di- vision of Europe: The European Union enlarged', in J. Böröcz and M. Kovasc (eds.) *Empire's new clothes: Unveiling EU enlargement*. Telford: Central Europe Review.
- Śliwa, M. (2009) 'Globalization and social change: The Polish experience', in S.B. Banerjee, V.C.M. Chio, and R. Mir (eds.) *Organizations, markets and imperial formations: Towards an anthropology of globalization*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.
- Slovova, K. (2006) 'Looking at western feminisms through the double lens of Eastern Europe and the Third World', in J. Lukić, J. Regulaska and D. Zaviršek (eds.) *Women and citizenship in Central and Eastern Europe*. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Smith, A. (2007). 'Articulating neoliberalism: Diverse economies and everyday life in "postsocialist" cities', *Contesting neoliberalism: Urban frontiers*, 204-222. [<http://www.geog.qmul.ac.uk/socialexclusion/pdf/cuf.pdf>]
- Spivak, G.C. (1988) 'Can the subaltern speak?' in C. Nelson and L. Grossberg (eds.) *Marxism and the interpretation of culture*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- Stenning, A. and K. Hörschelmann (2008) 'History, geography and difference in the post-socialist world: Or, do we still need post-socialism?' *Antipode*, 40(2): 312-335.
- Stenning, A., A. Smith, A. Rochovska and D. Swiatek (2010) *Domesticating neo-liberalism: Spaces of economic practice and social reproduction in post-socialist cities*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Taylor, B. and M. Śliwa (2011) 'Polish migration: Moving beyond the iron curtain', *History Workshop Journal*, 71(1): 128-146.
- Todorova, M. (1997) *Imagining the Balkans*. New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Verdery, K. (2002) 'Whither postsocialism?', in C. Hann (ed.) *Postsocialism: Ideals, ideologies and practices in Eurasia*. London: Routledge.
- Wolff, L. (1994) *Inventing Eastern Europe*. Stanford: University Press.
- Wills, J., K. Datta, Y. Evans, J. Herbert, J. May and C. Mcilwaine (2010) *Global cities at work: New migrant divisions of labor*. London: Pluto Press.
- Witz, A., C. Warhurst and D. Nickson (2003) 'The labor of aesthetics and the aesthetics of organization', *Organization*, 10(1): 33-54.

Analysed newspaper articles

- Chapman, C. (2003) 'Prostitutes to be tracked on EU database', *Scotland on Sunday*. [<http://scotlandonsunday.scotsman.com/prostitution/prostitutes-to-be-tracked-on.2473049.jp>]
- Devine, M. (2004) 'Spongers vow', *The Sun*, February 6.
- Daily Mail (2004) 'Britain at risk from EU disease epidemic'. [<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-259079/britain-risk-eu-disease-epidemic.html>]

- Eastham, P. and M. Hickley (2004) 'Blunkett's open door', *Daily Mail*, February 24.
- Laughland, J. (2004) 'Immigration is turning Britain into a sweatshop', *Mail on Sunday*, March 14.
- Hartley, C., R. Perrie and C. Rae (2004) 'In EU come', *The Sun*, May 1.
- Marsh, B. (2003) 'Crackdown on health tourists is unworkable', *Mail Online*. [<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-190526/crackdown-health-tourists-unworkable.html>]
- Nicoli, A. (2006) 'EU'd better watch out', *The Sun*, February 26.
- Nixon, M. (2004) 'The doctors' invasion', *Mail on Sunday*, February 29.
- Sun, the (2004) 'EU docs warning', April 19.
- Yapp, R. (2004) 'The doctors' bypass', *Daily Mail*, April 19.

the author

Barbara Samaluk, PhD, is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Work and Employment Research Unit at the University of Greenwich, Business School. She received her PhD at Queen Mary, University of London, researching the commodification of migrant labor from post-socialist central and eastern Europe (CEE) on the UK labor market. Barbara's areas of expertise include transnational labor migration, cultural political economy, commodification and marketization processes within postcolonial and post-socialist order, equality and diversity, and anti-discrimination. Currently, she works on a research project exploring the effects of marketization on societies, where her specific focus is on post-socialist CEE context. Her research and academic attainment are underpinned by years of active engagement with systemic advocacy for human rights and anti-discrimination in various CEE countries.

Email: b.samaluk@greenwich.ac.uk