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Transnational creative knowledge migrants in the Sofia region

The view of transnational migrants

ACRE report 7.10



European Commission



CITIZENS AND GOVERNANCE IN A
KNOWLEDGE-BASED SOCIETY

Ivan Nachev
Evgenii Dainov

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Accommodating Creative Knowledge – Competitiveness of European Metropolitan
Regions within the Enlarged Union

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ACRE

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Bulgaria is the only European ex-Warsaw Pact country that failed to make the transition in one leap. It went through two economic collapses, caused by governments of ex-Communists, and consequently carried out two political revolutions – first in 1989-1990 and then in 1996-1997.

During the 1990s, Sofia's artificial Soviet-type industry collapsed, as it did all over the country. Unlike most others, however, Sofianites used the newly arisen opportunities for private initiative and so the capital avoided the severe economic depression, which drove into poverty the provincial cities and de-populated a good number of them. It re-invented itself away from heavy industry and embraced the new service sectors, which now form more than three-quarters of its GDP. Its population doubled again, but the city reached full employment by 2006-7 and since then skills shortages have been an increasing problem.

The overall aim of this report is to understand the drivers behind the decisions of highly skilled transnational migrants to settle and work in Sofia. To reach this aim the empirical research was to answer the following questions: What kind of skilled migrants can be found in the Sofia region? How successful is Sofia in attracting highly skilled transnational migrants? Why do they come to Sofia? Where do they live and work? What do they like and what do they dislike about their life here?

The attractiveness of Sofia for migrants depends both on the opportunities for finding a job, the city living conditions, and on the real estates situation in Bulgaria. Sofia belongs to the group of cities which would be attractive for the investors because of a fast growing economy and the attendant attractions of availability of a skilled labour force and tourism.

In Sofia, as well as in other cities in South-Eastern Europe, there is a potential for investments, as well as for the concentration of high skilled workers. It is a fact that 70% from the general investments that are being poured in Bulgaria are coming to Sofia. Naturally, this pouring of resources into the Bulgarian economy is positive, but in order to attract more resources more improvements should be made in the infrastructure and the conditions of living and working in the capital generally – the “hard” factor crisis that has come through during the work in every Work Package, conducted to date under this project.

In the international respondent sample, much as in the Bulgarian samples studied previously, a significant difference between “location” factors and “retention” factors is evident. Generally speaking, people come (*location decision*) mostly under the influence of “hard” factors; but then decide to stay on (*retention decision*) because of the influence of “soft” factors – in Sofia's case, the varied lifestyles available, the existing community life and the tolerance of the city.

As their Bulgarian counterparts, international creatives are pleased with the “soft” aspects of life in Sofia – aspects that arise out of the way of life of the communities, and also out of

private initiative. Respondents, international as well as Bulgarian, are severely displeased by the “hard” aspects of Sofia – infrastructure, services, transport, and general upkeep of the place. In this sense, the traditional “pipes, policing and pavements” policy of the 19th-20th centuries, which Sofia Municipality is finally trying to follow, does target the most acute critiques of the city. While still blissfully unaware of the entire problematic of “creatives” and “soft factors”, Sofia’s planners would evidently be serving the needs of the “creatives”, both domestic and foreign, if they just did successfully the tasks that are routinely expected of municipalities.

In terms of policy, Sofia’s policy-makers are addressing the criticisms, related to “hard” aspects, such as traffic, natural environment, infrastructure and services that both indigenous and foreign creatives have been levelling at the city. This is only the beginning of policy-making in Sofia and its future impact is still impossible to judge. What is obvious is that policy-making has concentrated on the traditional “hard” issues, rather than specifically on attracting Florida-type creatives. On the contrary, the recent – and most likely doomed to fail – attempts of Sofia Municipality to severely and effectively curtail migration into Sofia have the potential of keeping out precisely the kind of creative, mobile “circular migrants” that any city needs to prosper in the 21st century. In this particular case, it would be better for Sofia to stay on its historical development path, where stated policy always fails in implementation, so as not to turn the creatives from its gate.

At the same time, given the predominance of “soft factor” considerations in “staying-on” location decisions, the city will have to grapple with soft-factor issues, for fear of eventually losing creatives to other, tidier cities or EU member countries. This would mean enhancing the current “hard-factor” policies with significant “soft-factor” elements. What these elements should be – this we now know from both our research and from Richard Florida’s. For once, our work fits in with his insights: that “creatives” treasure nature-related amenities, such as well-run parks, easy access to unpolluted bodies of water, bicycle paths, pedestrian open public spaces and so forth.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction to the region

Unlike most major cities in Europe, Sofia has no navigable river to attract human settlement. But its dozens of mineral water springs proved an attraction enough for a tribal alliance of Thracians, the Serdi, to settle there as far back as the 8th century B.C. When the area was taken over by Rome, the Romans established a town named after its natives – Serdika. During the 1st-4th century A.D. Serdika was a flourishing Roman city, the capital of the Inner Thracia region.

During the great migrations of the 5th and 6th centuries, Serdika was frequently sacked by Huns, Goths and other barbarians. From mid-6th century onward, under Justinian the Great the city, re-named into Triaditsa, recovered its status of regional capital of the Eastern Roman Empire.

In 809 the Bulgars, who had swept in from the shores of the Caspian Sea to establish a state to the north of the Balkan Mountains, added the city to their land, re-naming it into the Slavic “Sredets”. It was later, as the rest of Bulgaria, re-absorbed into the Byzantine Empire, but recovered its independence and re-joined the resurgent Bulgarian state following a series of uprising in the 10th century.

Between the 14th century and the late 1870s the city, as the rest of the nation, was part of the Ottoman Empire. It was re-named “Sofia”, after its oldest church, sometime in the 15th century.

The city went into decline with the rest of the Empire from the latter half of the 18th century, to meet Liberation (1879) as a large village. After Liberation, with Sofia declared Bulgaria’s capital, the city’s managers made a strenuous effort to turn the city into a European-style capital in the shortest time.

During the decades of forced industrialisation, undertaken by the Communists from the mid-1940s, Sofia grew more than two times in population, breaching one million by the end of the 1980s.

The tenor of the city’s life became dominated by the incoming peasant-workers and Communist Party functionaries, while the skyline was crowded with factory chimneys and high-rise concrete blocks of flats. The economy of the city was severely skewed in the direction of heavy industry.

A revolution in Sofia led to the downfall of the communist regime in 1989. During the 1990s, Sofia’s artificial Soviet-type industry collapsed, as it did all over the country. Unlike most others, however, Sofianites used the newly arisen opportunities for private initiative and so

the capital avoided the severe economic depression, which drove into poverty the provincial cities and de-populated a good number of them. It re-invented itself away from heavy industry and embraced the new service sectors, which now form more than three-quarters of its GDP. Its population doubled again, but the city reached full employment by 2006-7 and since then skills shortages have been an increasing problem.

2 THEORIES OF MIGRATION: THE CASE OF HIGHLY SKILLED MIGRANTS¹

For a better understanding of trans-national migration in creative and knowledge intensive industries in the city region of Sofia it is important to have a look on recent international migration research and its theories. Migration to Europe in the past 20 to 25 years differs in form and consequences from earlier population movements across national borders. New types of migration and new forms of trans-national migration can be observed in most countries in the EU, including **Bulgaria**. Older approaches of migration research do not seem to describe current migration processes properly. Especially the migration of highly skilled workers shows specific characteristics which require new descriptions.

There is no consistent theory of migration; on the contrary, migration research is characterised by a wide range of theories. Classical approaches basically deal with economic factors to explain migration processes on the macro-level or decisions to migrate on the micro-level. But the changes of migration processes since the 1990s cannot be described appropriately by classical theories. Hence new approaches try to explain contemporary migration structures. They point out the embeddedness of migrants in social networks and try to focus on the meso-level of migration in form of exchange processes between social spaces. In this chapter classical approaches of migration research and new theories will be described which focus on labour migration in general. Afterwards there will be a description of approaches which deal with migration of highly skilled in particular. This also includes Florida's account of the 'creative class'. His perception of this 'class' as being 'hyper-mobile' is one of the most contested elements of his creative class thesis. Finally it will be discussed which approaches are appropriate to describe the movement of highly skilled migrants to *Sofia*.

2.1 Classical theories of labour migration

Classical theories of migration interpret migration processes which are seen as unidirectional with definite countries of origin and destination areas. Migration processes are explained as a consequence of economic disparities and adverse conditions on which individuals react and decide to migrate.

¹ This section has been written by the ACRE Leipzig team (Bastian Lange, Juliane Schröder and Kornelia Ehrlich, Leibniz Institute of Regional Geography) and Amsterdam team (Marco Bontje and Heike Pethe, University of Amsterdam). The section is common to all ACRE reports within Work Package 7.

2.1.1 *Push-pull model*

The emergence of international migration can be explained by correlations between countries of origin and host societies. Everett (see Lee, 1972), worked out a push-pull model which states that there are push-factors in the regions of origin and pull-factors in the destination area, which encourage migration. There are also intervening factors like spatial distance or migration laws and personal facts which influence decisions to migrate. This approach considers not only economic factors like economic disparities but also social factors like conflicts or the attempt to escape from danger (Bürkner & Heller, 2008, p. 38; Haug, 2000, p. 8; Kneer, 1996).

2.1.2 *Neoclassical theories*

Neoclassical theories are based on the push-pull-model. Macro-economic approaches focus on economic factors like economic growth (see Lewis, 1954, see Todaro, 1976). It is assumed that disparities between places of production and labour markets – namely disparities of wage level as well as labour supply and demand for labour – lead to migration. Migration is seen as the attempt to reach a macro-economic equilibrium. Countries with work intensive sectors are characterised by low wages and countries with capital intensive sectors by high wages. These wage differentials cause migration to the areas where the income level is higher. Thus the labour supply lowers and wages increase in ‘poorer’ countries while labour supply increases and therefore wages lower in ‘richer’ countries. At the same time economic and human capital flows towards the ‘poorer’ regions, which are beginning to develop capital intensive sectors. Migration abates when economic disparities vanish. This disregards that there are other factors like the establishment of migrant communities in host societies which may encourage further migration (Haug, 2000, p. 2f, 11f; Bürkner & Heller, 2008, p. 38f).

Macro-economic theory has its counterpart in micro-economic approaches. Here the focus is on the individual migrant. As individuals they opt for migration by rational cost-benefit calculations. Migration is interpreted as investment in order to maximise economic utilities. Individual features, social conditions or technologies which lower the costs of migration enhance the probability of migration. The amount of the expected benefits determines the extent of migration flows. The higher the income level in the destination area in comparison to the earning in the home region, the lower the costs of migration, and/or the longer the remaining years in professional life, the higher the probability of migration. This implicates that there is a higher incentive to migrate for workers with less human capital if the expected income level is low. By contrast high skilled workers are encouraged to migrate if the expected income is high. Otherwise they tend to stay because they can take advantage of their human capital in their home country as well (Massey et al., 1993, p. 456; Haug, 2000, p. 5f, 13f).

But neoclassical theory disregards international political and economic contexts and decisions as well as social boundaries. Furthermore the implicated assumption of homogeneous professional abilities in countries of origin and destination areas as well as the assumed trend to global macro-economic equation are controversial.

2.1.3 New migration economy

The new migration economy approach also focuses on an economic factor: the income. But it also considers the social embeddedness of individuals in households. Individuals are interpreted as acting collectively. Hence the approach focuses on families and households. According to this approach households try to maximise the expected income and to minimise risks for their economic wealth. The job migration of a household member is a form of reassurance because the migrant is independent of local economic conditions of the household. Furthermore international migration and the associated money transfer from abroad can be used as capital for an increase in productivity of the household. Usually it is a matter of temporary migration. It is claimed that adjustment of wages does not stop international migration. Even if there is no strong incentive, households try to diversify their economic risk by migration of family members. Migration is seen as a risk lowering strategy (Haug, 2000, p. 7f).

2.1.4 Dual labour market theory

Neoclassical migration theory as well as new migration economy assume that migration is a result of rational decisions of individuals or families. In contrast the Dual labour market theory suggests that migration is an effect of political and socioeconomic constellations. The reasons for labour migration are not seen in a trend to a labour market equation but in the segmentation of the labour market. Advanced industrial societies develop a dual economy with a capital-intensive primary segment and a labour-intensive secondary segment. The latter is characterised by insecurity and low wages. Native workers usually do not have any motivation to accept these jobs, which also mean less prestige and low promotion prospects (Lebhart, 2002, p. 13 f). Hence advanced economies demand foreign workers for the secondary segment. This causes migration (Haug, 2000, p. 3f; Lebhart, 2002, p. 13ff).

2.1.5 World system theory

This migration approach deals with the idea of the clash between capitalistic industrial- and developing nations. It is assumed that the origin of migration lies in institutional and sectoral disparities which are evoked by the integration of nations into the worldwide capitalist system. This approach divides the world into three zones: core, semi-periphery and periphery. To explain the patterns of migration the reciprocal dependency of these zones as well as direction and constitution of flows of capital and goods are analysed. It is presumed that international labour migration follows the international flows of capital and goods in the opposite direction. This intends that first of all migration is detectable in Global Cities, which attract migrants from the periphery and not industrialised societies.

Therefore migration is seen as a logical consequence of the globalisation of the economy which causes the emergence of the capitalistic market in developing countries. This implicates that international migration primarily appears between former colonial powers and its colonies because of already existing relations in economy, transport, administration,

culture and language (Lebhart, 2002, p. 16ff; Haug, 2000, p. 4f; Bürkner & Heller, 2008, p. 40f).

2.2 New theories of labour migration

The 1990s confronted the migration research with new migration forms which cannot be described as unidirectional processes with definite countries of origin and definite destination areas. The classical micro- and macro-analytic migration theories failed to apply to these forms. There was a missing link: the connection between individuals and society. New approaches in migration research pointing out the importance of social networks as the missing link were required.

2.2.1 Theory of migration systems

The theory of migration systems assumes that the intensive exchange of information, goods, services, capital, ideas and persons between specific countries causes a stable system. Migration is one of these exchange processes. Thereby several countries of emigration can be connected with one region of immigration, just like one emigration country can be characterised by migration flows to several destination areas (multi-polarity). Migration systems are variable social arrangements (formal and informal) including individuals and institutions of both countries. The participation of social ethnic networks, multinational firms, educational institutions or other corporations - as mediations between macrostructures and individuals as well as between the different countries - in shaping the migration system plays a crucial role. Therefore this approach concentrates on macro-, meso- and micro-structures. It considers the economic, political, social, demographical and historical context of migration systems and focuses on both ends of the migration flow, on disparities and interdependencies. But it does not say much about the genesis of migration systems.

In contrast to other theories the relevance of spatial proximity is denied. Instead it points out the influence of political and economic relations on migration systems. As political, economic and communication relations are adjusted by feedback and modulation mechanisms, migration systems, although stable, are not static but dynamic. The processes in and between countries change. New migration systems emerge, countries drop out or join a system, interdependencies transform and migration flows alter in shape (Haug, 2000, p. 17ff; Bürkner & Heller, 2008, p. 44f; Lebhart, 2002, p. 29 ff; Fawcett, 1989, p. 671ff).

2.2.2 Theory of migrant networks

As seen the migration system approach points out the very relevance of ethnic networks built by migrants and their family and friends. In contrast to old micro- and macro-analytic approaches, new migration theories focus on the meso-level of migration. The social network approach also stresses the influence of social networks on migration. Migration networks shape social and spatial paths of migration provide new migrants with information and

resources² and therefore facilitate their migration. In short, they lower the costs and risks of migration. On the other hand they smooth the process of keeping in touch with the home region and influence the integration process of the new migrants into the host societies.

Therefore it is assumed that personal relationships which connect migrants, former migrants and non-migrants in the home countries and host societies increase the probability of international migration and can lead to chain migration and sustained migration flows. That means there is no strong correlation between migration flows and wage and employment disparities because of the positive effects of migrant networks. These networks develop an own dynamic which can hardly be regulated.

The effects of social networks on migration are not clear yet. Surely, social relationships influence the decision to migrate by providing information and support or the opposite. Strong social ties in the home countries can inhibit migration. Less social ties can promote the movement. Migrant networks can produce security but also dependency, liability, little integration in the host society and therefore less freedom. This could frighten people. Thus respective contexts have to be considered in order to correctly interpret the relationships between social networks and migration (Haug, 2000, p. 20ff; Lebhart, 2002, p. 20ff; Bürkner & Heller, 2008, p. 42ff).

2.2.3 Theory of social capital

The network perspective can be specified by the term social capital. As already mentioned, personal contacts to friends, relatives and compatriots facilitate migrants to find jobs and housing and can offer financial support. The motives for providing resources might vary. While some act simply by ethical reasons (value orientated) or feel a group identity and therefore act by solidarity (bounded solidarity); others act strategic (reciprocal transfer) or in awareness of their position in the group (status orientated) (Haug, 2000, p. 22ff; Bürkner & Heller, 2008, p. 45f).

That means that besides the benefits of social capital there are also restrictions like conformity pressure, obligation to share and limitation of contact with other persons which do not belong to the social network. Making contacts outside of the community could be seen as an assault to the group identity and cause punishment. So individual getting ahead could be inhibited.

In consequence it depends on the community in which the migrant is situated and its openness if social capital is next to economic capital a beneficial element in the migration process.

² For example supporting finding a residence and a job or providing financial security.

2.2.4 *Trans-national migration*

Migration systems and processes have changed since the 1980s. They can be described as circular movements with specific social structures and mobile lifestyles. This new patterns are called trans-national migration as a special form of international migration. New forms of communities emerge, producing specific social spaces by the socio-cultural practice of trans-national migrants. These spaces are neither bounded in the home country of the migrants nor in the host society but between and therefore are interpreted as being trans-national social spaces.

“[...] trans-national social spaces are pluri-local frames of reference which structure everyday practices, social positions, employment trajectories and biographies, and human identities, and simultaneously exist *above and beyond* the social contexts of national societies” (Pries, 2001, p. 65).

Trans-national migration is characterised by spatial movements that can be nomadic and pluri-local, but these movements are not de-territorialised. This leads to hybrid identities and practices. Trans-national migrants can benefit from opportunities of their home countries as well as of their current domicile. They are able to create flexible strategies of sojourn. The possibility of gaining power in their country of origin by i.e. transferring economic capital to their country of origin and simultaneously gaining more power in the host society as political actors, as “voices for the minorities”, is a specific feature of trans-national migrants (Bürkner, 2000, p. 302).³

Trans-nationalism is explained by the process of globalisation and its linked modern communication, transport and labour forms. But as Bürkner points out, there were migration forms in history which showed trans-national characteristics before globalisation began.⁴ Furthermore economic and socio-cultural processes of globalisation as well as processes of transformation on a national level appear to be not more than framing conditions for a collectivisation around an individual or a little group. The relevance of economy for the emergence of trans-national spaces is disregarded (Bürkner & Heller, 2008, p. 46f; Bürkner, 2005, p. 113-122; Haug, 2000, p. 16ff; Pries, 2007, p. 20-22).

2.3 **Theories of highly skilled migration**

Besides old and new migration theories which try to explain labour migration in general (see 2.1. and 2.2.) there are new approaches which focus on migration of highly skilled workers in particular. Besides the concept of Brain Drain where movement of highly skilled is interpreted as unidirectional, other theories think this migration form as circular and oscillating and connect them with the new shaping of capitalism.

³ Glick Schiller et al. (1992) showed the phenomena of trans-nationalism in the case of the migration of workers from Central America to the US.

⁴ Bürkner refers to the early shaping of migration paths by ethnic communities in the USA at the beginning of the 20th century (Bürkner 2000, p. 302).

2.3.1 *Brain drain*

The brain drain approach normally is applied on migration of highly skilled workers between different countries. Country of origin and destination area are seen as clearly defined containers with separated social systems.⁵ The embeddedness of migration processes into flows of capital, goods, communication and information is only of marginal interest.

The concept of brain drain assumes a unidirectional and permanent migration between 'more' and 'less' developed countries. Again economic factors like the higher income level in the destination area are claimed to be the main reason for migration. Seen from the perspective of dependency theory⁶ developing regions are characterised by a loss of human capital while highly industrialised societies benefit. In consequence it is said that the emigration of highly skilled obstructs the economic progress in developing regions and as a result keeps them in economic dependence (Meusbürger, 2008, p. 31; Meusbürger, 2008, p. 51f, Pethe, 2006, p. 5f). But this approach does not consider that emigrated highly skilled workers might return to their home countries. This would be brain gain since highly skilled workers improved their qualifications abroad and therefore could push the development in their home countries. Instead of speaking about brain drain, it is more likely that there is brain circulation (Pethe, 2006, p. 9). We will now discuss the gradual shift in migration literature from 'brain drain' to 'brain circulation' and the possible negative and positive impacts on the countries of origin in some more detail.

In the social science literature, three approaches are prominent which discuss the mobility of the highly skilled professionals. In the 1960s, the issue of brain drain discussed the negative outcomes of the emigration of talent of third world countries to industrialised countries. Often graduates originating from developing countries took advantage from the large income differences and better working conditions in Western states (Schipulle 1973; Adams 1968). Although many European countries refused to give labour permits to third world graduates, the US became the favourite destination for this group of mobile highly skilled migrants. As a result, more than 40 % of the highly skilled persons in all OECD countries who are resident outside their home country live in the US.

Although the brain drain perspective is still present in the political arena, it lost its prominence. Firstly, the geographical pattern of mobility changed in the 1980s due the increasing trans-nationalisation of the companies and the economy (Findlay, 1988; Salt, 1988; Findlay and Gould, 1989; Beaverstock, 1990; Findlay and Garrick, 1990). Secondly, researchers like Annalee Saxenian pointed out that the emigration of highly skilled can lead to a return migration of highly skilled after several decades, which has a positive impact on the economies of the developing countries. In her book 'Silicon Valley's new immigrant entrepreneurs' (1999), she explained how India, Taiwan and China profited from the

⁵ It is also possible to use this concept for different regions in one country. This is the case when migration processes between the old West German and the newly-formed German states are focused. There are not two separated social systems but yet the different history causes different economic and social conditions.

⁶ Dependency Theory assumes a stratification of countries in an international system and resulting power and dependency relations between dominant societies and countries in a lower position. Here migration is seen as a specific form of interaction between states, which is caused by structural disparities in dependent societies and provides a benefit to dominant countries (Bürkner & Heller 2008, p. 39).

economic activities of their ‘diaspora’. In her latest book ‘The New Argonauts’ (2006) she describes also the positive effects of international mobility of highly skilled migrants for the regional development. She has observed that the openness to foreign creative talent is one of the key factors for the success of Silicon Valley and also in the home countries of the migrants. Saxenian proposes that the successful development of the ICT industry in Israel, Taiwan and to a lesser extent in China and India is caused by the mobile talent who stimulates innovation, investment and trade between the countries. The exchange of knowledge, she concludes, is that the foreign experts ‘welcome the openness, diversity and initiative that have built Silicon Valley’. The connection which is constructed by the mobile ICT engineers is the basis of the economic success of these industries in their home and host countries.

Thirdly, country and regions in industrialised countries have become aware that highly skilled home nationals are also increasingly mobile and migrate to foreign destinations. Some of the earlier mentioned studies, like the work of Beaverstock, address expatriate communities from advanced capitalist countries to other advanced capitalist countries or to rapidly developing countries, like the British communities in New York City and Singapore.

In our own empirical analysis we will also demonstrate that a significant part of the highly skilled migrants coming to European city-regions are coming from other European city-regions, and that they are often either on the move to yet another European city-region or plan to return to their city-region of origin. This is again an example of ‘brain circulation’, a form of circular migration we will discuss in more detail now.

2.3.2 ‘Brain circulation’: circular migration

Since the 1980s labour migration changed. As empirical studies showed (i.e. Wolter, 1997) an increasing movement of highly skilled workers has emerged. Often this migration is temporary and can be described as circulation⁷ between industrialised societies as well as a migration from ‘more’ to ‘less’ developed countries. Circular migration implicates the return of the migrants to their home regions after one or more migration steps and is linked to transnationalism (Vertovec, 2007, p. 3f).⁸ Even though the region of origin firstly suffers a brain drain by losing highly skilled workers there is also a brain gain by foreign highly skilled or a brain re-gain by returning highly skilled, who might have improved their qualities. So it we could speak of brain exchange between the different regions (Schultz, 2008, p. 52f; Pethe, 2006, p. 7ff).

This new form of migration of highly skilled is attributed to internationalisation and economic interdependences. Therefore the perspective of research focuses primarily on the meso-level like firms and institutions. In the 1980s, the international financial market was deregulated and many industrial producers moved their production units outside their home markets. The world economy began to internationalise. Many trans-national production and service

⁷ It has to be pointed out that circular migration is not only a phenomenon which describes the movements of highly skilled. It also applies to less or unskilled workers (Smith & Guarnizo 1998, p. 18).

⁸ As Fassmann points out that the distinction between circular and trans-national migration is problematic, if migrants keep up their social and functional relations to their home society on a large scale (Fassmann 2008, p. 23).

companies developed which lead to the 'brain exchange' of highly skilled professionals within these large international organisations. The expertise of the highly skilled employees was needed to control and supervise the new sales offices, production units and bank branches abroad (Boyle et al. 1994, Findlay 1995). These so called expats were typically seconded to a foreign branch for two to five years. Although they were privileged compared to those professionals who came from third world countries a decade earlier, and they were compensated for their international assignment with relocation service and a salary above the home level, the seconded professionals had little choice to select their country of destination. They were are part of the international stream of investments and trade which was allocated due to the outcomes of international investment opportunities. I.e. the expats accompanied the foreign international direct investments streams and, in the case of newly erected production units, the trade of foreign goods and services. Wolter (1997) showed the interrelation between investment and international migration for the case of the European Union in the 1980s.

Beaverstock, who investigated the mobility of these professionals in the financial service sectors over two decades, points out that the geography of their mobility is often related to the geography of the global cities (Beaverstock 1994, 1996, 2002). Global cities are metropolitan regions with a large concentration of high range services and international headquarters which command and control international investment streams (cf. Friedman 1986; Sassen 1996). The Globalization and World Cities Research Network in Loughborough mapped out the position of cities in this international urban system by looking at the connectivity of the international organisation in the urban regions (www.lboro.ac.uk/gawc). In addition to the circular movement within the industrialised countries, Beaverstock and others also describe a movement from the North to the South. Compared to the previous mobility which was described as brain drain, the brain exchange connected industrialised countries more strongly or describes mobility from industrialised countries to less industrialised countries. Due to its strong economic embeddedness, the brain exchange is influenced by economic circles with a large increase of international mobility in the period of economic upturn and a decrease of international migration in the period of the economic downturn.

The brain exchange perspective was criticised recently for approaching the international migration of the highly skilled mainly from an economic perspective and neglecting the agency of the individuals (Scott 2006). Before the role of the individual migrants will be discussed below, it should be mentioned that the economy has also changed in the last decade, and the organisation has also influence on intra-company mobility of employees. Large vertically integrated companies were typical for the Fordist age. These differentiated units did not only comprise various production and administrative units, they also began to allocate each function at the most suitable location. Due to the internationalisation of their organisations, highly skilled migrants were seconded between the different parts of the companies. Typically they were sent from the head quarter to peripheral locations.

Due to the reorganisation of trans-national companies in post-fordism (Cormode, 1994; Koser and Salt, 1997; Wolter, 1999), hierarchies were reduced and activities were outsourced. Not only is the size of the companies reduced, but also the expensive international career opportunities for employees. The companies in the creative knowledge industries tend to be very small. A large share has less than 5 employees. On the one hand, this particular structure of the sector makes it less likely that intra-company mobility is a common feature in the

creative knowledge sectors. On the other hand, the technological progress enabled small actors to be mobile internationally, because the international communication and transport become cheaper and easily available. Instead of being seconded within a large company, it appears to be more likely that highly skilled individual change between small and medium companies now on their own steam.

2.4 Florida's conception of the international mobile creative class

“Regional economic growth is powered by creative people, who prefer places that are diverse, tolerant and open to new ideas”, writes Richard Florida in his book “The rise of the creative class”. The attractiveness of cities, its quality of life and its diversity of cities are pivotal for the future development of cities. A good people climate will draw new creative people to those places and will lever the economic success of regions. Using this imagination Florida describes conditions which are strongly related to the inward mobility of creative talent as a precondition and an effect for regional economic success of metropolitan regions. Diversity which is described as heterogeneity in terms of ethnicity, sexuality and lifestyles is seen as a precondition for the inflow of new talent. People from various backgrounds will be attracted to these spaces which will again lead to an even larger diversity of people. In the first texts, Florida does not distinguish between national or international migrants, but his later book ‘The flight of the creative class’ uses examples which indicate that he does not only have national migration, but also international migration in mind.

Florida mainly focuses on the ability of places to attract foreign creative, when he writes: “Today, the terms of competition revolve around a central axis: a nation’s ability to mobilise, attract, and retain human creative talent”. The attractiveness of regions is important, because the economic success will increase with the inflow of talent. This is the most important formula which Florida uses. A detailed description in which ways foreign migrants contribute to the host economy is difficult to decipher in his work. Several hints can be found: foreign creatives “help build our scientific enterprises” (p. 95), account for “a disproportionate share of most influential scientists” (p. 101), relieve the “looming talent shortage” (p. 103), “take American ideas and American relationships back home” (p. 110) and contribute to the entertainment industry (p. 125).

Florida has a very broad conception of the creative class which comprises 30 % of the American work force. Again it is unclear in which aspects the mobility of the creative class is different from other highly skilled persons. But not only Florida lacks a clear definition of what is meant by the mobility of the highly skilled. Scholars who want to investigate the international mobility of the highly skilled see themselves facing a jungle of definitions. The definition of their qualification and their migrant status can vary enormously. For instance, the term ‘highly skilled’ can indicate a formal educational credential, but ‘skill’ can also be defined as the ability to solve certain task whether those ability was acquired with a ‘learning by doing’-approach or a formal education. The status as migrant can be related to certain forms of work permits for foreign employees, the status as a seconded employee within an international companies or simply mean non-national. In addition to that, Florida gives an account about the creative class which does not necessarily mean that other occupations such

as doctors or are not internationally mobile (cf. OECD, 2002), whereas other creative knowledge workers are certainly limited to perform their activity in different countries. One prominent example are lawyers whose main professional reference is national laws. International law firms have only developed recently and mostly they are limited to certain field like international mergers and acquisitions. Although differences between the creative knowledge occupations seem to exist, their scope is still unclear and also how do they contribute to the different national economies?

Florida's ideas might be one of the most prominent accounts of social scientists which emphasise the importance of the international migration for regional economies. In the political arena, the issue has been more strongly articulated since the labour shortages in several sectors appeared in industrialised countries (OECD). Since the creation of a common market, the individual member of the countries of the European Union received the right to move freely within the common space even earlier. At the time, the creation of a common space was not so much motivated by the attraction of foreign talent, but by the reduction of economic disparities between the various regions of the member states.

Although several limitations exist, for examples for citizens of the new European member states, the member states and the European commission try to reduce the barriers, introduce a common migration policy and even support the mobility of certain groups actively. The Lisbon agenda, the agreement of a common migration policy in Tampere and the establishment of the student exchange programmes such as Socrates and Erasmus are examples which aim to promote the international mobility within Europe. The goal is to increase the competitiveness of the member states of the European Union by stimulating their ability for innovation and knowledge transfer. In other political arenas, other motivations to support the international mobility of highly skilled professionals are articulated. For example, on a global level, governments find mechanism to deregulate short term international mobility which is related to the international trade of goods and services (OECD, WTO).

Apart from the attraction of talent, the reduction of disparities, the decrease of labour shortage, the stimulation of innovativeness and the lubrication of economic globalisation, various national statistical offices in central and eastern Europe point at the continuous decrease of their work force in the coming five decades. The political initiatives in Europe and the US are increasingly perceived as an international 'war for talent'. Florida addresses in his recent book the increasing danger that the US American cities loose this ability to attract and to retain foreign talent. European countries are becoming increasingly successful competitors for creative talent, in his view .

All accounts use imaginations of international migrations which expect positive outcomes. This is a recent development. Since the oil crisis in the early 1970s, immigration was stopped in most European states, because the incoming labour was seen as a competitor for the home nationals. In many countries only transferees of trans-national companies were successfully able to apply for a labour permit. Although those negative threats are less articulated in the public now, the mechanism of the international migration of highly skilled are not fully analysed. Who is internationally mobile? Why are trans-national migrations engaged in certain industries? How long do they typically stay? What effects does their presence have on

the region, in particular on the economy and the housing market? Which cities and regions are attractive and what are the drivers behind their success?

2.5 The upcoming paradigm

The firm-related perspective has been central in the study of international migration of the highly skilled, because many researchers assumed that this migration flow was largely demand driven. Apart from labour migration, other motives exist. Personal motives like family unification and marriage are the most prominent. Another important factor is education. But asylum seekers and refugees start a new life in other countries, too. In addition to that, an increasing number of cases are reported, when highly skilled migrants decide to live in a country because of the interesting cultural environment and the offered amenities as it was described by Florida too. Then, immigrants settle in the country first, and look for work later. In other words, the variety of reasons to settle in a certain country might be larger than the reasons which are found in the immigration legacy of the country in question.

In the Netherlands, for example, about one third of the immigrants entered the country due to employment related reasons, another third because of family related reasons and one sixth started with their studies in the Netherlands. Of course, these numbers needed to be treated with caution, because they are strongly related to the immigration categories which exist in the Dutch law. Firstly, immigrants use and tend to be classified in categories which gives them the best access to the host country. Research (Kanjapan 1995) shows that immigrants tend to switch between the categories to a large extent. Secondly, important motives such as large differences in the house prices in border regions which are not relevant in the legal framework are not mentioned in the legal framework.

The heterogeneity of expats increases. Apart from the seconded transferees who work in large companies, an increasing share comes on their own steam. Due to the removal of immigration barriers for labour migration within the EU and the stronger support of student mobility in the EU, but also internationally, the socio-economic background and the motives of trans-national migrants diversify (Conradson and Latham, 2005; Scott, 2006a; Scott, 2006b).

According to Scott, the group of expats is diversified. Young professionals who come in their early career or stay on as graduates, international Bohemians who enjoy the cultural amenities and assimilation-settlers who marry a partner in the host country are new groups that have not gained enough attention. An overview of the nationality of foreign highly skilled immigrants in the Netherlands shows that the immigration of highly skilled persons cannot always be related to economic linkages between the countries. Nearly 50 % of the highly skilled foreign nationals who lived 2000 in the Netherlands come from countries which either had strong colonial ties to the Netherlands such as Indonesia or Suriname, or were the recruiting countries of the former guest workers such as Turkey and Morocco or where the home countries of a larger highly skilled refugee population such as Iraq, Iran or Afghanistan. Less than one third of the foreign highly skilled in the Netherlands, however, derive from Western OECD countries. Using the nationality as an indicator of the migration motivation is, of course, problematic too. Firstly, this approach assumes that persons with a similar nationality

share the same motive. Secondly, these immigrants are formally highly educated, but it is unclear, if they can use their educational credentials in their job. In addition to that, many foreign nationals are born in the Netherlands, although they hold a foreign passport. They cannot be considered as migrants.

The new heterogeneity of the skilled migrants leads also to a larger diversity of residential choice between the foreign highly skilled. The former orientation on the higher segments of the housing market in the suburban areas fades in favour of the increasingly popular and therewith more expensive inner city on the one hand, and lower priced flats on the other. Due to the strong urban orientation of creative workers, the overall preference for inner city location might also be emphasised by foreign creative workers. Furthermore, the duration of the stay appears to change to. Expats which typically live between two to five years abroad are accompanied by trans-national migrants who settle for a longer time frame or even permanent in the foreign country. In addition to that, the possibilities to access the labour market of creative knowledge workers might also vary with their demographic background. Kibbelaar (2007) points out that foreign migrants who are not part of the classic expat population in the Netherlands often struggle to find positions in the creative knowledge industries on the one hand. On the other hand, they are less likely to choose a creative knowledge profession, because they consider those occupations as less prestigious and economically less rewarding .

Therefore, an analysis which identifies how many persons work in the creative knowledge economy and are of foreign descent might give a more accurate number about the real inflow foreign creative knowledge workers than an approach which only identifies the formal education of immigrants. A comparison between the results of both approaches identifies the scope of the brain waste of immigrant human capital, because it will identify the scope of access of foreign highly qualified workers to these industries.

2.6 Settling and staying: Highly skilled migrants in the host society

While the trans-national mobility of highly skilled migrants receives increasing interest and attention from academic researchers and policy-makers, much less attention has been given so far to their experiences after their move and their preferences in terms of residence, amenities and relations with the host society. Integration in the host society, for example, is generally hardly considered a problem since most highly skilled migrants are expected to stay a few years at most and since they are expected to have a well-paid job. Another generalising assumption often made is that highly skilled migrants most often come from societies that are very close to the host society in terms of norms, values and behaviour, so they would hardly have adaptation problems.

These assumptions might apply to most expatriates, but as we have seen in the sections above and will see again in our empirical analysis, this group is actually only a small part of the highly skilled migrants coming to and travelling within Europe. Highly skilled migrants quite often stay for more than a few years, they do not always come with the guarantee of a job, their job is not always well-paid, and they also come from non-Western developing countries.

While this heterogeneity in the broad category of highly skilled migrants is gradually acknowledged, we hardly find evidence of this in the international academic debate so far. As far as matters of settling and staying of highly skilled migrants are discussed, mostly the focus is strongly on the sub-category of expatriates, and most attention is given to the housing and real estate market.

Expatriates are often merely seen as affluent corporate movers that can rely on relocation services. Because of this view, they are often discussed in terms of dualisation of world cities. Several studies (Freund, 1998; Glebe, 1986; White, 1998; White and Hurdley, 2003) show that immigrants from OECD countries differ in their housing preferences strongly from other, often lower skilled migrant population. The residential pattern is often very similar to home nationals with the same socio-economic status. “[T]he settlement of migrants from North America, Australasia and other parts of Europe has tended to occur most strongly in those parts of London with the highest occupational status”, observes White. This pattern varies between different OECD nationals. Japanese corporate transferees and their families show the strongest segregation of all national groups in London, in Düsseldorf and Frankfurt/Main. They live more often in suburban locations, and share less often similar housing patterns with similar status groups. The high concentration is often ascribed to the activities of relocation services and Japanese real estate agencies, the importance of public transport access to work, security of the residential environment, quality of the dwelling (cleanliness of kitchen) and proximity to school and other community institutions (Glebe, 1986; Glebe, 1997; White, 1998; White and Hurdley, 2003). In particular the proximity to schools is often stated as a pivotal point for all OECD nationals too, although this view is also contested.

Generally, expatriates rent more often than home nationals due to their temporary status, although the rental sector is with some 10 % of the dwellings relatively small in some of the investigated cities such as London. Rarely the flats of the transferees are owned by their companies. Instead White and Hurdley observe that other ethnic entrepreneurs who hold these flats as property investment let these high-priced dwellings to Japanese in London. This untypical demand in the rented sector leads to a rise of rent prices in those residential neighbourhoods. A similar connection between the rise of housing prices and immigration is described for Vancouver. This is properly the most prominent and extreme example which illustrates how activities of affluent immigrants lead to a significant increase of housing prices (Brosseau et al., 1996; Hiebert, 2000, 31ff; Ley and Tutchener, 2001; Olds, 1998; Olds and Yeung, 1999). Because of the transfer of Hong Kong to the People’s Republic China, wealthy Chinese immigrants and entrepreneurs fled to Canada. They acquired Canadian citizenship by making large investments. Often they spent large amounts of money in the regional housing market and transformed the suburban residential landscape, because they constructed houses which were conceived as monster-houses by the older population of English descent. Due to their acquisition of large suburban properties the prices in the higher housing market segment rose. In addition, entrepreneurs built malls and developed larger inner city housing projects (Ley and Tutchener, 2001; Olds, 1998; Olds, 2001).

The examples from London and Vancouver, however, show how the effects are firstly related to global flows which are linked to each city. Secondly, they show that the aims of the incoming educated population from the industrialised countries and the effects of their inflow can vary considerably. Recently, Scott underlined that an increasing heterogeneity of highly

skilled immigrants stream into European cities. Apart from the typical expatriate population, overstaying students, family migrants and international bohemians live in the metropolitan regions. Also Conradson and Latham point at the ‘muddling trans-nationalism’ in large European cities such as London which comprises an increasing number of mobile middle class individuals. Compared with the typical expat population, the residential preferences differ. They are more oriented towards inner city neighbourhoods. Due to their lower income, they are not able to afford a rented dwelling in the upper housing segments. Since they travel more often individually, they can also not rely on relocation services to find accommodation. On the contrary, they are more likely to compete with the local middle class. In other words, the chances of trans-national migrants and expats to access the labour market and the effects of their presence are as much related to their socio-demographic background as to the local and national regulations.

2.7 Conclusion

No simple theory can deal with the complex reality of international migrants in Sofia. What is clear is that they are part of the new, globalisation-related population of highly-skilled migrants, who do not intend to become part of the place of destination – in this case, of the city of Sofia. It is also clear that, unlike the indigenous Bulgarian creatives studied in the previous Work Packages, international migrants are not predominantly – or even significantly – driven by “individual trajectory” considerations (i.e. by factors to do with previous links to the place, with family and community). On the contrary, their location decisions are mostly individual-based, which creates the temptation to see them as Florida’s happy-go-lucky nomads, moving from place to place in the search for the good and varied life.

This, however, has not been proven to be so. Much like indigenous migrants, the choice to relocate has been seen to be largely driven by “hard” factors – job offer, or being simply “sent” by the management of the home company to do a job in Bulgaria. Much like Bulgarian domestic migrants also, international migrants connected to education and movie-making tend to include a “soft” component into their migration decision. Usually, this is a “second-level” decision: once a respondent has decided to migrate abroad and begins choosing the place, then “soft” factors come into play: knowing people from Bulgaria, or who have been to Bulgaria and have had a good impression of the quality of life, or simply knowing something of the history and culture of Bulgaria. And then the specific migration choice – Bulgaria – is made because of the expectation that quality of life would be good.

It is to be noted that respondents, although asked about their Sofia location choice, almost universally speak about Bulgaria – the country, not the city. Both “hard”-influenced and “soft”-influenced location choices are to do with Bulgaria, rather than Sofia. So how is it that, while taking off for Bulgaria, they end up in Sofia? The answer is to do with Sofia’s unique place in the creative and knowledge-intensive field – almost the entire bulk of those industries, as well as the market for them, is situated in Sofia by virtue of it being the capital, the gateway and the country’s most dynamic and relentlessly progressing city. In this sense, foreign migrants end up in Sofia by default – while coming to locate in Bulgaria, they get sucked into Sofia.

In the international respondent sample, much like in the Bulgarian samples of the previous Work Packages, a difference between “location” factors and “retention” factors can be traced. Generally speaking, people come (location decision) mostly under the influence of “hard” factors; but decide to stay on (retention decision) because of the influence of “soft” factors – in Sofia’s case, the varied lifestyles available, the existing community life and the tolerance.

As their Bulgarian counterparts, international creatives are pleased with the “soft” aspects of life in Sofia – aspects that arise out of the way of life of the communities, and also out of private initiative. Respondents, international as well as Bulgarian, are severely displeased by the “hard” aspects of Sofia – infrastructure, services, transport, and general upkeep of the place. In this sense, the traditional “pipes, policing and pavements” policy of the 19th-20th centuries, which Sofia Municipality is finally trying to follow, does answer the most acute critiques of the city.

Unlike Bulgarians, international respondents tend to place more of a blame on ordinary Sofianites for the dilapidation of the mass housing and its immediate environment – i.e. issues that ordinary Sofianites could resolve, but have chosen not to.

While Bulgarian respondents make an attempt to answer policy-related questions (and come up with the answer that Sofia-based policies are non-existent, while national-level policies are the ones that make a difference), international respondents do not mention any policy at all when speaking of their location / retention decisions. Policy, it seems, playing almost no role in Bulgarian creatives’ location choices, has zero weight in international migrants’ location choices.

What is certain is that none of the existing migration theories can meaningfully cover, in isolation, the situation of the international migrants in Sofia. A combination (or re-working) of the theories emerging since the turn of the century seems to be the way forward if we are to make sense of the data emerging.

3 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN BULGARIA AND SOFIA

3.1 Internationalisation of the economy in Bulgaria and Sofia

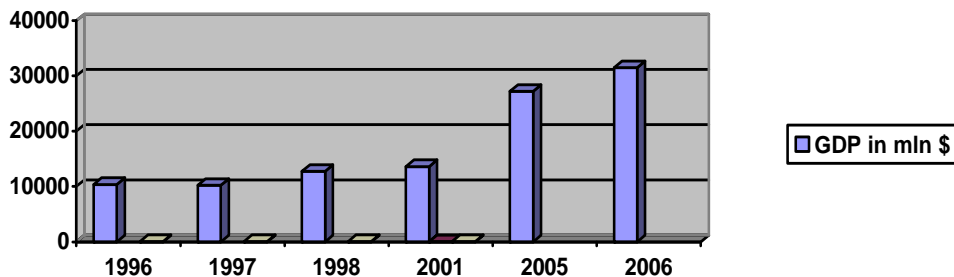
Bulgaria is the only European ex-Warsaw Pact country that failed to make the transition in one leap. It went through two economic collapses, caused by governments of ex-Communists, and consequently carried out two political revolutions – first in 1989-1990 and then in 1996-1997.

Only in 1997 did Bulgaria turn seriously to the business of reform, in a situation of virtually zero resources and complete economic exhaustion. Inflation was 2,000 per cent, monthly wages had sunk to around \$ 10, the majority of banks had collapsed, the economy had shrunk more than after the disastrous defeats in the two World Wars (as an ally of Germany).

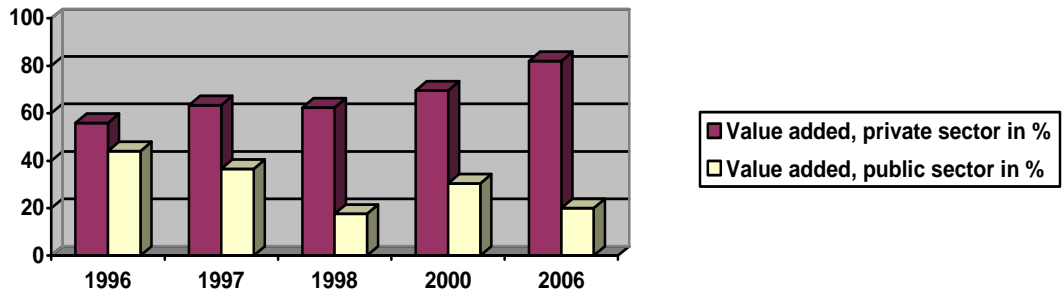
For most of the 1990s, Bulgarians avoided reforms toward a market economy because they were not convinced of its merits. This mind-set pre-dates the socialist period – latest research (Avramov, 2007) has demonstrated that the evasion of market economy began in the early 1920s and has proven a durable characteristic. As a result, until the end of the 1990s Bulgaria's economy was locked into a doomed effort to establish a socialist-capitalist synthesis, characteristic of most former Soviet Republics. Crony capitalism with predatory inclinations was the inevitable result, which still plagues Bulgaria's society today.

After the second economic collapse of 1997, which was yet again the result of an attempted centrally-run economy, Bulgarians entered the path of reform. The introduction of a Currency Board regimen, backed by IMF reserves, re-established the financial system, whereas determined privatisation, conducted at break-neck pace, re-established the economy on a market basis. Legislation harmonisation with the EU, as part of Bulgaria's accession effort, helped establish the legal basis for business and legality. Nevertheless, it took Bulgaria 11 years to reach its pre-collapse economic indicators of 1996, ensuring it remained the poorest nation in the EU.

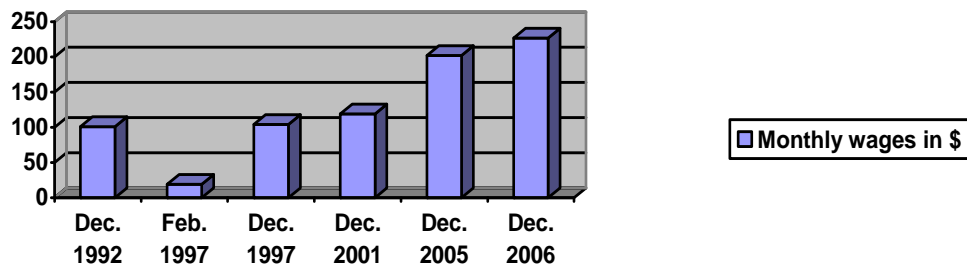
Coming behind almost everyone else, Bulgarians joined the EU later than most, on 1 January 2007.



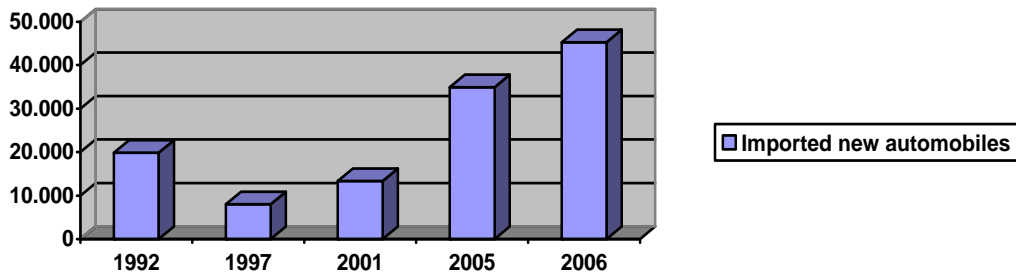
Source: National Statistics Institute



Source: National Statistics Institute



Source: National Statistics Institute



Source: National Statistics Institute

Contemporary urban theory has some way to go, before truly making sense of the development and prospects of ex-socialist cities. Trying to imagine them as a sub-phenomenon of what is already known from Western cities is to stray away from their complex reality.

There are a handful of texts available (Musil, 2005; Petrovic, 2005; Ruoppila, 2004), which attempt to make serious sense of such cities in Europe. Such texts, as well as the work done on Sofia under the ACRE project, forcefully suggest that such cities are best grasped as a novel phenomenon, whose uniqueness stems from their participation in the unique process of post-socialist transformations. Mina Petrovic (Petrovic, 2005) lists three types of transformation, directly impacting on ex-socialist cities:

1. From totalitarian to democratic society, from the planned to market based economy.
2. Developmental: from an industrial to post-industrial (service) economy and society.
3. Transformation from an isolated to an integrated position in the world economy, which is itself transformed from an international to global type.

To this list, a *fourth* point must be added: the societal aspects of the difficult emergence from a deformed, imitative industrialisation. While it produced the outer trappings of modernity – urban life, industrial factories, Fordist methods of production – communist modernisation did not produce the basis of modernity: the autonomous, resourceful individual. The outcome was that none of the Development Plans placed at their centre the life of the individual. Post-socialist cities, as a consequence, do not provide a benevolent enabling environment for the ‘creative (free, resourceful, multi-cultural) class’.

Based on the experience of Sofia, furthermore, at some future date an entirely *new category* of city would have to be added to existing theoretical models: that of the revolutionary city. Being the arena of two successful revolutions (1990 and 1997), Sofia inevitably differs from most cities, inasmuch as its citizens have an entirely different level of self-confidence, civic awareness, initiative and organisational capacity.

For the purposes of this research, the fundamental theoretical point can be narrowed down. Since 1990, Sofia has re-invented itself without help or hindrance from strategies or urban development plans. Rather, the energies of its citizens have managed to utilise objective factors for development, such as the city’s gateway function, its established role of political, economic and cultural leader, as well as the clustering of different types of workers associated with this. All of these were successfully harnessed, from 1991 on, by the introduction of market mechanisms that freed individual and group initiative.

Insofar as any ‘path dependency’ can be discerned, it is the sustained failure, from 1945 to 2008, of all attempts to plan or limit the development of the city.

Sofia is entirely – for good and evil – the product of the ‘invisible hand’ of the market. As such, it falls neatly into Petrovic’s category of unregulated capitalist city, with some elements of Third World development. The results have been mixed. The city produced more than one-third of the national GDP and attracts almost 70 per cent of all direct foreign investment, while at the same time its aged infrastructure, designed for under one million inhabitants, is unable to service the current 2.5-plus million inhabitants.

3.2 Economic development of the creative knowledge economy in the metropolitan area

No planning supported Sofia's emergence from socialism after 1990. Until the end of the 1990s, the administration was engulfed by the problematic of privatisation and had no capacity to spare. As a result, stuck with the 1961 Development Plan, long since irrelevant, administrators found little motivation for enforcing existing regulations. This in turn created the typical 1990s atmosphere of a corrupt boomtown. A deluge of unregulated construction was one outcome.

Sofia's "creation out of chaos" trajectory neatly illustrates Törnqvist, Andersson's major prerequisite for a creative milieu – "structural instability" (i.e. uncertainty about the future) (Törnqvist, 1983; Andersson, 1985). Such uncertainty contains the freedom to fashion the future and this is what Sofianites did.

Since 1990, Sofia has re-invented itself without help or hindrance from strategies or urban development plans. Rather, the energies of its citizens have managed to utilise objective factors for development, such as the city's gateway function, its established role of political, economic and cultural leader, as well as the clustering of different types of workers associated with this. All of these were successfully harnessed, from 1991 on, by the introduction of market mechanisms that freed individual and group initiative.

Objective factors ensured that Sofia became the nation's creative city by default – for lack of other cities similarly placed. But such factors could have remained an unrealised potential only. What unlocked it was not conscious policy, but local initiative. Initiative produced successes and investor trust, attracting the bulk of domestic and foreign investment, as well as outside human talent, all of which fuelled further development in a virtuous spiral.

The communist takeover of 1944 found in place a self-confident European city with a no less self-confident elite, which the new regime promptly annihilated. Sofia was to become a socialist city, populated by functionaries and a new working class, engaged in Soviet-built heavy industry. In 1989, Sofia housed three-quarters of Bulgaria's metal production, fourteen per cent of machine construction, a fifth of construction materials production, a fifth of rubber and plastics production – a socialist industrial-Fordist city.

From the end of 1989 and to January 1991 Sofia was the arena of the anti-communist revolution, in which thousands took part over more than a year. The end of communism was seen and felt as a Sofia-driven process, which raised the confidence level of Sofianites in the teeth of economic collapse. A reforming government, appearing in 1991, met the demands of the revolutionary crowds and lifted limitations on private initiative. The government also returned nationalised real estate to its owners, providing citizens with a start-up capital. By 1992, Sofia was transforming from a city of shortages into a place of shops and services. These sucked in the workforce freed from the collapsing state industry.

With hindsight, the "creation out of chaos" developmental trajectory was evident even then. No government or municipal development plan or policy defined Sofia's re-invention as a post-Fordist city. The path had less to do with planning and almost everything to do with an Aristotelian-Habermasian model, under which civic energies and habits, once awoken, spread

beyond issues of governance (the ending of communism, in this case) and infuse the daily lives of citizens. Political initiative turned into economic entrepreneurship and established Sofia as the locomotive of the new national economy.

By 1996, Sofia established a reputation of being capable of providing jobs for all comers, with an unemployment rate under six per cent (reaching two per cent by 2007, signifying full employment), compared to a national decline in employment of almost twenty-five per cent between 1990 and 1996. When other cities went into steep decline, following the disintegration of the Soviet-style economy, their most dynamic inhabitants flocked to Sofia, supplying it with the nation's most enterprising, dynamic and creative labour force. Inevitably, this influx dynamised the city, as the (predominantly young) newcomers formed lifestyle sub-cultures, which contrasted with the drab officiousness of the capital in decades past.

By 2002, Sofia was producing thirty per cent of Bulgaria's GDP, employing a quarter of the entire Bulgarian workforce. During its economic leap, from 1998 to 2002, Sofia's GDP increased by over eighty per cent. By 2007, some three-quarters of that GDP came from services, with the share of (the once dominant) industrial production shrinking to under one-fifth. Profit generated increased more than three-fold between 1998 and 2003. Over the same period, investment increased more than two-fold. GDP per head in Sofia reached double the national average.

The percentage of the employed in the private sector increased from under four per cent in 1990 to over seventy in 2003. Since the advent of foreign investment into Bulgaria, Sofia has never attracted less than half of it, and continues to pull some sixty-five per cent of it today.

In terms of industrial structure, the figures clearly point to the emergence of a "creative city". Sofia is home to: sixty per cent of all Bulgarian gardening and landscape companies; half of all design companies; half of all advertising companies; forty per cent of all printing companies; over forty per cent of all fashion design companies; half of all architectural bureaux; over half of all antique dealers; eighty-six per cent of all music companies; eighty per cent of all publishing companies; over half of all software companies; half of all radio companies; half of all TV companies; seventy per cent of all insurance companies; 100 per cent of all market research companies; seventy per cent of all human resources companies; 100 per cent of all information agencies.

Creative and knowledge companies form just over a fifth of all firms active in Sofia, not taking into account more traditional indicators, such as state-funded educational institutions.

The creative industries in Sofia comprise a large variety of fields, such as advertising, marketing, broadcasting, film, Internet and mobile content, music, print and electronic publishing, video and computer games, design, architecture, visual arts, performing arts, museums and library services. The pointers for 2007 are clear enough (data provided by MarketTest Ltd.):

- Sofia has one-third more owners of businesses and is home to half the entire managerial force of Bulgaria. Half of all self-employed and free-lancing Bulgarians are in Sofia.
- Sofia has one-fifth greater proportion of people involved with culture and science than is the national average, one-third more people working in tourism, double the proportion engaged in banking and finance, double the proportion of employment connected with the arts, and almost double the proportion engaged in trade and services; it also has fifty per cent more people involved in software than the national average.
- More than sixty per cent of Sofianites get more than the minimum wage, compared to under forty as the national average; conversely, the minimal wage and under is admitted to by less than eleven per cent of Sofianites, compared to twenty-four for the country as a whole.

In terms of the industries themselves, the figures clearly point to the emergence of a “creative city”. Sofia is home to: sixty per cent of all Bulgarian gardening and landscape companies; half of all design companies; half of all advertising companies; forty per cent of all printing companies; over forty per cent of all fashion design companies; half of all architectural bureaus; over half of all antique dealers; eighty-six per cent of all music companies; eighty per cent of all publishing companies; over half of all software companies; half of all radio companies; half of all TV companies; seventy per cent of all insurance companies; 100 per cent of all market research companies; seventy per cent of all human resources companies; 100 per cent of all information agencies.

4 **MIGRATION TO BULGARIA**

4.1 **Migration policy in Bulgaria**

The successful governance and regulation of migration policies is an important vehicle for development in a globalising world economy. This fact raises the question of migration and integration of immigrants as a key point on the national, regional and global scales.

We are witnessing a global redistribution of work force, which represents an irreversible process and it has to be governed in the interest of the states of origin and destination, as well as in the immigrants themselves. Conversely, the ineffective governance of migration processes may lead to the expansion of grey economy, to the accumulation of tension in the hosting societies, to the humiliation and exploitation of the illegal immigrants.

The definition and the maintenance of migration policy of the Republic of Bulgaria is binded to the national interest of the state and is accorded with the engagements in that field stemming of the state's full EU membership, as well as with the new trends on the global and regional plane and the established international standards. Its binding to the EU policy and practice derives from Bulgaria's obligations accepted with the Contract for joining the EU, from the reglamentations and the directives, the common practice and the initiatives in this field.

The actual migration situation in Bulgaria is having the typical parameters characteristic to the already joined Eastern European EU member-states, who for a short period of time transformed from states of emigration to states attracting immigrants. Within the last few years Bulgaria slowly, but permanently acquires the characteristics from a country of origin and transit country to a hosting country.

The migration character in Bulgaria has changed given the democratic changes, given the Eastern expansion to the EU, and given the economic and cultural globalisation on the world level. Unlike the period up to 1989, when Bulgaria had a strongly limited migration profile, after the democratic changes it is a full member in migration processes on the Wuropean and World scale. Bulgaria makes no exception from the world trends in the growing mobility of the population thanks to the fast development of technologies, accessible transportation, and communications.

Recently on the Bulgarian jobs market a shortage of work force in some branches is already observed and now the Bulgarian economy needs a well balanced welcome of workers from other countries. The Bulgarian migration policy is maintained as to support economical development.

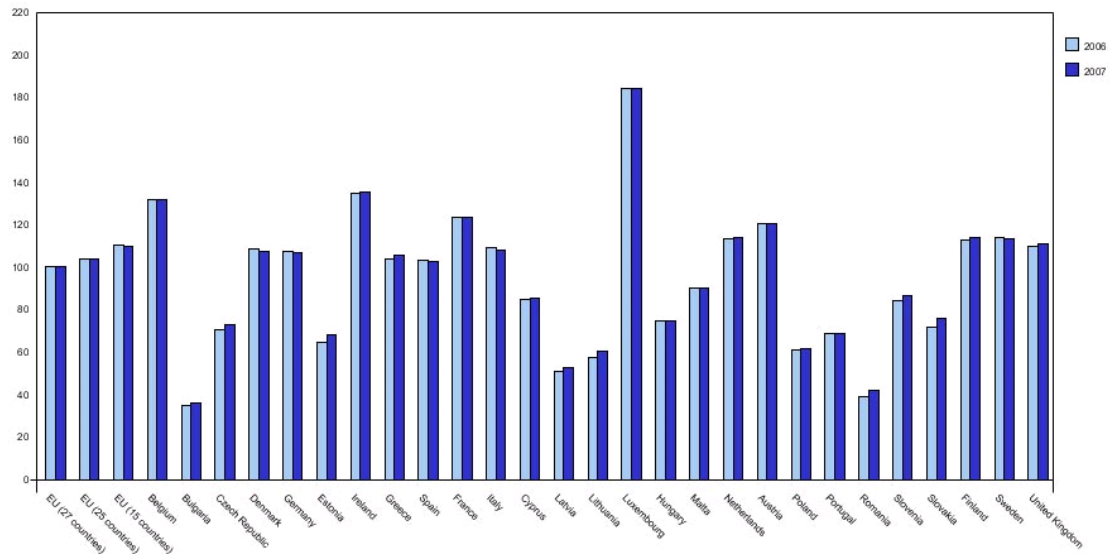
Bulgaria is working actively to attract first and foremost foreign citizens with Bulgarian descent. There are legislative initiatives under way for bettering opportunities for their resettlement, study or work in Bulgaria.

All these new developments ensured that the government took migration policy very seriously, producing a National strategy on migration and integration, created for the period 2008-2015.

4.2 Short history of labour migration in Bulgaria

After the democratic transition in 1989 the Bulgarian citizens received the right to free travel. Initially, emigration had a political tinge or was based on ethnicity, as Bulgarians took the opportunity to escape the oppressive climate of communism, or as ethnic Turkish Bulgarians used the opportunity to join their relatives in Turkey, which was at the time significantly more developed than Bulgaria. But by 1990-91, migration started to be defined by other conditions and factors which ascribe to it more and more economic character.

The first great group of Bulgarian migrants after the start of democratic transition was directed towards Canada and the USA. This tendency is still in force today, since for highly skilled specialists and young families from Bulgaria, the USA remains a preferred destination due to the easy integration within the society built by immigrants, the accessible programs for social entry, opportunities for education and professional realisation and higher pay. In comparison, EU member-states attract only with their better remuneration compared with Bulgaria and in some cases with accessible education. The other advantage is the proximity of the Western European countries to the home country, as compared to North America.



Source: Eurostat (Labour Productivity in EU)

In analysing the characteristics of migration, there are two distinctive periods: 1989 to 1992, which is generally of ethnic-political nature and includes the restoration of familial and kinship relations. In the second period – after 1993, a strengthening of migration's economic character is being observed, due to instable economic and political situation within the country; selective functions of migration in relation to undertaken restrictions on the side of other states; change in the social-demographic constitution of migration – age decrease, increase of the educational state, and others.

Migrants' arrangement along gender lines leads to the following conclusions: women constitute 40% from all potential migrants; men dominate among those wanting to move and work long-term abroad; women are more often in favour of brief migrations, while men prefer long-term migration. In terms of purpose, in males the “resolving of daily life issues” has a greater importance, while among females the relative import of education-related purposes is greater than among males.

The age-gender structure of potential migrants shows that women are in a younger age group than men. Migration potential among women is highest in the age group up to 29. In relation to education levels, women present a variable picture, while among potential male migrants the groups with higher education dominates. Among men, readiness to emigrate declines with education levels, which is not the case with women.

Economic activity of potential immigrants shows the following tendencies: among women, it is little lower than the one in men; the purview of constant settlers among the economically active males and females is greater than the one in the long-term migrants group; in males, the economic activeness of first group potential migrants, i.e., constant settlers, is greater than the one in females, while in the second group, i.e., long-term migrants, it is equal for both men and women¹.

The preferred states for migration among men are: Germany, USA, Spain, UK, Canada, and among women – USA, Germany, Spain, Greece, Italy, and Canada².

There is a great similarity between men and women, who are potential migrants, in encouraging their children to go abroad. Some 88% of men and women encourage their children to study abroad, 89% encourage them to find work abroad, but just over half (54.5%) encourage them to make their home abroad permanently³.

The problems for Bulgaria spring not only from the migration flow measures, its high participation of representatives from both genders, as well as work force with high level and very low level educational and professional background, but mostly of the accelerated developed processes of European integration and the establishing of common strategies and policies in the field of work load and immigration. Their study is important also because of the recent membership of Bulgaria in the EU and its belated inclusion in the general European

¹ According to Gender Dimension of the Migration from Bulgaria, by Rossitsa Rangelova, Source: Economic Thought (Икономическа мисъл), issue: 2 / 2005, pages: 108114, on www.ceeol.com.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

jobs market and in the strategies of the Union for the work load, social security and the integration of immigrants on the jobs market⁴.

In the country, the processes of migration were firstly studied in the beginning of 21st century in the course of the negotiations for Bulgaria's joining the EU⁵.

According to a research from August 2006, there is a decrease in the willingness of Bulgarians to engage in long-term emigration⁶. In 2006, the numbers of Bulgarians willing to emigrate were less than half those of 2001. Altogether, about 35,000 Bulgarians aged 16 to 60 expect to work, live or study in other EU member-states for a period of 5 years. The overall picture is as follows: Bulgarians would go mainly to Spain, followed by Germany; the USA is the third most preferred destination, followed by Greece, Great Britain, Canada, France, Italy, Ireland and Brazil.

According to a research from June-October 2007, there has occurred a stabilisation of the proportion of Bulgarians who do not expect to emigrate – some 80%⁷.

Migrants can be studied in three general groups: those related with the concept of “brain drain”; working migrants seeking legal work abroad (they have the greater relative part from the three groups defined); illegal migrants. Potential migrants with higher education do not expect to be doing abroad significantly different jobs than the highly qualified positions they would hold at home; this applies for both men and women. In the second group, expectations are less favourable and more varied. The most unfavourable condition is the one of illegal migrants and especially women, who in this group are with the lowest or no education and do not have the opportunity to choose their job. In Bulgaria researches in this field are limited.

Among potential migrants, the proportion of women has significantly decreased, as well as the proportion of the unemployed – the feedback from returning migrants acts as a retaining factor. Migrations of the “work-and-study” type are on the increase⁸.

There are changes in the educational and professional structures at hand – the greatest number among potential migrants are now the people with secondary education, while university graduates are less willing to emigrate; this applies also at the lowest end of the educational ladder. The highest-educated, as well as the lowest-educated Bulgarians, are losing their emigration drive⁹.

Domestically, migration patterns have also changed since the 1990s. The willingness for migration to the large regional cities has diminished, with the capital Sofia citizens and small-size towns becoming migration destinations. Unmarried couples are most likely to migrate

⁴ Source: Economic Thought (Икономическа мисъл), issue: 2 / 2005, pages: 108114, on www.ceeol.com.

⁵ Source: European Employment Strategy and the Bulgarian Labour Market (Mid-term and Long-term Horizons) Economic Thought (Икономическа мисъл), issue: 2 / 2005, pages: 108114, on www.ceeol.com.

⁶ Национална стратегия по миграция и интеграция 2008-2015 (National Strategy for Migration and Integration 2008-2015)

⁷ European Employment Strategy for Bulgaria. Territorial Mobility. Sofia. 2007.

⁸ According to Gender Dimension of the Migration from Bulgaria, by Rossitsa Rangelova, Source: Economic Thought (Икономическа мисъл), issue: 2 / 2005, pages: 108114, on www.ceeol.com.

⁹ Национална стратегия по миграция и интеграция 2008-2015 (National Strategy for Migration and Integration 2008-2015)

along these lines, with families sharply losing their migration potential. Sociological studies from 2006 reveal that in comparison with 2001, the willingness of Bulgarians for any labour migration has diminished by 50%, and in 2007 – by 80%.

The motive of “incomes supply” gives way to other values, such as a professional career as a long-term resource for personal prosperity and self-respect, as something important not only for the individual concerned, but also as a resource passed on to the next generation.

University students, high school students, young workers are more often likely to seek opportunities for personal prosperity and legal work abroad. Emigration in 2007 comes up with a „youthful face“.

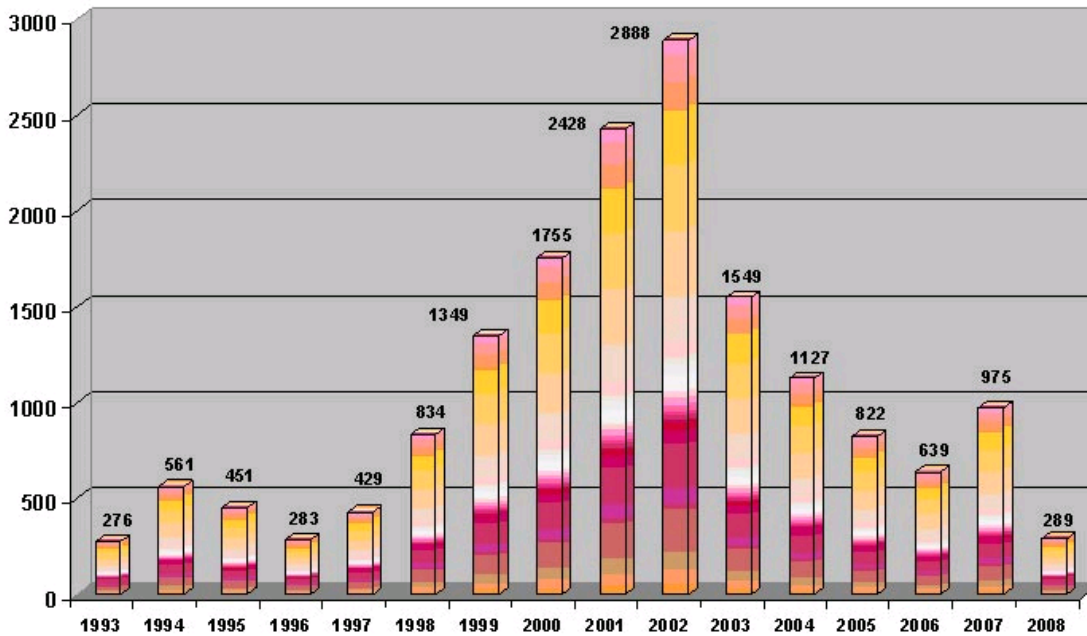
Rapidly, migration becomes an important facet of integrating the Bulgarian economy within the ones of the EU and the rest of the world. One known major consequence of migration is money transfers to the home country. For many countries, these are the greatest source of foreign incomes. For Bulgaria, the share of money transfer from abroad, as proportion of GDP, is around 1%. What is characteristic for Bulgaria is that a massive percentage of its migrants abroad, some 80%, do not make any money transfers back home, especially when working abroad on a short-term basis.

Basic macroeconomic indicators (%)	year					
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
GDP Annual Growth	5.0	6.6	6.2	6.3	6.2	6.0*
Inflation	2.3	6.1	6.0	7.4	7.6	No data
Employment (%)	52.5	54.2	55.8	58.6	N/A	No data
Unemployment (%)	13.7	12.0	10.1	9.0	6.9	No data

*Source: Eurostat *forecast data*

In a World Bank report it is being reported that a quarter of higher-educated males, who have migrated out of Bulgaria, then return; the figure for women migrants 31,5 %.

Since the beginning of the 21st century, as Bulgarian migration abroad has diminished, the reverse trend has been gathering pace. The number of foreigners with lasting and constant sojourn in Bulgaria is on the increase, and has been increasing sustainably over the last several years. The numbers of those seeking Bulgarian citizenship have also increased, doubling in the last four years.



Source: State Agency for Refugees with the Council of Ministers

For the last several years, there is a strengthening of the tendency toward a stronger interest in settling in Bulgaria from EU citizens. There is a clear interest for a constant sojourn on the part of UK citizens, whose numbers settling in Bulgaria have been increasing annually by about 30-40 % for the last three years. Significant numbers of German and Greek citizens have settled in Bulgaria, with increasing numbers of citizens of Cyprus and Italy also seeking more permanent sojourn¹⁰.

In 2006, the status of constant sojourn (with an extended period of one year) was granted to 14,694 foreigners – 20 % more than the previous year. The status of constant sojourn within the country (for an indefinite period) has been given to 3,099 persons, or 1,5 % more than the previous year¹¹.

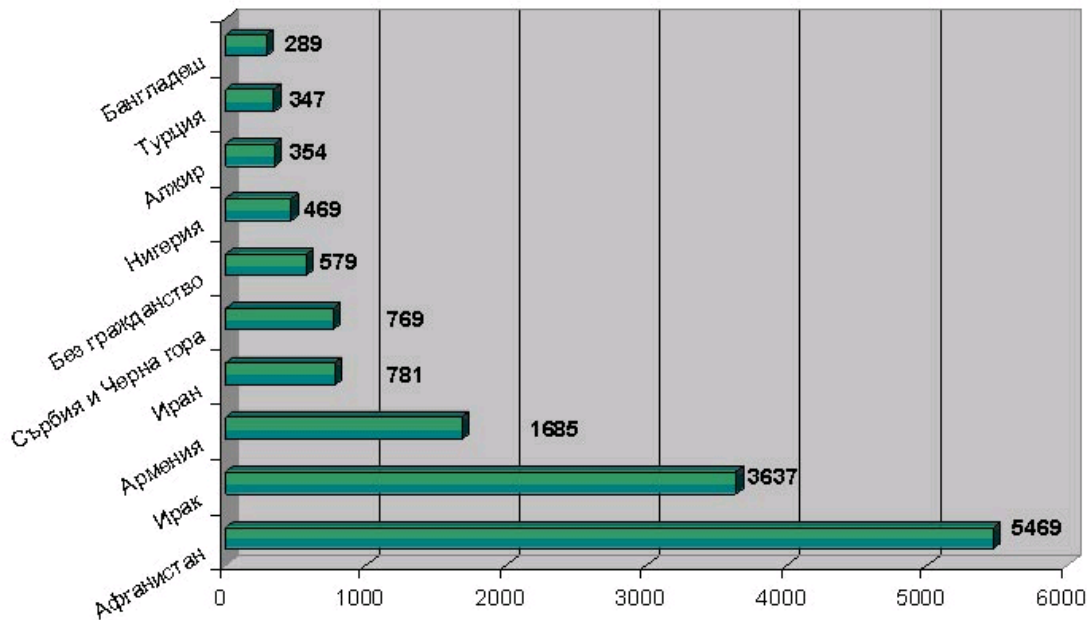
The prevailing reasons for the granting of constant sojourn status under the Act for Foreign Citizens in the Republic of Bulgaria (AFCRB) are: students in graduate form of education – 5,650; persons maintaining business activities in the country – 3,428; persons holding the grounds that allow for constant sojourn or that have contracted marriage with a Bulgarian citizen or with a constantly sojourning foreigner in the country – 2,224; family members of a foreigner's family who has been granted a permit for constant sojourn – 1,506; foreign specialists, sojourning by virtue of international contracts and treaties binding on Bulgaria – 739 persons¹².

¹⁰ Национална стратегия по миграция и интеграция 2008-2015 (National Strategy for Migration and Integration 2008-2015)

¹¹ According to Доклад за миграционната обстановка в Република България през 2006 г.

¹² Ibid.

In the beginning of 2007, in the country there were 55,684 foreigners registered. Around 35 % of them are living on the territory of Sofia, followed by Plovdiv - 9 %, Varna - 8 %, and Burgas - 5 %.



Source: State Agency for Refugees with the Council of Ministers

4.3 Brain gain and brain drain in Bulgaria

The direct foreign investments have to do not only with the total migration process, but also with the jobs market condition, including the level of unemployment. Investment impacts beneficially on the economy, the number and quality of jobs and the prospects of workers. In this sense, the influx of foreign investment and foreign employers acts as a factor which decreases the emigration potential of Bulgarian nationals – which is part of the explanation for the rapidly falling emigration, out of Bulgaria, of recent years.

A further relationship between migration and foreign investments may be sought in the data for the number of Direct Foreign Investments. Direct foreign investment is linked to the migration of foreign citizens into Bulgaria. In 2006 foreign investment reached the record-high level of 4.1 bln. Euro, and as of the beginning of 1996 up to 2006 the influx amounts to 16.96 bln. Euros. The leading investors are Cyprus, USA, Germany, Austria, Great Britain, and Italy. A favouring sign is the increase in investment from US companies for the last several years¹³.

Foreign companies invest mainly in middle- and large-scale enterprises. With overall 7,457 investments by the end of 2006, such investments form more than 95% of foreign investments

¹³ Национална стратегия по миграция и интеграция 2008-2015 (National Strategy for Migration and Integration 2008-2015)

and exert a decisive influence on the economy of the country, respectively on the jobs market and interior migration.

Foreign persons of private capacity (95,772 by the end of 2006 r.) invest mainly in micro-enterprises and small-scale enterprises. For a great number of them, the main aim of the investment is to live in Bulgaria, where they find more favourable conditions of living and doing business, hence in actual fact they represent a kind of economic immigration. The increasing number of investing persons of private capacity is an indicator of the improvement in the Bulgarian business climate.

Investment from foreign persons of private capacity comes mainly from Turkey, Russia, Macedonia, Greece, China, Syria, and Armenia. The rapid increase of investments from persons of private capacity originating from Great Britain in the last two years is mostly explained by the fact that such migrants, originally coming for the climate and ambience, tend to, after a while, develop small-scale business activities on-site.

The direct foreign investments have a direct relation to the regional jobs market condition. The data for the regional arrangement of investment show a great concentration in the city of Sofia. To some extent this is due to the fact that companies who operate in other regions prefer to register their headquarters in Sofia. Other districts that are preferred by investors are Plovdiv, Varna, Burgas – which happen to be the next biggest cities, after Sofia, in descending order. Foreign investors prefer sites with well developed infrastructure, qualified workers, and opportunity for finding local partners, which in turn exerts influence on the interior migration of the population to the districts already mentioned¹⁴.

In 2006 for all foreigners (here, the citizens of EU, EEP and Switzerland have been included too – prior to Bulgaria's joining the EU) wanting to work on a labour contract or as commissioned labourers in Bulgaria, it was necessary to have a work permit from the Minister of Labour and Social Policy. The overall number of permits issued in 2006 was 1,475. The permits were issued to persons from Turkey, Macedonia, Ukraine, Italy, Germany, Greece, India, USA, UK, Austria, Russia, France, China, Romania, Serbia, Pakistan, Brazil, the Philippines, Belarus, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Australia, and so on. The number of those working from neighbouring EU member-states – Greece and Romania – was about 130 people.

The statistical data of the National Revenue Agency for 2007 indicate that the citizens of the EU, the EEP and Switzerland who have worked with a labour contract in Bulgaria in 2007 were 3,168. The self-employed citizens of EU, EEP and Switzerland in 2007 in Bulgaria were 1,602. For the same year (2007) 1,243 new work permits were issued to citizens of third-party states, with the biggest number of permission granted to Turkish citizens, followed by citizens of Macedonia, India, Ukraine, USA, Serbia, Russia, China, Brazil, Thailand, Croatia, The Philippines, and others.

¹⁴ Ibid.

5 MIGRATION INTO SOFIA

The latest official statistical data, from 2006, maintain that Sofia is inhabited by 1,377,531 people. This figure is nowhere near the real state of affairs and all expert evaluations, as well as polling data suggest that there are more than two million people residing in Sofia at any given time. According to statistical data from 1980 the capital has been inhabited by 1,056,945. For a mere five years, their number increased with about 65 000 just to reach 1,121,763 by the mid-1980s. According to these data, it turns out that 20 years later the inhabitants are more or less again the same number – something that is flatly contradicted by everyday experiences and observations¹.

After a long period of denial, the city's managers and planners have finally agreed, in the beginning of 2009, that they are dealing with a city of two million. What this means is that over the past decade, while Sofia was managed as a city of one million, but was in fact double the size, its infrastructure, communications and social life were placed under intolerable strain. The result has been a drastic increase of communal, social, techno-genetic, economic and ecological problems and incidents, as well as degradation of social mores and of basic orderliness.

In a panic-driven attempt to solve the problems of overpopulation, the capital's municipal managers foresee the creation of a new Commission on Demographic Issues, with the sole purpose of halting the inflow into Sofia. What is planned is an attempt at a drastic curtailment of migration into Sofia, with the introduction of stricter migration controls, police control and the linking of the access to social services to address registration.

From the turn of the century, according to the official figures, the population of the capital has been growing at an average 10,000 people annually². Whereas official figures are not to be trusted as a general rule, in this case they do illustrate the steep tendency of population growth in Sofia, whose population has increased by more than 5% between 2001 and 2007. With the birth-rate in the city as weak as the rest of the country, this increase is to be accounted for almost entirely by migration. The resulting population density is about 13 times higher than the average for the country.

In arranging the population **by gender**, women continue to prevail in number than men - 52.5% from the general population. In 2007 in Sofia, the figure is 1,104 women per 1,000 men. The last year when men prevailed in number was 1953, when the proportion figure was 1,102 men per 1,000 women. Then, this was due to the massive influx of physical labourers

¹ Source: http://www.imoti.net/news/view_news/3992

² Source: http://nmrp.log.bg/article.php?article_id=5267

from around the country, pushed into Sofia by the dynamics of the forced, Soviet-type industrialisation³.

The age structure of the population is the outcome of demographic processes from the past. The population's ageing is obvious in the marker **approximate age** of the population, which is increasing. In the last years what is observed is a decrease of the relative part of the younger generations (the age group of 10 to 19), an effect of low birth-rate in the 1990s. There is a decrease (with lower speeds) in the number of the elderly too (over 65) as the effect of the natural and mechanic dynamics of the population.

The population's ageing brings about changes in its arrangement by the categories of **under, in, and over the age of those able to work**.

The population **under working age** decreases. In 2001, the relative part of this group was 14.4%, and by the end of 2007 the population under the age of work ability decreased to 13.2% of the overall regional population. This fact confirms the extending tendency for the ageing of the Sofia population. By 31.12.2007, official figures put the working-age population of Sofia at 833,481 people, which is 17.3 % of the country's entire working-age population.

The population **over the age of work ability** in 2007 was 243,064 people – 19.6% of the overall Sofia population and 14.2% of the country's population over the age of work ability.

Officially, 30% of the gross national product is made in Sofia. Most experts believe this figure to be as misleading as the figures for the Sofia population, and believe that this percentage is significantly higher – that an even larger proportion of the national product is being produced in the capital city.

The cars officially registered in Sofia are over 1 million (which, in passim, makes nonsense of the official population figure of less than 1.3 million). The construction boom continues apace, only slightly dampened by the world financial crisis. A big proportion of the city quarters were forced to bid adieu to their green spaces so that new buildings may arise.

In Europe, the cheapest city for immigration is Sofia⁴. At the same time, a big portion of Bulgarian highest-skilled specialists prefer to emigrate abroad. In the period 1990-1998 the average yearly number of scientists who resigned from the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (BAC) is 135, among which younger scientists prevail. According to some researchers, half of all scientists are prepared, or are thinking about leaving science if suitable work is found abroad. During the same period (1990-1998), 208 scientists from BAC have emigrated abroad. Among them scientists from the biological and chemical sciences, followed by the physical, the social, mathematical and technical sciences prevail. From the immigrated 208 scientists however, only 17 % (35 of them) are now working in scientific establishments abroad.

The Bulgarian government is working on two large scale programs for creating opportunities for finding and keeping in the country young people interested in scientific studies; and also

³ Source: NCI: www.nsi.bg/press/pressSofia.pdf

⁴ Source: <http://imoti.investor.bg/?cat=6&id=51741>

for attracting back Bulgarian scientists who have gone abroad and enriched their professional experience through work in scientific establishments or creative knowledge-based occupations.

The making of a National Program For Scientific And Applied Researches And Technological Innovations is planned also, where a defined place is to be given to the measures for reacting to the brain drain from Bulgaria and for the recruitment of talented Bulgarian researchers who have emigrated from the national research and educational process abroad.

Whereas such programmes target the problem at the national scale, the lack of such initiatives has not diminished the attraction of Sofia as a destination for the highest-skilled. It is international migrants of this sort that we analyse in this research. In the beginning of this analysis, some specifics need to be pointed out.

Unlike the previous interviews, conducted with indigenous Bulgarians settled in Sofia, the international migrants have a different perspective on the city. They spend as much or more time abroad than in Bulgaria and have more 'objective' views on conditions in Sofia, with less Bulgarian influence. Also they would pay attention to things that Bulgarians may not place quite as high in their hierarchy of importance, and demote issues that Bulgarians find important.

The first impression that the respondents shared was about their surprise at the Soviet-type housing stock in Bulgaria. They are not astonished that this type of mass housing exists, but they remain astonished by the poor shape in which people keep the buildings and by the degraded infrastructure around them. Second comes the surprise at the low level of social care in the social system of Bulgaria. The third most frequently shared impression is to do with the corruption climate in Bulgaria and also with the inefficient nature of the Bulgarian political system and its practices.

Generally, the picture that comes out of international migrants' descriptions of Bulgaria is one of a developing country, with still-forming civil society that has a future, but a future that can only depend on the efforts of its people. This is the part of Bulgaria that they see and share, and their opinion is based on meetings with Bulgarians and on the media also.

Under these impressions, however, a different picture emerges. Respondents share significant positive aspects of life in this country. They claim that compared to the West, it's very easy to live here. It's not as stressful. In their view, people here do not understand how lucky they are. They describe the problems with crime sometimes as normal, just because this is problem everywhere.

More importantly, respondents point out that after the fall of communism, the good thing in Bulgaria is that people own their homes. In this sense, they don't have mortgage, they don't owe anything to the banks, making their lives much easier – particularly given the current crisis – than in West. International respondents point out this example, and to the beauty of the country, as the basis for Bulgarians to find solutions to the problems of the country to attain a brighter future. In the eyes of the international respondents, Bulgarians should be more constructive and less pessimistic.

6 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The questionnaire was developed and led by members in the Munich team. The creation of the questionnaire entailed a number of different steps which involved collaboration both within the team as well as with members from the entire ACRE project. Below is an outline of the different steps followed in the formulation of the questionnaire, from its conception to the final version.

6.1 Qualitative research: Semi-structured interviews

The current work package uses qualitative research methods to gain information from hilly skilled transnational migrants that would be difficult to collect if using quantitative techniques, as in the previous work packages of the project. Furthermore, new hypotheses can be developed and at the same time checked and existing hypotheses can be tested.

This research is based on 25 semi-structured interviews, conducted on-site of the company-respondent by a Sofia Team member.

The objective of WP 7 is to understand the drivers behind the decisions of the trans-national migrants (ex-pats) to settle at a certain location, differentiated according to the type of economic activity they are connected with; estimating the relative importance of the location factors that played a role in their decision making process (again with a particular focus on the importance of ‘soft’ factors, such as the quality of space; atmosphere of the city and region, available high-quality residential space, etc.).

One of the most frequently mentioned keys to a successful development as a ‘creative knowledge region’ is openness for trans-national migrants. The type of migrants most wanted for stimulating an attractive breeding ground for creativity and knowledge-based activities is the skilled international migrant. Most of them migrate between large international economic centres and only stay for relatively short times between a few months and a few years. These ‘short-term’ stayers are better known as ‘expatriates’ or ‘ex-pats’. To what extent do the case study regions manage to attract these skilled migrants across the national borders? Are the skilled migrants needed for the ‘creative knowledge city’ actually coming to the city/region? If they are attracted, how accessible and attractive is the local and regional housing market for them?

The objective of this particular section of the project and, more specifically, of the questionnaire, was to understand and to answer the following questions: which factors – “soft” or “hard” were decisive for migrants in knowledge-intensive and creative companies in the decision to establish their enterprise at the Sofia location, or to keep their company in the Sofia city region? How do the companies rate Sofia as a location? For two of the chosen

sectors of industry (the consultancy sector and the web design sector), to date there have been hardly any studies of the location requirements and location-change decisions of companies. For this reason, a qualitative and exploratory approach is most suitable here, since with this methodological approach, new and context-specific perspectives and explanatory approaches can be gained.

The empirical survey for this project began with a comprehensive search of the literature for the individual branches of industry.

Sofia team then pursued two routes. First came interviews with experts in the field at the start of the research process were above all important for obtaining initial general information about the individual branches of industry, and secondly for gaining a deeper insight into the structure of the respective branch of industry in the Sofia urban region, with its special features as well as problems that are specific to the research location. The industry experts include chairs, managers or members of industry associations, as well as representatives from the area of public administration and non government organizations close to research companies. The information from the expert discussions and the expert opinion was used above all for the description and analysis of the sectors. Furthermore, the information obtained from the industry experts was of great importance for evaluating the guided interviews.

Only then, second, came the interviews themselves. The core of this investigation is formed by 25 topic-centred guided (structured) interviews with highly skilled transnational migrants managers of representative companies from knowledge-intensive and creative sectors from Sofia city.

It must be recalled that, unlike other cities included in the ACRE project, Sofia is not a metropolitan region (i.e. a compact city plus surrounding industrial-residential areas). Business and residence in Sofia continues to take place in the city proper – the area encompassed by the Ring Road and situated entirely within the bounds of Sofia city Municipality. Sofia Region, the area outside the city / municipality, is still a sparsely inhabited, primarily rural area, with little analytical significance.

6.2 Selection of respondents

Respondents were selected on three bases: a/ geographical location of the company (i.e. centre-periphery); b/ size of the company (in terms of the number of permanent employees); c/ on the basis of the previously selected sectors

The following sectors were chosen for the study by the Sofia ACRE team:

- Knowledge-intensive sector: code number 74.14 (business and management consultancy activities)
- Code number 65: finance
- And 73, 803: R & D, and higher education

- Creative sector: code numbers 921 and 922 (motion pictures, video, radio and television activities),
- Code number 722 (only computer games and electronic publishing; software is not included, but web design was included).

In the area of the knowledge-intensive sectors, the Sofia case study relates not only to the management consultancy sector, but in addition with management consultancy firms for European projects, investment firms that offer management consultancy as part of their service were also included.

In the area of audiovisual media, the Sofia case study relates exclusively to radio and television production, with the choice of firms being concentrated on national broadcasting TV and Radio. Moreover, electronic publishing, in other words the multimedia sector, as well as the computer games sector and web design sector or IT sector, were studied and analysed separately, because all of the firms are concentrated in Sofia, making impossible a meaningful analysis of location decision factors.

The cases were selected in a targeted manner, according to a grid of variables. The following criteria were decisive for the structure of the sample:

- Belonging to the sector
- Size of the company
- Numbers of the company, located in Sofia
- Location of the company, at the city level

First of all we selected companies, based in the Sofia area. Second we investigated the highly skilled transnational migrant managers of these companies.

Those companies that fulfilled the selection criteria were identified based on trade directories, and contacted by means of an official letter from the Centre for Social Practices – New Bulgarian University. Altogether, approximately 30 companies from these sectors were contacted, of which 25 firms expressed their willingness to be interviewed.

The respondents for the guideline-based interviews were predominantly highly skilled transnational migrants who had a management function in the company (managers, members of the board). This selection ensured that the interviews could yield relevant information about the background to the location decisions, satisfaction with Sofia as capital of Bulgarian and as a location and general local requirements of the company.

The interviews were conducted based on a semi-standardised guideline which contains open questions on the most important topic complexes of the investigation. The guideline has been adapted in each case to the respective particularities of the various branches of industry, and the size of the company.

The guideline is divided into five thematic focus areas.

Business model / production structures and work organisation: The aim of this topic area was to obtain information about the services or products offered by this company, as well as about the usual work organisations in this branch of industry. In-depth knowledge about the work organisation (project work, project procedures, project partners, network labour market) in the sectors are important because a close connection between the work organisation of a company, the customer structure and employee structure, the role of networks and the significance of spatial proximity is supposed.

Customer structure and employee structure: The questions about customer structure, regional distribution or customer acquisition are intended to reveal the importance of the spatial proximity of companies and customers, and to clarify any possible decisions on location that are made by the firms. With regard to employees, we examine whether Sofia is attractive for employees in the knowledge-intensive and creative sector, whether the demand for qualified employees in Sofia can be covered, and how strongly the various branches of industry are dependent on the local labour market, or whether it is primarily a network labour market.

Networks: A distinction is made here between the formal and informal networks, and we examine their importance for obtaining orders and acquiring personnel, or generating new knowledge. A further central point in this topic section is the importance of spatial proximity for the development and maintenance of networks.

Location factors: Here, we distinguish two spatial reference units. We differentiated on the one hand according to hard and soft location factors for the whole urban region, and on the other hand according to hard and soft location factors for the company location at the level of the district of the city (“ideal” city centre or in the outlying area). The aim here is to discover the significance of certain location factors, as well as the reasons for establishing the company at the Sofia location.

Municipal policy and the policies in Sofia region: Do we have a policy? What importance do policy measures have, and what policy measures could be taken to improve competitiveness? It was also a matter of discovering what support instruments the companies are aware of, which ones they make use of, and how they evaluate the measures.

Within the framework of a pre-test with management consultants and multimedia agencies, we examined whether the wording of the questions was comprehensible, and whether the choice of questions is consistent. The guideline was revised slightly following the pre-test. Over the course of the investigation, the guideline was repeatedly adapted, in the manner of a circular research process, to the current status of evaluation and knowledge.

The interviews mostly took place on-site at the companies, and lasted on average 1 to 1.5 hours. Usually the discussions were conducted by one interviewer, in order to ensure that all aspects of the guideline were adequately dealt with, and new aspects were investigated further. For each interview, a memo of the most important statements and details about the interview situation was produced.

The discussions were recorded, and subsequently transcribed in full and anonymised. After transcription, an initial evaluation of the interviews was made, the results of which flowed into the further progress of the research.

The category scheme was developed in the present investigation, in a two-stage analysis process. First of all, three example interviews were selected from each sector of industry, and these were initially coded openly and thematically. In a further step, the codes that were produced in this way were further generalised and abstracted in a group discussion amongst the project team, and eventually a final coding scheme and initial hypotheses or guideline questions for the analysis of the text material were drafted.

Subsequently, the cases were studied according to the principle of minimum/ maximum contrast in respect of the answers to the questions posed, and the differences and common features of the various companies were worked out according to sector, size, and company location at the city level.

6.3 Problems and limitations

Sofia team's efforts continued to be very severely hampered by a problem haunting the whole effort from the beginning – to wit, the catastrophic state of official statistics. There are virtually no statistics to be found on any of the issues of interest; and, although the Director of the National Statistical Institute was sacked and a new Director recently appointed, there has been no improvement as far as Sofia-related data is concerned.

A second problem, which runs through all Work Packages, is the continuation of a culture of distrust and secretiveness, some of which has seeped into the culture of the international migrants. We found respondents unwilling to discuss questions relating to turnover and wages.

A further limitation, more generally speaking, on the applicability of the results of the current Work Package is the following. The number of interviews conducted in each sector was much too small to be able to make any kind of general conclusions about the sector. A fuller, and scientifically clearer picture would emerge sometime in the future, should such interviews be implemented on a larger scale, allowing for at least a measure of scientifically solid generalisation.

7.1 Introduction

“The reason I like Sofia is that it has something. It is not a beautiful city, in fact it is rather ugly. But it has something. Maybe because there is always something happening that you go and do. For instance, when I used to go out more regularly, you can do that 24/7. There is always something close to you that is open — a fruit stand, a bar. There is always something close by that can be necessary. A certain atmosphere, a certain arrangement of things that makes it easy.”

(Interview 11 R&D)

“There are things I don’t like, but they are all small. They are so relative in the end. Sofia as a city has quite a lot to offer, but it has to solve the present climate problem – I mean the smoke, the dirty air in the city and the transport problem.”

(Interview 4, Business & Consultancy)

The objective of WP7 is to focus on the main reasons that make the trans-national migrants settle at a certain location – ranging for example from the type of economic activity they are connected with to living infrastructure, climate and regional preferences. This research also aims to estimate the relative importance of the so called ‘soft’ location factors that played a role in their decision making process, by grouping the activities of occupation.

7.2 Business and management consultancy activities and finance

The framework of the interviews analysis should go through and assess the main motives of migration such as work and family, as well as to note the country of origin and the migration direction. The following number of six female and five male have been interviewed in this first sector and they are nationals of the following countries: UK, Serbia, Estonia, Germany, Austria, Greece, Czech Republic, Ireland and Philippines.

Table 7.1.

Code of Sector	Sector	Gender	Origin
65	Consultancy	Female	Germany
744	Publishing & Advertising	Female	UK
65	Finance/Investment	Female	Estonia
65	Insurance	Female	Austria
65	Finance/Investment	Female	Greece
65	Finance	Female	CZ
744	PR & Advertising	Male	Serbia
65	Consultancy	Male	Ireland
65	Business Consultancy	Male	Philippines
65	Consultancy	Male	Greece
65	Consultancy	Male	UK

7.2.1 *Motivation to come to the Sofia region*

Business related reasons and contacts

In this field, most of the interviewed have in the beginning worked in management consultancy in the area of investment, asset management, real estate portfolios. This also included consulting private persons, very wealthy ones, with huge real estate portfolios.

Most of the interviewed had been working in different countries or studying at different universities and then have been invited to work in Bulgaria or have found jobs through third parties. After college, one of the interviewed went to London for 4 1/2 years. There he worked as a design engineer in a consultancy office. Then he came back to Ireland and worked in consultancy design office for 12 years with large consultancy company. Then he went to work for a project management company in Budapest, after that in Saudi Arabia, Oman, in Middle East and in Sofia. In this case the interviewed found the job through the Irish company he had been working for previously. He was working on his own, privately as a project manager. He knew the company and the owner of the company asked him if he would like to be involved in the project. He had a good experience in Budapest, so he thought that in Sofia it would be similar.

Other business related reasons are when the interviewed person was assigned in Bulgaria for a long term deployment for a motorway project, on the Trakia motorway from Chirpan to Stara Zagora. Work nature of the interviewed was basically in his field, which is civil engineering. He chose to go on a construction side. He's been working as a consultant, he was the advisor to the employer or to the designer of the employer. It depended on the particular contract. He was sent to Bulgaria after having basically finished his project in Bangladesh. Then came this project in Bulgaria and they needed somebody with his experience. They said: "We need you in Sofia". So he packed his bags and he went to Sofia.

Most of the interviewed people have been previously working abroad and were just sent to Bulgaria. In this sense the business related reasons and contacts are mainly connected with no personal contacts on behalf of the interviewed with Bulgarians in the beginning, just

eventually contacts with one or more people from the relevant business environment in Bulgaria.

“My motivation to come to Bulgaria was my job. I basically was invited.”

Business consultant

“I was told “we need you in Sofia” so I packed my bags and went to Sofia.”

Business consultant

Private reasons and personal network

The interviews show that some people moved because they liked travelling. In another case, the family of the interviewed had a very little influence, as the children are at secondary and university stage of education, so they were back home with his wife. For the person from this case, at his age that is quite happy to go walking, to drink a bottle of wine or have a pleasant chat with somebody. So in this sense the social networks are important and as per the interviewed one should have to look at that too.

Another example shows that person came without family and in this sense again the family motivation is not of importance.

“I came without my children and I knew I would come back to Belgium to see them.”

Business consultant

“I was looking for new job and life abroad – that brought me to Bulgaria.”

Business consultant

Quality of the metropolitan region (soft factors)

In this relation, in most cases the interviewed knew they were going to a developing country and they did not expect the infrastructure to be different to what it is, for example. Of course, mostly everything was set up already for them. They had come already here several times and in this sense the quality of life itself seems to be the most significant factor in terms of the particularity of the country and the region.

“I knew I was going to a developing country and I did not care about the infrastructure or something.”

Business consultant

“I knew you were on the wrong side in wars and that it was an ex-communist country. Neither of those influenced my choice.”

Business consultant

7.2.2 Accommodating in the Sofia area

Employment

The interviews show that in the beginning respondents moving to Sofia mostly knew only their working environment and in this sense followed the ‘interest’ of their own employment. The results also show that in most cases the move to Bulgaria was seen as “pleasant”, because they somehow found a community for themselves and their families.

In this sense, in the course of time the results show that the job they originally came for played a role of introducing them to people not only as colleagues but also meeting friends, finding social relations and even developing business locally.

“I had a good working experience but I did not know a lot about the country. Anyway I was sure I would adapt.”

Business consultant

“Well I guessed there would be some differences and that was the challenge. On the other side that’s what’s interesting sometimes.”

Business consultant

Such findings support previous conclusions, made during work on Work Packages 5 / 6: that there is a difference between “location” factors and “retention” factors. People tend to move into Sofia for “hard” business reasons, but stay on under the influence of “soft” factors to do with community, geniality and varied leisure activities.

Living environment

The results show that in the beginning the living environment had impact on the interviewed while they adapt and in this sense it more was an adaptive challenge. In the course of time, the results show that respondents like Sofia, in particular the people, the food and the environment. In some cases, some people mention that Bulgarians are close to them as mentality. In general, the respondents are satisfied with the quality of life they have here, how they spend their free time, with the cultural life, etc. On that aspect they are satisfied and even enjoy living in Sofia.

“It’s a wonderful place. I love it.”

Business consultant

“There’s always something necessary, something you can enjoy and it’s like things come to you at times. Amazing.”

Business consultant

Housing and neighbourhood

The living situation of the respondents tends to improve with time. Exceptions are those of the interviewed that had in the beginning exactly the conditions they wanted. As negative side of the city could be pointed the heavy traffic and the traffic jams. However, some of the interviewed said they even though they don't mind walking sometimes.

“Everything was arranged for me, but I find living here more interesting.”

Business consultant

“You have to accept things otherwise things won't accept you. But nothing is as bad as it seems in the end...”

Business consultant

We see here a close alignment of data on indigenous and international respondents in the creative sector. Both Bulgarians and international migrants, working in this sector, treasure the “soft” aspects of the city, the aspects that have arisen through community ambience or private enterprise; and are very dissatisfied with the “hard” (infrastructural) aspects of living – the aspects, for which the municipality is directly responsible.

7.2.3 Current situation in the Sofia area (overall satisfaction, problematic aspects)

Employment

Following a certain time in their job, respondents tend to evolve comments relating to the differences and similarities between the employment and working habits they know, and the ones they find in place. Given the small sample it is difficult to generalise, but international migrants in business and management consulting seem to find the Bulgarian way of doing things bureaucratic and rigid. Some miss the monthly meetings in the company, to which they had been used prior to migrating into Sofia, at which meetings all the staff can gather together; and this was seen as lacking in Bulgaria. In this sense, what was found missing in Sofia was the lack of opportunity for people in the company to discuss the management, the way things are running in the office, so that staff could influence things, make changes. The absence of such opportunities was seen as a drawback and lack of involvement. Respondents saw the situation as too rigid, and needing time to change – “unfortunately, you can't really speed things”.

“Practices are different and sometimes slow and without any sense. Unfortunately, you can't really speed things.”

Business consultant

“The most interesting is to adapt. But the reality is you can't adapt to all differences. I think this is about any country.”

Business consultant

Living environment

In general international migrants describe the country in general as very nice, because of the seaside and mountains. The common conclusion is that it's a beautiful place and they love it here. Then they qualify people as very friendly and open minded and the environment as pleasant and acceptable. Very important for the living environment, according to the respondents is that they like the food in Sofia and, in particular, the people.

However the most important is that they qualify the city and the people as tolerant and friendly to foreigners. Overall, the interviewed liked it that there are many places to go in Sofia and to see. This also includes the restaurants variety as well as the mountains around Sofia, the mountains and the Black sea in the country in general. The one thing that the foreigners are not used to is the traffic.

“People are very friendly to foreigners and this is acceptable.”

Business consultant

“I love Sofia and I love Bulgaria. Everybody has his own life and at the same time people are ready to share some part of their life with yours.”

Business consultant

Housing and neighbourhood

Mostly when foreigners come to Bulgaria, and particularly Sofia, they share a common view – the housing standards are different and the difference between them is often not small. In this sense the highly-skilled migrants already settled in Sofia are fully satisfied with the living conditions they had and they have. Something common to all respondents is that, at the time of the interview, they had either renovated their home or bought a new one, showing a high level of residential mobility. Moreover, the interviewed from this sector describe Bulgaria and Sofia as very attractive for living, especially if one could have maybe the same working conditions as in the country of origin.

“Now I moved to a new place and I think the housing quality here is much better.”

Business consultant

“I am completely satisfied with my living situation. However I am not sure everybody in this country is and at the same time I'm sure the government can make more efforts for this.”

Business consultant

7.3 Radio and television activities

The following number of one female and two male have been interviewed in this second sector and they are nationals of the following countries: USA and The Netherlands.

Table 7.2.

Code of Sector	Sector	Gender	Origin
921/922	Movie industry	Female	The Netherlands
921/922	Movie industry	Male	USA
921/922	Media	Male	USA

7.3.1 Motivation to come to the Sofia region

Business related reasons and contacts

The business reasons of most of the interviewed in this sector are related to the fact that they were invited to work here, found a movie project or were sent here by their company.

In this case the business reasons that made migrants move are primarily because they wanted to work in this specific field and did not care much of the country. Their job is mainly in shooting movies and Boyana Film Studio is rather famous in this sense. This is related to the research and development of new projects. This type of work also includes talking to local and international producers and directors who have a script they want to develop. Internationally, it has to do with producers and directors who have the script and the money and who are now looking for a cheap but inviting place to shoot the movie. This includes the script, its reading and then together with an outside producer trying to come up with a budget for shooting the movie here.

Also the respondents are trying to help develop new Bulgarian movies, Bulgarian made. Some of the interviewed have previously worked abroad on different film projects. The particular thing here is though, that they have been looking for development in the specific field and project and they found that in their job in Sofia.

In this sense the business related reasons and contacts are mainly connected with no personal contacts of the interviewed with Bulgarians in the beginning.

“I came here to research and develop new projects.”

Producer

“I had colleagues and I knew only them. However the environment here seemed to be good and this and my plans brought me here.”

Producer

Private reasons and personal network

Again, as in the previous sector, the interviews results show that some people moved due to the fact they would visit another country and travel. Some of the cases also show that the family had a very little influence, as well as the case when the children. However it's obvious in interviews that people stay in touch with their families, if they move without with them.

Most of the interviewed view their move as for personal reason, not only for career, but also as an opportunity to live abroad. So in this sense the social networks are important. Some examples from the interviews show also that the interviewed already knew their colleagues here.

"I had contacts here already so I just came to shoot movies."

Producer

"Private reasons – that's my job and life I got here."

Producer

Quality of the metropolitan region (soft factors)

As in the previous sector, in most cases the interviewed knew they were going to a developing country and in this sense were not surprised by the problematic aspects of life in Sofia. Of course, in most cases again everything was set up for the migrants already - the agent or the responsible person for that had arranged their accommodation and place for living, saving them some of the frustration of Sofia life. Also, the interviewed mostly knew some people that had been to Bulgaria before.

Quality of life, however, does play a role in the location decision – indeed, seems to be the most significant factor for choosing this particular country and city.

"I knew people before I come here so I had some impression about Sofia."

Producer

"I had heard just good things about life in Bulgaria and my coming here confirmed this."

Producer

7.3.2 Accommodating in the Sofia region

Employment

Respondents from this sample are moving to Sofia because precisely knew their future working conditions and because in this sense they followed the 'interest' of their own employment. In this sense, they followed career factors in their decision. The results also show that in most cases it was "good", retrospectively, to move to Bulgaria, because of the working conditions in terms of income in this country and secondly, because they found a community for themselves and their families. In this sense in the course of time the results

show that the employment played a role of knowing more people not only as colleagues but also meeting friends, finding social relations and even developing business locally. However, they still experience a huge language problem and linguistic barrier here.

“I do not understand Bulgarian but this is not a problem at my job. However it is hard to meet people and make friends.”

Producer

“I often have problems with my colleagues, there are some cultural differences.”

Producer

Living environment

The results show, just like in the previous sector, that in the beginning the living environment had impact on the interviewed as long as they adapt and in this sense it was an adaptive challenge. In the course of time the results show the respondents liked Sofia, in particular the people, the food and the general ambience. In some cases, people mention Bulgarians are close to them as mentality. They also describe Bulgarian people as more relaxed rather than in West or in the States. This is mainly due to the fact they speak openly, they are natural, and they speak freely without prejudice.

In general the interviewed are satisfied with the quality of life they have here, how they spend their free time, sub cultural life, etc. On this level, they are satisfied and enjoy living in Sofia. International respondents expect that, in the future, the Bulgarian way of life will change to something more European, with a distinctive Bulgarian flair, but it will be the same as elsewhere.

For the interviewed, Sofia has something very strange, useful and strange – that every time and everywhere there’s something open and it can be necessary. One of the interviewed is comparing this to peeling an onion – “every time you think you got the skin, there is another layer that you find”.

“People here are much more relaxed than in the States. That’s great. Just great.”

Producer

“People here work less and enjoy life more I think.”

Producer

Housing and neighbourhood

Regarding the housing and neighbourhood for these interviewed, it only tends to evolve. In several cases the interviewed had exactly the conditions they were told and wanted respectively. As a negative side of the city could be pointed the heavy traffic and the traffic jams. In this sense some of the interviewed said they even though they don’t mind walking sometimes. Houses are far more expensive than flats and in general it is very hard country to live in, in their view, if you are a local. The local people don't earn much money and the prices are very high. Also what needs in Sofia to change is to stop the uncontrolled, massive growth of construction.

“I think there should be control. You should stop the massive growth of construction.”

Producer

“Sofia is a wonderful place, the mountain, the climate, everything. Living conditions here could be great, if one has the resources to live here of course.”

Producer

7.3.3 Current situation in the Sofia region (overall satisfaction, problematic aspects)

Employment

In this sector the satisfaction level from work is significant. They fully express this satisfaction from working conditions, practices and colleagues. Also like in the previous sector, the respondents shared that things could speed up in Bulgaria and the bureaucracy here is still a negatively heavy factor, hindering development and lowering the quality of life. However, this sample shared this view as an impression, not as a direct impact on their work.

“I am happy I work here although I do not understand some of the people’s practices.”

Producer

“Practices are changing more and more to the Western’s ones.”

Producer

Living environment

The interviewed are unanimous about the living environment in Bulgaria – amazing scenery with spectacular mountains, Black Sea coast and cities, but they admit they still see the Soviet footprint present here. The common conclusion is that it’s a beautiful place and they like it. They also qualify people as very friendly and the environment as acceptable.

Very important for the living environment is that the interviewed like the food in Bulgaria. Very important also remains the Bulgarian behaviour toward foreigners – it’s positive. Overall, the interviewed liked the country, also because there are many places to go in Sofia and to see. This also includes the restaurants variety as well as the mountains in Sofia, the mountains and the Black see in the country in general.

The one thing that the foreigners are not used to is the traffic. They also describe Bulgarian people as more relaxed rather than in other countries. In general the interviewed are satisfied with the quality of life they have here.

“I think the quality of life here is very high.”

Producer

“You should repair some buildings and renew them. Also build more in your typical style, rather than in the modern one.”

Producer

Housing and neighbourhood

Mostly impressions, once people move to Bulgaria and start living here, are the same. In this sense the housing and neighbourhood is on the level respondents in this sample are fully pleased with. This is mostly determined by the fact it has previously been arranged so and they already knew the relative conditions they were going to have. This is common of most sectors. In this sense their situation could of course improve and this is mostly connected with the fact that some of them bought flats and in this way chose the neighbourhood they wanted. Some of the interviewed also shared that they own an apartment right in the downtown area or where they preferred. Other prefer different from the downtown areas, however they all describe the situation with housing in Bulgaria as hard because of the high prices and low salaries.

“Now I own an apartment right in the downtown area. I have everything I need.”

Producer

“My flat is big enough and I can afford another one if I need it. It’s good to change the district in Sofia, you can always see something new...”

Producer

7.4 Computer and related activities

The following three females and one male have been interviewed in this third sector and they are nationals of the following countries: UK, France, Dominican Republic and USA.

Table 7.3.

Code of Sector	Sector	Gender	Origin
722	Consultancy in IT	Female	France
722	Consultancy in IT	Female	UK
722	IT	Female	USA
722	Online Entertainment	Male	Dominican Republic

7.4.1 Motivation to come to the Sofia region

Business related reasons and contacts

The main business reasons of the interviewed in this sector are rather similar to those in the previous and they are related to the fact that they were sent here by their company. In some cases at first it was a short stay to do some training, and later they were offered a longer contract. Their work was primarily in the scope of customer service and quality management. The interviewed were mostly responsible for providing quality services to their clients. In other words their department was making sure there are standards for providing customer service and then was checking if everyone, in the different departments, in different countries, was meeting these standards.

Some of the interviewed were specialised in communication with different languages, English and French in most cases. Most of the interviewed people have been previously working abroad. The particular thing here is though, that they have been looking for development in the specific field and they found that in the job in Sofia. In this sense the business related reasons and contacts are mainly connected with no personal contacts on behalf of the interviewed with Bulgarians in the beginning, just eventually contacts with one or more people from the relevant business environment in Bulgaria.

However, previous quality-of-life expectations did play some role in the decision to take the job in Sofia.

“I just was sent here. However I knew it was going to be good experience for me.”

Customer Care Manager

“I knew nobody here. I just came to work and enrich my experience.”

Customer Care Manager

Private reasons and personal network

Specific for this sector of computer activities is the spirit of travel, which the sample revealed. Family factor played not a crucial role as per the interviewed and had a very little influence. However it's obvious in interviews that people stay in touch with their families if they do not move with them. Most of the interviewed view their move as related to internal and personal reason, not only for career, but also as another opportunity to live abroad.

“I wanted to move abroad to work. I think Bulgaria is a perfect for me and my experience.”

Customer Care Manager

“My private reasons actually were connected with my work and career. I can also add that I wanted to develop abroad...”

Customer Care Manager

Quality of the metropolitan region (soft factors)

The quality of the metropolitan region did not play a significant role for this sector. In most cases, as in the other sectors, the interviewed knew they are moving to a poorer country and they did not mind those imaginable differences about the country. As in almost all cases in all of the interviewed from all sectors, the lodging was set up beforehand for the migrants. The agent or the responsible person for that had arranged their accommodation and place for living. Not in all cases thought, the interviewed knew some people that had been to Bulgaria before. Quality of life itself seems to be the most significant factor in terms of the particularity of the country and the region and of course the country's life standard.

“I knew it was different from the developed countries.”

Customer Care Manager

“I can always learn new things in such countries, I think everybody can.”

Customer Care Manager

7.4.2 Accommodating in the Sofia region

Employment

As in all sectors, at first when moving to Sofia, the interviewed were aware mainly of their working environment. In this sense they were chasing different goals ranging from trips in a country like Bulgaria to developing personal qualities, for example. The results also show that in most cases it was “pleasant” to move to Bulgaria because they somehow found a community for themselves and their families – something that is, again, similar to all samples of respondents in this study. In this sense, in the course of time the results show that the employment played a role of knowing more people not only as colleagues but also meeting friends, finding social relations and even developing business locally. However the interviewed still experience a huge language problem and linguistic barrier here.

“I knew my colleagues from the team. I came for the experience.”

Customer Care Manager

“With my work, in this country, things are as I expected. I can just add positive comments.”

Customer Care Manager

Living environment

As to the living environment for this sector, the results show that in the beginning the living environment had impact as much as it’s related to the so called cultural shock. It was more viewed as an adaptive challenge. In the course of time the results show the interviewed like Sofia, in particular the people, the food and the environment, exactly like in all interviewed from all sectors. In some cases some people mention Bulgarians are close to them as mentality. They also describe Bulgarian people as more relaxed rather than in “the West”. This is mainly due to the fact they speak openly, they are natural, speak freely and show no prejudice. In general the interviewed are satisfied with the quality of life they have here, how they spend their free time, sub cultural life, etc. On that aspect they are satisfied and even enjoy living in Sofia.

“I like life here, there are so many things to do in Sofia and always.”

Customer Care Manager

“I think Sofia is great place to visit and to live in. People, nature, food, everything can make you feel good.”

Customer Care Manager

Housing and neighbourhood

One very common point in all interviewed is that the living situation of the interviewed tends to improve. There are almost no exceptions and the interviewed said that they mostly changed the location of their living place rather than the condition inside. This is the main specific factor in this sector. Otherwise again as negative side of the city as per the interviewed could be pointed the heavy traffic and the traffic jams.

“Things in other countries are organised, traffic, everything. Here they are not.”

Customer Care Manager

“I believe people don’t do enough to improve their conditions. Neither do the authorities.”

Customer Care Manager

7.4.3 Current situation in the Sofia region (overall satisfaction, problematic aspects)

Employment

Regarding the current employment situation of the interviewed in this sector, it could be said that there are less differences in the type of work and conditions between Bulgaria and the other countries representatives. The differences though are mainly in the practices that the highly-skilled migrants see out of work – which are in other words the typical Bulgarian customs that reflect the local behaviour at work too. Generally the people engaged in this sector are satisfied with their working conditions, develop new business in some cases and do not point out some serious differences in the working conditions between Sofia and their previous working places.

“I think Bulgarians are very intelligent and very professional.”

Customer Care Manager

“I am pleased with my working conditions and colleagues. I am also pleased with life here.”

Customer Care Manager

Living environment

A very similar factor in all sectors is that the interviewed are people that were born abroad which have been studying out of Bulgaria and then moved here. In this relation, their impressions do not vary a lot. In general they describe the country as very nice, first because of the seaside and mountains. The common conclusion is that it’s a beautiful place and it could get better. Then they qualify people as very friendly and open minded and the environment as pleasant and acceptable. Very important for the living environment is that the interviewed like the food in Sofia and its people. However the most important is that they qualify the country and the people as tolerant and friendly to foreigners.

“Bulgarians are tolerant to foreigners. The country has amazing landscape and Black Sea coast.”

Customer Care Manager

“I travel a lot here. There are things to see, culture, places, you can meet people freely. This is great advantage.”

Customer Care Manager

Housing and neighbourhood

In this field, factors and results between all sectors are quite similar. Regarding the housing and neighbourhood, all of the interviewed are fully satisfied with their initial and actual situation. They knew what the conditions were going to be and in the end they eventually made some efforts to improve them as per the individual case. As in most cases, the interviewed point out that the living conditions in Sofia differ and although they are pleased with theirs, there could be made more for generally improving at least the infrastructure here.

“Things in other countries are organised, traffic, everything. Here they are not.”

Customer Care Manager

“I enjoy living here, I like my place. What I don’t like is how people treat their places.”

Customer Care Manager

7.5 R & D, and higher education

The following number of five female and two male have been interviewed in this fourth sector and they are nationals of the following countries: UK, USA, The Netherlands and Canada.

Table 7.4.

Code of Sector	Sector	Gender	Origin
73/803	R&D	Female	Canada
73/803	R&D	Female	USA
73/803	R&D	Female	UK
73/803	Higher Education	Female	USA
73/803	Higher Education	Female	USA
73/803	Higher Education	Male	USA
73/803	R&D	Male	The Netherlands

7.5.1 Motivation to come to the Sofia region

Business related reasons and contacts

In this forth sector the examples are mostly related to the work in a private school as English teacher. As a teacher their position involved teaching four different classes, including the IB curriculum. One of the examples shows how the person was looking for a teaching job after doing some research. Then the person was interested in teaching and also wanted to live abroad. Then basically it turned out that there was a job in Bulgaria, and it was in a school where the person wanted to work.

These examples show the person wasn't trying to move here, but it was the option he chose when deciding to move somewhere. Other business reasons of most of the interviewed in this sector are related to the fact that they were sent here by their previous organization, but this is not a common case.

The most common case in this sense is that the interviewed wanted to teach abroad and went to a job fair in their teaching country.

"I just was looking for a job abroad and I found one in Bulgaria."

Teacher

"I could go to another country, but my job offer here was better. I think it's worth."

Teacher

Private reasons and personal network

Something not very specific for this sector only, which could be valid for all sectors and for all interviews, is that the interviewed from the educational sector had an express desire to work and teach abroad. The families of the other viewed had no impact on their decisions to move abroad. Noteworthy, as in the other cases with other sectors, is that people stay in touch with their families and they move not with them.

Mostly of the interviewed view their move as important for their career, but rather in the sense of the experience abroad. Another example shows the person came without family and in this sense again the family motivation is not of importance. The interviewed in almost all cases did not know much about the country, but knew something about its history – that was on the “wrong side of the world wars”, they knew Bulgaria was in the Soviet sphere of influence; they generally had an idea as to where they would be now because they had visited other former communist countries. On the other hand they did not know anyone here.

Also, “tolerance, acceptance of diversity, equality, openness or too strong social cohesion” were significant, because the interviewed wanted to teach people and if they are not open to new experiences, they would not be able to teach them, so they wanted people to have this characteristic.

The hard factors - in this sense, the nature of the job are amid the most decisive location factors. This is often related to as “good job offer” and “career development”.

“I had previously worked abroad but I liked this part of Europe and that’s why I came here.”

Teacher

“I wanted to know more about Bulgaria and I knew it’s very old and beautiful country.”

Teacher

Quality of the metropolitan region (soft factors)

In most cases the interviewed knew they are going to a less developed country and they did not pay attention to the fact they were expecting the infrastructure or the buildings to be different for example. This is something that exists in all sectors as a shared characteristic. The interviewed in this sample mostly knew some people that had been to Bulgaria before. Expected quality of life itself seems to be the most significant factor in terms of the particularity of the country and the region. Another factor turns out to be the tolerance and the openness of the people and the fact they accept foreigners “as they are”. In some cases “following the partner” also could be a soft factor.

“I knew Bulgaria is in Eastern Europe and it’s a very beautiful country with ancient culture.”

Teacher

“I guessed it’s different from West and that’s what challenged me...”

Teacher

7.5.2 Accommodating in the Sofia region

Employment

The accommodation in the Sofia region regarding to the employment could be related to as a “know factor” for this sector. In other words, the interviewed already well knew life abroad and especially life in this type of communities. Very soon, as also seen in the other respondent samples, the working environment helped the interviewed meet new people, find friends and better situate themselves in the new society. As in the previous sector, the language barrier remains a difficulty.

“I enjoy my job in Sofia and I am very happy I can meet new people.”

Teacher

“I get well with my colleagues and everybody. I like my job and my environment.”

Teacher

Living environment

All interviewed are unanimous about the living environment in Sofia and Bulgaria. The results show that in the beginning the living environment had an impact on the interviewed as long as they adapt and in this sense it more was an adaptive challenge. This is mostly in terms of buildings and infrastructure. In the course of time the results show the interviewed like Sofia, night life, clubs, people and food. They like Bulgarians because of their ‘joy for life’ and being open-minded. Also related factor in the living environment is that the teachers are living together in some cases and they share the same impressions about Bulgaria’s living environment.

“I like Sofia – there’s always something open, something interesting and something... necessary.”

Teacher

“In most cities there’re things that you can find if you look for them. In Sofia you don’t look for things a lot and life comes to you.”

Teacher

Housing and neighbourhood

As the interviews are aimed at highly-skilled migrants, the living conditions of these people could only improve, minding their social status. This sector, like all others, is not an exception. In general the teachers live in a house on the campus of the school they work for. They live with other teachers and they “like it a lot”. They live with other people who are about their age. They also point that they like the living place or the house a lot. The impression about safety in Sofia is also important from the beginning. As negative side of the city could be pointed the heavy traffic and the traffic jams. Also houses in their opinion are far more expensive than flats and in general it is very hard country for the locals. The people don't earn much money and the prices are very high.

“I live in a house with other teachers. However I am not sure Bulgarians could afford to rent a house.”

“I like a lot the place. I love it.”

Teacher

“I have no complaints. Everything is as I imagined and wanted it.”

Teacher

7.5.3 Current situation in the Sofia region (overall satisfaction, problematic aspects)

Employment

The current situation of the interviewed in this sector does not seem to have major problematic aspects. In this relation the interviews show that the working environment of the interviewed does not have almost any differences with the one they previously had. Generally the interviewed teachers do not refer to have had problems like other migrants, in terms of work habits and organisation of work differing significantly from what they were used to.

“I am satisfied with my work here, I like the place where I live and my colleagues.”

Teacher

“Well everything is great, job, colleagues. I think I even like communication more with Bulgarians than with foreigners here.”

Teacher

Living environment

The impressions of the interviewed about the living environment in Sofia are determined first of all by the fact that these people were born abroad and then moved here to work here. The fact they come to Sofia being used to their previous living environment entails impressions about the Bulgarian customs and cultural life. Other important impression about Sofia is that the night life offers a big choice and the restaurants and other establishments are on a very good level. The interviewed also see Bulgaria as country with attractive living environment because of Black Sea and the mountains here.

“I like the food and the people. Bulgarians speak freely and they are open-minded in comparison with the other countries I have been living in.”

Teacher

“I think it’s very funny and useful to live with Bulgarians.”

Teacher

Housing and neighbourhood

As to the housing and neighbourhood in this sector, it could be viewed from both view points – of those that are involved in the R & D activities and those working in the educational sector. Mostly the interviewed in the R & D point out that the conditions they had in the beginning were in most cases the conditions they expected from the place they were living in. This applies of course strictly to their living place only. They also share the impression that there are high-quality and very low quality districts in Sofia and the difference could be decreased by some municipal policy.

As per the interviewed from the educational sector, they are mainly satisfied by the living conditions they have and the place where they live. They apparently pay less attention to this and more attention to the community factor in the housing and in the neighbourhood. One of

the things the interviewed teachers really like, but that they haven't realised before, is that Sofia is a very safe city in their view. They do not feel afraid to walk around, to take a taxi, to run, except with the dogs at the beginning. They have felt safe in a lot of cities of Europe, but it's one thing they seem to take for granted.

"I was not aware of that in the beginning, but Sofia is really a safe place for living."

Teacher

"There's something that I should admit – differences between living standards here is big, but people also don't understand where they live and they don't value this place."

Teacher

7.6 Summary

In all of the four related fields, consecutively will be considered and summarised first the role of the hard factors and then the role of the soft ones.

Hard factors, such as the nature of the job offer, are the decisive location drivers, dominate. This is often related to as "good job offer" and "career development". Also important as motivation appears to be the geographical position of Bulgaria. In this sense the good international accessibility, allowing migrants to keep in touch with their family and friends elsewhere, is a strong reason and additionally influences the decision-making.

Soft factors seem to have lesser significance in terms of original location choice. Many respondents refer to initial cultural surprises and challenges to overcome. Expected quality of life, however, seems to be the most significant factor for the choice of this particular country and city to locate, within the framework of the more general initial decision to migrate somewhere.

In this sense, the almost universal statement "I knew everything would be different" must be interpreted in two ways – as an initial attraction and a following challenge to adapt; and then, after sometime has passed – as an enduring attraction to stay. Another retention factor turns out to be the tolerance and the openness of the people and the fact they accept foreigners "as they are". In some cases "following the partner" also could be a soft factor.

The general conclusion regarding hard factors is that the economical activity and the nature of the job offer are determinant about the decision-making whether to move or not to Bulgaria. In this sense the country is rather seen as a place for working than as a country for living. On the other hand, the soft factors play a role on a different level. In this case the country is rather seen as place for living more than a country for working. Those are the main differences between these two types of factors.

Generally speaking, migrants linked to "softer" professions, such as education and movie-making, allow for a greater role of "soft" factors both in their decision to migrate to Sofia in particularly, and later – in their decision to stay on. Migrants in the field of business and communications are almost exclusively driven by "hard" factors in their migration decision,

but also later on develop an appreciation for the “soft” factors that keep them in Sofia or make their stay a pleasant experience, rather than just a job to do in the time allotted.

There is a resounding lack of any reference to the role of policy in attracting the migrants interviewed in this research.

7.6.1 Overview

The aim of this work package has been to examine the prime motivating factors attracting transnational migrant workers to the Sofia Area. Four separate sectors were examined:

Business Management & Consultancy Activities & Finance, Computer related activities, Radio and Television Activities and R&A and higher education.

Provisional conclusions are summarised below:

Decisions to move to Sofia

While decisions regarding moving to Sofia varied between respondents, and according to age profile etc, the main motivating factors seemed to be related to Sofia as a smaller-scaled English-speaking city, as part of work programme, or in search of work.

Role of 'Hard' and 'Soft' factors

'Hard' factors, such as proximity to transport infrastructure along with rental and general housing costs set the boundaries around which respondents made decisions regarding choice of location, but within these boundaries, the 'softer' factors, such as access to general amenities influenced locational decisions.

The Role of Sofia

In general there was a highly negative perception of Sofia's transport infrastructure. This was related to both traffic congestion, and the public transport. Significantly, it seemed that most respondents either lived in an area close to public transport, or within easy access of work through walking. The “hard” constraints of inadequate infrastructure evidently militate against the tendency, evident in better-run cities, for “creatives” to drift out into the suburbs.

Mostly the interviewed did not like the dirtiness and disorder and they confirmed something should be done in this relation.

Labour & Labour Processes

The work-related responses varied relatively between each sector. However, the overarching message has been that every studied sector treasures flexibility in terms of everyday activities, and the sense of ownership of the various work tasks being undertaken.

The Role of Networks and Networking

In general, discussion about networks would not that much revolve around family connections and broader social ties. It seems it's quite easy to meet Bulgarians and create social networks outside of the family ones.

Future Projections

In general those who had a family or were considering starting a family felt more settled in Sofia, and didn't have much consideration of moving outside the city in the coming years. For those who were single, or without commitments to paying a mortgage there was a high chance that they would leave in the coming years. In general this was due to going back home, or to look for other experiences elsewhere. Although the general frustrations with public transport and other 'hard' factors didn't necessarily cause respondents to think of leaving, other factors, including price of housing and general cost of living, were seen as potentially forcing a move.

8 CONCLUSIONS

The attractiveness of Sofia for migrants depends both on the opportunities for finding a job, the city living conditions, and on the real estates situation in Bulgaria. Sofia belongs to the group of cities which would be attractive for the investors because of a fast growing economy and the attendant attractions of availability of a skilled labour force and tourism.

In Sofia, as well as in other cities in South-Eastern Europe, there is a potential for investments, as well as for the concentration of high skilled workers. It is a fact that 70% from the general investments that are being poured in Bulgaria are coming to Sofia. Naturally, this pouring of resources into the Bulgarian economy is positive, but in order to attract more resources more improvements should be made in the infrastructure and the conditions of living and working in the capital generally – the “hard” factor crisis that has come through during the work in every Work Package, conducted to date under this project..

No simple theory can deal with the complex reality of international migrants in Sofia. What is clear is that they are part of the new, globalisation-related population of highly-skilled migrants, who do not intend to become part of the place of destination – in this case, of the city of Sofia. It is also clear that, unlike the indigenous Bulgarian creatives studied in the previous Work Packages, international migrants are not predominantly – or even significantly – driven by “individual trajectory” considerations (i.e. by factors to do with previous links to the place, with family and community).

At the same time, much like indigenous migrants, the choice to re-locate has been seen to be largely driven by “hard” factors – a job offer, or being simply “sent” by the management of the home company to Bulgaria. Much like Bulgarian domestic migrants, international migrants connected to education and movie-making demonstrate greater sensitivities to “soft” factors in their migration decision. Usually, this is a “second-level” decision: once a respondent has decided to migrate abroad and begins choosing the place, then “soft” factors come into play, such as knowing people from Bulgaria, or who have been to Bulgaria and have had a good impression of the quality of life, or simply knowing something of the history and culture of Bulgaria. And then the specific migration choice – Bulgaria – is made because of the expectation that quality of life would be good.

It is to be noted that respondents, although asked about their Sofia location choice, almost universally speak about Bulgaria – the country, not the city. Both “hard”-influenced and “soft”-influenced location choices are to do with Bulgaria, rather than Sofia. So how is it that, while taking off for Bulgaria, they end up in Sofia? The answer is to do with Sofia’s unique place in the creative and knowledge-intensive field – almost the entire bulk of those industries, as well as the market for them, is situated in Sofia by virtue of it being the capital, the gateway and the country’s most dynamic and relentlessly progressing city. In this sense,

foreign migrants end up in Sofia by default – while coming to locate in Bulgaria, they get sucked into Sofia.

In the international respondent sample, much as in the Bulgarian samples studied previously, a significant difference between “location” factors and “retention” factors is evident. Generally speaking, people come (*location decision*) mostly under the influence of “hard” factors; but then decide to stay on (*retention decision*) because of the influence of “soft” factors – in Sofia’s case, the varied lifestyles available, the existing community life and the tolerance of the city.

As their Bulgarian counterparts, international creatives are pleased with the “soft” aspects of life in Sofia – aspects that arise out of the way of life of the communities, and also out of private initiative. Respondents, international as well as Bulgarian, are severely displeased by the “hard” aspects of Sofia – infrastructure, services, transport, and general upkeep of the place. In this sense, the traditional “pipes, policing and pavements” policy of the 19th-20th centuries, which Sofia Municipality is finally trying to follow, does target the most acute critiques of the city. While still blissfully unaware of the entire problematic of “creatives” and “soft factors”, Sofia’s planners would evidently be serving the needs of the “creatives”, both domestic and foreign, if they just did successfully the tasks that are routinely expected of municipalities.

During the first weeks of 2009, following decades of policy inactivity, Sofia Municipality has launched a long-term investment program worth 366 mln Euro. The program foresees investments in construction, restoration of kinder gardens, schools, health and social institutions and mostly renewing and restoration of the roads infrastructure. The strategy for Sofia includes concrete projects with possible sources of financing implying the completion of the underground train system, as well as the building of trash compost factory.

Domestic “creatives” uniformly lay the blame for the city’s unkempt appearance at the door of the municipality; and therefore expect municipal officers to resolve all problems identified. Unlike Bulgarians, however, international respondents tend to place more of a blame on ordinary Sofianites for the dilapidation of the mass housing and its immediate environment – i.e. issues that ordinary Sofianites could resolve by their own efforts, but have chosen not to.

While Bulgarian respondents make an attempt to answer policy-related questions (and come up with the answer that Sofia-based policies are non-existent, while national-level policies are the ones that make a difference), international respondents do not mention any policy at all when speaking of their location / retention decisions. Policy, it seems, playing little role in Bulgarian creatives’ location choices, but has zero weight in international migrants’ location choices.

What is certain is that none of the existing migration theories can meaningfully cover, in isolation, the situation of the international migrants in Sofia. A combination (or re-working) of the theories emerging since the turn of the century seems to be the way forward if we are to make sense of the data emerging.

In terms of policy, Sofia’s policy-makers are addressing the criticisms, related to “hard” aspects, such as traffic, natural environment, infrastructure and services that both indigenous

and foreign creatives have been levelling at the city. This is only the beginning of policy-making in Sofia and its future impact is still impossible to judge. What is obvious is that policy-making has concentrated on the traditional “hard” issues, rather than specifically on attracting Florida-type creatives. On the contrary, the recent – and most likely doomed to fail – attempts of Sofia Municipality to severely and effectively curtail migration into Sofia have the potential of keeping out precisely the kind of creative, mobile “circular migrants” that any city needs to prosper in the 21st century. In this particular case, it would be better for Sofia to stay on its historical development path, where stated policy always fails in implementation, so as not to turn the creatives from its gate.

At the same time, given the predominance of “soft factor” considerations in “staying-on” location decisions, the city will have to grapple with soft-factor issues, for fear of eventually losing creatives to other, tidier cities or EU member countries. This would mean enhancing the current “hard-factor” policies with significant “soft-factor” elements. What these elements should be – this we now know from both our research and from Richard Florida’s. For once, our work fits in with his insights: that “creatives” treasure nature-related amenities, such as well-run parks, easy access to unpolluted bodies of water, bicycle paths, pedestrian open public spaces and so forth.

After half-century of policy impotence, in 2009 Sofia’s planners finally produced a feasible set of policies to tackle “hard-factor” issues. It is our belief that the creative and knowledge-intensive workers of the capital would now appreciate the development of policies, which address “soft-factor” issues as well. What is, however, crucial in the particular case of Sofia is that any such policies must be developed in a way so as to include civil society into the planning and implementation stages of the planning. For we know that it is the civic energies and the imagination of people living in Sofia, rather than top-down, technocratic policies that have driven the city forward and would, most likely, continue to be the main force behind its further development.

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Appendix 1: Topic guide interviews highly-skilled migrants

Start of the interview:

- Short introduction of ACRE
- Permission to record the interview

First question:

How did you come to live in the in xy region now?

- Did you study here?
- Are you here with your family?
- Where do you live? (city / region)
- For how long?
- Where did you live before?
- How much did you know about xy before you came here for your present stay?

Education:

Could you please tell me something about your education?

- Where (else) did you go to school / university?
- What did you study?
- From where did you obtain your degree?

Professional experience / Career:

Could you please tell me something about the main steps in your career after finishing study?

How did you find your first job in xy?

- Own search//I was offered the job
- Own internet search
- Sent by the company
- Advertisement (newspaper / internet)
- Open application
- Family/Friends
- Other, what?

Where do you work? Could you please describe your actual working situations?

- Position, job
- What do you like about your job situation / what do you not like?
- How satisfied are you with your situation?
- Would you like to change something?

Motivation to come to xy:

What was your main motivation to come to xy? (pull and push-factors)

- Role of hard factors:
 - study
 - job offer, career opportunities now and later in your home country, interesting work task, higher income, better working conditions (working hours, permanent and temporary contract, executive level, routine –project activities),
 - good international accessibility of the xy region, transport infrastructure and public transport facilities,
 - public social infrastructure (availability of kindergartens, (international) schools, higher education),
 - technical infrastructure,
 - price of housing
 - price of living
 - availability of subsidies (e.g. for artists),
 - tax incentives, other?

- Role of soft factors
 - followed partner
 - came here with my parents
 - tolerance, acceptance of diversity, equality, openness or too strong social cohesion, civil society
 - quality of life (spare time activities, subcultural scene
 - quality of the environment (landscape, culture and tourism sights etc.)
 - attractive residential environment, attractive architecture, housing conditions

Social networks

- What is your family background?
- What role have other family members played in the decision process? (wife / husband)
- How many people did you know in xy before?

Actual living and working situation:

Could you please describe your actual living situation?

- What do you like about xy / what do you not like about xy? (quality of life, housing situation, tolerance, diversity, spare time activities, landscape etc.)
- What problems and chances do you experience at the moment in xy region?
- How satisfied are you with your living situation?

Past:

When you think back to your first months in xy, how did you experience the first time after you came from abroad?

- Did you get support? (E.g. by your company, the city, friends in xy...)
- How did you find your accommodation (relocation service, own search,..)?
- How was the paper work?
- How much did you pay yourself for the international move?
- Did you miss a certain type of support?

Future:

What are your future plans?

End of the interview:

- How satisfied are you altogether with your situation in xy?
- What do you think can be done to improve the situation of highly skilled migrants in the creative knowledge industry in xy?
- Would you like to add something?

Personal background (following information should be obtained; see also short questionnaire)

- male/female
- age
- family situation
- nationality/ies
- country living before coming to this country
- duration of stay in xy region (month/year)
- income
- highest educational degree/country obtained