Attracting talent? Birmingham and the West Midlands region as a destination for the highly skilled

The view of transnational migrants

ACRE report 7.3

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ACRE is an acronym of the international research project ‘Accommodating Creative Knowledge – Competitiveness of European Metropolitan Regions within the Enlarged Union’.

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Table of contents

Executive summary .............................................................................................................. 1

1 Introduction ................................................................................................................... 5
  1.1 Aims and objectives of Work Package ........................................................................... 5
  1.2 Outline of report ........................................................................................................... 5
  1.3 Introduction to Birmingham and the West Midlands economy ...................................... 6
  1.4 Creative and knowledge intensive industries in the Birmingham economy .................. 9
    1.4.1 Creative industries in the Birmingham economy ....................................................... 9
    1.4.2 Knowledge intensive industries in the Birmingham economy ................................. 10

2 Theories of migration: The case of highly skilled migrants ........................................... 13
  2.1 Classical theories of labour migration ............................................................................ 13
    2.1.1 Push-pull model ....................................................................................................... 14
    2.1.2 Neoclassical theories ............................................................................................... 14
    2.1.3 New migration economy approach ........................................................................... 15
    2.1.4 Dual labour market theory ....................................................................................... 15
    2.1.5 World system theory ............................................................................................... 15
  2.2 New theories of labour migration .................................................................................. 16
    2.2.1 Theory of migration systems .................................................................................... 16
    2.2.2 Theory of migrant networks ..................................................................................... 17
    2.2.3 Theory of social capital .......................................................................................... 17
    2.2.4 Trans-national migration ......................................................................................... 18
  2.3 Theories of highly skilled migration ............................................................................. 18
    2.3.1 Brain drain ............................................................................................................. 19
    2.3.2 ‘Brain circulation’ .................................................................................................. 20
  2.4 Florida’s concept of an internationally mobile creative class ....................................... 22
  2.5 The upcoming paradigm ............................................................................................... 23
  2.6 Settling and staying: Highly skilled migrants in the host society .................................. 23
  2.7 Conclusion .................................................................................................................. 24

3 Migration in the UK ....................................................................................................... 27
  3.1 Definition of a migrant ................................................................................................. 27
  3.2 UK migration policy context ........................................................................................ 28
  3.3 Short history of labour migration in the UK ................................................................. 29
  3.4 Routes of economic migration to the UK ..................................................................... 31
    3.4.1 EEA/EU .................................................................................................................. 31
    3.4.2 EU ‘A8’ Citizens - Worker Registration Scheme (WRS) ........................................ 31
    3.4.3 Non EU citizens ...................................................................................................... 31
  3.5 Drivers of migration to the UK ..................................................................................... 32
  3.6 Corporate transfers ..................................................................................................... 33
  3.7 Sources of migration data: Advantages and disadvantages .......................................... 33
  3.8 Recent migration trends ............................................................................................... 34
  3.9 Nationality of migrants ............................................................................................... 35
  3.10 Regional distribution of foreign workers in the UK .................................................... 35
4 Migration in Birmingham and the West Midlands

5 Internationalisation of the UK and the West Midlands economy, the regional labour market and demand for skills

6 Methodology

7 Results
8.18 Problems and opportunities for the Birmingham metropolitan region – some policy observations

8.1 Problems and opportunities for the Birmingham metropolitan region – some policy observations

8.9.3 A ‘working’ typology........................................................................................................ 135
8.9.2 Migrant ‘Types’: Understanding the Motivation for skilled migration in Birmingham ...

8.9.1 Review of literature on skilled migrant ‘types’................................................................. 130
8.9 Typology of skilled migrants.............................................................................................. 130

8.8 Future mobility ................................................................................................................ ...

8.7 Diversity, segregation and integration ................................................................................ 128

8.6 Why people stay: Importance of ‘soft’ and ‘hard’ factors and quality of life in the

8.5 Importance of networks: personal and professional ........................................................... 123

8.4 Attractiveness of Birmingham and the West Midlands region to highly skilled trans-
national migrants.............................................................................................................. ... 123

8.3 Deciding to live and work in the UK.................................................................................. 122

8.2 Profile of surveyed trans-national migrant workers........................................................... 122

8.1 Trans-national migrant workers in Birmingham and the West Midlands........................... 121

7.1.8 Perceptions of the city: ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ factors.............................................................. 85
7.1.9 Social networks .............................................................................................................. 87
7.1.10 Residence and neighbourhood...................................................................................... 88
7.1.11 Experiences, support ................................................................................................... 89
7.1.12 Future plans ................................................................................................................... 89

7.2 Business Management and Consultancy........................................................................... 90
7.2.1 Overview of TNMs interviewed...................................................................................... 90

7.2.2 Motivation for coming to the UK.................................................................................... 91
7.2.3 Motivation to live/work in Birmingham/West Midlands.................................................. 91
7.2.4 Remaining in Birmingham/West Midlands..................................................................... 93
7.2.5 Career and job situation.................................................................................................. 93
7.2.6 Activities outside of work/for relaxation......................................................................... 94
7.2.7 Perceptions of the city: ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ factors.............................................................. 94
7.2.8 Social networks ............................................................................................................. 97
7.2.9 Residence and neighbourhood....................................................................................... 98
7.2.10 Experiences, support .................................................................................................... 99

7.2.11 Future plans ................................................................................................................ 99

7.3 Higher education............................................................................................................... 101
7.3.1 Overview of TNMs interviewed...................................................................................... 101
7.3.2 Motivation for coming to the UK.................................................................................... 101
7.3.3 Motivation to live/work in Birmingham/West Midlands.................................................. 102
7.3.4 Remaining in Birmingham West Midlands..................................................................... 107
7.3.5 Career and job situation.................................................................................................. 108
7.3.6 Activities outside of work/for relaxation......................................................................... 108
7.3.7 Perceptions of the city: ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ factors.............................................................. 110
7.3.8 Social networks ............................................................................................................. 116
7.3.9 Residence and neighbourhood....................................................................................... 116

7.3.10 Experiences, support ................................................................................................... 118

7.3.11 Future plans ................................................................................................................ 119

8 Main locational drivers for transnational migrants in the West Midlands............ 121

8.1 Trans-national migrant workers in Birmingham and the West Midlands................. 121
8.2 Profile of surveyed trans-national migrant workers......................................................... 122
8.3 Deciding to live and work in the UK................................................................................ 122
8.4 Attractiveness of Birmingham and the West Midlands region to highly skilled trans-
national migrants.............................................................................................................. ... 123
8.5 Importance of networks: personal and professional ......................................................... 124
8.6 Why people stay: Importance of ‘soft’ and ‘hard’ factors and quality of life in the

West Midlands region........................................................................................................ 126

8.7 Diversity, segregation and integration ............................................................................. 128
8.8 Future mobility .................................................................................................................. 129
8.9 Typology of skilled migrants............................................................................................ 130
8.9.1 Review of literature on skilled migrant ‘types’.............................................................. 130
8.9.2 Migrant ‘Types’: Understanding the Motivation for skilled migration in Birmingham ...

8.9.3 A ‘working’ typology...................................................................................................... 135
8.10 Problems and opportunities for the Birmingham metropolitan region – some policy
observations ......................................................................................................................... 135
References ..................................................................................................................................... 139

Appendices ..................................................................................................................................... 143

Appendix 1: ACRE Topic guide for interviews with highly skilled migrants ...................... 143
Appendix 2: Categories of overseas nationals who may be classed as ‘migrant workers’ .......... 146
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report forms part of a wider European study exploring the impact of creative and knowledge-intensive industries on the competitiveness of 13 European metropolitan regions. Through a comparative approach, the project seeks to understand the extent to which creativity, innovation and knowledge are central to successful long-term economic development.

The objective of this particular Work Package is to understand the drivers behind the location decisions of highly skilled trans-national migrants (TNMs). Why do they move to a particular city, in this case, Birmingham to live and work in creative and knowledge-intensive industries? A second and interrelated objective is to explore the role and relative importance that both ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ factors play in this decision-making process.

The report brings together the results of qualitative in-depth interviews with 29 TNMs who work or have set up their businesses in Birmingham or the West Midlands Metropolitan region: 10 in Visual and Performing Arts; 9 in Business and Management Consultancy Activities; and 10 in Higher Education.

As discussed in previous ACRE reports (see Brown et al 2007), Birmingham and the West Midlands have a long history of attracting immigrants and migrant workers from around the world. Today, the city has one of the most ethnically diverse populations in Britain - some 29.7 per cent of the city’s population coming from minority backgrounds.

In the last 10 years, like the rest of the UK, Birmingham and the West Midlands have seen a dramatic increase in the number of international migrants, partly due to enlargement of the European Union. Non-UK nationals now account for some 5 per cent of regional employment in the West Midlands. The majority of these recent migrants come from the new European accession states (particularly Poland) and have replaced New Commonwealth countries as the largest source of new labour migrants in the region.

Trans national migrant workers in the West Midlands are predominantly young (around 45 per cent are aged 25 years and under and a further 40 per cent are aged 25 – 34 years) and in general males outnumber females (3 males to every two females). The majority of economic migrants are in employment and they present a varied profile in terms of their occupations and industry sectors. However, according to available data, around 15 -20 per cent work in the creative and knowledge intensive industries. Economic migrants generally bring skills that are in short supply amongst the West Midlands population, and make a significant contribution to the economy of the region.

The majority of TNMs interviewed knew very little, if anything, about Birmingham or the West Midlands region before arriving. For some, the city and what to expect was a complete unknown. For others, the perception they had from colleagues, friends, the media, etc., was negative - a grey, post industrial city with high crime levels and problems associated with the
wide ethnic diversity of the population. However, there were also some positive perceptions relating to the diversity of the city, including the acceptance of foreigners, and the overall friendliness of people living in the city, especially when compared to London.

The majority of interviewees were attracted largely by job or career opportunities or because they were undertaking some form of formal education programme in the region, not by the city itself. The attractiveness of Birmingham appeared to be that it was known as one of the major cities in the UK, and thus offered interesting educational, employment and career development opportunities for international migrants.

Although some migrants had chosen to come to Birmingham specifically, many interviewees indicated that they had wanted to come to the UK, rather than Birmingham or the West Midlands and originally they had no strong preference for any particular location in the UK. This evidence suggests that location in the West Midlands was largely attributable to serendipity, rather than a positive choice, and mirrors the findings of other research.

The different professionals had one factor in common: They were drawn to the UK by ‘pull factors’ such as career advancement, global centres of excellence or the personal development resulting from travel and experiencing another culture, rather than being ‘pushed’ out of their country. The study also concluded that improved earnings were not dominant reasons for migrating although they were of importance to some of those coming from developing countries.

Interviewees who choose Birmingham specifically mainly did so for personal reasons, such as following a partner who had found a job in the city. In the Higher Education sector, the reputation of the institution (in this case, the University of Birmingham), a particular academic department, or the opportunity to work with key professionals in their particular academic field, played a central role in interviewee’s decision to come to Birmingham. In the Business Consultancy sector, the presence of a large international professional firm with overseas secondment opportunities, the general depth of the professional sector and attending universities in the region were the main factors drawing people to Birmingham.

Nonetheless, most interviewees cited a number of advantages with the Birmingham location, which satisfied their requirements of ‘hard’ economic and ‘soft’ quality of life factors - as a large city it offered a good variety of work and career opportunities; was centrally located in the UK and had good (international) transport infrastructure; was more affordable (in terms of general ‘cost of living’ as well as buying or renting housing) compared to London; it also offered a very ‘liveable’ working environment - as a city that is still fairly compact, it was easier to commute to and from work, for example. The multicultural aspect of the city in general and the acceptance of different minority groups was a particularly strong influencing factor for locating in Birmingham. Some interviewees also felt Birmingham was a very friendly city and more welcoming to and inclusive of foreigners. As such, Birmingham is a city capable of retaining highly skilled TNMs.

The decision to remain in Birmingham for most interviewees was dependant on job/career opportunities (for self and partner/spouse). However, for some, the positive aspects of living in Birmingham (hard and soft factors) as well as personal factors were also becoming important as retention factors – those who had become more socially embedded in the city in
particular, were more likely to want to remain. The majority found the city extremely welcoming to foreigners and they felt accepted and had integrated well. For most, the ethnic diversity of Birmingham was seen as a strong asset. For example, it widened access to job opportunities in more mainstream activities within the creative sector. The ethnic diversity of Birmingham also seemed to have a positive impact in terms of creativity - the mix of different cultures and influences assisting in the creation of new cultural products. Birmingham was also seen as a ‘vibrant’, international city, with a good (if incomplete) cultural offer.

Nevertheless, this positive image does not deny the presence of challenges. The city was seen as car oriented and difficult/unsafe for pedestrians and cyclists; some of the physical aspects of the city were also criticised – ‘ugly’ rundown areas very close to the city centre; New Street Station was considered unattractive and unsafe at night and gave a very poor first impression of the city; and the city was regarded as environmentally poor in terms of overall cleanliness/lack of recycling facilities. Interviewees commented negatively on the ‘look and feel’ of the city, particularly the lack of an identifiable and defined central area; a lack of landmark buildings and good architecture; lack of third spaces to meet up with friends. Particularly, the lack of niche and less mainstream cultural offer in the city was considered negative.

In terms of future mobility, for TNMs in the Higher Education sector, labour market mobility is an important feature of this sector and many interviewees saw their stay in Birmingham as offering short to medium term career development - they were prepared to move to another institution (in the UK or abroad) if an opportunity presented itself as a standard pathway of career progression.

Migrants in the Business Consultancy sector presented different profiles: some employed by large international firms had been sent to Birmingham on ‘secondment’ for career development opportunities and would be returning back to their home country in the next year to eighteen months. Others expected to remain not so much within the same company, but rather within the city’s professional sector more generally. Again, it was the depth of opportunities and firms that was important.

Interviewees in the Visual and Performing Arts sector were typically more mobile and ‘footloose’ than those in the other two sectors. Moving regularly between jobs and employers in order to develop experience and skills for career purposes is common in this sector generally. These interviewees seemed to have a more transient mindset and they did not feel overly tied to a particular place - moving to experience life and in another city was frequently cited as a reason for leaving Birmingham. They were not moving because of particular ‘push’ factors, rather they would expect to move on to other locations whatever city they were in. The majority of interviewees indicated they would plan to leave Birmingham within 1-2 years.

Nonetheless, some interviewees in this sector also cited specific ‘push’ factors which would influence their decision to leave Birmingham. These included the limited scope for career progression in the city due to a lack of client base and few commissions from public organisations to underpin their activities; a limited offering in terms of artist led spaces/galleries or studio spaces to hire in city as well and the proliferation of short term
contracts in the city and the feeling of insecurity this engendered. Some interviewees also felt that to succeed career-wise they must move to London, while others regard the more competitive nature of the creative industries in London as unattractive and preferred the more collaborative ambience across work and life that Birmingham seemed to offer. This applied especially to those wanting to develop intercultural products as these require significant cross-cultural collaboration.

A further important determinant of the length of stay in Birmingham of international migrants across all three sectors is the successful integration of their partner/spouse and family in the city. While most migrants found it easy to settle in the city, what is really important is for their partner to be able to develop a network of friends and activities over the longer term. Several interviewees commented that if their partner/spouse felt isolated and unhappy, this would be a major reason for choosing to leave the city.

These findings point towards the importance of traditional ‘hard’ economic factors in attracting international migrants to Birmingham while ‘soft’ factors appear key in retaining these individuals in the city. This is, however, tempered by the different mobility patterns of these migrants according to their sector of employment as well as their life-stage. This has important implications in terms of policy - and also for the re-thinking of leadership approaches for the development of creative knowledge cities more generally: Firstly, the major role of universities as skills provider and employers of skilled people has implications in terms of local and regional inward investment policy in the region. Secondly while Birmingham seems to meet many important ‘quality of life’ requirements for creative and knowledge workers and international migrants, the city and the region would benefit by addressing the lack of more ‘middle ground’ cultural activities. An approach that supported both the production and consumption of these activities and integrated them with wider planning initiatives and developments could create a more urban bohemian feel and allow Birmingham to compete more effectively with other cities in this domain. Thirdly, in order to cater for the needs of all type of migrants, it seems important that Birmingham continues to balance its housing and neighbourhood offer. As the findings show, limiting the choice of ‘professional’ accommodation to city centre flats is not sufficient to attract the highly skilled who are not new graduates and already have families.

It seems crucial that these findings and recommendations should be taken into account by partners such as the West Midlands Strategic Migration Partnership, Government Office for the West Midlands (GOWM), the Regional development agency - Advantage West Midlands (AWM), local authorities and the education sector when trying to address migrants’ priorities and issues through Local Area Agreements and other means. Given the ‘regional strategic coordinating role’ that the WMSMP has for all migrants, it is in a strong position to encourage collaborative working on these issues.

Finally, we have included an early ‘working typology’ of transnational migrants to inform the next phase of ACRE that is concerned with exploring the public policy challenges for city-regions going forward. This typology could be further developed for policy making purposes.
1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Aims and objectives of Work Package

The objective of this particular part of the ACRE project is to understand the drivers behind the location decisions of highly skilled trans national migrants (TNMs) to choose specific places in which to work or set up their business, in this case, Birmingham or the West Midlands metropolitan region. A second and interrelated objective is to explore the role that both ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ factors play in the decisions to move to a particular city. Of particular importance is the extent to which the attractiveness of the city region is influenced by consumption related 'soft' factors (for example, cultural amenities and leisure facilities; the atmosphere or 'buzz' of a city; the level of tolerance in the city) or by market related 'hard' factors (such as employment opportunities; housing and property costs; the quality of local transport networks; public support services).

The selected methodology involved qualitative semi-structured interviews with the target group in the city region. Three sub-sectors of the creative and knowledge intensive economy were chosen. The candidates chosen for interview were either working in firms in these sectors or had set up as freelancers. The following sub-sectors were selected:

**Creative Industries:**
90.0: Visual and performing arts

**Knowledge Intensive:**
70.2: Business consultancy activities
85.42: Higher Education

1.2 Outline of report

The remaining section of this chapter provides an introduction to Birmingham and the West Midlands economy. Chapter 2 ‘Theories of migration’ provides an introduction to migration. Chapter 3 ‘Migration in the UK’ provides detailed information of current migration policy, routes of migration, key drivers of migration and migration trends, regional distribution of migrants and their economic profile, while Chapter 4 ‘Migration in Birmingham and the West Midlands’ discusses the scale and distribution and socio-economic profile of migrants at a regional level. Chapter 5 ‘Internationalisation of the UK and West Midlands economy’ discusses the importance and impact of international inwards investment nationally and regionally as well as current and projected skills and labour shortages. Chapter 6 describes the research methodology, including the reason for choosing a qualitative approach; the development of the semi-structured interviews; the methods used for data analysis and
interpretation. Chapter 7 presents the main findings from the interview analysis on a sectoral basis as well as observations from policy makers/key stakeholders in Birmingham. Finally, Chapter 8 concludes with a discussion of the attractiveness of Birmingham and the West Midlands for highly skilled TNMs and draws out some of the key cross-sector themes emerging from the three sub-sectors. Finally, discusses the strengths and obstacles for Birmingham for incoming migrants, integration of migrants.

1.3 Introduction to Birmingham and the West Midlands economy

The West Midlands has traditionally been known as the industrial heartland of the UK, with an economy heavily associated with manufacturing, particularly automotive; aeronautics; metal processing and manufacture; plastics and rubber; food and drink (especially cocoa and chocolate confectionery); electronics and telecommunications engineering; and ceramics. However, the Region has been severely affected by continuing restructuring and de-industrialisation over the last thirty years, brought about by low productivity and strong overseas competition in the manufacturing industries, which led to high levels of widespread, long-term unemployment in the region, particularly during the mid to late 1970s and 1980s. Since the mid-1980s, however, there has been a regional recovery in terms of employment and a major factor in this has been the steady growth of the service sector.

Much of this service sector growth has been focused around Birmingham, commencing with an ambitious strategy of economic and physical regeneration the 1980s and 1990s which formed the catalyst in the transformation of the industrial/financial/service base of the city. Nonetheless, it is only in within the last decade that the expanding service sector has made a significant impact on the city and region in terms of Gross Value Added (GVA) and the city has seen substantial employment growth in financial and professional services and business tourism.

| Table 1.1 - Employment by sector - Birmingham, West Midlands and UK, 2005 |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Total Employment in the Economy (000s) | Birmingham | West Midlands County | West Midlands Region | UK |
| 1 Agriculture and fishing (SIC A,B) | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.9% |
| 2 Energy and water (SIC C,E) | 0.4% | 0.6% | 0.6% | 0.6% |
| 3 Manufacturing (SIC D) | 12.4% | 15.0% | 15.2% | 11.1% |
| 4 Construction (SIC F) | 3.8% | 4.2% | 4.5% | 4.6% |
| 5 Distribution, hotels & restaurants (SIC G,H) | 21.0% | 23.0% | 24.1% | 24.1% |
| 6 Transport and communications (SIC I) | 5.0% | 5.2% | 5.6% | 6.0% |
| 7 Banking, finance & insurance, etc (SIC J,K) | 21.5% | 19.0% | 17.5% | 20.7% |
| 8 Public administration, education & health (SIC L,M,N) | 30.8% | 28.5% | 26.8% | 26.9% |
| 9 Other services (SIC O,P,Q) | 5.1% | 4.5% | 4.7% | 5.2% |

*Source: ONS, Annual Business Inquiry, 2005.*
Although there have been attempts to diversify its industrial base by developing new, high value, high growth activities such as telecommunications, pharmaceuticals, and computer software/hardware services, Birmingham remains at risk because of the continuing over-dependence on low-value manufacturing sectors and especially employment linked to the fragile automotive industry. Despite the growth in service sector, manufacturing is still more important within the economic structure of Birmingham the West Midlands than in any other city region in the UK, accounting for 15.2 per cent of employment compared with 11.1 per cent nationally (Table 1.1).

As Table 1.1 indicates, employment in service sector industries now far exceeds that in manufacturing, accounting for over three quarters of total employment. Public administration (27 per cent); distribution, hotels and restaurants (24 per cent) and banking, finance and insurance (18 per cent) all employ more people in the Region than manufacturing (15.2 per cent). This is particularly the case in Birmingham, which has developed strong service – oriented employment.

The West Midlands now has the largest business and professional service (BPS) sector outside London, although a significant share of this is concentrated in and around central Birmingham. The region is also the recognised centre of the UK software industry (also computer games) and new technologies for the medical and media sectors are crucial elements of the business base. Furthermore, the region is also becoming increasingly well-known for specialist high value added niche manufacturing.

Another significant and growing sector is the (business) tourism industry. Since the mid-1980s, the Region has tried to establish itself as an important exhibition and conference centre, notably with the construction of the International Convention Centre (ICC) and the National Exhibition Centre (NEC). The City has also benefited substantially from European structural funds under Objective 2. However the region has yet to establish itself as a premier European business location. According to The European Cities Monitor, (Cushman & Wakefield Healey & Baker, 2004), only 3.2 per cent of European business leaders were very or fairly acquainted with Birmingham as a business location compared with 40 per cent for Manchester.

The shifting economic profile of the region demands different skills sets (LSC, 2005). However, the working age population in the West Midlands is recognised as having major skills deficiencies, which are most pronounced in Birmingham. Although there are parts of the region with highly skilled and qualified populations, the general skills deficiency, low levels of productivity and competition are seen as key factors in explaining why the West Midlands lags behind other regions of the UK and Europe in terms of economic growth (Bryson and Taylor, 2006).

In 2006 (latest figures available), Gross Value Added (GVA) per capita in the West Midlands was £88.9 billion; just 89 per cent of the UK average and representing only 8 per cent of the UK total (ONS, Regional GVA First Release, December 2007). Although this figure is higher than for the North East, The North West, Yorkshire and Humber, and Northern Ireland, it shows the region lagging significantly behind the East of England, London and the South East and West of England. GVA per head in the West Midlands Region is estimated as £16, 583 in
comparison with £18,631 for the UK (ONS, Regional GVA First Release, December 2007). There is substantial intra-regional variation, however, with a growing gap between high and low productivity areas in the West Midlands¹. Within the metropolitan region, figures range from a high of £21,206 in Solihull, with £18,145 in Coventry and £17,984 in Birmingham, to a low of £12,947 in Sandwell and Dudley (ONS Regional GVA First Release, December 2007).

Both Birmingham and the West Midlands region also lag behind the national figures in terms of managerial and professional occupations – Table 1.2. Only 35.7 per cent of occupations in Birmingham are in this category compared to 41.9 per cent nationally in 2005/2006 (ONS, Annual Population Survey, 2006). On the contrary, jobs in Birmingham show higher proportion of occupations in clerical and skilled trades (26.5 per cent compared to 23.4 per cent nationally) and elementary or process occupations (21.6 per cent compared to 18.9 per cent nationally).

However, there is predicted to be a significant shift from ‘blue collar’ occupation to ‘white collar’ jobs over the long term – Table 1.2. By 2015, it is projected that around 39 per cent of jobs in Birmingham will be in the highly skilled, professional and managerial occupations. These changes will have an impact on education and training needs. For example, the ‘service-oriented and customer-facing economy is leading to an increase in the demands for staff with a wide range of transferable ‘core’ skills, which includes the ability to use IT to a basic level, solve problems, work as a team, influence others and communicate effectively’ (BEIC, 2005, p. 54).

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<td>Administration and clerical</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>-0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled trades</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>-22.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services occupations</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>19.9</td>
<td>28.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operative, unskilled and manual</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>-13.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: BEIC, 2005, p. 53

Birmingham is dynamic in terms of firm formation, but a lower proportion of firms survive over the longer term in the City, when compared with the region and the rest of Great Britain. In 2005 (latest figures), 2,425 firms were registered in Birmingham, which represented 10.7 per cent of the end of year stock. This represents a higher proportion than the West Midlands as a whole (9.4 per cent) or Great Britain (9.7 per cent). At the same time, a higher proportion of firms were deregistered in Birmingham that year (9.9 per cent) compared to the region (8.1 per cent) and Great Britain (8.3 per cent) (DTI, Small Business Service, 2007).

¹ On a regional basis GVA needs to be used with care as the figure is calculated using workplace rather than place of residence data. This means that GVA does not take into consideration GVA that is created by individuals living in an area but who work in adjacent regions.
We find the same trends when we look at trends for 12 month and 36 month survival rates for firms in Birmingham and compare them with the regional or the national picture. Following national trends, survival rates have been increasing in Birmingham since 1995, from around 84 per cent to around 91 per cent of firms surviving after 12 months in 2005 (latest figures) and from just under 60 per cent in 2005 to around 66 per cent of firms surviving after 36 months in 2002. (DTI, Small Business Service, 2007). However, despite these improvements, the City still lags behind both the region and the country, both of which had 12 and 36 month survival rates of 92 per cent and 71 per cent respectively (DTI, Small Business Service, 2007).

1.4 Creative and knowledge intensive industries in the Birmingham economy

This section provides an overview of creative and knowledge intensive sectors in the Birmingham economy and then provides an overview of each of the sub-sectors chosen for the ACRE research: Motion Pictures & Video Activities, TV & Radio; Computer Games and Digital Media/Web design; Business and Management Consultancy Activities - profiling them in the national context and then outlining the main characteristics of each sub-sector in Birmingham and West Midlands region.

1.4.1 Creative industries in the Birmingham economy

In 2006, there were 27,519 CIs jobs in Birmingham, representing 5.6 per cent of the Birmingham economy (ONS, Annual Business Inquiry, 2006). Simply looking at employment, Arts/Antiques (25.6 per cent) and Architecture (26.1 per cent) dominate, followed by Computer Software (19.5 per cent)\(^2\). Of the other CIs sub-sectors in Birmingham, Music and Visual and Performing Arts (9.9 per cent); Screen Media and Radio (8.7 per cent); and Advertising (5.1 per cent) are less important in pure job numbers – Table 1.3.

In 2004, Birmingham CIs contributed 8.7 per cent of national CIs GVA (Lutz et al., 2007). However, there are significant differences within sub-sectors – with some performing better than others. The largest sub-sectors within CIs in Birmingham as measured by GVA are Software (35 per cent) and Architecture (31.9 per cent). Radio & Television (9.8 per cent) and Advertising (6.6 per cent) are next, while Music and the Visual and Performing Arts contributes least (1.1 per cent) (ONS, Annual Business Inquiry, 2005).

In 2006, there were 3,638 Creative firms in Birmingham according to the Annual Business Inquiry (ONS, Annual Business Inquiry, 2006). This number represented around one tenth of all firms in Birmingham. Arts and Antiques (1,188 firms), Architecture (782 firms) and

\(^2\) However statistics for Arts/Antiques and Architecture sub-sectors need to be interpreted with caution, as these two categories contain branches which can neither be regarded as creative nor as knowledge intensive. For example, the SIC codes covering architecture include many activities related to machinery and industrial plan design. It is difficult to extract from the SIC codes covering Arts/Antiques the creative parts of this sector, but it is likely that much of it refers to sales activities.
Computer Software (711 firms) are the sectors with most firms in Birmingham. In comparison, there are only 108 Publishing firms and 166 Advertising firms in the city.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1.3 - Employment in Creative Industries - Birmingham (2006)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts and Antiques</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designer Fashion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Video, Film &amp; Photography</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music and the Visual &amp; Performing Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publishing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Software</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio and Television</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total CI employ</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total employ</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CI employ as proportion of total employ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Available national data sets do not capture small companies below the VAT threshold or freelancers. It is estimated that around a third of CIs (31 per cent) are not registered for VAT in Birmingham and there are thought to be approximately 21 per cent freelancers in the CIs sub-sectors (Burfitt et al, 2006). Not only does this indicate the importance of freelancers and self-employed people in the CIs sectors in Birmingham, it indicates that official figures underestimate, by nearly a third, the number of CI firms in the City.

Around 89 per cent of CIs firms in Birmingham have less than 10 employees. This is a higher proportion than found in the local economy as a whole (80.3 per cent) but lower than nationally for creative firms (92.1 per cent). Firms in Screen Media and Radio; Publishing; and Music, Visual & Performing Arts were more likely to have medium and large firms. Overall, 0.4 per cent of CIs firms had more than 200 employees in 2005 - above the national average of 0.2 per cent (ONS, Annual Business Inquiry, 2006).

The CIs sector in Birmingham is also dynamic: The majority of firms are less than 15 years old and 48 per cent of firms were created in the last 10 years (Burfitt et al, 2006). Furthermore, more than 5 per cent of firms were created in the last three years in Publishing, Software, Screen Media and Radio and up to 8.2 per cent in Music and Performing Arts.

1.4.2 Knowledge intensive industries in the Birmingham economy

Finance, Law and Other Business Services together with R&D and Higher Education are important sectors in Birmingham’s economy. These sectors have been part of the regeneration strategy pursued by the City and are sectors with a higher concentration of jobs in the City than the national average. Law and Other business services dominates, with nearly half (49.4 per cent) of Knowledge Industries (KIs) employment in the city, followed by Finance (27 per cent). Higher Education and R&D makes up 17.4 per cent of employment in the sector (nearly
all accounted for by Higher Education), while ICT (excluding software) accounts for the remaining 6.2 per cent of KIs employment – Table 1.4.

The Finance sector accounted for 4.3 per cent of the city’s employment (20,926 employees) in 2006. This was down from 4.9 per cent in 2005. However, it is still well above the national average for employment (3.9 per cent) in this sector (ONS, Annual Business Inquiry, 2006). Law and Other Business Services accounted 7.8 per cent of employment (38,346 employees). Again, this proportion is higher than the national average (7.0 per cent of employment) for 2006. There were 13,461 jobs in Higher Education and R & D in Birmingham in 2006 corresponding to 2.7 per cent of the city’s employment, which was slightly above the national average of 2.5 per cent. Finally, there were 4,839 ICT jobs (excluding software). This represented 1.0 per cent of employment, below the national average of 1.6 per cent. In total, KI employment represents 15.8 per cent of Birmingham employment, which is above the national average of 14.9 per cent.

| Table 1.4 - Employment in Knowledge Sectors in 2006; Birmingham and Great Britain |
|-----------------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Financial intermediation                      | 20,926           | 27.0             | 4.3             |
| Law and other business services               | 38,346           | 49.4             | 7.8             |
| R&D and higher education                      | 13,471           | 17.4             | 2.5             |
| ICT (excluding software)                      | 4,839            | 6.2              | 1.0             |
| **Total KI employ**                           | **77,582**       | **100.0**        |                 |
| **Total employ**                              | **491,841**      |                  |                 |
| **KI employ as proportion of total employ**   | **15.8**         |                  |                 |

Source: ONS, Annual Business Inquiry, 2006
Notes: 1 This calculation is based on: 3002: Manufacture of computers and other information processing equipment; 7210: Hardware consultancy; 7230: Data processing; 7240: Data base activities; 7250: Maintenance and repair of office, accounting and computing machinery; 7260: Other computer related activities; 6420: Telecommunications

There were 4,843 firms in KIs sectors in Birmingham 2006, with the majority (63 per cent) in Law and Other Business Services. Firm size varied across sub-sectors: while more than two thirds (68 per cent) of Finance firms had fewer than 10 employees, only half (52 per cent) of Law and Other Business Services firms have this number of employees. However, 7 per cent to 9 per cent of firms in both these sectors also have more than 50 employees which is higher than the average for firms in the Birmingham economy (5.2 per cent with more than 50 employees). This indicates the presence of a very mixed sector where many small firms operate alongside large, national and international branches (e.g. Ernst and Young, KPMG, Deloitte, Barclays, Lloyds, Baker Tilly, Andersons).
2 THEORIES OF MIGRATION: THE CASE OF HIGHLY SKILLED MIGRANTS

For a better understanding of trans-national migration in creative and knowledge intensive in the West Midlands and Birmingham, it is important to look at 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 the UK. Older approaches of migration research do not seem to adequately describe current migration processes. The migration of highly skilled workers in particular shows specific characteristics which require new descriptions.

There is no consistent theory of migration; on the contrary, migration research is characterized 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 more generally. Following this, there will be a description of approaches which deal with the 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, the approaches which can be used to best describe the movement of highly skilled migrants in the Birmingham city-region will be discussed.

2.1 Classical theories of labour migration

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

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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), devised 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 such as economic growth (see Lewis, 1954 and 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 characterized by low wages and countries with capital intensive sectors by high wages. These wage differentials cause migration to areas where income levels are 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 theory disregards that there are other factors such as 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 potential in the home region and the lower the costs of migration and/or the longer the number of remaining work years, 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 not to migrate because they can take advantage of their human capital in their home country (Massey et al., 1993, p. 456; Haug, 2000, p. 5f, 13f).

However, neoclassical theory disregards international political and economic contexts and decisions as well as social boundaries. Furthermore the 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 approach

The new migration economy approach also focuses on an economic factor, namely 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 their expected income and to minimise risks for their economic wealth. The employment related migration of a household member carries less risk because the migrant is operating independently of the 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 the 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 approaches, 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 conditions. The reasons for labour migration are not seen in the context of a single labour market 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 ff). 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 industrialised, 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 the 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 but in the opposite direction. This means that migration is primarily 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 capitalistic markets in developing countries. This implies 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 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 new forms. There was a missing link: the connection between individuals and society. New approaches in migration research which considered the importance of social networks 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 mediators between macro-structures and individuals as well as between different countries - plays a crucial role in shaping the migration system. 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 origins 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

Similar to the migration system approach, the theory of migrant networks points to the importance of ethnic networks built by migrants and their family and friends. The network approach also stresses the influence of social networks on migration. Here, migration networks are thought to shape social and spatial paths of migration by providing new migrants with information and resources\(^2\) which facilitate their migration. In short, social networks lower the costs and risks of migration. These networks enable migrants to maintain contact with their home region and their own culture, but they also have an influence on the integration process of new migrants into the host societies.

This theory assumes that personal relationships which connect migrants, former migrants and non-migrants in origin and host societies, increase the probability of international migration and can lead to chain migration and sustained migration flows. This means there is no strong correlation between migration flows and wage and employment disparities because of the positive effects of migrant networks.

The effects of social networks on migration are not yet clear. For example, social relationships can influence the decision to migrate by providing an information and support network but migrants can also be excluded from these host networks. Strong social ties in home countries can inhibit migration, while weaker social ties may promote migration, or the reverse may be true. Migrant networks can gain security but also dependency, liability, little integration in the host society and therefore less freedom. 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 with friends, relatives and compatriots facilitate migrants in finding jobs and housing and can offer financial and personal support. The motives for providing resources might vary. While some act simply out of ethical reasons (value orientated) or from a feeling of group identity and therefore act by solidarity (bounded solidarity); others act strategically (reciprocal transfer) or in awareness of their position in the group (status orientated) (Haug, 2000, p. 22ff; Bürkner & Heller, 2008, p. 45f). This means that besides the benefits of social capital there are also restrictions such as conformity pressure, obligation to share and limitation of contact with people who do not belong to the social network. Making contacts outside of the community could be seen as weakening the group identity, therefore individuals may be stifled by the group in their attempts to become more established and successful. In consequence it depends very much on the dynamics of the specific community in which the migrant is situated and its openness, if social capital is to be seen as a beneficial element in the migration process.

\(^2\) For example supporting finding a place to live and a job or providing financial security.
2.2.4 Trans-national migration

Migration systems and processes since the 1980s can be described as circular movements with specific social structures and mobile lifestyles. These 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 somewhere in 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 the opportunities of their home countries as well as those of their current host and they are able to create flexible strategies. 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 the highly skilled is interpreted as unidirectional, other theories categorise this migration form as circular and oscillating and connect them with the new shaping of capitalism.

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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 to migration of highly skilled workers between different countries. Country of origin and destination area are seen as clearly defined entities with separated social systems. 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 higher income levels in the destination country are claimed to be the main reason for migration. Seen from the perspective of dependency theory, developing regions are characterised by a loss of human capital while highly industrialised societies benefit. In consequence, it is said that the emigration of the highly skilled obstructs the economic progress in developing regions and as a result keeps them in economic dependence (Meusburger, 2008, p. 31; Meusburger, 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). 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 are discussed below.

In the social science literature, three approaches are prominent which discuss the mobility of highly skilled professionals. In the 1960s, the issue of ‘brain drain’ discussed above focused on the negative outcomes of the emigration of talent from 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 per cent of highly skilled migrants in all OECD countries who are resident outside their home country lives in the US. Although the ‘brain drain’ perspective is still present in the political arena, it has lost its prominence. Firstly, the geographical pattern of mobility changed in the 1980s due the increasing transnationalisation of firms and the economy (Findlay, 1988; Salt, 1988; Findlay and Gould, 1989; Beaverstock, 1990; Findlay and Garrick, 1990).

Secondly, researchers like Saxenian pointed out that the emigration of the highly skilled can lead to a return migration of highly skilled people after several decades, which has a positive impact on the economies of the developing countries. In her book ‘Silicon Valley’s new immigrant entrepreneurs’ (Saxenian, 1999), she explained how India, Taiwan and China profited from the economic activities of their ‘diaspora’. In her latest book ‘The New Argonauts’ (Saxenian, 2006) she describes the positive effects of international mobility of highly skilled migrants for regional development. Her observations of the impact of foreign

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5 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 and Heller 2008, p. 39).
talent and entrepreneurs in Silicon Valley in the last decades also points to the openness to foreign creative talent as one of the key factors for the success of Silicon Valley. However, 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 their mobile talent who stimulates innovation, investment and trade between these countries and the US. The exchange of knowledge, she concludes, is because 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, industrialised countries have become aware that their highly skilled workers are also becoming increasingly mobile internationally. Some of the earlier mentioned studies, like the work of Beaverstock, address the movement of expatriate communities from advanced capitalist countries to other advanced capitalist countries or to rapidly developing countries – for example, British communities in New York City and Singapore. In our own empirical analysis we will also demonstrate that a significant proportion of highly skilled migrants 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 which is discussed in more detail below.

2.3.2 ‘Brain circulation’

As empirical studies show (i.e. Wolter, 1997) an increasing movement of highly skilled workers has emerged since the 1980s. Often this migration is temporary and can be described as circulation\(^6\) 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 trans-nationalism (Vertovec, 2007, p. 3f).\(^7\) Even though the region of origin initially 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. 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 and on 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 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

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\(^6\) 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).

\(^7\) As Fassmann points, 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).
abroad (Boyle et al. 1994, Findlay 1995). These so called expatriates 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 packages and a salary above that which they would earn at home, the seconded professionals had little choice in the selection of the country of destination. They were part of the international stream of investments and trade which was allocated due to the outcomes of international investment opportunities i.e. they accompanied 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 services 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 Globalisation 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 urban regions. 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 described 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 role of the individual (Scott, 2006). Before this issue is discussed, it should be mentioned that the economy has also changed in the last decade, and the changing organisation of the firm also has an influence on the 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 their 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 are companies down-sizing, but international career opportunities for employees are also reduced. 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

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8 See www.lboro.ac.uk/gawc
technological progress enables small actors to be mobile internationally, because international communication and transport have become cheaper and more easily available. Instead of being seconded within a large company, it appears to be more likely that highly skilled individual change employer more frequently and move between small and medium companies.

2.4 Florida’s concept of an internationally mobile creative class

In his book, ‘The rise of the creative class’ Richard Florida asserts that ‘Regional economic growth is powered by creative people, who prefer places that are diverse, tolerant and open to new ideas’. Florida sees the attractiveness of cities, their quality of life and the diversity of their population as 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. Florida describes conditions which are strongly related to the inward mobility of creative talent as both a precondition and an effect of regional economic success in 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 rise of the creative class’, Florida does not distinguish between national or international migrants. It is only in his later book, ‘The flight of the creative class’ that he uses examples which indicate that he does not only have national migration, but also international migration in mind. However, a detailed description for the ways in which 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 the 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). Again it is unclear in what aspects the mobility of the highly skilled ‘creative class’ is different from other categories of people. But it is not only Florida who lacks a clear definition of what is meant by the mobility of the highly skilled. Scholars who investigate the international mobility of highly skilled face a number of definitional problems. For instance, the term ‘highly skilled’ can indicate a formal educational qualification, but ‘skill’ can also be defined as the ability to solve certain tasks regardless of whether those abilities were acquired vocationally or by more formal educational means. The status of migrant can also mean many things: it can be limited to certain forms of work permits for foreign employees; the status as a seconded employee within an international company; or simply mean any non-national.
2.5 The upcoming paradigm

The firm related perspective has so far been central in the study of highly skilled international migration, because many researchers assumed that this migration flow was largely related to economic conditions and was demand driven. However, 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 also constitute significant numbers of migrants, particularly to the UK. In addition to that, an increasing number of highly skilled appear to be choosing to migrate to a new country because of the interesting cultural environment and the amenities offered there (cf Florida, 2002). Due to the removal of immigration barriers for labour migration within the EU, coupled with the stronger support for student mobility within the EU and also globally, the socio-economic background and the motives of trans-national migrants have diversified (Conradson and Latham, 2005; Scott, 2006a; Scott, 2006b). Therefore the heterogeneity of migrants seems to be increasing. According to Scott (2006b) new migrant groups that include; ‘young professionals’, who stay on in the host country as new graduates or migrate at the start of their careers; ‘international Bohemians’, who enjoy cultural amenities; and ‘assimilation-settlers’ who marry a partner in the host country, have gained in importance but have not received much research attention and it is clear that the immigration of highly skilled persons cannot always be related simply to economic linkages between countries. Furthermore, patterns of duration of stay in the host country appear to be changing. Expatriates who are seconded by their companies and typically live between two to five years abroad are accompanied by trans-national migrants who settle for a longer time period or even permanently in the new country.

However, opportunities for foreign creative knowledge workers to access the labour market might vary with their demographic background. For example, 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 and they are less likely to choose a creative knowledge profession, because they consider these occupations as less prestigious and economically less rewarding.

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

While the trans-national mobility of highly skilled migrants is poorly researched and understood, even less attention has been given so far to the experiences of highly skilled migrants after they move and their preferences in terms of residence, amenities and relations with the host society. Integration in the host society, for example, is not generally considered an issue, since most highly skilled migrants are expected to stay only a few years at most and since they are expected to arrive already having secured 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 face fewer adaptation problems. These assumptions might apply to some expatriates, who have company relocation packages and a network of colleagues with a similar socio-demographic standing as themselves, 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 the UK and, more particularly, to Birmingham and the West Midlands. Individually motivated 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-European, and developing countries with very different cultural backgrounds. While this heterogeneity in the broad category of highly skilled migrants is gradually acknowledged, we find little evidence of this in the international academic debate so far.

2.7 Conclusion

Over the last decade, highly skilled migration has been gaining relative importance in European migration flows. In Britain, for example, around two-thirds of foreign workers who came into the UK in 2003 were classified as being in professional or managerial occupations, a considerable increase compared with the previous decade. However, as is clear from the different theories of migration discussed in this chapter, few existing migration approaches adequately deal with this new phenomenon. Until recently, migration of the highly skilled attracted little attention among international migration scholars. Most research has been directed towards immigration for permanent settlement and its consequences for integration and race relations; temporary labour migration, mainly by manual workers; and more recently, asylum seekers. There has been little on the internationalisation of education and the movements of students or on forms of immigrant entrepreneurship.

The nature of highly skilled migration to the UK has also changed. Until recently, it mainly consisted of high-powered bankers and multinational company executives who were seconded from one wealthy, developed nation to another, and which could be described as ‘brain exchange’ (Beaverstock, 1994, 1996). Now new sectors, particularly those in ICT, high technology and knowledge intensive occupations have become more prominent, and skilled migrants from developing countries have become more important. Yet, the upsurge of skilled migration has not only involved workers in the ‘new economy’, but also professionals in the health and education sectors reflecting traditional ‘brain drain’ concerns. For example, the low proportion of foreign doctors returning home after training in the UK. The pattern of skilled immigration to the UK is likely to increasingly reflect the emergence of global labour markets and the UK’s position and functions in the global economy. Despite this, the UK can expect to see the continuation of specific migration linkages that reflect not only the country’s historical position in international migration systems (for example, New Commonwealth migrants).

During the 1990s the United Kingdom moved from a position where the flows of skilled migrants in and out of the country were almost in balance to a position where the country made significant net gains each year. The UK’s stock of foreign labour rose to over one million for the first time in 1998. The switch could be described as a switch from a ‘brain exchange’ to one of ‘brain gain’ with very significant growth both in the number of migrants issued with work permits to enter the UK and also in the proportion of these permits granted to particular countries. Over time, regardless of place of origin, professional and managerial staff have become a higher proportion of net inflows of employed migrants. Prior to 2004,
The Labour Force Survey shows that, excluding the Irish, foreign labour was likely to be highly qualified. Looking only at professional and managerial workers, the UK had the third largest stock of skilled labour from low-income countries in the EU.

However, post-2004, the pattern is somewhat different. Migrants from the new A8 accession states, although many are highly educated and skilled individuals, are working mainly in non-skilled or clerical and administrative positions in the UK, giving rise to the issues of ‘brain waste’. In 2006, professional and managerial workers accounted for 53.1 per cent of all employed immigrants, down from 61.5 per cent in 2003. Professional and managerial emigrants represented over half of the outflow in 2006, reflecting the return of A8 citizens after engaging in low skilled jobs in the UK (Salt, 2007). However, analysis of current occupation and citizenship shows that the non British constitute the bulk of the inflow of professional and managerial migrants while the British are the main contributors to the outflow. Hence, to an extent, foreign highly skilled workers are a replacement for departing Britons (Salt, 2007).

Although studies have found that only a small proportion of skilled migrants from OECD countries appeared to return home prior to 2004 and the numbers of migrants from developing countries particularly in Africa and Asia seeking to extend their work permits to allow them to remain in the UK were also increasing (Findlay, 2006), a recent report has found that just under one quarter of migrants from Central and Eastern Europe planned on settling permanently in the UK (Spencer et al 2007), a much lower proportion than is the case with previous groups of immigrants. Therefore whereas ‘brain gain’ is more apt for the former category of highly skilled, ‘brain re-gain’ and ‘brain circulation’ may be more appropriate for the latter.
3 MIGRATION IN THE UK

3.1 Definition of a migrant

There are no universally agreed definitions of ‘migration’ and ‘migrant’; rather there are a number of different definitions in common use. However, given that the primary focus of this study is with economically-driven migration (people who have moved because of work or employment opportunities in creative and knowledge intensive industries), it is valuable to define it more clearly within the UK context (see also Appendix 2 for a summary).

Economic migrants are defined as people in work (employed or self-employed), who were born outside the United Kingdom. Several categories of people are distinguished: those born in the rest of the 15-member EU; those born in the ‘A8’ accession countries which joined the EU in 2004 (but excluding Cyprus and Malta who also joined in 2004) and Bulgaria and Romania which joined the EU in January 2007 – sometimes known as ‘A2’ accession countries; and non-European Economic Area (EEA) migrants born elsewhere in the world.

Economic migration is defined as the movement of people from one country to another primarily for employment-related reasons. It includes:

- those who stay for only a few weeks (for example, seasonal workers) up to those who stay for several years (for example, work permit holders);
- those entering under a range of different schemes that vary greatly according to length of permitted stay, conditions of stay and possibility of extension;
- those who are employees in the new country, those who move to become self employed and even those who have their own business in the new country, sometimes employing locals.

The main groups of economic migrants in the UK at present include:

- foreign nationals who do not need a visa to work in the UK;
- work permit holders;
- those on special worker schemes;
- those in the Highly Skilled Migrant Programme;
- business people and investors;
- those on working holiday visas and other exchange schemes; and
- those on other special visas such as au pairs, volunteers and religious instructors.

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Defining exactly who is an economic migrant is not straightforward. For example:

- those who accompany migrants (such as spouses) are also permitted to work and so, although they did not migrate primarily for the reason of working, they may also be classed as labour migrants;
- in some cases those who migrate for non-work reasons may be eligible to work (for example, foreign students studying in the UK are permitted to work up to a set number of hours during term time and in their holidays);
- some people switch categories (for example, student to work permit holder); and,
- there are an unknown number of people who enter illegally or work illegally, and are technically labour migrants but who are not captured in official statistics.

Those who are not generally classed as a labour migrants include:

- refugees and asylum seekers;
- visitors, even if they are here to attend conferences or to meet with clients or even to attend interviews for a prospective job;
- retirees and others who do not work and support themselves economically; and
- any returning citizen, regardless of how long they have been away.

### 3.2 UK migration policy context

The volume and nature of migration is shaped by the legislative framework at UK (and EU) level which has changed and continues to change over time. In any consideration of the role of migrants in the labour market, the legislative and policy framework is therefore of key importance.

In the UK, migration policy is defined more by the demand for labour, rather than through a quota system. The UK government operates on the principle of ‘managed migration’, with migration being viewed as a solution for addressing labour shortages, particularly in key professions and some unskilled jobs (Green, Jones and Owen 2006). Immigration regulations are therefore shaped partly in relation to the skills needs of the labour market. For example, the number of work permits issued has increased enormously since 1997, as non-EEA (European Economic Area) workers have been recruited to fill job vacancies and skill shortages in the IT, hotels and catering and health and social care sectors. The work permit scheme is also employer driven (employers apply for work permits not migrants); therefore individual firms also play an important role in selecting which workers receive the necessary permits.

British immigration policy is governed by the Immigration Act of 1971 and subsequent modifications to it and, prior to 2007, was implemented by the Home Office Immigration and Nationality Department (IND). Migration policy is subject to review and in 2006, the Home Office announced plans to implement a Points Based System (PBS) for managing labour migration into the UK that will replace the current 80 or so routes that exist now. The planned transition to the PBS is located in the context of a fundamental overhaul of the IND. This
involved the creation of the Borders and Immigration Agency (BIA), to replace the IND from April 2007.

Statistics frequently show that foreign entrepreneurs and labour are vital to the UK’s economy. The objective of the new PBS is to ensure the UK targets the people it needs in order to remain ‘one of the world’s most innovative economies’, while enabling a straightforward and transparent application procedure for migrants. Reform of the system therefore aims to match migration rules to skills needs (LSC, 2007). The new PBS is likely to have an impact on the volume and nature of future migration flows (Green, Jones and Owen 2007). The new immigration system is broken into five tiers that will be used for judging the status of applications to live and work in the UK:

**Tier 1:** For highly skilled migrants, entrepreneurs, investors, and graduate students. This is designed to replace the Highly Skilled Migrant Programme (HSMP), the Entrepreneur and Investor schemes, and the International Graduates Scheme.

**Tier 2:** This is for skilled workers who have a job offer. This tier will encompass the current UK Work Permit rules.

**Tier 3:** For a limited numbers of lower skilled workers to fill temporary shortages in the labour market.

**Tier 4:** Students.

**Tier 5:** For youth mobility and temporary workers, such as those who come under Working Holiday agreements with other countries.

The BIA have revised the system in consultation with the key stakeholders and partners, and have a number of specific taskforces allowing them to work with key organisations on developing particular policies. One stakeholder group is the Arts and Entertainment Taskforce, which aims to support the development and delivery of policy that impacts on the arts and entertainment sector. Its membership includes representatives drawn from music, agents and promoters, film & broadcasting, fashion, art, visual arts, theatre and circus.

### 3.3 Short history of labour migration in the UK

There was relatively little international migration to Britain (other than from Ireland) until after WWII. Immigration flows immediately after the War were primarily demand driven (resulting from the needs of the reconstruction effort) and were dominated by individuals arriving from the New Commonwealth (Caribbean) and from Ireland. Immigration in the 1960s and 1970s was dominated by arrivals from India and Pakistan, though around 10 per cent of immigrants in the 1970s came from countries which now comprise the European Union. Most of the Bangladeshi immigrant community arrived in the 1980s. During the same time, many immigrants arrived from the European Union and the Old Commonwealth countries (including the USA).
Immigration to the UK was primarily a market-driven response to supply and demand, rather than a policy-driven one (Glover et al 2001). While at first migrants from the New Commonwealth were welcomed as a valuable source of labour, racial tension led to successively tighter restrictions on immigration. Until the Commonwealth Immigrants Act 1962, all Commonwealth citizens could enter and stay in the United Kingdom without any restriction. By 1972, only holders of work permits, or people with parents or grandparents born in the UK could gain entry.

Labour migration to the UK from outside the EU was fairly strictly controlled until the 1990s. After 1992 the creation of a single EU labour market led to some relaxation in restrictions on migration. Most recently, the increase in immigration is attributable to the widening of the EU and to immigration policy that accompanied the accession of the A8 countries on May 1st 2004 as citizens nations from these accession countries obtained free movement and the right to work in the UK, Ireland and Sweden from this date. But there has continued to be a steady flow of migrants to the UK from non-A8 countries too, especially from the New Commonwealth.

It is only within the last decade that immigration to the UK has exceeded emigration (Glover et al 2001). There was substantial net emigration throughout the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s (resulting from return migration of New Commonwealth immigrants and two-way, Irish migration). Immigration to the UK remained at similar levels to emigration for most of the 1980s and early 1990s (in part, this reflects an ongoing process of outward and return migration by British citizens. It also reflects return migration by foreign nationals who had previously immigrated to the UK). However, over the last few years net migration to the UK has increased significantly. This reflects trends associated with globalisation, increasing economic integration and in particular labour mobility within the EU, coupled with the UK’s relatively strong labour market (compared to most other EU countries), which has led to a large increase in the numbers of temporary and permanent immigrants to the UK.

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2 In addition Malta and (South) Cyprus also joined the EU at that date. Bulgaria and Romania joined the EU on January 1st 2007.
3.4 Routes of economic migration to the UK

Migrants enter the UK by a number of different routes. From a labour market perspective, different migration routes are important in feeding different industries and occupations:

3.4.1 EEA/EU

Free movement rights mean that citizens of the EU15 (i.e. the first fifteen European Union member states) and other European Economic Area (EEA) and Swiss nationals do not need permission to work in the UK. Individuals can accept offers of work; work (whether as an employee or in self-employment); set up a business; manage a company; or set up a local branch of a company. No comprehensive statistics are collected upon their entry to the UK.

3.4.2 EU ‘A8’ Citizens - Worker Registration Scheme (WRS)

With EU expansion to central and eastern Europe in May 2004, the UK put in place transitional measures to regulate access to the labour market by nationals of the ‘A8’ countries (Czech Republic; Estonia; Hungary; Latvia; Lithuania; Poland; Slovakia; Slovenia) via the Worker Registration Scheme (WRS). Through the WRS, A8 citizens were free to take up work with an employer on payment of a registration fee to the Home Office; self-employed workers are not required to register. WRS data may be used as a measure of the numbers of A8 citizens coming to work. However, they give no data on the duration of stay in the UK and, because they exclude the self-employed, they are an underestimate of those actually taking up work. Due to much greater than expected numbers of migrants from ‘A8’ member states since 2004, with the accession of Romania and Bulgaria to the EU in January 2007, additional restrictions were placed on migrants from these ‘Accession 2’ (A2) states.

3.4.3 Non EU citizens

During 2008, the UK the new points based system for non-EU migrants wishing to come to the UK to work, study, and train. Tier 1 was implemented in early 2008 and is intended for highly skilled migrants, post-graduates, entrepreneurs, and investors. Tier 1 has replaced the following immigration categories: The Highly Skilled Migrant Programme (HSMP); Investors; Self-employed lawyers; Businesspersons; Writers, Composers and Artists; The International Graduates Scheme; Innovators; Fresh Talent: Working in Scotland Scheme.

Qualifying individuals for Tier 1 will be offered unrestricted access to the UK labour market without a prior job offer or sponsor for a defined period of time – 2 years for Post Study

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applicants and 3 years initial leave for categories that can lead to settlement. All Tier 1 migrants except Post Study graduates will be able to switch into other Tier 1 categories.

Tier 2 was implemented on 27 November 2008 and replaces the UK Work Permits scheme, which previously covered general work permit employment, ministers of religion, airport-based operational staff, overseas qualified nurses and midwives, sabbatical posts, seafarers, named researchers, people on the Training and Work Experience Scheme, Jewish agency employees, overseas media representatives (journalists and other news media).

Tier 2 offers an entry route into the UK for skilled workers, including those who have a job offer to fill a gap that cannot be filled by a UK worker and people who are an employee of a multi-national company being transferred to a skilled job in a UK-based branch of the organisation. Tier 2 to of the PBS requires potential immigrants to be sponsored by a prospective employer in the UK.4

3.5 Drivers of migration to the UK

UK household surveys (such as the Labour Force Survey and the Census of Population) do not collect information on the reason for migration. There are many reasons underpinning individual migration decisions. Where official data exists, it tends to suggest that the most important reasons for migration to the UK are for work, study or to join a partner or immediate family (Horsfield, 2005).

Key economic ‘push’ factors from origin countries include a lack of life chances, lower wages and living standards and a lack of available opportunities to utilise skills in the home country (often as a consequence of high unemployment), and political or economic instability. Key ‘pull’ factors are job opportunities, higher wages, access to research funding and political and economic stability (LSC, 2007; Audit Commission, 2007). The ageing population creates many opportunities in the UK labour market for younger migrants. The combination of industrial change and an increasing skills intensity in the labour market (as a result of the need to pursue global competitiveness) means there are significant skills gaps in the labour market. This means that migrants are increasingly seen as an attractive source of labour by many employers.

Broader quality of life factors are also important, including a desire for a better quality of life for themselves and their families, career development opportunities and a desire for travel and adventure. Once a migration flow has been established, the momentum created can be an important driver of subsequent migration flows (for example, migrants from the New Commonwealth).

4 Employers wishing to sponsor an immigrant from outside of the EEA under Tier 2 will need to apply to the BIA for a license and be accepted onto the register of licensed sponsors. Registered employers will be rated (A or B) with points allocated to their chosen migrant in accordance with the employer’s trustworthiness as demonstrated, for example, by their track record of conforming to their immigration responsibilities.
3.6 Corporate transfers

One of the main features of labour immigration into the UK is the high proportion accounted for by corporate transfers. Almost all of those transferred are professional, managerial or highly skilled technical staff. In 2007, the number of people working abroad a year before and at the time of the survey was 88,000. About 22,000 of (25 per cent) worked for the same employer at both times and may be assumed to be corporate transferees.5 The majority of this group (15,000) were foreign nationals, a smaller number than the year before (27,000), larger than 2004 and 2005 (11,000) but still down on 2002 and 2003 (22,000 and 29,000).

Aggregation of the data for the period 1994/2006 provides more detail: the average annual number of corporate transfers for all nationalities was 25,357, 61.4 per cent of whom (15,571) were foreign nationals. Between six and seven thousand EU(15) citizens were transferred in each year.

3.7 Sources of migration data: Advantages and disadvantages

No single data source has comprehensive coverage of migration in the UK, and there is a lack of up-to-date information on the numbers and characteristics of migrant workers at national, regional and local levels (Rees and Boden, 2006).

The key data sources which are of greatest relevance for this research are the UK Labour Force Survey (LFS); National Insurance Number (NINo) registrations. Each of the data sources has its own strengths and weaknesses. In brief these are:

**UK Labour Force Survey (LFS):**
- frequently updated (every quarter);
- only source of data on the nationality of the foreign population and workforce in the UK;
- small sample size means that detailed disaggregation by nationality and migrant characteristics is not possible;
- annual fluctuations may reflect sampling errors;
- provides no information on persons leaving the UK
- provides no information on reasons for migration.

**NINo data:**
- all workers required to register, including the self-employed;
- detailed data at a local level available;
- apply for a NINo at no cost;
- recorded at the place they are applied for, so will not reflect subsequent movement within UK.

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5 An estimate of the scale of corporate transfer may be derived from the LFS, which records whether or not an immigrant who was working abroad the year before is now working in the UK for the same employer, and is thus a corporate transferee.
WRS data:
- only for A8 nationals;
- information registered by the employer’s postcode, not individual’s home;
- an initial fee of approximately £90 is an obstacle to registering - only about 60% of people register with the scheme;
- self-employed not required to register;
- danger of double-counting when individuals have multiple jobs;
- people are not required to de-register so makes no allowance for people who registered but may have subsequently left the UK;
- does not represent a measurement of the migrant ‘stock’ (i.e. inflows minus outflows), since outflows are not recorded.
- Only limited amount of Management Information is available publicly,

Work permits:
- required by all non-EEA nationals in order to work legally in the UK;
- data are made available on a workplace- basis.
- data refer to work permits currently in force not total work permits issued to date.

3.8 Recent migration trends

The UK Labour Force Survey (LFS) is the only source of statistics on migrants living and working in the UK, and statistics from this section are taken from the 2007 survey. The source of data on employment of people who are subject to immigration control is the Home Office’s Work Permits (UK).

Economic migration to the UK has grown considerably over the last decade and particularly over the last four years, with the opening up of the labour market to citizens of the new A8 member states of the European Union (EU) from May 2004. In 2007, foreign nationals accounted for 6.5 per cent of the total UK population, compared with 4.5 per cent in 2002. Numbers of foreign nationals working in the UK topped a million for the first time in 1998 (3.9 per cent of the total in employment). By 2007, 2.035 million were recorded, up from 1.746 million in 2006, and representing 7.2 percent of the total workforce (LFS 2007).

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3.9 Nationality of migrants

The LFS provides statistics on country of birth as well as nationality. Europeans now account for half of the foreign workforce (49.9 per cent), up from 45 per cent in 2005, and slightly more than their share of the foreign population (45.9 per cent). EU(15)/EFTA countries supply 25.6 per cent of foreign workers continuing the fall of the last four years. The Irish continue to be the leaders in this group, but their dominance has been falling, from 22.6 per cent of all foreign workers in 1995 to 8 per cent in 2007.

Numbers of A8 Europeans in the labour force have grown rapidly, reaching 20.1 per cent of all foreign workers in 2007 (figures for 2006 were 13.3 per cent). It is likely that this figure underestimates the total A8 workforce, given the large numbers of A8 nationals registering under the Workers Registration Scheme, together with the self employed who do not need to register. Poles were the largest A8 nationality, 71.4 per cent of the group.

3.10 Regional distribution of foreign workers in the UK

The regional distribution of foreign workers in the UK is very uneven (Salt, 2007). In 2007, Greater London had 38.5 per cent of the total. However, London is becoming relatively less important, its proportion of the total falling from 45.3 per cent in 2005. Hence, while the figures continue to demonstrate the continued importance of the capital in international labour mobility, its position is slipping. The Rest of the South East accounted for another 19.0 per cent of the total. East Anglia; East Midlands; West Midlands (Metropolitan and rest) and the South West accounted for 20.2 per cent of the total, and increase from 17.1 per cent of the total in 2005.

Although all foreign national groups are more heavily concentrated in Greater London, there are major differences between them. Those from the Caribbean, ‘Other Americas’, Australia/New Zealand and Africa are particularly to be found in the capital, along with citizens of France and Germany and the southern EU. The Rest of the South East is a region of concentration for those from North America and the northern EU states. Compared with foreigners as a whole, those from the A8 countries and South East Asia are overrepresented when compared with all foreign nationals in the Midlands and South West England. The Irish, those from the A8 countries and from the Indian subcontinent are the only foreign groups relatively overrepresented in northern and western parts of the UK. This pattern for the most part reflects that of recent years, with some minor variations in the trend. Overall, what has been an emerging trend towards a more even geographical distribution of foreign labour in across the UK as a whole now seems to be confirmed.
3.11 Economic profile of migrants

Data for 2007 confirm the trend of the last few years towards a lower skilled foreign workforce. In 2007, 38.6 per cent of foreign workers were in the most skilled group, compared with 40.5 in 2006, 42.2 per cent in 2005 and 43.6 per cent in 2004. For the second year in succession, a lower proportion of foreign nationals were in highly skilled occupations than was the case for the domestic workforce. In addition, a higher proportion of foreign nationals were in the least skilled (routine) group. This shift in skill balance has been brought about by the inflow of workers from the A8 countries, only 10 per cent (15.8 per cent in 2006) of whom were in highly skilled occupations while two thirds were in routine ones.

Different foreign groups also appear to have different roles in the UK labour market. EU(15) and EFTA nationals are generally more skilled (52.5 per cent in the professional, employer, manager group) and this is especially true of those from France and Germany, other northern EU countries, North America and Australasia. In contrast, workers from the southern tier of EU countries (Spain, Portugal, Italy, Greece), the Indian subcontinent, Caribbean and especially from the A8 and ‘Other Europe’ countries are underrepresented in highly skilled employment (Salt, 2007). Non EU workers in general, along with those from the Indian subcontinent and the Caribbean, are overrepresented in the routine category, as are citizens from the southern EU states. In contrast to earlier years, the Irish and Africans are now more likely to be highly skilled (Salt, 2007).

The different national groups are not evenly spread across industries: North Americans, Australians and New Zealanders, those from France and Germany and Northern EU countries, are more likely than others to be in the financial and business service sector, which generally requires higher level skills. Africans, Southeast Asians and those from the Caribbean/West Indies are especially to be found in Group transport, communications and other services. The Irish continue to be relatively overrepresented in manufacturing and construction, though to a much lesser extent than in the past, and in transport, communications and other services. Those from the southern EU countries are more likely than others to be in distribution, hotels and catering. A8 citizens have their own pattern, with a disproportionately high representation in manufacturing and construction and lower representation in other sectors, especially finance and business.

3.11.1 Non-EEA nationals: work permits

Work permits and first permissions are of particular interest as they are sought for foreign workers newly entering the labour market and they can be used as an indicator of labour market trends.

Over the period 1998 - 2006, the total number of approvals (including work permits, first permissions, extensions, changes of employment), rose steadily every year as a consequence of the ICT sector boom (which subsided after 2001) and recruitment of health workers for the NHS (which peaked in 2004). There was a dip in 2005, followed by a further rise in approvals, with a 10 per cent increase in 2007. Over the period 2000 – 2006 as a whole, the total number of permits issued was almost 600,000.
In 2006, work permits (issued on behalf of foreign nationals living outside the UK at the time of application) were 55.4 per cent of all issues; first permissions (issued on behalf of foreign nationals living within the UK at the time of application) were 13.4 per cent; extensions (by an employer on behalf of an employee already with a permit) were 16.1 per cent; and changes of employment (from one UK employer to another or for technical changes in occupation) were 12.2 per cent. The first two categories thus represent new work permits and constitute increments to the labour force. These data also indicate that the majority of non-EEA foreign nationals applied for permits prior to coming to the UK.

In 2006, the top five industry groups were: Computer services (21.8 per cent); Health and medical services (17.8 per cent); Administration, business and managerial services (12.4 per cent); Financial services (9 per cent); and Hospitality, hotels and catering (7.5 per cent). The main change since 2005 is the sharp rise in the number and proportion in Computer services and the fall in Health and medical services.

Most work permits and first permissions in 2006 were for managerial and professional occupations (64.8 per cent of the total.) Associate professionals were the next largest group (21.7 per cent). Nearly half of approvals (47.3 per cent) were for people recruited into three main occupations: ICT professionals (24.3 per cent); managers and proprietors in other service sectors (13.1 per cent) and health associate professionals (nurses and carers) (9.9 per cent).

However, over the past year there have been some fundamental shifts in occupational distribution. Numbers of issues for managers and senior officials rose by 1.4 per cent (including an increase of 1.0 per cent to corporate managers); professional occupations increased by 7.2 per cent, of which ICT professionals went up by 4.8 per cent and engineers by 2.0 per cent. In contrast, numbers for associate professionals and technical occupations fell by 10.6 per cent, mainly due to a decline health and associate professionals (nurses and senior carers and to therapists).

Occupational and nationality data demonstrate that migrant workers from different countries tend to specialise in particular occupations. Broadly speaking, the more developed countries provide corporate workers, those less developed focus on health workers, while India exceptionally accounts for 62.5 per cent of all science and technology professionals.

Above average concentrations of Australians, Canadians and Nigerians can be found among teaching and research professionals; Romanians, Pakistanis and Malaysians are overrepresented in skilled trades occupations. Americans tend to be clustered in sales and customer service occupations, in associate professional occupations related to culture, media and sport and related to business and public services, and among managers and senior officials. Japanese have a similar distribution to Americans. The flow of Indians is focused mainly towards professional occupations in science, technology and health. Migrants from the Philippines tend to be concentrated in caring personal service occupations or in associate professional jobs related to health and social welfare.
3.11.2 Skilled migration: The Highly Skilled Migrant Programme (HSMP)

Since 2002, the UK has been actively encouraging skilled migrants to immigrate to the country -- first through the Highly Skilled Migrant Programme (HSMP) and now through its Tier 1 (General) visa for general highly skilled migrants, which replaced the HSMP on 30 June 2008.

In 2005 the number of HSMP approvals increased by 140 per cent on the year before to reach 17,631. This increase continued in 2006, although at the lower rate of 24.4 per cent. Those from India and Pakistan accounted for over half the total, the figure rising to 71.3 per cent with the inclusion of Australia, Nigeria and South Africa.

The programme’s geographical scope remains narrow. The general trend among countries has been towards increasing engagement with the HSMP but with variations. The number of Indian Highly Skilled Migrants rose sharply between 2005 and 2006, as did that of Australians, while Pakistani and South African numbers hardly changed.

3.11.3 A8 migration: Worker Registration Scheme (WRS)

WRS data may be used as a measure of the numbers of A8 citizens coming to work. However, they give no clue to the duration of stay in the UK and, because they exclude the self-employed, they are an underestimate of those actually taking up work.

Between May 2004 and June 2007, 643,340 A8 citizens were approved to work. The majority (66.9 per cent) were Poles, with Lithuanians and Slovaks the next largest groups – Table 3.1. Although there is some overlap between the skills profile of A8 citizens and non-EEA citizens working in the UK, in general the WRS and the work permit system serve different occupational niches (Salt and Millar, 2005). Most (82.0 per cent) of those entering the UK from A8 states occupy lower skilled jobs whereas the majority (86.5 per cent) of work permit approvals are for people who take up managerial, professional and associate professional or technical positions. The list of occupations WRS applications as a whole emphasises the importance of less skilled factory work, agriculture and hospitality, in many ways the classic occupations of historic guest worker flows in Europe.

When registering, over half (56 per cent) said they intended to remain in the UK for less than 3 months and 13 per cent for more than a year. However, around a quarter claimed not to know how long they would stay. A recent report found that just under one quarter of migrants from Central and Eastern Europe planned on settling permanently in the UK (Spencer et al 2007), a much lower proportion than is the case with previous groups of immigrants.
3.11.4 National Insurance registrations

Every foreign worker who is legally employed in the UK requires a National Insurance Number (NINo), so NINo registration data cover all labour migrants (i.e. EU citizens – including those from Accession countries who are covered by the WRS, those on Work Permits (including students working part-time)), whatever their length of stay in the UK. The allocation of new NINos should therefore give an indication of the annual (year running April-March) increment to the workforce. However, NINo data do not take account of the length of time an individual spends working in the UK and so they may include equally people who work for one week in the year with those working fifty two. Overall, they probably present a fuller picture of the foreign increment to the UK workforce than any other single source but should be used only with appropriate caveats.

The total number of NINo registrations to adult overseas nationals in 2007/08 was 733 thousand, an increase of 27 thousand (3.9 per cent) on the previous year. This is the smallest annual percentage increase in the period for which figures are available. The small increase was due to the sharp drop in the number of A8 nationals registering: registrations to A8 nationals increased only by 4.7% from 318 thousand in 2006/07 to 332 thousand in 2007/08, whereas in 2005/6 the A8 Accession countries account for 270 thousand new registrations, 41 per cent of the total. In 2007/08, there were 400 thousand registrations to non Accession nationals, a 3.2% increase from the previous year. However, Poland still formed the largest nationality: 29% of all registrations (a 4.4% decrease from the previous year). Registrations from Bulgaria and Romania, who joined the EU on the 1st of January 2007 show the largest increase, rising by 11 thousand and 19 thousand respectively in the year to 2007/08. As well as Poland, three other A8 countries, Slovak Republic, Romania and Lithuania, were in the top ten.

The vast majority are young, and over 80% of all registrations in 2007/08 were made up of 18-34 yr olds. The 25-34 age group is the largest single age group for NINo registrations for men, whereas the biggest group for women is 18-24. Overall, 54 per cent of NINo

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### Table 3.1 - Worker Registration Scheme for A8 nationalities, 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Numbers</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Czech Rep</td>
<td>30640</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>6365</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>20945</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>25870</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuania</td>
<td>66435</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>430395</td>
<td>66.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>62090</td>
<td>9.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>643340</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Home Office*

*Notes: The figures are for the initial applications only*
registrations to adult overseas nationals are from males. However, by age band, the 18-24 age group is the only group where registrations from females exceed those from males.

The London Government Office Region accounted for 37.2 per cent of all registrations in 2007/08, an increase from 34.1% from the previous year. The West Midlands was fifth of the English Regions, and accounted for 6.4 per cent of registrations. Of the top 20 Local Authorities with the highest number of registrations in 2007/08, 15 of these were in London GOR. Birmingham and Edinburgh represented the highest LAs outside of London.

3.12 Qualification levels of migrant workers

Dustman et al. (2003) examined the educational attainment of foreign-born migrants in the UK using evidence from the Labour Force Survey and compared this with the UK-born population. They found that, overall, a higher proportion of non-UK born migrants had a degree-level qualification than UK-born nationals (21 per cent compared with 16 per cent in 2000). However, overall, non-UK born are more polarised in terms of educational attainment: The proportion of the immigrant population both who have a degree and have no qualifications is higher than the UK-born population.7

There were also significant differences in this finding according to country of birth. The proportion of immigrants with degree level qualifications was substantially higher than the UK-born population for Black Africans (33 per cent), Chinese (31 per cent) and people from other English speaking developed countries (26 per cent) such as the US, Australia or New Zealand and those categorised only as ‘other white’ (32 per cent). In contrast, the West Indian, Pakistani, and particularly, the Bangladeshi communities contained fewer graduates than the national average and many more individuals with no formal qualifications.

Whilst the West Indian immigrant community does relatively badly in terms of educational attainment, it is the only ethnic group, including UK-born whites, where women do better than men. The proportion of female West Indian women with a degree is close to the national average and the share of West Indian women with no qualifications is below the national average. In contrast, the share of women in the Bangladeshi and Pakistani communities with no qualifications is more than twice the national average.

There is some indication that new migrants from the A8 countries tend to be highly qualified but lacking English language skills (Sachdev and Harries, 2006). However, these findings were based on small-scale qualitative research and wider evidence is required. However, what is agreed on by several sources is that, regardless of qualifications, these migrants tend not to be occupying high-skilled roles (Green et al. 2005; Salt 2007).

7 More recent research using data from the LFS for 2005 confirms the polarisation of migrants’ qualification profile in relation to that of the wider population. However, the apparent polarization might at least be partly explained by the number of migrant LFS responders that cite ‘other’ qualifications as a result of difficulties in mapping their qualifications to the UK system (IPPR, 2005). While this might be relatively straightforward at degree level, it is much more difficult for other qualifications.
4 MIGRATION IN BIRMINGHAM AND THE WEST MIDLANDS

4.1 Migration policy in Birmingham and the West Midlands

The governance of migration and integration in Birmingham and the West Midlands involves a large number of public, private and community organisations, linked through various partnership bodies and contracts. This reflects the norm for public governance in the UK, where partnerships are the standard way in which public policy is developed, and contractual agreements provide the mechanism for managing the delivery of services by third parties (Jeffares et al., 2008).

Migrant integration policy operates at both the regional and city level in the West Midlands. However, at the city level, policy has a low political profile (Jeffares et al., 2008). More attention is given to equalities and community cohesion of longstanding migrant communities in the city. Furthermore, the issue of highly skilled migration has not been addressed either at a regional or local level.

4.1.1 City level policy

Although the city council has a key role in integration policy in Birmingham, it needs to build alliances with other organisations. Policies for the integration of migrants were developed in its 2002 Integration Strategy, which covers Housing, employment, leisure, language and personal safety, as well as monitoring and raising awareness. It is implemented through a range of activities within the city council and in partnership with other public, private and community organisations, including the police and health services. A senior manager is responsible for the policy, coordinating work with city council departments and other agencies. At present, the Integration Strategy and work on this policy area is separated from the city council’s wider social inclusion and equalities activity, but a number of links are now being made (Jeffares et al., 2008).

4.1.2 Regional Level policy

Migration policy at the regional level is the responsibility of the West Midlands Strategic Migration Partnership (WMSMP), formerly the West Midlands Consortium for Asylum & Refugee Support, which is one of 11 such organisations across the UK, all of whom are core funded by the UK Border and Immigration Authority (BIA) of the Home Office. The WMSP has, since 1st April 2007, been formally responsible for overall integration of economic migrants in the West Midlands in addition to the overall governance of asylum seeker dispersal and integration services for refugees. The WMSMP aims to oversee asylum seeker
dispersal and facilitate the integration of refugees and migrants in the West Midlands by effective multi-agency working across the region.

The WMSMP works on a variety of challenges that exist with immigration and integration issues in the West Midlands region. Although there are differences amongst some of the challenges for economic migrants compared with asylum seekers and refugees, many of these are tackled jointly. The key issues that the WMSMP covers include: housing related issues such as access to good quality housing; access to employment opportunities that are appropriate to migrants’ qualifications; issues around qualification conversion for migrants entering the UK to enable access to the labour market; community cohesion issues, including negative perceptions and a lack of understanding of the variety of migrants that are in the UK; health related issues including a lack of understanding of the UK health system, difficulty in communicating health concerns to professionals.

The Secretariat - which is now made up of five staff - seeks to:

- Work in partnership to gather regional data and monitor and evaluate the impact of policies and influence policy decisions
- Promote the inclusion of asylum seekers, refugees and new migrants through a multi-agency approach
- Identify and seek to address gaps in resources and service provision
- Ensure relevant organisations are aware of the needs of asylum seekers, unsuccessful asylum seekers, new refugees and migrants
- Partner with local, regional and national bodies including government departments to deliver on specific initiatives.

The WMSMP Board is made up of representatives from the statutory, private, voluntary and community sectors and migrants and refugees themselves. The Partnership structure also includes:

- Contract Delivery Group of regional contract providers for asylum accommodation and support
- Inclusion Strategy Monitoring Group to oversee implementation of the Inclusion Strategy
- Regional Implementation Groups (RIGs) to take forward strategy actions
- Regional Refugee Forum of refugees, their organisations and network

The WMSMP works at national, regional and local levels: At the national level through the principle strategic groups on migration\(^1\) established by government at the regional level through collaborative working with other regional organisations. At a regional level, the WMSMP is also charged with providing an ‘enabling’ function to develop and maintain a high level of coordination with other regional organisations, such as Government Office for the West Midlands (GOWM), the Regional TUC, the Regional development agency -

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\(^1\) Migration Advisory Committee (MAC); Migration Impacts Forum (MIF); Corporate Stakeholder Group; National Migration Group; National Asylum Support Forum; Managed Migration: Employer Taskforce; Managed Migration: Joint Education Taskforce (JET); Managed Migration: Arts & Entertainment Taskforce.
Advantage West Midlands (AWM), the regional and local Learning and Skills Councils (LSC) and the West Midlands in Europe (WMiE) office which works on behalf of a partnership of over 90 regional organisations from the local authority. This aims to ensure that the participation of local and regional organisations ‘is in a clear, regional direction on migration through working with the WMSMP.’ (WMSMP, 2007).

At a local level the WMSMP seeks to address the challenges of increased migration by supporting the inclusion of migrants within Local Area Agreements (LAAs)\(^2\) which set out the priorities for a local area agreed between central government and a local area and other key partners at the local level - WMSMP and GOWM are working collaboratively in this respect and are also supporting partnership arrangements which address migration issues outside of the formal LAA structure (WMSMP, 2007).

A recent example of WMSMP facilitating partnership working is the ‘Welcome to…’ initiative. The WMSMP is working with partners in several areas of the West Midlands to develop local welcome information for new arrivals and to ensure that relevant information, experiences and expertise are shared across the Region. The new ‘Welcome to Birmingham’ website was formally launched on 23 February 2009 and was a partnership project funded by Digital Birmingham and Birmingham Health and Wellbeing Partnership. The website is a guide to information, support and services in Birmingham for people new to the city\(^3\) and contains over 100 pages of information in plain English as well as welcome videos and scripts in 7 different languages (Arabic, Dari, Kurdish, Polish, Pushto, Russian and Somali). The site is targeted at all new arrivals and also useful to those who work with them. It can be navigated by migration status or by topic area. Links are provided to translated information and to other websites that provide information in more detail.

There are now two local Welcome websites in the West Midlands, one for Birmingham and one for Herefordshire and several other localities are looking at developing local information for new arrivals. Funding is currently being sought to develop a West Midlands wide online hub that can share this information and bring it together at a Regional level. Discussions are also taking place with WMSMP, the East of England Development Agency (EEDA) and Advantage West Midlands (AWM) regarding the potential development of a national information portal for migrants, through adapting the existing www.migrantgateway.eu portal or developing a complementary local/regional information hub.

\(^2\) LAAs set out the priorities for a local area agreed between central government and a local area and other key partners at the local level and involve the selection of a number of ‘priority indicators’ for improvement at the local level.

\(^3\) The ‘Welcome to Birmingham’ website can be accessed at www.welcometobirmingham.org.uk.
4.1.3 Regional migration strategies

WMSMP regional migration scoping exercise

In order to meet this new requirement for incorporate the needs of economic migrants within its target group, the WMSMP recently commissioned a ‘Regional Migration Scoping Exercise’ which was published in January 2008. The exercise looks at a range of issues which have developed as a result of increased migration, particularly on the public sector, such as housing, health, education and community cohesion, as well as making recommendations for regional action.

The key aims of the Scoping Exercise are to:

1. Establish the scale of issues, and resulting impact upon local authorities and other statutory partners as a result of the significant increase of migrant workers arriving in the West Midlands;
2. Ascertain the current level of activity, at either a strategic and/or operational level, taking place across the region in responding to these issues and consider how the WMSMP Secretariat can make a contribution to this through its Regional Strategic Coordinating role;
3. Make recommendations to BIA as to the scale and nature of the work to be undertaken at a regional level, with a view to successfully supporting local authorities and partners in responding to the issues identified. (WMSMP, 2008)

The purpose of the Scoping Exercise is to look at what can be done, by the WMSMP, working across the West Midlands to add value to locally established or emerging programmes and support organisations, by making strategic and operational linkages with them beyond those currently in place (WMSMP, 2008, p3). A significant amount of engagement at a local and national level needs to take place to ensure that the region meets the needs of migrants who are choosing to settle here, and to help them maximise their potential for the benefit of the region. The recommendations include that WMSMP should work with new and existing partners to establish the regions’ priorities on migration and that a new joint working/commissioning arrangement should be considered to enable priority needs to be met. The WMSMP should promote its regional strategic co-ordinating role to government departments to seek their buy-in to this joined-up regional approach.

A further set of recommendations addresses the need for better data and information on migrant characteristics in the West Midlands: there is a need to commission research to identify if there are any major differences between migrants from different countries and who arrive through different routes, as much research at present seems to be generic, and there is a need to undertake further in-depth data analysis to identify migrants that are in greatest need of support to ensure the efforts of the WMSMP are better targeted and effective.
Regional Economic Strategy and migration: The economic impact of migrant workers in the West Midlands

At around the same time as the completion of the West Midlands migration scoping exercise (WSMP, 2008), a key report; ‘The economic impact of migrant workers in the West Midlands’ (Green, Jones and Owen, 2007) was launched. Jointly commissioned by the Regional Development Agency (Advantage West Midlands), the Regional Learning & Skills Council (LSC), Birmingham Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and Worcestershire LSP, the West Midlands National Health Service, Herefordshire Equality Partnership and Solihull Borough Council, this report addresses the knowledge gap in the West Midlands in relation to the impact of migrant workers, in particular those from European Union Accession countries, on the region’s economy and labour market.

The aims of the report are to:

- Quantify and profile migrants in the region;
- Assess their impact upon the economy and on the indigenous population;
- Investigate the motivations and intentions of migrants residing in the region;
- Investigate employers’ rationale for employing migrant workers;
- Assess the implications for skills and training provision as well as to provide some findings on other policy areas in assessing the impact of migrant workers on key services, including, health, housing and community cohesion

The West Midlands Migrant Worker Survey, undertaken as part of the main study, makes a distinction between the different types of migrants in terms of their reasons for entering the UK and their future plans. Three types of migrants are identified:

1. Economic migrants who are usually low-skilled workers, attracted to the UK because of the higher rates of pay but aiming to stay in low-skilled roles where employers are unlikely to invest in them;
2. Aspiring migrants who are mainly students and skilled workers undertaking unskilled work in the UK but improving their English or gaining qualifications at the same time to pursue their chosen career path within the UK or abroad, employers would expect this group to self-improve their skills;
3. Global migrants; who take skilled positions in the UK to help address skills deficiencies, they are mainly concentrated in professional or associated positions.

The report recognises that people may well arrive in the UK as economic migrants but then become aspiring migrants or vice versa. It maybe that using this kind of categorisation, interventions could be better targeted, i.e. global migrants such as Indian IT professional may not really need the same type of information, advice and guidance as Slovakian migrants with long-term aspirations to remain in the UK.

The report does not focus in any detail on migrants working in highly skilled positions. However, one of the main findings is that migrant workers are disproportionately clustered in low-wage sectors and occupations in the West Midlands regardless of skills levels. The Migrant Worker Survey found that migrants coming into the UK are often over qualified for
the jobs that they undertake and are very keen to improve their skills and employment prospects. In particular, English language skills are seen as important for employment progression, engagement and social integration. However, a study carried out in the North of the region (French and Mohrke, 2006) found that opportunities for migrants to move into high-skilled work are limited by strong perceptions held by employers and agencies about what does and does not constitute ‘migrant work’. Unless the under-utilisation of skills is addressed, there is a risk that skilled migrants may be lost to other countries through frustration and in search of better prospects. The Study suggests better utilisation of the skills of ‘aspiring’ migrant workers is likely to require one or more of the following: qualification recognition, skills recognition, development of language skills, policies to facilitate progression in employment and knowledge transfer:

**Qualification recognition:** According to the regional study, in terms of qualification recognition, migrants report difficulties in getting overseas qualifications recognised in the UK. Although structures are in place (such as UK NARIC) for the recognition of both vocational and academic skills, few migrants made reference to these when asked.

**Skills recognition:** Key issues include little or no UK work experience; lack of a UK work reference, problems understanding how the UK labour market operates; poor English language skills; employers’ attitudes to migrants and shortcomings in the infrastructure for skills recognition (Phillimore et al., 2007). Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) is less well developed in the UK than in countries such as the Netherlands, France and Germany and improvements may well be of use here.

The Study found that migrants experienced difficulty in gaining recognition of their skills, and that they have become frustrated about not being able to secure employment at the level they feel is commensurate with their skills. Information, advice and guidance accessible to migrants seem to be lacking as well as clear mechanisms for skills recognition across the UK. Certain sectors however such as the construction industry have addressed this and others could learn from it.

**Development of English Language skills:** English language skills are fundamental for migrants to live and work in the UK and ESOL courses are one of the best routes to achieve this. Although demand for ESOL has grown considerably, concern has been expressed by providers who deliver it to a mobile population, where people may leave the UK or move elsewhere for a job, part-way though a course and how this impacts upon their success rates, retention and achievement. Traditional ESOL courses for migrants have now been replaced with new ESOL for Work qualifications (launched in October 2007). The aim to make it easier for employers and migrant workers to get the functional English language skills they need. The new qualifications are shorter and more work-focused than traditional ESOL qualifications. As such, it is hoped that they will help employers benefit from improved communication skills and productivity, and that this will encourage employers to contribute to the cost of training their staff.

**Progression in employment:** Amongst the different broadly defined categories and types of migrants, not all are interested in developing skills related to employment which would help them to progress in their current job or move to a better one. This is particularly true of
younger migrants who come to the UK for a limited period - perhaps for a few months to pay for their studies, or as a kind of ‘gap year’ or those economic migrants who were previously defined as the ‘classic economic migrant’ that is people who are content to work in low pay, low skilled work.

Migrant workers intending from the outset to stay in the UK for longer periods, or who change their initial plans and decide to stay for longer, are more likely to be interested in, and offer a better prospect for employers and for the region, for progression in employment. Hence it is either the aspiring migrants or the economic migrants who become aspiring migrants that need to be targeted with policy interventions to improve that help improve their skills, qualifications, English and UK work experience.

The report recognises that migrants are potentially significant actors in knowledge transfer, but they may face barriers in utilising and applying their knowledge in the workplace. The implication for policy at the level of the firm is that there is scope for greater recognition that migrant workers may represent an untapped source of creativity, innovation and enhanced productivity, if appropriate mechanisms can be set in place to enable learning and knowledge transfer.

The report findings will directly feed into Regional policy as the results will be used to update and implement the Regional Economic Strategy, to consider the implications on skills and training provision in the region and to enable Local Strategic Partnerships to improve their understanding of the impact and issues relating to migrant workers within their localities.4

4.2 History of migration to the West Midlands

Birmingham and the West Midlands have a long history of inward migration. However, prior to the 1950s, Eire and Northern Ireland were the most important sources of overseas immigration into Birmingham, and into the 1960s, Irish immigrants made up 5 per cent of the population of the City. The 1950s saw the start of substantial immigration from the New Commonwealth5. By 1961, 1.4 per cent of Birmingham’s population were immigrants from the West Indies and 0.9 per cent from the Indian sub-continent. By the mid-1960s over 40 per cent of the total migrant population (based on country of birth data) came from the Caribbean, Pakistan and India. Despite this influx, by 1971 the percentage of New Commonwealth residents (including their dependants) remained at less than 5 per cent (Slater 1996).

In the years following the Second World War there was a major influx of immigrants to Birmingham as workers, predominantly from Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland and the New Commonwealth countries (initially the Caribbean and later from India, Bangladesh and Pakistan and also a small population from the rural New Territories region of Hong Kong) arrived in the City. The economic boom of the fifties, fuelled by the

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4 The report can be downloaded using the following link: http://www.wmro.org/standardTemplate.aspx/Home/GeneralResearch/EconomicMigrants/Results

5 The New Commonwealth consists largely of African, Caribbean and Asian countries. The Old Commonwealth refers to Australia, Canada and New Zealand i.e. the White settler colonies.
reconstruction effort, resulted in a shortage of labour, which attracted a flow of mostly young, single men who came to work in industries in and around Birmingham. As a process of chain migration developed, more and more men from the same villages arrived, as well as their wives and children. This led to the passage of increasingly restrictive legislation with the 1962 and 1968 Commonwealth Immigration Acts. In 1971, a third Act effectively stopped all primary immigration from New Commonwealth Countries.

The UK population census of 1991 contained a question on membership of ethnic group for the first time. According to census statistics, the ‘non-White’ population in Birmingham had increased from 5 per cent to more than 21 per cent (nearly 206,800 people). In the Region as a whole, 8.3 per cent (around 427,500 people) of the population described themselves as belonging to an ethnic group other than ‘White’. This represented around 14 percent of the country’s minority BME population. As of 2001, Birmingham had one of the most ethnically diverse populations in Britain, with 29.7 per cent of the city’s population coming from minority backgrounds, and was second only to inner areas of London in terms of ethnic diversity.

Amongst the largest minority communities: 10.6 per cent were Pakistani, 5.7 per cent are Indian, 6.1 per cent Black Caribbean or African, and 2.9 per cent of mixed race (ONS 2001). Alongside there existed a small population of Chinese (0.5 per cent of the total population) – Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 - Distribution of population by ethnicity in Birmingham, West Midlands and England and Wales, 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Birmingham</th>
<th>West Midlands</th>
<th>West Midlands Met. County</th>
<th>England and Wales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>White:</strong></td>
<td>70.4</td>
<td>88.7</td>
<td>80.0</td>
<td>91.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British</td>
<td>65.6</td>
<td>86.2</td>
<td>76.5</td>
<td>87.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irish</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other White</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mixed:</strong></td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White and Black Caribbean</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White and Black African</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White and Asian</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Mixed</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Asian or Asian British:</strong></td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistani</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladeshi</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Asian</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Black or Black British:</strong></td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caribbean</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Black</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chinese or other ethnic group:</strong></td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Ethnic Group</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ONS Census of Population 2001
Although in the immediate years after the end of the Second World War, South Asians and African-Caribbeans from former New Commonwealth countries came to the West Midlands in search of work and better opportunities, i.e. these were essentially economic migrants - in recent periods it has been groups from Eastern Europe, the Middle East and Africa who have migrated to the city of Birmingham. These have mainly been refugee groups from diverse origins, such as the Balkans (Bosnia and ethnic Albanian asylum seekers from Kosovo), Somalia, Afghanistan and Iraq (mainly Kurdish asylum seekers and refugees). Birmingham has also become home to many young Iranians (Dick 2004). For these ‘new’ migrants, political reasons may be just as important as economic reasons for coming to the UK.

Finally, since 2004, there has been an influx of new economic migrants from to the region from Accession 8 (so-called ‘A8’) countries (notably Poland).

4.3 Scale and distribution of migrants in the West Midlands

It is not possible to say with any certainty how many migrant workers there are in the West Midlands at any one time. Different data sources provide different estimates (Green et al., 2007). Nonetheless, it is clear from all sources that there has been a marked increase in the number of labour migrants to the West Midlands in recent years. However, the relative increase in the West Midlands is similar to that experienced across the UK as a whole.

According to the Labour Force Survey (LFS) there were around 122,000 non-UK nationals in employment in the West Midlands in summer 2006, representing 4.9 per cent of total employment, of whom 86,000 had entered the UK since 1991 and 54,000 had entered after 2001. These are likely to be minimum estimates given that some of the most mobile groups of the population tend to be missed by the LFS.

The scale of the recent increase in migration to the region is illustrated by the fact that there were 46,600 National Insurance Number (NINo) registrations of overseas nationals in the West Midlands in 2007/8, compared with 23,400 in 2002/3 (DWP, 2008). However, this increase is no higher than the UK average (Green et al., 2007).

The key component of recent increase in labour migration to the region has been migrants from Accession 8 (so-called ‘A8’) countries (notably Poland). Between May 2004 and March 2007 there were just over 47,000 approved ‘first applications’ to the Worker Registration Scheme (WRS) in the West Midlands. However, the data contain only those that have submitted applications to register with the Home Office. Workers who are self-employed do not need to register and are therefore generally not included in these figures.

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6 NINo registrations of overseas represent a net increment to the migrant stock in employment over the period in question and an unknown number of migrants will stay for a short period only.

7 The number of applicants to the WRS does not represent a measurement of net migration to the UK (inflows minus outflows). It is a gross (cumulative) figure for the number of approved ‘first applications’ to the WRS in a given period. If an A8 migrant comes to the UK and makes a first application in London but subsequently moves to Birmingham, he/she is counted in London.
Over 19,000 people from outside the European Economic Area (EEA) were granted Work Permits to work in the West Midlands between 2002 and 2006. Work permit applications were concentrated in the major urban centres, notably Birmingham and Coventry: Birmingham accounted for 30 per cent of all migrants granted work permits between 2002 and 2006. The next largest concentration was in Coventry (9.1 per cent of the regional total), followed by Sandwell (5.5 per cent), Warwick (4.3 per cent) and Wolverhampton (4.3 per cent).

During the period from May 2004 to March 2007 there were just over 47,000 approved applications in the West Midlands on the Worker Registration Scheme (WRS) for ‘A8’ migrants: 26,825 were in the period from May 2004 to March 2006, with a further 20,335 in the year from April 2006 to March 2007.\(^8\) A key feature of the A8 migration to the UK has been a greater orientation towards rural areas than previous migrations (Stenning et al. 2006; Green \textit{et al.}, 2007) and data from the WRS show that over the period from May 2004 to March 2007 the local authority areas with the largest count of A8 migrants were mainly rural Herefordshire (7,140) and Birmingham (7,110). Together, these two areas account for 30 per cent of all A8 migrants recorded in the WRS in the region over the period.

### 4.4 Nationality of migrants

Analyses of a range of different data sources show that there have been important changes in the profile of migrant workers by nationality in recent years. Poland has risen dramatically to become easily the largest supplier of migrant workers in the West Midlands, with other A8 countries also increasing in importance, although new Commonwealth countries (including India and Pakistan) also remain an important source of migrants to the region and particularly in Birmingham.

Overseas NINO registrations by broad national group in the West Midlands from 2002/3 to 2006/7 shows a shift from New Commonwealth countries dominating in 2002/3 (45 per cent of the total) to Accession 8 countries accounting for the largest share of registrations from 2005/6 onwards (53 per cent of total registrations in 2006/7).

The changing profile of labour migrants by nationality in the region generally mirrors changes in the profile at UK level. However, in 2006/7 there were some notable differences in the West Midlands:

- **a larger proportion of total NINO registrations from:**
  - A8 countries (53% compared to 44% nationally)
  - New Commonwealth (25% compared to 22% nationally)

- **a smaller proportion of total NINO registrations from:**
  - EU countries (9% compared to 13% nationally)
  - Old Commonwealth (2% compared to 5% nationally).

---

\(^8\) The number of approved applicants to the WRS does not represent a measurement of net migration to the UK (inflows minus outflows): rather, it is a gross (cumulative) figure for the number of approved ‘first applications’ to the WRS in a given period.
WRS data show that over the period from May 2004 to March 2006 Poles comprised 69 per cent of the cumulative count of around 48,000 A8 migrants registering for the scheme.

There are local variations in the profile of labour migrants by nationality: the largest 3 overseas nationalities registering for NINos 2006/7 for Birmingham were Poles (29.6 per cent); Pakistanis (12.5 per cent) and Indians (8.8 per cent).

Work permit data on non-EEA nationals indicates that the origins of economic migrants on work permits are very diverse. Over the period from 2002 to 2006 the ‘top 25’ out of the 180 nationalities supplying migrants on work permits accounted for 91 per cent of the total number of migrants on work permits. The countries of origin supplying most migrants on work permits were India (25 per cent of the regional work permit total), the Philippines (with 14 per cent of the regional total) and China, South Africa and Zimbabwe (each supplying about 7 per cent of the regional total).

4.5 Socio-economic profile of migrants in the West Midlands

Males outnumber females amongst labour migrants top the West Midlands, accounting for 55 per cent of NINo registrations by overseas nationals in 2006/7. Females accounted for only 38 per cent of WRS applicants over the period from May 2004 to March 2006.

Migrant workers are predominantly young: around 40 per cent are aged 25 years and under and a further 40 per cent are aged 25-34 years. Those from A8 countries were even younger on average, but the percentage of older workers was also higher than that for people born in the New Commonwealth. Amongst Poles, 43 per cent allocated NINos during 2006/7 were aged under 25. People from the Old and New Commonwealth, Other Europe and the Rest of the world were most likely to be aged 25 to 34 (DWP 2007).

According to Labour Force Survey data, there are certain ‘migrant dense’ (MD) sectors of the West Midlands economy, particularly manufacturing and private and public service sector-based activities including Health and Social work. These sectors account in total for 59.4 per cent of all migrant employment (71.0 per cent of post-2002 migrant employment) – Table 4.2. This is compared to only 42.5 per cent of employment of UK nationals. The increasing proportion of employment within these sectors for post-1991 and post-2002 migrants indicates an increasing concentration of migrant employment in particular ‘migrant-dense’ industries (Green et al 2007).

There are different industrial profiles for migrant workers entering the UK via the different routes: two fifths (40 per cent) of all WRS registrations in the West Midlands over the period from May 2004 to March 2007 have been in Administration, Business and Management Services, while 19 per cent have been in Agricultural Services. Patterns of registration in this sector display pronounced seasonality, with more registrations in the summer than the winter months. The third largest sector is Hospitality and Catering (11 per cent of total), followed by Manufacturing (9 per cent of registrations). In Birmingham during this period, WRS

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9 The WRS does not use the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) for coding industry. The coding scheme used in the WRS includes some categories which are wide and general in scope.
registrations are highest in Administration, Business and Management Services (45.2 per cent) followed by Hospitality and Catering (23.3 per cent).

Table 4.2 - Migrant dense industry sectors (% of employment by group)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry sector</th>
<th>UK nationals</th>
<th>All migrants</th>
<th>Post 1991</th>
<th>Post 2002</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D Manufacturing</td>
<td>19.9%</td>
<td>23.3%</td>
<td>21.7%</td>
<td>25.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H: Hotels &amp; Restaurants</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I: Transport, Storage &amp; Communication</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N: Health &amp; Social Work</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
<td>19.8%</td>
<td>25.3%</td>
<td>26.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P: Private Households</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All MD industry sectors</td>
<td>42.5%</td>
<td>59.4%</td>
<td>65.4%</td>
<td>71.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All industry sectors</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Labour Force Survey. The analysis is restricted to the West Midlands region based on place of work.

Source: Green et al., 2007

Table 4.3 - Migrant-dense 2-digit occupations (% of employment by group)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation 2 digit SOC</th>
<th>UK nationals</th>
<th>All</th>
<th>Post 1991</th>
<th>Migrants</th>
<th>Post 2002</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>managers &amp; Proprietors in Agric. &amp; Services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Professionals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science &amp; Tech. Assoc. Professionals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health &amp; Social Welfare Assoc Professionals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textiles, Printing and Other Skilled Trades</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caring Personal Service Occupations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
<td>11.0%</td>
<td>16.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process, Plant &amp; Machine Operatives</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Trades, Plant, Storage related</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>92</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
<td>18.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Admin &amp;Service Occupations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total MD occupation groups</td>
<td>34.0%</td>
<td>55.8%</td>
<td>62.8%</td>
<td>70.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All occupations</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Labour Force Survey. The analysis is restricted to the West Midlands region based on place of work.

Source: Green et al., 2007.

Non-EEA migrants on work permits display a different industrial profile to those on the WRS. Nearly half of all migrants on work permits are in Health and Medical Services (48 per cent of work permits), followed by Hospitality and Catering (15 per cent), Administration, Business and Management Services (8 per cent) and Education and Cultural Activities (7 per cent).

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10 Work permits are coded to a non-standard industrial classification, so it is not possible to make direct comparisons with other data sources.
Labour Force data again show concentrated in certain professional occupations (notably as health professionals and business & public service professionals) and also in elementary, operative and caring personal service occupations – Table 4.3. Given the changing importance of different migration ‘routes’ -notably the impact of A8 migration - there is some evidence of movement towards a greater share in less skilled occupations. Nine of the 25 SOC sub-major group occupations can be classified as being Migrant Dense (MD) areas of work. These occupations, in total, account for only 56 per cent of employment of all migrants (71 per cent of post-2002 migrant employment).

Table 4.4 - Migrant dense 3-digit Occupations (% of employment by group)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation (3 digit SOC)</th>
<th>UK nationals</th>
<th>All</th>
<th>Post 1991</th>
<th>Post 2002</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>117 Protective Service Officers</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.2 *</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>122 Managers &amp; Proprietors In Hospitality &amp; Leisure</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>2.3 *</td>
<td>1.6 *</td>
<td>1.2 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>211 Science Professionals</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.4 *</td>
<td>0.5 *</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>213 Information &amp; Communication Technology Profs.</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.3 *</td>
<td>2.1 *</td>
<td>1.7 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>221 Health Professionals</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>4.1 *</td>
<td>6.0 *</td>
<td>2.9 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>244 Public Service Professionals</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.9 *</td>
<td>1.4 *</td>
<td>2.3 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>311 Science &amp; Engineering Technicians</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.9 *</td>
<td>1.1 *</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>313 IT Service Delivery Occupations</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.7 *</td>
<td>0.7 *</td>
<td>0.8 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>321 Health Associate Professionals</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>6.0 *</td>
<td>8.1 *</td>
<td>8.2 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>322 Therapists</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.5 *</td>
<td>0.6 *</td>
<td>0.6 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>342 Design Associate Professionals</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.4 *</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>351 Transport Associate Professionals</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.2 *</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>541 Textiles &amp; Garments Trades</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.3 *</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>543 Food Preparation Trades</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>3.1 *</td>
<td>3.9 *</td>
<td>2.4 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>611 Healthcare &amp; Related Personal Services</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>5.7 *</td>
<td>6.7 *</td>
<td>9.1 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>623 Housekeeping Occupations</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.6 *</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>712 Sales Related Occupations</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.9 *</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>811 Process Operatives</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>4.1 *</td>
<td>5.2 *</td>
<td>6.9 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>812 Plant &amp; Machine Operatives</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>2.3 *</td>
<td>1.8 *</td>
<td>3.1 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>813 Assemblers &amp; Routine Operatives</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>4.2 *</td>
<td>3.8 *</td>
<td>5.4 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>814 Construction Operatives</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.8 *</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.7 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>822 Mobile Machine Drivers &amp; Operatives</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>1.2 *</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>1.2 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>913 Elementary Process Plant Occupations</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>2.8 *</td>
<td>3.4 *</td>
<td>2.1 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>914 Elementary Goods Storage Occupations</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.2 *</td>
<td>3.0 *</td>
<td>4.2 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>922 Elementary Personal Services Occupations</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.6 *</td>
<td>5.1 *</td>
<td>8.6 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>923 Elementary Cleaning Occupations</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>4.2 *</td>
<td>3.7 *</td>
<td>5.1 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>924 Elementary Security Occupations</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.2 *</td>
<td>1.3 *</td>
<td>1.3 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>925 Elementary Sales Occupations</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>1.0 *</td>
<td>1.6 *</td>
<td>2.8 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total MD Minor group occupations</td>
<td>30.3</td>
<td>55.9</td>
<td>63.3</td>
<td>71.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All occupations</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Labour Force Survey
Note: (1) * Indicates a migrant dense occupation with respect to the particular migrant (sub) group; (2) The analysis is restricted to the West Midlands region based on place of work.

Source: Green et al 2007
There are also different occupational profiles for migrant workers depending on method of entry to the West Midlands. The largest occupations for those on work permits are Nurses (32.2 per cent), Chefs (10.2 per cent) and Other healthcare related occupations (9.3 per cent), which together accounted for more than half of all work permits – Table 4.4.

The WRS contains limited information on occupations of registered workers from A8 countries. However, ten occupations have accounted for 70.7 per cent of all initial approvals - Table 4.5. The largest was Process Operative (other factory work) (24.2 per cent); Farm workers and farm hands represented 10.7 per cent, warehouse operatives 10.5 per cent and packers 7.5 per cent. The distribution of occupations emphasises the predominance of less skilled occupations for WRS applicants (Green et al 2007).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
<th>Cumulative %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nurse</td>
<td>32.2</td>
<td>32.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chef</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>42.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Health/Medical Occupation</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>51.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Mgr Related Occupation</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>58.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Engineer Occupation</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>63.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher(School/College)</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>65.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other It Related Occupation</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>68.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>70.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctor</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>71.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Carer</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>73.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pharmacist</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>75.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Hotel &amp; Catering Occupations</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>77.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Chef</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>78.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Worker</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>79.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head Chef</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>81.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecturer (University)</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>82.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radiographer</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>83.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Software Engineer</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>84.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Financial Occupation</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>85.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musician</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>86.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Edu/Cult Occupation</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>87.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waiter/Waitress</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>87.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountant</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>88.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurant Manager</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>89.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physiotherapist</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>89.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: UK Department for Work and Pensions, 2006*
This section provides an overview of internationalisation of the UK and West Midlands economy with particular emphasis on foreign direct investment (FDI). It also considers the regional labour market and the factors that will influence the demand for skills in the West Midlands.

5.1 Global trends and recent developments in Foreign Direct Investment

The United Nations’ World Investment Report 2008 compares annual foreign direct investment (FDI) flows and stocks globally. In 2007, global FDI inflows rose by 30 per cent to reach a record $1,833 billion, despite the financial and credit crises which began in the second half of 2007 and FDI inflows into developed countries reached $1,248 billion. The United States maintained its position as the largest recipient country ($233 billion), followed by the United Kingdom ($224 billion), France ($158 billion), Canada ($109 billion) and the Netherlands ($99 billion) (UNCTAD, World Investment Report 2008).

The restructuring and concentration process in the enlarged common market of the EU countries led to the EU attracting almost two thirds (64.4 per cent or $804 billion) of total FDI inflows into developed countries, driven again by the large FDI flows to the United Kingdom, France, the Netherlands and also Spain (UNCTAD, World Investment Report 2008).

An indicator for the degree of global integration is the percentage of FDI stocks on the gross domestic product of a country – Table 5.1. The inward investment is significantly lower than outward investment for all developed countries. However, the UK has the highest percentage of GDP attributed to inwards investment at 48.6 per cent, compared with 40.1 per cent of GDP for France, 40.9 per cent for the EU and 27.2 per cent for all Developed Countries.

UNCTAD has provided indicators to measure the amount of FDI countries receive relative to the size of their economies (Inward FDI Performance Index) and their potential to attract FDI flows (Inward FDI Potential Index). In 2007 (latest figures), the UK was ranked 29th in the Inward FDI Performance Index (behind five other European countries: Bulgaria, Iceland,

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1 Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is the international movement of capital for specific investment purposes where the foreign investor gains control over the investment asset. FDI occurs when overseas companies set-up or purchase operations in another country. FDI encompasses new projects, expansions of existing projects, or mergers and acquisitions activity.

2 See: http://www.unctad.org/Templates/Page.asp?intItemID=3198&lang=

3 To some extent, the record FDI levels in dollar terms also reflected the significant depreciation of the dollar against other major currencies. However, even measured in local currencies, the average growth rate of global FDI flows was still 23 per cent in 2007 (UNCTAD, World Investment Report 2008).
Malta, Estonia, Belgium), but 3rd in the Inward FDI Potential Index after the United States and Singapore (2006 figures latest available).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>UK</strong></td>
<td>Inwards</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>47.3</td>
<td>48.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Outwards</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>62.3</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>61.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>USA</strong></td>
<td>Inwards</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>15.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Outwards</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>20.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>France</strong></td>
<td>Inwards</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>34.3</td>
<td>40.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Outwards</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>33.5</td>
<td>46.9</td>
<td>54.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EU</strong></td>
<td>Inwards</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>39.0</td>
<td>40.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Outwards</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>36.1</td>
<td>44.9</td>
<td>48.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Developed countries</strong></td>
<td>Inwards</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>24.9</td>
<td>27.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Outwards</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>30.8</td>
<td>33.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 5.2 - Matrix of European inward FDI performance and potential, 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High FDI Performance</th>
<th>Low FDI Performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Front runners</strong></td>
<td><strong>Below potential</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Sweden, UK</td>
<td>Austria, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Norway, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Above potential</strong></td>
<td><strong>Under performers</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albania, Macedonia</td>
<td>Turkey</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Among the industry sectors that are currently dominating global FDI are energy, automotive, ICT, electronics, telecoms, pharmaceuticals and financial services. Mining and mineral extraction have also grown in importance. But we are still seeing a decline in primary and

---

4 The indices are calculated by UNCTD based on 12 economic and performance indicators.
manufacturing investment and a rise in the proportion of service based investment. Services now represent two thirds of total global FDI flows.

5.2 UK Foreign Direct Investment

In terms of overall FDI performance the UK still remains dominant in Europe and is second only to the US in having the greatest inflows and outflows of FDI. For the financial year ended March 2008 UK Trade & Investment reported continuing strong growth of inward investment with a total of 1,573 projects from 48 countries, a 10 per cent increase - Table 5.3. Forty-two per cent of projects were new investments; 28 per cent were expansions; and 30 per cent were M&As. The continuing attraction of the UK as a centre for headquarters operations was demonstrated by over 200 companies establishing HQs here in 2007/08.

The United States continued to be the main source of investment projects into the UK with 30 per cent of the total. There were significant increases in projects from Germany and Japan, the second and third largest investor countries, and projects from India and China continued to grow.

‘Knowledge intensive’ R&D related inward investment saw an increase of 83 per cent and over two-thirds of all inward investment projects were innovative or knowledge driven and in the high-value category now targeted by UKTI. Significant increases were also reported in creative industries, as well as environmental technologies and advanced engineering. The UKTI Inward Investment strategy focuses support on key sectors where the UK is considered to have the strongest competitive offer internationally: creative industries, energy, financial services, ICT and life science (UKTI 2008).

Table 5.3 - UK FDI projects by sector 2007/2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Projects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Software</td>
<td>234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Engineering</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICT</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Services</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Science</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Services</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Technology</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative and Media</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>515</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1573</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: UKTI, 2008
5.3 Attracting high value international investment to the West Midlands

5.3.1 Inward investment policy in the West Midlands

UK Trade & Investment (UKTI) the Government department responsibly for works with the Regional Development Agency (Advantage West Midlands), and other regional partners to create and maintain a Regional International Business Strategy and Action Plan. The International Business Action Plan (IBAP) is developed from and directly supports the West Midlands Economic Strategy (WMES). The WMES is the overarching planning policy document in the region which aims to deliver sustainable economic development and growth to the West Midlands. Within the WMES, attracting international inwards investment is seen as strategic objective. The IBAP is a key element of the WMES delivery framework, seeking to maximise the economic benefits to the Region arising from engagement with the global economy, including attracting an additional 200 international investments in the region by 2011 (AWM, 2008a). The aim is to achieve this by implementing a defined programme of actions set against a number of strategic priorities, with particular implications for the West Midlands knowledge economy – under Priority 3, the intention is firstly, for 75 per cent (200) of international inward investment projects within the region to be defined as knowledge driven and secondly, to increase the percentage of innovative firms supported to trade internationally, with particular focus on increasing the trade and investment performance of universities and other regional sources of knowledge by providing support to identify and secure international customers for R&D activities (AWM, 2008a)

A new region wide International Business Forum (IBF) has been set up with two primary roles:

- To monitor, advise on and contribute to the development and implementation of the International Business Action Plan.
- To act as advocate for AWM on international business issues.

The new IBF will comprise 15 members. It will have private sector representation from a broader spectrum of interested parties including SME exporters, major existing inward investors, Universities, the Minority Business Forum and key businesses with specific global connections into India, China, the enlarged EU and the USA. Birmingham City Council is represents the public sector by virtue of Birmingham’s key role in raising the international profile of the region.

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5 IBF is a successor body to the Regional International Trade Steering Group (RITSG).
5.3.2 Foreign direct investment in the West Midlands

In recent years some 2,300 international businesses have been attracted to the West Midlands region, directly employing 250,000 people - around 10 per cent of the region’s workforce and accounting for 13.2 per cent of regional GVA. However in relative terms the West Midlands has been less successful than many other regions in attracting these businesses and particularly those focusing on higher value added products, services and markets.

While average productivity (in terms of GVA per employee) for international businesses is 33 per cent higher than that of indigenous West Midlands companies, this lags behind all other English regions, Scotland and Wales. The West Midlands also lags behind all other regions in terms of GVA generated by exports per employee.\(^6\)

There were around 100 investment cases in the West Midlands in 2007-08. However, there are now only around half of the number of jobs associated with the average investment compared with the late 1990s (much of the inward investment coming into the region during 1980s and 1990s was low value-added manufacturing).

Sectors particularly prominent in the past three years have been ICT, Business & Professional Services and Automotive Engineering and future inward investment opportunities are more focused around knowledge-driven projects where high level skills and access to the region’s centres of research excellence/universities is increasingly important. There is also a growing shift towards service sector-based inward investment and the region is strongly placed to compete for this type of investment.

Employment in foreign owned businesses is around 15 per cent of the regional total, but varies by local authority area. Most areas are in the 10-20 per cent range, but Solihull, Telford and Coventry are in the 20-30 per cent range while largely rural Shropshire has only 4 per cent.

Attracting more knowledge intensive businesses that supply high value added products and services to international markets is seen as critical to the development of a strong and productive knowledge economy in the region (AWM, 2008a). AWM’s International Business Action Plan identifies a series of key actions to do this, including:

- Focusing activity on six ‘niche clusters’ where the region has strengths based on the availability of market opportunities and an appropriate skills and knowledge base - automotive engineering & aerospace, ICT, business & professional services, environmental technologies, building technologies and medical technologies
- Targeting appropriate foreign companies via a coordinated programme of activity in key overseas markets, disseminating key messages via a network of intermediaries

\(^6\) AWM International Business Action Plan (AWM, 2008a)
5.4 Demand for higher level skills in the West Midlands

In a knowledge based economy, skilled human capital is the most valuable factor of production as productivity and competitiveness increasingly depend on human knowledge and skills. Furthermore, innovation has become crucial for productivity and growth in a global economy which is characterised by short product cycles. The importance of knowledge, creativity and innovation implies the need for people with relevant qualifications as well as the ability to adjust to rapid technological change.

The demand for higher level skills from public sector organisations in the West Midlands compares well with that of other regions - some 50 per cent of staff working in the region’s public sector organisations are qualified to degree level or above (ONS Labour Force Survey, 2007) and knowledge-intensive public services (particularly education and health and social care) have been key drivers of employment growth in recent years (WMRO, 2008). ‘Knowledge assets’ such as universities play a particularly important role in some localities – notably Birmingham, Coventry, Wolverhampton. Between 2001 and 2006 some 22,500 net new jobs have been created in education across the region (WMRO, 2008).

In contrast, less than 24 per cent of the region’s private sector workers are ‘highly skilled’7 - well below the England average of 28 per cent, the South East (29 per cent) and London (42 per cent). This reflects both the region’s historical reliance on low productive sectors and its relatively poor record in attracting knowledge intensive international businesses already discussed. The public sector appears to be ‘mopping up’ the supply of higher qualified people not being recruited by the Region’s relatively under developed private sector knowledge economy. To close the gap the region’s private sector firms would need to recruit an additional 70,000 highly skilled staff.

Within the Region’s private sector, computer services is the only industry of a significant size with more than 40 per cent of the workforce with higher level qualifications. Business & Professional Services, which is one of the Region’s most important private sector knowledge industries in employment terms, has only 34 per cent of its workforce with higher level qualifications, compared with 44 per cent nationally (WMRO, 2006). People with higher level skills going into the industry in the region are more likely to go into lower skilled, lower paid jobs. However, excluding these lower value added activities, knowledge intensity is increasing within this ‘cluster’ and encompasses a range of higher value activities: business and management consultancy; computer consultancy; legal services; and accountancy are highly knowledge intensive which have between 40 per cent and 70 per cent of staff qualified to at least NVQ level 4 or the vocational equivalent (WMRO, 2006).

Skills shortages were less of an issue for West Midlands’ creative and cultural sector employers (compared with employers operating in other sectors) in 2007 (LSC, 2008). The Creative & Media sector8 in particular, does not seem to struggle to attract a pool of

7Defined as employees qualified to degree level or equivalent or above.
8 The ‘Creative & Media’ sector refers to industries covered by Skillset and Creative & Cultural Skills Sector Skills Councils, including: animation, computer games, facilities, film, interactive media, other content creation,
employees that are suitably skilled/qualified to perform available jobs. However, the region’s cultural sector experiences the issue of having vacancies that are hard-to-fill at a rate that exceeds the average for all sectors, with a particular issue with regards to job applicants meeting the required level of work experience (WMRO, 2009). The highest levels of skills gaps in the Creative & Media sector are Manager and Senior Official jobs (32 per cent). The level of skills gaps within Associate Professional and Technical Occupations (21 per cent) is significantly higher than the average for all sectors (5 per cent) (LSC, 2008).

Recent research highlights that many of the region’s businesses are looking to move into higher value added products, services and markets and a quarter indicate that graduate and other higher level skills will be critical to their future business success (WMHEA/LSC/AWM/WMRO, 2008). However, the current relatively low level of demand for higher level skills from the region’s private sector has a significant impact on both the retention and attraction of graduates and other ‘knowledge sector workers’ (WMRO, 2009). Therefore, while more demand for higher level skills will help to improve graduate retention, it will also be important to ensure that the region is perceived as an attractive place to live and work.

However, at the same time as demand for skilled labour is increasing in the region, there has been a relative decline in skilled labour supply in the UK. This is due to a combination of reasons such as demographic changes, a lack of students, notably women, going into in research and science-based subjects (Work Foundation, 2008). In light of these changes, the attraction of the West Midlands to highly skilled migrants is an important issue, but one the region has yet to address.

The ‘Leitch Review of Skills’ (HMT, 2006), sets out a vision for the UK to become a world leader in skills by 2020. The West Midlands Economic Strategy (WMES) (AWM, 2007) and associated Skills Action Plan (AWM, 2008b) have responded to this by committing the region to action to raise the overall level of demand for skills from employers and individuals, to better align the supply and demand for skills and to ensure the effective deployment of skills that will raise productivity and value added in the region. The Strategy emphasises the vital role of high-quality environments in both attracting and retaining highly skilled people and businesses, and confronts the need to stimulate a greater desire for such skills among people living and working in the region. Although one of the priorities revolves around recruiting and retaining graduates, and attracting graduates to the region – the issue of attracting international skilled migrants is not dealt with.
6 METHODOLOGY

6.1 A qualitative approach

The methodology involved qualitative research in the form of semi-structured interviews with TNMs working in creative and knowledge-intensive occupations in the Birmingham city region. With this approach interviewers use a topic guide but do not rely on a rigidly structured question set. Probing techniques are used to encourage respondents to give the fullest answer possible. This technique is used to collect qualitative data by allowing a respondent the time and scope to talk about their opinions on a particular subject, although the focus of the interview is decided by the researcher. The objective is to understand the respondent's point of view rather than make generalisations about behaviour. It uses open-ended questions, some pre-defined and suggested by the researcher and some which arise naturally during the interview. The researcher tries to build a rapport with the respondent and the interview is like a conversation. Therefore, unlike a questionnaire, the wording of questions will not necessarily be the same for all respondents (see Dillon, 1990; Wengraf, 2001 for further on the methodology).

There are a number of strengths and weaknesses/limitations in the use of this methodology – Table 6.1. The method provides a depth of information through the use of open-ended questions that cannot be gained from questionnaires, and it allows the respondent to talk freely about issues and does not constrain their responses through the need to ask / answer predetermined questions. If the interview is videotaped things like body language can be studied at a later date by the researcher. However, a focused interview is difficult - if not impossible - to repeat exactly, since not all of the questions are pre-determined and the respondent is encouraged to talk freely, in depth and detail. A respondent may answer the same question in a different way depending on a number of factors (their mood, how comfortable they feel talking about themselves, etc.) that are impossible for the researcher to control.

Finally, the depth of (personal) information created using this method may make it relatively more difficult to generalise findings from a small group of people to a much larger group. However, this may depend on the nature of the research and the type of questions used. If, for example, the research is designed to discover people’s opinions about something this would be easier to generalise than if the questions were directed at discovering something more personal about respondents.
6.2 Criteria and methods for interviewee selection and structure of the sample

This section describes the criteria and methods used for the selection and sampling of the target groups, namely highly skilled TNMs currently working in creative and knowledge-intensive occupations in Birmingham, as well as the structure of the final sample.

6.2.1 Criteria for selection

Respondents were selected on the basis of the following criteria: 1) they were currently working in specific sub-sectors of the creative knowledge economy based on pre-selected NACE codes (see below); 2) they were highly skilled (educated to at least degree level or an equivalent vocational-level qualification); 3) they had migrated to UK for primarily economic reasons (i.e. not an asylum seeker, refugee, or moved with parents); 4) they had been resident in Birmingham for a minimum of 6 months and a maximum of 10 years.

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1 One interviewee in the Visual and Performing Arts sector initially moved to Birmingham as an asylum seeker but very quickly made a conscious decision to remain in the city to live and work.
6.2.2 Choice of sectors

One creative and two knowledge-intensive sectors have been chosen:

Creative Industries:
1) 90.0: Visual and performing arts

Knowledge Intensive:
1) 70.2: Business consultancy activities
2) 85.42: Higher Education

These sectors were selected; 1) to retain continuity with previous ACRE work packages (WP5 and WP6) in the case of Business and Management consultancy and HE sectors; 2) pragmatism as we have contacts and access to these sectors (for example, we have access to a database of 900 foreign university of Birmingham staff) plus there is statistical evidence that the Business consultancy sector has a relatively high number of migrants; 3) Data on migrants working in individual creative industries sub-sectors is very problematic. However, previous research carried out by members of the ACRE Birmingham team and personal knowledge of the individual sectors indicates that the Music and Visual & Performing arts sector in Birmingham is particularly diverse in terms of nationality.

6.2.3 Size of firm

The size of firms selected is a reflection of the makeup of the individual sectors: The Music, and Visual & Performing Arts sector is composed predominantly of freelance and small companies, with a few larger organisations such as the Symphony Orchestra and the CBSO. The HE sector is composed entirely of large organisations (Universities); the Business and Management consultancy sector is composed of small firms with some large, international firms who have offices in the City. It is here we are able to interview migrants sent to the UK by their companies – Table 6.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NACE 90.0: Visual and Performing Arts</th>
<th>Europe</th>
<th>Rest of World</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freelance</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NACE 70.2: Business and Management Consultancy Activities</th>
<th>Europe</th>
<th>Rest of World</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freelance</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NACE 85.42: Higher Education</th>
<th>Europe</th>
<th>Rest of World</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freelance</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| TOTAL                      | 15     | 14            |

Notes: Using new NACE Rev.2 coding
6.2.4 Structure of the sample

A total of 29 interviews were carried out: 10 from the Visual and Performing Arts sector, 10 from Higher Education and 9 from the Business Consultancy sector – Table 6.2.

We were not been able to control for nationality in the sample or to select EU, A8, New Commonwealth or Rest of the World migrants in proportion with the Birmingham or the West Midlands migrant profile (See Chapter 4). Similarly, it was not possible to control for gender.

In terms of nationality, 2 interviewees came from A8 countries; 13 from EU countries; 9 from New Commonwealth (India, Pakistan, Australia, Canada etc); and 5 from the Rest of the World. 11 interviewees (37.9 per cent of the sample) were female compared to 45 per cent in the Region.

6.2.5 Method of selection of interviewees

There is no regional or city-level database which has detail of the firms where migrants are currently working. The Worker Registration Scheme for A8 migrants provides a postcode for work address only. It is therefore virtually impossible to locate migrants using available databases and impossible to screen for nationality. The following methods were therefore used to obtain our sample:

1. Use of personal industry and business contacts (some contacts from previous ACRE WPs)
2. ‘Snowball’ sampling whereby we asked experts and other interviewees if they knew of suitable people to interview
3. Internet searches to identify migrants working in chosen sectors
4. Contacting senior managers/directors of firms to request interviews with migrant employees.

6.2.6 Expert stakeholder interviews

In addition to interviews with TNMs, it was anticipated that five interviews with policy-makers and other key city and regional stakeholders would take place. However, at the time of the ACRE fieldwork, a major regional report into migration in the West Midlands; ‘The economic impact of migrant workers in the West Midlands’ (Green, Jones and Owen, 2007) had just been published. This report forms the main knowledge-base in the region in relation to migrant workers motivations and their impact on the economy. Furthermore, the West Midlands Strategic Migration Partnership had only recently widened its remit from asylum seekers and refugees to include migrants and had just completed the ‘Regional Migration Scoping Exercise’ (WMSMP, 2007) (See also Chapter 4 of this report for further details of Regional Migration policy). Other than very broadly within the economic impact report (Green et al., 2007) the issue of skilled migration has not been addressed either at a regional or city level, therefore it was extremely difficult to obtain interviews with policy makers who instead referred us to these two reports.
6.3 Structure of semi-structured interviews: Highly skilled TNMs

The key themes covered in the semi-structured interviews were the same for all interviews carried out, and included:

1. Attraction: determining the reasons underlying the decision to come to Birmingham
Why does a professional decide to move (for a brief or long period) to the UK generally and to Birmingham more specifically? What makes the city attractive for a foreigner (role of ‘soft’ and ‘hard’ factors)? How does it attract them on a practical level? What institutions, networks, programmes does it offer?

2. Living and working in Birmingham
What do they like and dislike about living and working in Birmingham (role of ‘soft’ and ‘hard’ factors)? What activities are they involved in outside work (use of cultural and other recreational facilities in city and elsewhere)? How do foreigners interact with others (do they develop networks for social or work reasons)? Why do they choose a particular residential area and what are their opinions about their neighbourhood?

3. Remaining in or moving from Birmingham
What impression do foreigners have of Birmingham? Why do they decide to remain or leave (role of ‘soft’ and ‘hard’ factors)? What institutional facilities exist for foreigners in Birmingham (for example, do they get any help with practical and bureaucratic aspects, with creating networks, and so on, in order to facilitate the entry in the job market)? What more should/could Birmingham offer? What are they looking for in the city?

The full interview topic guide can be found in Appendix 1.

6.4 Conducting interviews

Interviewees were selected using a number of methods: 1) using a database of known firms from previous ACRE work packages; 2) personal contacts in the chosen sub-sectors; 3) web search of firms in chosen sub-sectors; 4) referrals obtained from managers who had already been interviewed.

Interviewees were contacted initially by letter (if the firm had not been previously contacted about ACRE research) or by email or telephone to determine if they were interested in participating. Interviews with expert stakeholders were contacted in a similar way.

The majority of the interviews were conducted face to face by the ACRE researchers between August and November 2008. All of the interviewees agreed for the conversation to be recorded.

The majority of the interviews were conducted at the offices of the interviewee, while some were conducted at a more informal common meeting place such as a café or the Birmingham International Conference Centre. The duration of interviews was on average 45mins.
All interviews were made anonymous and transcribed in full. Transcription took place both in-house and externally using a transcription company based outside the region. For each interview, notes of the most important statements and details about the interview situation were also produced in addition to a full interview transcript.

6.5 Data analysis

After transcribing the recorded interviews, the data were analysed using ENVIVO software and organised into key themes according to the areas of the topic guide detailed above.

6.6 Limitations

The number of interviews conducted in each sub-sector is relatively small and therefore the extent to which the results of this study can be more widely applied to TNMs working in the creative and knowledge-intensive industries in the city-region as a whole should be treated with caution. Also, the study excluded those who may have considered migrating to the UK or the West Midlands but decided to go elsewhere, or those who did not consider the UK or the West Midlands at all. The lack of a detailed database of TNMs working in the creative and knowledge intensive sectors meant it was difficult to sample proportionately according to nationality or gender. Furthermore, securing ‘expat’ interviewees working in larger companies relied heavily on gatekeepers to pass on information to relevant people.
In this section, main results from the qualitative interviews are presented. First, we describe results by sub-sector, followed by key findings from the policy-maker and expert stakeholder interviews. Finally, we make a cross-sector thematic comparison of the results.

7.1 Visual and performing arts

7.1.1 Overview of TNMs interviewed

Interviewees were young - all were between 29 and 36 years of age; very well educated - all having at least a first degree and the majority also holding a postgraduate qualification; Females outnumbered males in the sample (60 per cent female); the majority (60 per cent of the sample were freelance/self employed. All had been living and working in the UK for less than 10 years – Table 7.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee reference</th>
<th>Job Title</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Highest level of education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CI1</td>
<td>Research &amp; Intelligence Manager</td>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>MA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CI2</td>
<td>Freelance Artist</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>BA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CI3</td>
<td>Freelance Animator</td>
<td>Greek</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>MA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CI4</td>
<td>Freelance Artist</td>
<td>Taiwanese</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>MA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CI5</td>
<td>Exhibitions Coordinator</td>
<td>Australian</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>MA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CI6</td>
<td>Director/Freelance Musician</td>
<td>Kurdish</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>MA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CI7</td>
<td>Communications Manager</td>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>MA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CI8</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Australian</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>MA</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Freelance Visual Artist</td>
<td>Polish</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>MA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.1.2 Motivation for coming to the UK

Three of the interviewees were living and working elsewhere in the UK before moving to Birmingham: two were working in the creative industries in London (one working there for 6 years, the other working only temporarily for a few months prior to getting a job in Birmingham). One interviewee was undertaking a foundation degree in Kent prior to moving to Birmingham for further study. However, few of the other interviewees had much previous experience of the UK prior to deciding to move here. One had visited as part of a school educational visit about 20 years ago (and had visited Birmingham as part of this visit, so had
some experience of the city, albeit prior of any current regeneration), the other had visited the UK as part of international travels, again about 10 years ago (lived in South of England) but not in a professional/working capacity at that stage. The two Polish interviewees had recently visited the West Midlands prior to deciding to migrate to the region. Both had come to the region as part of university studies and had returned to their home countries to complete their degrees before deciding to return to the West Midlands to live/work here.

It is important to separate out interviewee’s motivations for migrating to the UK in general rather than their motivation for choosing the West Midlands or Birmingham more specifically. A number of reasons were cited for choosing to move to the UK, which were a mix of ‘hard’ economic (better job prospects in creative industries sector, ease of setting up as a freelancer, familiarity with UK systems) and ‘soft’ quality of life (related to career/professional development as well as personal development) factors:

**Economic factors:**

- Better job prospects for working in creative industries in the UK than in home country
  
  ‘I found it quite, well, relatively easy to find employment in creative industry which is, it was for me surprising because I was sure, I’m still sure that if I stayed in Poland I wouldn’t be given so many opportunities and chances to do, you know, do what I’m, really stay with my occupation rather than try to do something completely different and basically just earn money.’ (CI10)

- The employment system for setting up as a freelance more straightforward in the UK
  
  ‘Well first of all what really attracted me was a very straightforward self employment system….the bureaucracy is down to a minimum. This was very, very helpful as a first step forward.’ (CI10)

- Familiarity with UK systems/ease of working (dual citizenship means already have bank account/Niño/NHS etc)
  
  ‘I’ve got a dual citizenship passport – so I have a British passport…it’s very easy, I already have a bank account, I already have a national insurance number, I had NHS…’ (CI5)

**Quality of life factors:**

- The opportunity to study/live in another country/culture
  
  ‘...it was more the idea of coming to a different culture that I wanted to explore rather than the specific area’ (CI3)

  ‘I came here as an opportunity. I had had in my mind for a long time coming to England to live and work.’ (CI8)
Opportunity to gain qualification in specific area/no equivalent courses in home country

‘I think compared to Sweden and the UK there was the opportunity to study visual arts and in Sweden there maybe 3 Universities with 20 places at each place, so there is almost no possibility to get into these places at that time of your life you have to be more maybe 25 and have quite a lot of experience.’ (CI2)

‘...because at the time....the course I wanted to do which was Graphic Design, there wasn’t - in Greece there wasn’t an equivalent in academia’ (CI3)

Career/personal development/to develop a more international profile

‘I mean the main reason was really to get out of XXXX and to see the world and develop my career as a more international artist I suppose. I think that’s probably the motivation because....to break through that sort of international market at the time I felt like I needed to develop my knowledge of international markets.’ (CI4)

Travel/new experiences/ see the world (also relates to career/personal development)

‘...apart from career opportunities - because I really wanted to, kind of, I guess experience more sort of international contemporary artists and art and projects, because Australia’s quite, you know, Australia can be quite isolated in some ways.....but aside from that, the other, sort of, motivation for being in the UK was to travel, you know, the accessibility to Europe from here’ (CI5)

7.1.3 Motivation to live/work in Birmingham/West Midlands

All interviewees had lived/worked in the West Midlands for less than 10 years and four had lived/worked in the West Midlands for less than 3 years. The majority (6 out of the 10 interviewed) initially came to the West Midlands region for educational reasons: Four of these interviewees chose to undertake a degree or masters course in the West Midlands (BA Graphic Design/MA Moving Image – Coventry University; BA and MA fine Art – Birmingham City University (BCU); MA Creative and Media Enterprises –Warwick University). Their reasons for choosing to study in the regions were based on the strength of the courses offered - they felt the institution provided the best courses in their subject area: ‘It was the course, really, because the course sounded really interesting – there wasn’t any other course of its kind.’ (CI1). However, as already discussed in section (7.1.2), for some interviewees, it was more the idea of coming to study in the UK in general rather than an active choice of the West Midlands.

Finally, two interviewees came to the West Midlands initially as part of an exchange programme with their home university and a community arts organisation in the region (the Public in West Bromwich), then choosing to move back to the West Midlands after completing their studies.

The initial links with the region for these interviewees were developed through meeting people at university - some of whom were already working in the local creative industries.
sector - and thereby becoming networked into the local creative industries; or through work placements, internships and voluntary work in the sector which were ways into employment in the creative industries, and these constituted important reasons for interviewees who had studied in the region to remain in the region or to return to the region once graduating:

> 'when I finished my MA I decided to stay...I think this initial link that it was here I already had some contacts in the area and it seemed like loads was going on.' (CI10)

> ‘...my decision was partly formed by the fact that I knew people here and I had friends, so it kind of made sense to come here.’ (CI9). However, the main motivation for this interviewee to return to the region was personal reasons (had met partner who was studying at Birmingham university). ‘I didn’t choose Birmingham... I came here because of personal reasons. So it was sort of an accident really.’ (CI9)

> ‘I was put in touch with an organisation called XXXX...and I was doing my internship with them, and that’s how I kind of went into the arts....So I did my internship with XXXX and then and stayed and worked for them for a year.’ (CI1). ‘I would be honest, it wasn’t a conscious choice as such, it was the fact that I moved here [Birmingham] with my first job, well my internship, really.’ (CI1)

> ‘...as soon as I start my MA and I meet people from the MA - some people older than me that were already working in the region, and suddenly you are in a network of artists that the references into the City of Birmingham in terms of cultural events and art events are happening more often and more often and then you start getting more clued up to the idea of coming here and seeing what’s happening.’ (CI3)

The remaining four interviewees had all completed their education in their home countries and all had previous work experience in the creative industries sector before coming to the West Midlands/UK. One interviewee had an established PR/media career in London, but decided to relocate to Birmingham for better career opportunities and because the creative sector in Birmingham was perceived to be more ethnically integrated than in London:

> ‘Wherever I was working in London, basically, different media organisations, I was being typecast either to cover Asian stories or because I worked in PR agencies also, you know, handling Asian clients. And one of the things I noticed about Birmingham ....was that a large amount of ethnic population was working in mainstream media, which I wanted to do’: ‘so, yeah, that was one of the reasons I moved to Birmingham it’s quite ethically diverse but also it’s quite integrated.’ (CI7)

Two interviewees had been travelling in Europe and ended up in the UK/West Midlands almost accidentally and had no strong preferences for where they located - neither of these interviewees had initially intended to live or work in Birmingham:

> ‘I lived in London, as most Australians do, on people’s floors and I lived in Italy for a little bit and in Germany for a little bit and got some work in London which was really great and that work actually led directly to an interview opportunity, which got me a job here in Birmingham.’ (CI8) - For this interviewee the job offer was the only reason for moving to Birmingham: ‘Honestly, I hadn’t really thought of moving to Birmingham until I was aware of the job.’ (CI8).
The other had ended up in the Midlands because of family living in the region, and had an intention to be based in the UK not Birmingham in particular, however this interviewee was offered a job in the creative sector within a short time of moving to the city and so decided to remain in Birmingham for this reason. The final interviewee had initially come to the West Midlands as an asylum seeker and had no say in the choice of location.

The evidence suggests that locating in the West Midlands was largely attributable to serendipity, rather than a positive choice. This mirrors the findings of the recent West Midlands migration study (WMRO, 2007). However, most interviewees cited a number of advantages of being located in Birmingham. The multicultural aspect of the city in general and the acceptance of different minority groups was a particularly strong influencing factor for locating in Birmingham:

‘Soft’ factors
- Multicultural city, diversity of population (race, colour, ethnicity, religion)/ acceptance of foreigners
- General friendliness of people
- Close cultural/creative networks in city

‘Hard’ economic factors
- Lower cost of living (than London)
- International accessibility (airport); transport infrastructure and public transport
- Central location within UK, ease of access to London and elsewhere
- Employment opportunities of being in a big city

Therefore, while the city itself did not seem to play an important part in initially attracting interviewees, the creative industries/cultural scene in Birmingham and the job opportunities in the sector, the acceptance of foreigners and the welcoming nature of the people, as well as hard factors associated with transport, cost of living, central location etc seem to have played an important part in retaining these individuals once they graduated.

‘I mean, it’s a very, professional, friendly city. I mean, within these two square miles, there’s everything in here, all the arts organisations over here, if you want to make creative partners over here, Most of the local newspapers are based round here, local media is just round the block.’ (C17)

‘...I moved here and I found the place quite nice, it was cheap to live in, I made loads of friends, it’s fairly easy to get around. I think the fact that it’s multicultural helped as well, being, you know, somebody who’s not from this country. You do feel more accepted, I guess, though it wasn’t such a big factor, I don’t think but, you know, I can see that it would be a factor for other people.’ (C11)

‘Another thing which was really, really attractive, every time I left West Midlands and Birmingham in particular it felt like its transport, well maybe apart from London, is not really good and the West Midlands for me as self employed just starting and it was quite important that I could travel cheaply.’ (C10)
‘...the other reason I wanted to stay is because I do want to go to London but I thought it would be too expensive, you know, to be honest, and a lot of my friends did and, you know, in your, sort of, first or second job in this country, it is a struggle and a half to live in London, so I decided not to.’ (C11).

‘One of the things was that it had an International Airport and I did think that great, it is easy for me to go between Sweden and here. But then when the low cost Airlines came in, there is no direct flights between Birmingham, so I always have to go to London anyway.’ (C12)

‘Birmingham is not such a bad place to be, it’s really central to everywhere in the UK, it’s got a good international airport, only an hour and a half from London on the train, and short drives from other cities and other airports, you know, and so we, kind of, thought, well, maybe we’ll stay.’ (C15)

‘I found out that people here, because they [are] used to live and work with foreigners and refugees, asylum seekers, now they are more friendly here and we are not a stranger anymore.’ (C16)

‘If you need any job it is easy in Birmingham because it is a big city, you can find a job and especially for my career, Birmingham is just wonderful because it is very diverse and very multi cultural city and for me [there are]..... many, many different opportunities in Birmingham for me to take it, to develop and improve my career, my skills and to continue.’ (C16)

Most of the interviewees knew very little, if anything, about Birmingham or the West Midlands region before arriving. For some, the city and what to expect was a complete unknown:

‘I knew it was the second biggest city.’ (C12);

‘Just a name and that it’s somewhere in the middle of the country and that was it really before coming here for the first time... So it’s not that I was particularly attracted to Birmingham as a city.’ (C19);

‘Birmingham meant as much as anywhere else, because I didn’t really know any of the context, I just knew it’s one of the biggest cities close to campus, that’s all I knew pretty much.’; ‘I’d applied to two universities...one in London, one in Birmingham, I didn’t really know enough about the geographical differences between the two, you know, they were just two cities for me.’ (C11).

For others, the perception was quite negative of a post-industrial, grey city. A couple of interviewees commented on the ‘bad press’ that Birmingham got, and the perception of high crime rates:

‘I knew that Birmingham was [an] industrial city, post industrial city and that I could expect completely different environment, but at the same time seeing so much concrete in one go was quite overwhelming’ (C110);
‘It’s more like this post-industrial image, so I didn’t know too much about it’ (CI4)

‘I’ll be honest, Birmingham, I find it quite a grey city. So my initial view of Birmingham, still to a certain level, it’s still quite a grey city.’ (CI7)

‘Well, I think before I moved here I had a lot of negative press about Birmingham, it was, like, oh my God, you know, you’re going to get shot and whatever.’ (CI1)

‘The West Midlands - I used to joke that when I was moving here that the best thing about Birmingham was that it was easy to leave.’ (CI8)

Two interviewees commented that the perception from university peers was that being a creative based in Birmingham was not as good as being based in London - that you were somehow inferior or settling for second best by remaining in the West Midlands:

‘It was people at university and, you know, other people on my course and things like that. It was seen as a - there’s enough negativity around it to say, you know, it’s almost like you’re settling for less, you know, you could have gone to - you could have done so many bigger things with your life, you know, because you came to Warwick and you did this fabulous course or whatever, so it did seem like people were saying that, you know, ‘I can’t believe you’re settling for Birmingham, when you could have done so much better!’’ (CI1)

‘...if I go anywhere else in the UK and say I live in Birmingham, people ask me why, why you are an artist and you live in Birmingham, because they don’t see Birmingham as a city where creative industries are developed.’ (CI9)

However, there were also some positive perceptions about living/working in Birmingham, relating to the multicultural/ethnic diversity of the population, and the overall friendliness of people living there, especially when compared to London:

‘People said that, you know, it’s very multicultural, people are friendly, because the comparison is always between London and Birmingham.’ (CI1)

‘I knew about it [ethnic diversity of region] after my first visit which was a year before I decided to move and I knew it was encouraging in terms of, I knew that my accent would not seem strange because you have so many strange accents around. So yes definitely it was helping that you did not feel like an outsider, because everybody seems to be from somewhere else.’ (CI10)

Perceptions about the West Midlands came from a number of sources:

- Books (CI4, CI10)
- English lessons (CI10)
- People who had previously studied in the region/other students/Tutors (CI3, CI1, CI3)
- Friends (CI1)
- TV/the Media (CI8, CI1, CI9)
For those looking at alternative locations to Birmingham, most had initially considered London. However, the cost of tuition fees and living expenses were considered prohibitive:

‘Well, London, but then tuition fees were much higher and I had to consider living expenses and other things...’ (CI4)

‘I had thought of going to London, but then the cost of living, so that was kind of one of the things. But I really wanted to live in a big city, so I guess the kind of second biggest city was the next best thing.’ (CI2)

‘I do want to go to London but I thought it would be too expensive, you know, to be honest, and a lot of my friends did and, you know, in your, sort of, first or second job in this country, it is a struggle and a half to live in London, so I decided not to.’ (CI1)

One interviewee considered Leicester because of the similar degree of multiculturalism/ethnic diversity in the city as Birmingham, but decided against it because it was felt to be even less attractive physically than Birmingham:

‘the reason I decided against moving to Leicester was it’s even greyer than Birmingham!’ (CI7)

Only two interviewees had not considering alternatives to Birmingham. One wanted to work with a specific organisation (but interestingly also cited the lower cost of living in comparison with London as an advantage of migrating to the region):

‘No, well I hadn’t been looking. I knew about XXXX Arts and I heard about their work, so I mostly - because I was interested in carrying on with my research for my MA - so I wasn’t really looking at any other opportunities and any other places. And it was quite actually attractive that I knew that I can, I’ll have enough money to pay my rent, because Birmingham is reasonably cheap compared to London and I looked into cost of living.’ (CI10)

The other interviewee had moved because of personal reasons (partner was studying at university in the city), so there was no other option at the time.

The two interviewees who had been travelling and ended up in the region accidentally were considering alternatives generally (in UK or Europe), but no specific locations were mentioned.

Perhaps because of the life stage of the interviewees – they were young, the majority coming over to study at university; none were married or had children prior to moving to migrating to the West Midlands - the majority of interviewees made the decision to come to the UK/West Midlands themselves and were not influenced by family members. Only one interviewee was influenced in coming to the region because her partner was studying at Birmingham.
University. For the same reasons, none of the interviewees brought family with them or intend to bring family members over in the future.

7.1.4 Intended length of stay in the West Midlands

Interviewees had quite ambivalent about the length of time they intended to live/work in Birmingham/West Midlands before they arrived. For those in education, it was mainly just to complete studies/partners studies and then leave; others were just going to try out the job/see what opportunities there were and what living in the city was like –there were no real plans to remain long-term:

‘Before I arrived, I only planned to do my MA then go back because I had a job commitment in Taiwan.’ (CI4).

‘I thought I would stay for three years just for my BA’ (CI2)

‘Just for about a year, I think it was, until he was finished [his degree];’ ‘Temporary about a year or two, so….because we were thinking straight away about going somewhere else even to a different country.’ (CI9)

‘I was just going to try it out and see how it goes. I didn’t have any set length of time, but I think in the back of my head, you know, thinking about it and I’d always thought I’d move to London at some point, though I didn’t, you know, I didn’t know when.’ (CI1)

‘Initially, when I took this position, it was interim post for three months and basically, for me, that three months was the testing ground….Testing Birmingham, like, can I live here?’ (CI7)

‘I don’t tend to work on that sort of – I don’t schedule stuff. I just came here to sort of find a job while being a freelancer. To find a project to work with. At the beginning I wanted to find something that was a lot more stable to be honest.’ (CI3)

Plans for remaining in Birmingham generally depended on future job/career opportunities (for self and partner/spouse) in Birmingham. Several interviewees had remained in Birmingham much longer than initially intended (for example, one interviewee had originally intended to stay in Birmingham for 3 years until completing education but had found work in the creative sector and began work as a freelancer and had remained in the city for 10 years). Somewhat worryingly, several interviewees felt that they would leave Birmingham in quite soon - a time period of around 2 years was mentioned - so interviewees were still thinking of Birmingham on a temporary basis and were not considering settling in the region on a long-term basis. This was partly due to the ‘footloose’ nature of creatives - wanting new experiences and to sample life in other cities, and there was also the pull to London or other cities that were perceived to be more ‘creative’ (see also section 7.1.5):

‘I came here with an idea to leave’; ‘it might be we will stay here for another couple of years I don’t know.’ (CI9);
‘...probably maximum of 2 years.’ (C12);

‘Well, I think it really depends because we can see how it’s developing in terms of our own career and because the more I do here, the more I feel like I belong here, but then at the same time, like all young artists, we’re still looking at London and thinking whether I should go to London or not.’ (C14).

‘...at least for a couple of years, but I intend to move back to London in a couple of year’s time, you know, I like the city, I mean, I don’t disregard the city, but, like I said, the opportunities there are in Birmingham, they’re very limited after a certain level, there’s a full stop to that. And you can’t go anywhere, you know.’ (C17)

‘...now that I’ve got this job, absolutely, we’ll, kind of, you know, give it another couple of years and, sort of, you know, see where we are at that stage.’ (C15)

‘we probably won’t be here in Birmingham for a lot longer’; ‘we do want to live in New York’; ‘Well, it is an opportunity to live there for a spell. We won’t live there forever.’ (C18)

Only one interviewee intended to remain in Birmingham long term and had no plans to leave the city:

7.1.5 Remaining in Birmingham /West Midlands

Reasons for remaining in Birmingham involved a combination of the following (mainly ‘soft’) factors:

♦ Meeting husband/wife (partner/spouse from UK)
♦ Better job opportunities (especially for freelancers )/job satisfaction
♦ Friends/personal networks
♦ Strong connections to creative arts community/professional networks
♦ Enjoying life in the city/ ‘not as bad as expected’

◆ Meeting husband/wife
Three interviewees (C18, C12 and C14) had met their husband/wife while working in Birmingham/West Midlands. All three spouses were from the UK, and were also working in the creative industries sector in the region, so this was a strong reason for remaining in Birmingham.

‘It’s different now of course because, well, I’m married now and I have to consider my partner as the reason to stay, although he doesn’t mind going back to XXXX, but I think we just want to see whether we can actually build something here.’ (C14) 

‘The reasons I remained in Birmingham were to establish the international connections whist doing some art projects and also because of the marriage.’ (C14) 

‘The reason I have stayed is because I have found my husband’ (C12)
• Job satisfaction/ better job opportunities

Satisfaction with current job as well as better/more opportunities to work in creative industries (particularly as a freelancer), were important reasons to remain in Birmingham:

‘I think it’s the job. It’s job satisfaction and I’m closely associated with the culture industry over here. So, yeah, that’s what’s basically keeping me here. It’s quite fun.’ (CI7)

‘I think it is the reason I have stayed because opportunities have really been given to me and that has been one of the main reason for me staying here.’ ; ‘I was advised to leave Birmingham because I was told there was no cultural activities for visual artists here. But I saw that as an opportunity to start something. At the time the art scene was relatively small so it was easy to get to know people and work together to initiate projects.’ (CI2)

For one interviewee, there was the desire to ‘give back’ something to the city (CI3):

‘I have some ideas and some sort of projects that I will like to carry on working with here and just because I have got a lot from working here and I want – this is going to sound cheesy - but I want to give back and initiate my own ideas if you want and now I know people that I would be very happy to work with.’ (CI3)

There were also some negative reasons for remaining in Birmingham:

‘Well to be honest we’re a bit stuck here, because we don’t get enough work to save enough money to go anywhere else. But we get enough work to keep us going, so it’s not that we have to move somewhere. But it’s not the kind of work that we want to get really.’ (CI9)

• Personal/professional networks and strong connections creative arts community

The fairly small size of the cultural sector in Birmingham, meant colleagues often became close friends - so an intertwining of professional and social networks and strong connections and involvement in the creative arts community was an important reason for some to remain in the city:

‘with my small group of friends, two of whom still live around the corner from us, even though we have moved a lot, we are very steeped - they have been in Birmingham for probably an additional 5 years on top of me - very steeped into the kind of arts community - Birmingham Future and Birmingham Forward and all kind of this vision of what Birmingham could be, the potential of the city. They were colleagues of mine at the XXXX, but we spend a lot of time with them and just gradually widened our circle of friends’ (CI8)

‘...because the whole cultural scene is quite closely intertwined with each other, you know, we work a lot with the Birmingham REP, Symphony Hall team, you know... the Hippodrome, Audience Central and all these people, so it was pretty fast and I made a good circle, so I liked it here and plus the rent is very low, so.’ (CI7)
As already discussed, the majority of interviewees did not see themselves remaining in Birmingham on a long-term basis - they were mobile and ‘footloose’ both in terms of their personal and career aspirations - wanting to experience life in other cities (Berlin, Chicago, Bristol, London, Spain/Southern Europe, Melbourne) and fresh challenges etc. Partly, this was associated with better ‘quality of life’ (actual or perceived) in other cities.

However, there were also a number of factors acting to ‘push’ interviewees from the region. Many were related to lack of perceived or actual job and career opportunities, such as a lack of client base (for commissions); difficulty for career progression above a certain level; little national exposure of Birmingham based arts; perceived general lack of council support for artists and few artist led spaces/gallery spaces or studio spaces to hire in city; a proliferation of short-term contracts.

- Limited scope above a certain level for career progression in Birmingham

  ‘...I feel like in order to move on I need to move somewhere else. Which is a shame really because I do like Birmingham, I hated it at first, but...’ (CI9)

  ‘I intend to move back to London in a couple of year’s time, you know, I like the city, I mean, I don’t disregard the city, but, like I said, the opportunities there are in Birmingham, they’re very limited after a certain level, there’s a full stop to that. And you can’t go anywhere, you know, so.’ (CI7).

  ‘...in London, if you do a project like that, it’ll be picked up instantly by one of the main stations, you know, and then there’ll be a bigger opportunity for you to develop as a professional and there’ll be more funding...’ (CI7)

- Lots of training opportunities but few commissions etc

  ‘Well there are plenty of opportunities with creative partnerships, again it’s education and not many commissions for artists and not many opportunities for doing exhibitions or projects or for developing your own practice.’ (CI9)

  ‘the support you get is training so it’s giving other people jobs, the people that are in the training for, you know, so all the creative something courses which are useful, like the first time you do it, but you perhaps need one or two and there’s so much on offer, but not much work. Like once you’ve done that there’s not much development afterwards.’ (CI9)

- Lack of support for artists from city council

  ‘...making money seems to be the priority for the city council or to host promotional events for the city. No organic development seems to be supported or appreciated by the city council.’ (CI2)

- Few artist led spaces/gallery spaces or studio spaces to hire in city

  ‘...Birmingham it was quite up and coming for a while, a couple of years ago, but now it’s kind of a lot of artist led spaces closed down and there’s not really much in terms of, not many gallery spaces, not many studio spaces and it just feels like you need to kind of
do it yourself. Which is fine, but if there is not much else going on, it’s not, there’s no infrastructure or not enough infrastructure.’ (CI9)

‘There are only two [radio studios] in the whole of Birmingham...there’s two places you can actually hire.’; ‘London, you can pick up a phone call, you have, like, hundreds of options of hiring radio studios to do workshops over there, so although I know it’s a big city and all that, but these are the things which attract professionals to a city, you know, they should develop more of these facilities in the city’ (CI7)

• Proliferation of short term contracts
Insecurity (characteristic of sector) was a major issue. One interviewee had recently moved from Birmingham to the South of England for a longer term contract:

‘I couldn’t find the opportunities like this one in Birmingham that my involvement in Birmingham was really lasting a few months or sometimes, just a few weeks. So these opportunities, well there was loads of them, but they were, you know, very short ones and I found a residency down south for six months. They kept me here for a bit longer.’; ‘...I felt that I needed a little bit of security rather than being still on two weeks long contract, or you know one week every month....so I was definitely really desperate to find something long lasting and this opportunity came and it was quite easy to leave Birmingham, which was quite strange. It was quite easy to go.’ (CI10)

• Better ‘quality of life’ elsewhere
‘I keep realising that the environment in terms of architecture, I felt that some of the places, some of the building areas, some open spaces in West Midlands, just hurt you visually’ (CI10)

‘I was essentially attracted to south, also in terms of weather even, it was warmer. Simply when I was travelling down in a train it was just three hours on a train, actually less and it was warmer and sunnier and greener.’ (CI10)

‘I [was] also attracted to the fact that it’s completely different way of living here and now when I go back to West Midlands, it seems really crowded and really the pace of life is much faster and although it’s still, we’re not talking about, you know, London pace of life is still is faster.’ (CI10)

‘...it is not quite so much what I don’t like about Birmingham but what I prefer, or what I think I prefer, about other places. Melbourne in Australia is my city of choice - that is where I want to be.’; ‘I think it is something to do with quality of life, weather, quality of food, quality of produce, quality of wine, quality of experience - you can plan a barbeque, you know, it is things like that. Now maybe it is because emotionally I had some very formative experiences in Melbourne, it could be something as simple as that.’ (CI8)

‘I think there’d get a point where I think just, you know, enough is enough of being in a city and, because ultimately we both know that it’s not where we want to be, I know it’s definitely not where I want to be, you know, living in a city for a long time.’ (CI5)
‘There seems to be no focus on leisure in Birmingham’; ‘There is no large public swimming baths. People seem very stressed and unfriendly. The fruit and vegetable market in the centre of the city is very hostile and unfriendly and the city doesn’t seem to have any sense of basic ‘service’ towards costumers.’ (CI2)

- General desire for new challenges

  ‘I do, at some point, fairly soon, actually, want to move out, but, I mean, there isn’t anything pushing me, there’s nothing about the city that’s pushing me out of there, as such, I just feel that I’m ready for other challenges.’ ‘I mean, to be honest, I think, you know, the more I live it, I like it better, but I don’t see myself just staying here for, you know, for the rest of my life or for anything.’ (CI1)

  ‘Well, I think it really depends because we can see how it’s developing in terms of our own culture and because the more I do here, the more I feel like I belong here, but then at the same time like all young artists we’re still looking at London and thinking whether I should go to London or not.’ (CI4)

- Birmingham not a good place to have a family

Although none of the interviewees currently had children, starting a family would be one of the main reasons for considering moving from Birmingham. The housing offer in Birmingham would become an issue for those currently living in or near the city centre – flats/lack of outdoor space, as well as more generic ‘quality of life’ issues associated with living in a city – levels of air pollution, worries about safe areas to play. One interviewee felt Birmingham did not offer much in the way of activities for young children; ‘I have no idea were I could take them to have a nice time.’ (CI2).

Several interviewees were considering going ‘back home’ as the long term option (to be near family and friends or if considering starting a family). However, a range of other cities were also being considered. In the UK this was predominantly London but also Bristol:

  ‘like all young artists we’re still looking at London and thinking whether I should go to London or not.’ (CI4)

  ‘We are thinking about Bristol, London, because of what I do and what he does and just trying to look where there are more possibilities and opportunities.’ (CI9)

Perceptions of Bristol were of being very vibrant and creative city, as well as being physically more attractive than Birmingham:

  ‘there’s quite vibrant arts and cultural scene again and there’s a lot happening and a lot more opportunities. That’s my perception. And it’s also a nicer city.’; ‘Visually and it’s by water you know’; ‘the city centre it’s nicer, because you can just walk around or you can go on a bike, that’s also important to me personally.’ (CI9)

Internationally - New York, Paris, Chicago, or Berlin were preferred options. One interviewee wanted to move to rural Southern England or Spain.
A number of reasons for choice of location some ‘quality of life’ related, others related to potential of work in creative industries:

- More ‘cosmopolitan’ feel of cities
- Better ‘quality of life’ (weather, physical environment, outdoors recreation)
- More vibrant culturally
- More possibilities/opportunities for working and developing career in creative industries

7.1.6 Career and job situation

Half the interviewees were working prior to coming to the UK/West Midlands - all were working full-time in arts/creative industries positions (music teacher, arts management, gallery curator, art teacher, media planner). Only three interviewees continued to develop these same career paths when in the UK. The other two pursued further studies in the UK and changed careers as a result: one became a full-time freelance artist and the other a research and intelligence manager for a regional arts marketing and audience development agency.

The remaining five interviewees had either come to the UK immediately after completing their education; or to continue their education in the UK and none were not working prior to coming to the UK.

As discussed in section 7.1.3., initial employment in the creative industries was gained mainly through work placements, internships and voluntary work in the sector which led on to further positions (same or different organisation) as well as building up contacts in the sector:

'It was quite specific actually because I had worked as an intern at XXXX when I was a student - so it sort of led on from being a student to building up contacts while I was studying' (CI2)

'...I applied just for casual work at XXXX and did that. ’; ‘and during that time, I also did an internship for two months...just to kind of get a foot in the door and also get to know the staff a bit more and just to, kind of, see whether, you know, if there was a job to come up, would I really, you know, want to be, considered for that.' (CI5).

'I was put in touch with an organisation called XXXX, who are a South Asian arts development agency, and I was doing my internship with them and that’s how I, kind of, went into the arts.’ ‘I did my internship at XXXX and then stayed and worked with them for a year.’ (C11)

Only one interviewee used a recruitment agency working with professionals in creative arts. This interviewee commented on the ‘hidden’ employment in creative industries/arts in Birmingham:

'I got this job through XXXX, and they are specialists and they found me the job. Before that, for three months, I had, myself, looked for different jobs in different places, you know, and it was very hard to find a job over here, but whereas XXXX, literally in the morning I sent my CV, in the evening I got a call, 'hey we’ve found a job for you'. And
I’m pretty good at googling and stuff, I’m very good at finding things, and I couldn’t locate it anywhere, so there’s a lot of internal recruitment and there’s a lot of, I don’t know, hidden recruitment happening over here.’ (CI7)

Some interviewees felt that the UK, rather than Birmingham specifically, had improved their career prospects – giving them the international exposure they needed and enabled them to pursue a career in creative arts that they would have found difficult to achieve in their home countries. However, several of the freelancers though that while Birmingham was a good place to start out on a career, it was not a good place to get to the next level (sector support geared to start-ups and lack of client base), and for them to advance, they would have to move elsewhere - one interviewee also mentioned that the external negative perception of Birmingham not being a particularly cutting edge creative city, was a worry and potentially harmful to her career. However, for those employed in the creative sector in Birmingham, the market was ‘less saturated’ than London, so it was considered easier to progress quickly up the career ladder, although the lack of large organisations as well as a good client base in the region prevented people getting to the highest level in their career. One interviewee felt that being in Birmingham was a career advantage because there were greater opportunities for ethnic minorities to work in ‘mainstream’ creative industries in Birmingham compared with London.

7.1.7 Activities outside of work/for relaxation

Most respondents enjoyed an active cultural life outside work time. They visited galleries, went to performances, events and concerts. Two were active amateur participants: one sang in a choir, the other was involved in theatre as an actor. Many liked to hang out with friends, socializing with friends in the pub, or café/restaurants.

Interviewees frequented establishment-high culture venues (including The Rep, the Symphony Hall, the CBSO, The Hippodrome, the Drum, Ikon Gallery), but also alternative-underground places (for example the Rainbow in Digbeth which is an independent old Victorian pub which also hosts live music events and street festivals) and performances known to them as insiders.

Parks and green spaces and the canal network were popular as places to unwind and relax (especially Cannon Hill Park in Edgbaston). Shopping in alternative spaces, flea markets, independents and eating in offbeat places were popular. Access to the surrounding countryside (and to National Trust properties like Coombes Abbey) was seen as important and the city’s proximity to an attractive hinterland was cited a couple of times.

Interviewees made use of the city as well as its surroundings - they enjoyed spending time in the more alternative areas of Birmingham, such as Digbeth and also the more ‘boho’ urban villages where they lived (particularly Moseley and Kings Heath). However, the city centre was still a convenient meeting place and is also where the high cultural institutions, art galleries, theatres and concert halls are located. The rural countryside surrounding Birmingham was popular for relaxation and ‘getting away from it all’.
7.1.8 Perceptions of the city: ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ factors

The interviewees liked many things about the city. They saw people as friendly and welcoming. For example they liked signs in other languages on bus stops which indicated that newcomers were recognised and offered support: ‘on bus shelters, you know, they have these little signs which are in different European languages which is, kind of, cute actually, because it feels like somebody’s making an effort, you know, I haven’t seen it in any other cities.’ (CI1).

Apart from the fact that it was a multi-ethnic city where outsiders were accepted and integrated well they also valued it as a place where diversity encouraged innovation. This rich-mix of cultures enabled creative professionals to innovate artistically and create new ‘inter-cultural’ products (performances, compositions etc). One respondent described how he drew on a variety of traditions to produce new hybrid artistic creations:

‘I maybe know about 30 musicians here in Birmingham and they are from different nationalities, different backgrounds and ... now we have got another band which I am the coordinator of this band, it is called XXXX - we are about 8 - 9 different nationalities in one band which we established 2006.’ ‘...without XXXX, without the band, we couldn’t work together. I think people here they want to break all the barriers. If I am Kurdish I don’t want to only work on the Kurdish music, no I want to work on the Zimbabwe music as well, bring those styles. Now I am working on the Reggae style with Kurdish music, I want to mix it now - rap - mix it with that - because we don’t have a Kurdish rap and I want to mix it, Kurdish Rap with say a freehand rap as well - how can we bring together. Now I am working on this kind of stuff which I have got musicians here, I have got the singers here which they can sing and they can play these kind of styles.’ (CI6)

The city was viewed as an honest, non-pretentious city that allows incomers to start new lives there without prejudice, hardworking people can make a future;

‘What do I like about it, I like the fact that it seems to just, kind of, you know, get on with it, I like the fact that it’s a functional place, it doesn’t have, I don’t think it’s got delusions about itself, it’s not like Manchester! It doesn’t have delusions about what it is or what it could be, I like, and I think the history of the city contributes to it, it’s always been somewhere, you know, it’s been a place of industry and business, you know, it’s a hardworking, kind of a place and I like that because I’m, it suits me as a person, I’m like that.’ (CI1)

The heritage of the city and how that was reflected in the built environment was liked. Particularly favoured areas were Jewellery Quarter and the canals. They also liked animated areas of the city:

‘I really love the outdoor market and the, down by St Martins, and I used to spend a lot of time there, actually, not so much anymore now that I’m working, but when I can, I like to shop there, I just love the banter and, you know, the characters and I really like that sort of atmosphere - that thing of people engaging with each other.’ (CI5); ‘the nicest part, the nicest moment of being in Birmingham for me was just the three weeks leading up to Christmas when you had German market on New Street and Victoria Square, because this sort of created for me a sense of place for people to meet, for other reasons than just
There was a certain amount of feeling that Birmingham as a city takes time to get to know, its advantages are not immediately apparent, unlike London for example – Birmingham was considered less ‘brash’, and more interesting because you have to seek out what is going on/explore and get to know the city slowly on a number of levels:

‘London, you can go there and it will throw itself at you, it will fling itself at you, the galleries are amazing, the arts are all over the place, there is the whole West End experience, there is any kind of food you could ever want. Birmingham is a much more subtle place. You can get almost anything you want here, you just need to know where or you need to know someone who knows where and I kind of enjoyed that.’ (CI8)

However, there were also a number of aspects about Birmingham that interviewees disliked. These included: the mainstream commercial/shopping focus of city centre and the lack of niche and independent shops; the drinking culture (mentioned by Indian respondents) and the Broad street commercial entertainment zone which revolved around this; the lack of ‘third places’ (the temporary closure of the Midlands Arts Centre was commented on as a particular loss in this respect); the lack of landmark buildings; the focus on city centre regeneration at the expense of other areas; the dominance of the car and the difficulty of walking or cycling in the city.

Interviewees commented on the underground and invisible cultural activity in Birmingham – and this was seen as both positive and negative. Respondents spoke about an active hidden cultural scene in the city. They enjoyed this edgy aspect of the city’s creative life:

‘…what I really admired here was that people were doing stuff but they weren’t obvious about it. I mean they weren’t bragging about it, so there were a lot of events that were happening - it almost feels like there was an underground sort of energy, creative energy.’ (CI3)

Some interviewees liked the fact that there were two levels of cultural activity existed side by side in Birmingham – the mainstream/established cultural venues and events and underground/alternative places and performances:

‘...I think that there are kind of two levels of arts activity going on here. There is all the kind of - it is not highbrow, but establishment I would say ...like CBSO, BCMG, Birmingham Royal Ballet, The Rep - places like this - the Hippodrome, Alex [Alexandra Theatre] - these are places that are established and then underneath there is this huge, wonderful undercurrent of arts activity happening - like the Flat Pack festival, like Gigbeth, like Seven Inch....like Supersonic and all the people at Capsule - like Vivid - all this under - like most of what Fierce Festival does - and that’s really vibrant I find, sometimes more vibrant than the establishment and I like that about the city.’ (CI8)

Although the lack of a middle ground – something between the very mainstream/established culture and the underground/alternative was seen as a negative by some: They were concerned that it was also difficult for outsiders to know what was going on in the city and that the invisibility of the scene meant that externally the city’s cutting edge arts/culture was not
recognised: ‘It’s also I think part of the reason why Birmingham is not perceived as a city where there’s much happening, although there is quite a lot.’ (CI9)

There was a recognition, however, that the city’s cultural and artistic community was partly complicit in this low profile because they failed to talk up the city as other rival regional cities did. Terms such as ‘self-deprecating’ were used and more negatively ‘cultural envy complex’ to describe attitudes within the city’s cultural community.

7.1.9 Social networks

A few of the interviewees already knew people (student friends) or had family in the region, and through them had temporary accommodation and initial support. Being a higher education student was an important initial point of contact with other people working in the creative industries sector (fellow students who already worked in the sector, or meeting people in the sector through exchanges or placements). This had also raised respondents’ awareness of the possibilities and potential of pursuing a professional cultural life in the city – see also section 7.1.3

Networks were seen as very important to interviewees. They reported that they had access to strong and positive creative networks within Birmingham. All interviewees had involvement in networks most were professional, business and cultural. Interviewees had accessed these through formal and informal means. A couple of people compared Birmingham’s creative networks favourably with London’s: Birmingham’s were considered more collaborative and less competitive than London’s:

‘...in terms of the art community it’s more close, you feel like you’ve made a lot of friends as artists and that’s probably something I can’t imagine in London because if you go to private views every night you see different people in London but here, because the art community is still quite small, you get to know people quite well.’ (CI4); ‘it probably just takes a much longer time in London for people to notice you and recognise you.’ (CI4)

People know each other and therefore there is a level of familiarity between people although you might not know them, you’ve seen them around and you have same references and for me that creates a foundation that it’s a lot more stable, dare I say so? I don’t mean that in London it’s not stable but here you have a foundation to begin with. Where there you have that moment of knowing and meeting and generating an idea where here I think it happens more naturally. And creates that sort of a safe area for people to grow organic within the project.’ (CI10)

Business/professional networks were especially important to freelancers who used them to learn about potential new project work and as support groups with individuals who understood the pressures and isolation of this type of employment.

The cultural identity factor was only important to one respondent. The majority actively wanted to distance themselves from culture of origin networks. They positioned themselves as international, cosmopolitan professionals who took advantage of the fluid and open multi-cultural scene. Many respondents (Swedish, Australian, Polish, Taiwanese, Indian) had
spouses or partners who were British. This group had ambivalent feelings about where home was because of their partners.

7.1.10 Residence and neighbourhood

All interviewees were living within the city boundaries. Only one interviewee lived in the city centre, while most were living in the inner suburbs to the South and West of the centre (Bearwood, Hagley Road, Pershore Road, Ladywood), or the urban villages (Edgbaston, Moseley, Kings Heath), while two interviewees lived in the suburbs to the North of the City (Handsworth, Perry Bar). Interviewees cited a number of criteria for choosing where to live. They liked to be close to city centre; ‘we’re living really central, actually, just up Hagley Road, in Edgbaston so I walk to work every day, it’s twenty minutes, so it’s really convenient.’ (CI5); ‘we’re the kind of people that if you’re going to live in the city, we want to be in the thick of it, you know what I mean, we’ve kind of, if we’ve made that choice not to live in the country…. so we’re close to everything, we don’t need to rely on the car all the time, we can catch, use public transport and we can walk, we really like, you know, to be able to walk to places and be accessible on foot.’ (CI5)

The quality of the environment was important too; ‘It’s a nice area especially at the springtime because the Cannon Hill Park is there and it’s gorgeous and I did used to cycle like- you see that’s another thing, when I was working a lot I used to take my bike and just go for like a ten minute cycle around the park and just come back and it’s beautiful actually. Very nice place.’ (CI3); ‘I like the fact that it’s close enough to the city centre, but is quite, you know, it’s nice and leafy and quiet and so it’s, you know, even though it’s quite close, it’s not, doesn’t have the ill effects of being in the city centre.’ (CI1)

Many were drawn to distinctive neighbourhoods which offered more alternative and less mainstream activities:

‘There is a curry house - called Spice Merchant - in Kings Heath and I went on opening night back in 2001 - and I still go ...and the French Café when it opened in Kings Heath - Maison Merci - it is really nice to have that and have some good French bread. The Kitchen Garden Café opening up - really good. Polar Bear the CD shop really good, Cinaphelia - the DVD shop that unfortunately is now shut - that was Moseley - really good. These are old school kind of - like independent places and I just felt that Kings Heath and Moseley had a slightly larger proliferation of these.’ (CI8)

All of these areas had a similar advantage of good, easy and quick access to city centre. Interviewees living in Moseley and Kings Heath mentioned the quality of life and alternative lifestyle/feel of the neighbourhood and the attractive urban surroundings. The green, leafy environment and closeness to parks were mentioned by those living in Edgbaston, Pershore Road and Handsworth. Interviewees enjoyed the fact that they were living close enough to the city centre to take advantage of it if they wished, but yet they didn’t suffer any of the ill effects of living in the city centre. However, the presence of a large expatriate community was important only to one interviewee living in Handsworth.
Most individuals were happy with their neighbourhoods, but some mentioned lack of community feeling. This was partly attributable to living in a professional neighbourhood and so not coming into contact with neighbours during the day. Only one interviewee was negative about the neighbourhood (Ladywood) and reported feeling uncomfortable about living there. The choice of location in this case had been because it was reasonably priced and was a central location rather than the desirability of the neighbourhood.

7.1.11 Experiences, support

The majority of respondents were very positive about their early time in the West Midlands. People were friendly and welcoming and praise was given for the ease of setting up in business. Respondents had not encountered any excess bureaucracy. Sector specific business support was highly praised, especially that provided by Creative Alliance. The Arts Council England West Midlands had helped and there was an obvious suite of creative industries support that interviewees had benefited from. The existence of MAC was praised this multi-purpose arts centre was seen as a friendly open third space for performance, hanging out and informal networking.

Two interviewees (both Polish) were critical of what they saw as an imbalance in business support. They felt that it was too orientated towards start-up businesses and there was a gap ‘in the middle’ in helping successful start-ups to grow sustainably. More commissioning and more space for visual artists were specifically mentioned as requirements to existing support. More sophisticated and more effective internal and external marketing of the city’s creative industries were cited by almost all respondents as important.

7.1.12 Future plans

There were mixed responses to the question of whether interviewees planned to remain or move from the city-region. Most interviewees reported that they intended to move from the city at some point. They had a range of reasons for this:

♦ Their nomadic tendencies. They were happy being transient and anticipated moving on to new places and new experiences. A couple of respondents took the time to stress that they were not being disloyal to the city – they would be the same in any UK city.

♦ The life stage of respondents was an important consideration. None of the interviewees had children. However, some interviewees indicated that they would want to reconsider where they were based when they became parents. A common feeling was that they would like to move to a more green place, either to a house with a garden or more space or to a more rural setting.

♦ Some respondents were considering returning ‘home’ to enjoy a better quality of life (weather and less urban grittiness). This was complicated, however, by the fact that they had a UK partner or spouse and this led to less than absolute certainty about whether they would remain here or go back home.

♦ The draw of London as a world city and global creative capital was mentioned often; ‘like all young artists we’re still looking at London.’ (CI4)
There was a prevailing feeling that you had to be working in London to be taken seriously and considered as achieving the highest standards in the sector.

There was a relative consensus within the respondents’ feelings about the city and there experience as trans-national migrants working in the visual and performing arts. They shared a dislike of mainstream experiences e.g. Bullring Shopping Centre and Broad Street entertainment zone. They felt it was fairly easy to start up in business because they had experienced an open-minded, supportive multi-cultural city with few barriers to outsiders. Newly arrived individuals were welcomed, accepted, supported and quickly integrated.

However within the group of interviewees there was a range of personality types. Some were enthusiastic, natural entrepreneurs delighted with the opportunities open to economic migrants eager to work hard and build a business. Others wanted and expected support from the public sector. However, a distinctive and common feature of interviewees was their independent, transient streak – their freelance and footloose attributes.

The diversity of the city was obviously attractive to the interviewees at a personal and professional level. They were able to settle in easily to social and business life. They were working in a rich melting pot of cultures which was a ripe incubator for new innovative ‘inter-cultural products’ which drew on a variety of existing cultural traditions to create innovative hybrid forms of artistic expression.

7.2 Business Management and Consultancy

7.2.1 Overview of TNMs interviewed

Interviewees had a more mixed profile in terms of age - most were between 25-35 years old but three were in their late 40s and early 50s. They very well educated, the majority having a first degree and two thirds of the sample were male – Table 7.2

The interviewees were mostly based in various forms of professional and business consultancy – accounting/auditing, planning and urban design, management, economic development analysis. All but one were based in the city centre and many were with national firms that have offices in several UK cities.

<table>
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<th>Job Title</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
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7.2.2 Motivation for coming to the UK

Most of the interviewees had trained abroad and gained their main university and professional qualifications overseas, had come here usually through two different channels: First, in the case of one professional firm, they came to the UK and Birmingham because of corporate opportunities, and transfers within their firm which had formal processes of co-ordination. Secondly, some interviewees (3 or 4) had family or personal links of some sort – one had lived in England before, had family here and because of this familiarity she wanted to come back one day. Two others had met English partners in Europe and their joint aspirations brought them to England. Most qualified abroad and got to Birmingham, or to the UK and then to Birmingham, either through work related channels or a combination of that plus personal links, particularly links with partners. Two interviewees came to the UK for postgraduate study, and took their degrees at West Midlands universities. They have subsequently entered the employment market and have stayed in the region since graduation.

7.2.3 Motivation to live/work in Birmingham/West Midlands

The motivations for coming to Birmingham were varied - the presence of a large office for an international accounting firm, studying at universities in the region, the general depth of professional opportunities in the consultancy sectors, and personal connections.

For the four respondents who all worked for one of the UK’s ‘Big Four’ accounting firms, the importance of the Birmingham office in its corporate network was crucial to their move here. All had the opportunity of an overseas placement and considered the UK initially. They then focused on the Birmingham office as an attractive option.

For the firm’s managing partner in the city, Birmingham provided an ideal professional opportunity:

‘The background is that at the time, my wife and I decided we wanted to move from South Africa. We had concerns about violent crime and all that sort of stuff. We decided that probably the UK made more sense. The other offerings were Australia or the US, but we felt the UK because I had worked here a bit and my wife’s sister lives in Surrey...’; ‘So I initially came across for a series of interviews in London and after that the firm said they could see some other opportunities in some offices outside of London which they were in the process of shaking up a bit, which was Birmingham, Bristol and Manchester. They said would I be open to go to one of those and I said ‘why not?’ and they said ‘any preference?’ I said ‘no, not really’ and they said well actually would I mind coming to have a look at Birmingham? So we came over again, at the beginning of ’94, came and had a look at Birmingham, met the people here, said ‘yeah, it sounds like an exciting, interesting place’. So when we moved here permanently, we arrived in April ’94 – for my wife, it was the first time she’d ever set foot in Birmingham, so we bought a house immediately and completed on that in June and the rest is history’ (BC1)
The depth of career opportunities available in Birmingham was also important for one of the office’s younger international migrants:

‘I’ve been working here in Birmingham for one year. I’m in special projects within XXXX. It’s called the Global Exchange programme and certain people in each company are selected to go abroad for a limited period of time which usually is eighteen months and you can apply for going up to three countries and within these three countries you are chosen one to spend at least eighteen months. Basically I’ve been working for five years in EY in Italy and then I have been brought in the global exchange so now I have spent the first year of my stay here in Birmingham.’; ‘I applied for three countries, all English speaking, and one of the most interesting proposals was from Birmingham. I have been over five years in XXXX Italy and now I’m involved in very big client here in the Birmingham office so I found the offer quite attractive to come here’ (BC5).

Some actively avoided going to London – one young interviewee said he wanted to avoid being around too many other French people because he would be less likely to improve his English. The Birmingham office was also seen as being a large enough operation to provide plenty of opportunities (in terms of breadth of work and spatial spread of the client base) but also small enough that it was reasonably personable – they could make good contacts and with that size of firm there were lots of good opportunities and actually the upward movement is potentially quite good. This was true both for the chief executive who moved in his late 30s and for the younger personnel at a much more junior stage in their careers.

‘I think is a great place to come. First of all for the office is a quite a big office, it is second biggest office in the UK and the size is right. I mean it’s not a small office, but is not so big that you don’t know people around so it’s quite good to come to Birmingham working. People are quite friendly and everyone has been helpful to settle everything to sort out stuff and so I think from both a work point of view and also things you can do in Birmingham and also how Birmingham is located in the map. So you have quite a few opportunities to travel around the UK it is a good opportunity to come to Birmingham. The only drawback is Birmingham airport - you can’t reach Italy very well. So you can just fly to Milan and when I come home like for Christmas or main holidays, I have a to take my flight to Milan and then drive two hours to go home’ (BC5)

Other respondents came to the Birmingham area initially because of their university education BCU, Aston and Warwick. They then stayed on in the region after graduation, primarily because the city offered a sufficiently deep pool of employment opportunities in the professional services field. This was also a factor for one interviewee who was already living elsewhere in Britain but moved to Birmingham with her husband, also in the consultancy field.

Personal connections did play some part with a couple of respondents – in one case the person’s spouse had family links in the area and in another the presence of extended family in Birmingham was a factor in choosing a university in the city.

The vast majority of interviewees knew very little about Birmingham before coming to the city. For them, it was very much a blank slate – neither a positive nor negative impression, but simply very little awareness of the city’s character or offer. Those who did know Birmingham thought vaguely that it was an industrial place but it was again a case of a low profile rather
than a bad image. That was perhaps reflected in their views of the city that were generally quite positive. However they did also realise that it was a big enough city to offer opportunities, this was the perception from Europe or South Africa before they came, that it did offer enough career opportunities, it was a big enough place, or that the office of the firm that they were going to was big enough to offer plenty of opportunities.

7.2.4 Remaining in Birmingham/West Midlands

Most interviewees intended to stay in Birmingham for the foreseeable future. The only exception was one young professional in the accountancy firm whose secondment was coming to a formal end within the next 12 months. In terms of reasons for remaining, for most the main factor was that their jobs and professional careers were going well and they saw no pressing reason to leave. Also several had developed stronger family and friend connections in the region, so that personal networks began to play a more important role.

‘Well I think in part there was enough challenge here. When I first moved here there was always the thought, go to Birmingham, work there for three to five years and maybe you can then look, if you wanted to ask for a transfer to London. That pretty soon sort of fell by the wayside. I arrived, I was in here for eighteen months when I was appointed managing partner of the office and that gave me a whole new set of challenges. Basically enough challenges and things to keep me motivated here, that I’ve got more and more tied in to the local community’ (BC1)

Overall, the respondents exhibited no great desire to move on and notably, there was no mention of moving to London to further their career aspirations or for lifestyle reasons. Nor did they express any desire to move out of the city for a more peaceful rural life – this was consistent amongst all respondents living within the main Birmingham area. Overall then, a combination of professional satisfaction, personal connections and general contentment with quality of life in the city has helped to root these migrants in Birmingham for the medium term at least.

7.2.5 Career and job situation

Most of the respondents had developed their professional careers almost entirely in the UK. This reflects their age profile and the tendency for such professionals to seek overseas opportunities at an early stage when they are relatively footloose and yet to start families. One notable exception was the chief executive of the accountancy firm who had 15 years of experience already, including some time in that multinational firm in South Africa. His decision to move was based more on a fundamental quality of life consideration for his family given the problems engulfing his country around that time.

The respondents expressed general satisfaction with their jobs and career outlook – despite the increasingly pessimistic economic climate at the time of interviews they did not convey much fear for their prospects or their firms’ general conditions. All found the Birmingham
offices and the firms they were in to be quite conducive to their career aspirations at the moment.

7.2.6 Activities outside of work/for relaxation

Most respondents said they spent much of their free time engaged in mainstream leisure pursuits in the city – bars, restaurants, theatre, cinema, and to some extent the high profile arts such as the symphony orchestra. This was commonly cited as an important part of their life in Birmingham and their overall experience as young professionals in the city. The city centre was a strong focus of such activity as well as some of the larger suburban centres for such activity including Sutton Coldfield, Harborne and Moseley. Even for some of those living in suburbs or outside the city, the city centre was a focus of much leisure activity because they work there and there is a strong social dimension to much of the professional sector – after hours events or just drinks with colleagues on a Friday, for example. For the city centre dwellers, walking on the canals was also an important way of relaxing. Few cited the countryside as important.

‘Well for me first the cleanliness and the architecture in general in city centre really surprised me, because I had this image of I could compare to Leicester so places which would be not really attractive from a foreigner point of view. I really like Paris so there would have been a huge difference but half of city centre is five years old so you got access to really nice buildings, so that really was good point for me. You can literally walk to hundreds of restaurants. You can go to the cinema walking. You got quite a few good offers on places as well. It’s quite nice I enjoy walking round the canals or running, if you don’t go towards Wolverhampton that’s fine’ (BC4)

‘Birmingham is very, very different from my original town. I was living on the coast so my apartment was just in off the coast then five minutes walking from the beach so Birmingham is definitely different, but I found the quite good things like going everywhere by walking which is very good. I find shops, supermarkets very near to my apartment open till late and again going out to restaurant or clubs which are quite cheap compared to other cities both in the UK and also in Italy and yes quite a lot of people around from same nationality which is good’ (BC5)

7.2.7 Perceptions of the city: ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ factors

The respondents generally had a very positive view of Birmingham as a place to live and work. The city’s mainstream leisure opportunities, cultural offering and nightlife were regularly emphasised, mainly but not exclusively by the under-35 interviewees. Related to this, the general ambience of the city centre including its canals and public spaces was also seen as highly attractive. This was true not only of those who lived in the city centre but also those who lived further a field and worked in the centre. Another important appeal was general ease of access – both in terms of the ease of getting in and out of the city centre (by public transport), and also in terms of the scale of the centre. Several people commented that it was relatively easy to get around between the key parts of the city (within the centre), especially compared to the hassle of doing the same in London. The ability to walk around the
centre fairly easily was important – especially to the three city centre residents who all walked to work. But it was also important to those who commute into the centre, such as this suburban resident:

‘I think it’s quite approachable, very compact to some extent because you’ve got everything. I mean probably with where our offices area as well, you’ve got everything on the doorstep, it’s really easy for me to commute, it’s really for me to go out, it’s really easy for me to meet clients and contacts, it’s very easy for me to get of Birmingham as well, as the station is virtually downstairs and so actually I find the city despite its size quite compact and easy to get around and do things’ (BC7)

Finally, Birmingham’s diversity was mentioned by two interviewees but this did not emerge as a significant factor overall. It was talked about more as a point of interest and a contrast to their small town upbringing than anything else. One interviewee originally Indian did cite Birmingham’s large Asian population and cultural infrastructure as a factor in deciding to study at Aston University, but he was also the most critical about perceived segregation and lack of integration in parts of the city.

The downsides cited by interviewees represent a flipside to some of the positives discussed above. The single most important source of frustration was the lack of diversity in the city’s leisure, culture and retail provision. While Birmingham’s mainstream assets were well used and liked by respondents, the younger, European ones regularly cited a lack of independent and distinctive operations and attributes such as alternative cinemas and a real café culture as surprising and disappointing for a city of its size. Further, several commented that the marketing of the city, especially through websites, was overwhelmingly corporate in tone, focusing on mainstream retail and underplaying the distinctive offerings that the city did have:

‘What I particularly like about the city centre is that I always pass the Hippodrome so I see the amount of things that are being shown there and also the amount of people that actually doesn’t take up this offer on, you know, culture, a lot of theatre, the Kirov Ballet or whatever showing at the moment. And I’m a great fan of the Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, so that is really, really good. What I sometimes find is that the Bullring is lovely, but is more or less just a compaction of high street shops under one roof. When they say Birmingham the shopping capital of the UK, I would expect quirky shops, boutiques, other shops you know, something that not every high street has and that not only applies to fashion and things but also apart from a couple of like the Hudson’s Coffee House, which I love, or Natale the little Portuguese place, we don’t have many things...’; ‘But that is a shame, because in other cities you have your little places, you know where on a Sunday morning you can brunch, but here I wouldn’t know that, because it’s just the same fare everywhere. That’s the only thing that sometimes puts it down. Otherwise the canals are lovely and I normally use it for jogging or I’ve been blackberry picking and all that...’ (BC3)

This view was echoed by a German migrant who had lived in Dresden and thought that Birmingham’s lack of distinctive cultural offerings such as independent cinemas was a disappointment amidst its otherwise positive working and living environment:
‘Dresden is smaller than Birmingham but again it’s a very different kind of city but it did have those kind of things and I think German cities do have more to offer in terms of culture and kind of interplay in my life with arts, theatre, even with cinema and I think it’s generally more widespread in German cities than in the UK... Birmingham is kind of industrial so I’m wondering whether it ever had that kind of cultural flavour. I mean places I’m comparing it with, Dresden and Berlin, which have obviously been centres of culture which Birmingham hasn’t been, and so to some extent it’s not very easy to compare these two’. (BC7)

There was also a view that there was some lack of momentum and consistency in the regeneration of the city, especially in and around the city centre. While they were full of praise for what had been achieved since the 1980s (though they had not actually experienced much of that transition firsthand) there was also a sense that interesting areas like the Jewellery Quarter and Digbeth had not fulfilled their potential. It was felt that district such as these could and should be the focus of more concerted initiatives, and that they were the types of places where some of the more alternative, individual cultural and leisure activity could flourish.

‘You do have a few things that would really define Birmingham like in Digbeth it would have the Custard factory and stuff like that. But in terms of general offer, because this is quite specific to one type of public in term so general offer then you just don’t have anything that could be literally saying this is in Birmingham. So that’s one of the things that would make it special’. (BC4)

‘Broad Street is not nice. At some certain age you just don’t want to go there. And also there’s having to walk up Broad Street when everybody is totally drunk is not nice. Digbeth - I didn’t have a look around there as well at the Abacus [apartments] and all those development. I think Digbeth is at the starting point of this development, because especially for women it’s like a nice area, then as soon as you cross round the corner, a no go zone. And at the moment it is still a little bit of a problematic, because all of a sudden you are in front of self storage buildings, totally isolated. I’ve seen the plans with the park and from the Bullring leading the avenue or whatever leading down to Digbeth. I think once that has all been put in to place it will be a fantastic area. At the moment I wouldn’t necessarily go there’ (BC3)

‘I’ve been a few times to the Custard Factory which is a really original place actually, I really enjoyed that. Not a big fan of music that is played there, but just to experience the venue. So I think it’s quite nice. Jewellery Quarter seems to be quite creative but again it’s a really limited offer. So yes you would have an Italian restaurant with Italian, you know, waiters, which is quite nice. You would have the Jam House which is good and different from the rest, but then apart from those few places then it just becomes only residential because quite a lot of buildings have been built. So it seems to be a model that could be used across the city, but still so empty’ (BC4)

These areas should also be marketed more dynamically, particularly to people in their 20s and 30s. Finally, a couple of interviewees mentioned a perceived lack of social and spatial integration in the city, particularly in some inner areas and with regard to Asian communities.
7.2.8 Social networks

Most interviewees knew no people before they came to the region with the exception of two who had some family connections already. Since settling in Birmingham and the West Midlands, however, professional networks have become important to the majority of the respondents. The nature of their work, and the tight knit character of Birmingham’s professional services sector are major factors in this. These networks are important in carrying out their jobs and there is considerable blurring between the professional and social dimensions of their lives. This is again closely bound up with the city centre leisure scene discussed earlier. For some interviewees, family links (including partners) have become more important as they have settled down in the region. But very little importance was attached to social networks with other people in their migrant communities. This was particularly noticeable for the European, South African and Zimbabwean migrants – they expressed little experience of socialising with others from their country of origin and they made little effort to meet such people either. It appeared that they were more concerned to plunge into their new environment without trying to retain links with their home country through such networks – if anything, some wanted to actively avoid this. And this was true of both those who had settled here and those younger ones who were more likely to move away from Birmingham in the next few years. Where they met and knew other people and professionals from their home country, it was likely to be through chance meetings in their work activity rather than any overt effort to connect with such people. However, some interviewees did highlight the value of connections with other migrants, though not specifically from their own nationality. This was especially true in the early days of getting settled in a new environment…

‘I try to avoid Germans wherever. It sound rude, but I find that the funny thing is because I worked in Solihull College and especially in the international section there. I have a very large circle of friends that is purely made out of internationals, but mainly like South America. There’s a large community in Birmingham of Brazilians that are growing, 40 or so of them I would call my friends and or acquaintances. Other than that I think internationals tend to mix with other internationals, not necessarily with their own nationality, just because it’s easier to understand the problems that you encounter, like doctors and all the difficulties that you have getting to know the system and not necessarily beating the system, but just surviving’ (BC3)

‘Actually about that, some Spanish friends came to Birmingham, most of them knowing about the city through a forum that’s been created by one of the Spaniards living here and explains how to get to a doctor, social safety. So a lot of people, I mean hundreds and hundreds, are registering on a web site before coming here, just to learn about the city, all the easy thing of life for now, transport and such, so I think that was quite a key influence in for a lot of people for the Spanish community’ (BC4)
7.2.9 Residence and neighbourhood

The interviewees lived in a range of locations within the city-region. Three lived in rented apartments in the city centre – young professionals at the international accountancy firm, who all walked to work. Four more lived in suburbs of Birmingham – Edgbaston, Kingstanding and Sutton Coldfield and another in the middle ring. All travelled to work in or near the city centre. Finally, two lived in Hampton in Arden, in Warwickshire east of the city, and in Leamington Spa. Again, both commuted daily to Birmingham city centre.

All expressed satisfaction with their living environments. The city centre dwellers valued easy access to work and leisure/culture amenities (on foot) and did not express any desire to move from the centre soon. For them, the city centre was a conscious choice and one had moved from a suburban location to live there. However she did have some cautionary comments about the range and nature of housing being provided in Birmingham’s city centre:

‘I have to admit it took me about three months and sixty odd viewings to settle on the city centre and I was getting very, very disappointed with everything I saw, because the further out you go, like in Solihull, I had a sixties apartment with big, big spaces. In the city centre everything is like a shoe box. They’re building like mad, but they’re not taking on board that people want to live. I can understand that people don’t cook any more that often. But outside space is so important and it hardly any of the apartments has a balcony and things like that. So I was already settling on other areas because that is a big, big thing for me and it took a while. I found one, but they are building like mad, but they, it just looks like we are turning a little bit in to the Japanese kind of shoe box micro living kind of thing, which is not really encouraging’ (BC3)

The suburban residents, two of whom had family, valued the combination of having their own house, and space plus relatively easy access to their city centre workplace and associated social life. The two residents outside the city had different reasons for being there. The chief executive of the accounting firm was already in his late 30s with family when he moved to the region and wanted a typically English country setting for them – his status also meant living in such a highly sought after village was affordable. However, the commuter belt location provides him with the best of both worlds:

‘Well, there’s two sides to it. Obviously I live in a village with fifteen hundred people, but it is very well connected to the city centre, you can get a train in twenty minutes. I can drive in depending on what time of day something between 20 and 35 minutes to get in. So you’ve got the benefit of a bit of country lifestyle, but being attached to a large city and I think that I quite like that. And I think the other side is just the city offers a lot professionally, there’s a business community - the size of businesses here are big enough to give one something to get ones teeth in to. But it is not too large as so as to be impersonal. So a lot of people often say that Birmingham business city centre is a village and depending on your position, it is in many ways. So I think that is important and I think there was just the third society that is the what I call the lifestyle offering, the theatres, orchestras, the sorts of things one can do here. You can go to NEC arena, all those sorts of things. Those sorts of things you can do so much here without having to travel down to London to do everything. I think those are the things that to me make it’. (BC1)
The other much younger professional lived in Leamington as a matter of continuity after graduating from Warwick University. As he was married but with no children he expressed an interest in moving to central Birmingham, perhaps somewhere like the Jewellery Quarter, to eliminate the train commute and be closer to work and social amenities. Overall those living in Birmingham expressed no longer term desire to leave the city for rural or small town location outside the city; in fact, two people expressed interest in moving closer to the city centre if circumstances permitted.

7.2.10 Experiences, support

There was no mention of institutional or policy support as a factor in their experience of moving to Birmingham and settling into the city. None had made use of such support, and nor had they sought it out. The support that they had was either through their employers (particularly in the case of the accountancy firm which has established programmes of international secondments) or through their universities if that is how they first came to the region.

However all respondents did say that they found Birmingham an accommodating city overall, and relatively easy to plug into and to find their way in fairly quickly. Again, the density of the professional networks and the highly connected nature of this sector in the city helped in this regard. The blurring of professional and social activity for many of them made it easier to settle in, meet people and feel part of things.

7.2.11 Future plans

The majority of the respondents said they expected to stay in Birmingham and/or the region for the foreseeable future. There were three main reasons for this – their jobs and professional careers were progressing well, and the city offered enough future prospects in the medium term; a general satisfaction with quality of life here; and a deepening of family and friend connections that tend to root people over time. The two exceptions were both young professionals at the accountancy firm. One was heading back to Italy within the next year as his secondment was finishing, another now living with his girlfriend said he was likely to move back to France in the next few years but was in no rush to do so at the moment. There was no evidence of any strong ‘push’ factors, either in a professional sense or related to quality of life concerns.

A final point discussed related to how policy makers and planners could improve Birmingham’s appeal as a place to attract and retain professional migrants such as themselves. Three related issues were prominent:

♦ Diversify the city’s leisure, culture and nightlife offer to add more independent, distinctive elements and to provide the range of amenities that would be expected of a city of this size, particularly its counterparts in Europe; also, the marketing of the city should more proactively promote the amenities of this sort that the city does have – at the moment, the city’s image is very mainstream and corporate in nature.
'Before coming I did a bit of research about the city. I remember a website called Be in Birmingham. And it’s solely from the shopping offer and I found it so disappointing, being the second biggest city what you have got to shout about is your shopping centre. And if you think about Birmingham from abroad you would think about shopping yes, but when you’re already inside it’s such a cosmopolitan city and I don’t think in general we present those strengths enough. I mean when you look at the Asian community, you don’t have any representation city centre for example, well apart from restaurants. I mean you don’t have any shops or any cultural offer. Maybe I’m wrong but I haven’t seen anything in city centre. You got to go to outside’ (BC4)

‘All the stuff they do around Centenary Square like the ice skating and the year round entertainment in that respect is really good. But I don’t know where to look for it, when are events actually coming on? Because all of a sudden you walk past it you think oh what’s happening here? But it’s not really presented that something is coming up. People know something may be happening, but they are not sure what’s actually happening and where to look for things. And the other thing is the really rich contrast between the very new city centre and the very old history, like the Jewellery Quarter, like the actual of making of jewellery and all that and it’s just something that doesn’t exist out there’ (BC3)

♦ Improve the regeneration momentum in the city, particularly in some of the interesting districts such as Jewellery Quarter or Digbeth that could be suitable locations for a more distinctive offer. These areas were seen as having plenty of potential and attraction, particularly for younger professionals, but were deemed to be nowhere near their potential and certainly not up to the standards of similar character districts in other European cities.

♦ Finally, and related to the other points, there was scope for creation of new housing and especially city neighbourhoods that would provide an attraction option for young professionals. This could provide a bridge between the kind of apartment-based city centre living experience by three of the respondents, and more established outlying suburbs in the city. Providing such living options would also link closely with the regeneration and distinctiveness issues raised by the interviewees.
7.3 Higher education

7.3.1 Overview of TNMs interviewed

Interviewees were young, all were between 28 and 47 years of age; very well educated with all having at least a doctorate level qualification; Males outnumbered females (80 per cent male). The majority (eight of the ten interviewees) had been living and working in the UK for less than 10 years – Table 7.3.

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7.3.2 Motivation for coming to the UK

Six interviewees came straight to Birmingham from their home countries. The remaining four had lived/worked elsewhere in the UK prior to moving to Birmingham: in London then Nottingham; Essex then the North West (Manchester, Wigan and Blackpool); and three interviewees had lived/worked in Oxford.

All of the interviewees had moved to the UK either for educational or job related reasons or because their spouse/partner had been offered a job here and they also needed to find employment. For those moving to the UK for educational reasons, it was regarded as a normal part of career progression in academia to go abroad for postgraduate level study:

‘...if you are doing research it is the normal thing to spend some time abroad as a post doc - so preferably in America - it is a big thing to go to America or go somewhere else. So I came for two year post doc here.’ (HE7)

‘I think it’s quite common thing probably in that far eastern countries, usually when people finish their undergraduate and they are interested in academic, particularly if they are interested in academic a career, then what people tend to do is go abroad to do well, either a master or PhD the main sort of target it’s usually either USA or UK but in recent, maybe not that recent, I mean in the past ten, fifteen years it expand to Canada, Australia. So it’s quite global and to be honest when I initially started I didn’t particularly target UK. (HE10)
Interviewees partly made the choice of whether to study in the UK depending on where the offer came from:

‘I sort of sent application to USA and the UK and it’s really depending on what offer I get and which I think is most suitable.’ (HE10)

One had a scholarship for a specific institution:

‘I was about to say money – that’s only part of the story, I am a historian ...so coming to Britain to do research was important in constructing my professional project, but money in the sense that I got a scholarship.’ (HE1)

Others were attracted to a specific institution because of its academic reputation: ‘the appeal of Oxford as a name.’ (HE5)

Interviewees who moved to the UK because of job opportunities rather than education did so either for; 1) general career progression - opportunities for advancement in the UK better than home country; 2) because of a specific job opportunity; or 3) because of partner/spouse securing a job in the UK.

### 7.3.3 Motivation to live/work in Birmingham/West Midlands

All but one of the interviewees had been living/working in the West Midlands for less than 10 years and four interviewees had been working at the University for less than 3 years. All had moved to Birmingham because of their own job at the University of Birmingham, or because of their spouse/partner’s job. Some interviewees specifically chose Birmingham because of the reputation of the institution, or department, or the opportunity to work with key academic professionals in their field. For some it was more ‘opportunistic’ – they were already working in their home country but an exciting job opportunity presented itself at Birmingham; some were looking at whatever job opportunities came along or what was on offer as their first job after completing post graduate studies elsewhere. Two interviewees accompanied a spouse/partner who had secured a job at the university and they had also managed to secure a position as well. For all interviewees, the job was the dominant motivating factor in their decisions to move Birmingham, the city itself seems to have played a very minor role:

- Reputation of university/department/key academics in field
  
  ‘I think the speciality and the university was probably the first thing that I was looking at.’; ‘...Birmingham was the most suitable area because the faculty and everything that they have at the university here is not really a match anywhere else.’ ‘I think it’s just the reputation of the department and also that they’ve got 5 professors of XXXX’ (HE4)

  ‘...my current boss was working in the US and I met him at a conference and then he said he is probably moving to UK, to Birmingham to set up a new institute a new centre in XXXX and XXXX and so Welcome Trust funded very high profile centre. So that’s what attracted me before I started enquiring about the city.’; ‘His work and the kind of job opportunities at that time when he projected it was quite appealing.’ (HE9)
‘In my field, Birmingham is the cradle of XXXX, sort of one of its birthplace, so when I was offered a one year contract here, I thought it was just heaven.’; ‘It was just work related – I was just so happy to get this one year offer’ (HE8)

♦ Chance job opening/opportunistic

‘There was an opening of a job which was quite exciting for me and that’s how I came. Not really for the city per se.’; ‘There was only one job, otherwise I had a full time position in XXXX so I could have stayed there, I wasn’t really searching for something, the opportunity came and just took it up.’ (HE3)

‘Again, circumstances. I mean as you know in education in university and academic life, you don’t always have a full choice of opportunities, you pretty much take what comes, comes along. And I have to say that when I found the place in, the opening over here, I was nervous about it because of the reputation that Birmingham had. In every other respect’ (HE5)

‘It’s also, mainly I have to say, that decision is also mainly by chance, it’s sort of timing. When I was towards the finish my PhD I just sort of start to look for job really for bread and butter and at that time Birmingham got an opportunity I applied and actually it’s the first job I apply and they accepted, so I just come straight here.’ (HE10)

‘Well, there is the fact that with the academic job market, the problems that there are actually few jobs available, so you are not necessarily as free as you would like. In this particular case, however, it did make a great deal of sense for me to come here because the University is a very good place, I knew the quality of the work conditions and there is a group of historians that I was very interested in working with. So for me it is joining a good University, but also a group of scholars in my field. So that was the main attraction.’ (HE1)

♦ Academic exchange programme - Birmingham only one of options

‘I applied for a job and it’s a programme form the German government from German university system and the government, is financed by the government, is called DAAD, German Academic Exchange Service, and they have got a programme sending lecturers abroad and so I didn’t choose Birmingham to be honest, but I was sent here.’ (HE2)

♦ Spouse/partner securing a job at the University

‘Basically my husband was my boyfriend then and got the job here first and I had applied for a position in Oxford and I had been told they wouldn’t have anything that year but they would have something next year. So I could have stayed on in XXXX and then have gone to Oxford instead.’; ‘I wouldn’t have gone to Birmingham if there hadn’t been a reasonably good job, but the main decision was the man.’ (HE7)

‘My wife’s job perspectives improved by moving to Birmingham and it took a while for me to find a job as well, but after some time, it worked out.’; ‘I had been looking at job possibilities in other cities; job wise, it was a step back for me with a lot of uncertainties.’ (HE6)
Interviewees knew very little about Birmingham – some had absolutely no perception either good or bad. Again, many of the perceptions were about the industrial past of Birmingham and the physical landscape of the city; ‘Birmingham was all Black Country to the literal sense of black country.’; ‘grim industrial city’; ‘very ugly’. However, the positive perceptions were about the city’s diversity; ‘people said it was more multi cultural and cosmopolitan than most other cities’; regarded as an ‘international’ city. However, in some instances the ethnic diversity was portrayed in a negative way; ‘like coming to a third world country’.

‘...initially I knew very, very little about the city itself.’ (HE1); ‘Well, I had a very bad image of the city. I guess like many people I thought of Birmingham as this rather grim, industrial city and it came as a really nice surprise when I first took a day off to explore the city. So it turned out to be a very good choice.’ (HE1)

‘I knew it was a very ugly city. I knew all the negative things about Birmingham. Everyone had told me ‘well Birmingham wouldn’t be my choice’; ‘I didn’t have any expectations. I came for the job and I thought I’ll survive even in a grim city.’ (HE8)

‘I knew quite a lot of rumours about the Birmingham as a place and I had never come here, so it made me nervous.’; ‘I was nervous about it because of the reputation that Birmingham had.’; ‘...it was portrayed to me as extremely ethnically diverse, which it is, but in a very negative way. It was portrayed as ugly, very concrete based and it’s nothing that I was expecting.’; ‘I was literally under the impression that coming to Birmingham was coming to a third world country.’ (HE5)

‘...what I knew about the city was more like that it’s an industrial city and that it maybe isn’t the most beautiful city in the world. That’s what I knew before and I was born close to the Ruhrgebiet to this industrial area in North Rhine-Westphalia the big industrial area and there are a lot of cities and I think I expected something like one of these cities, like Dortmund or Duisburg, so industrial cities.’ (HE2)

‘Birmingham was all Black Country to the literal sense of black country.’; ‘Industrial, yes. But then they said like it’s been changing because of a changing economy and then the way manufacturing is closing down and then looking at new economy for the region and stuff like that.’; ‘...people said it’s more multi cultural and cosmopolitan than most other cities.’ (HE9)

‘...I looked it up in my encyclopaedia which had been from about 1980 and all there was in there was a picture of the Bull Ring Centre, of the old Bull Ring Centre - and I just went; ‘oh my God, do we have to go there?’; ‘Well, it has got - it is sort of perceived as an old industrial town which has gone downhill a bit.’; ‘And that’s what I keep hearing, if I tell people I am in Birmingham then they are always sorry for me, but actually the quality of life is fine here, so.’ (HE7)
Interviewees’ perceptions of Birmingham and the West Midlands came from a mix of websites, books and ‘what you hear in the media’; and from friends or colleagues in the UK (who may or may not have had direct experience of Birmingham) or family members who had/already lived there:

‘I knew general bits because people who I know have stayed here and also from other sort of friends and family members who have been here for a while and so I knew most of the bits’ (HE4).

‘The perception really was from - well, the Internet wasn’t there then yet – but from looking into books about Birmingham and not being excited about it.’ (HE7)

‘Colleagues. Because I had colleagues of friends in the UK and when I told them I was going to go and work in the UK for a year and I’m going to go and work in Birmingham, they said, ‘well, not exactly my choice’; ‘people who knew something about Britain would say ‘oh, well that’s not a nice place’. (HE8)

‘..ignorance and as a result I sort of internalised all the people’s prejudices - mainly prejudices inherited from friends I guess.’ (HE1)

‘it was all through searching web sites’; ...one good thing about it in this age is you can get more information from the internet about cities and it’s more multicultural and statistics and all that which don’t actually reflect, but then you can get a broader prospective from these information about how things are...’ (HE9)

‘...what you here in the media. I didn’t know anyone who’d ever been before except for a friend who was with me ten years ago, but I can’t remember anyone talking about Birmingham’ (HE2)

Interviewees’ initial impressions were that Birmingham was much better than they had expected or been led to expect – much greener, so many parks, Brindley Place and canal network, urban villages (Harborne, Edgbaston, Moseley etc), the city centre is vibrant, it’s ethnically diverse, but in a positive way although even those who factored in the diversity of the city as part of their reason for moving to the city there were surprised at the level of diversity.

‘A lot more greenery in Birmingham than I imagined before I came. I never imagined Birmingham to be this green, so I mean all the ideas and perceptions I had were on industries and you know chimney smokes going out and all that, but it’s definitely much more different than I imagined.’ (HE9)

‘It’s a lot greener, I mean the first thing that hit me about Birmingham is it’s a lot greener than others, so many parks and so many trees and it’s not the concrete jungle that it was portrayed to be. Especially if you stay away from the core of the city, the city centre. So that was the first pleasant surprise and the surroundings, the fact that five minutes down the road from my house, I cross the M40, M42 and I’m in Cotswold country where I go and cycle for hours with no car passing me. That’s a big luxury.’ (HE5)
'when I woke up the first morning here, because I came the weekend before I started work, and I walked around and I didn’t know it then, but I walked around Harborne, and I thought everything was so pretty, and I didn’t understand how they could say Birmingham was an ugly city. And then a friend took my round Brindley place and I thought; ‘Wow, canals’ beautiful! And I must have come to the wrong city – there must be two Berminghams. So I had the expectation that it would be grim, but instead, what I saw was really nice. I have later seen other parts of Birmingham, but then.’ (HE8)

‘I realised that it wasn’t at all what I expected. It’s greener, it’s more beautiful, it has so many nice places around that you can visit. The city centre is vibrant, it has good night life. It’s not dirty, it’s ethnically diverse, but in a positive way. I mean I like Dudley. I love the black country, my partner is from the black country and the more I learn that part of Birmingham, the more I like it. (HE5); ‘When I came to Birmingham everything, every aspect of my social life improved. Like I said I related to people a lot more. I like the city itself a lot more than I would have imagined liking it.’ (HE5)

‘I can see it’s quite sort of diverse international city, but at that time it’s quite different at that time it was for example the old Bullring market.; ‘my first impression about the old Bullring – yes it’s not very nice, but on the other hand you can feel this sort of vibration. I think in someway it’s rather similar to the - what I would call the old culture and our market in our home country is more like that so in some ways a bit of familiar.’ (HE10)

‘...initially when I turned round I think the diversity was a bit of a surprise.’ ‘I think it’s just... some areas it just doesn’t even look like you’re living in the UK to be honest. (HE4)

Some interviewees were considering alternatives to Birmingham within the UK, but these were purely job/career driven and had nothing whatsoever to do with the city or location itself. Some interviewees (especially those at the start of their careers) indicated that they had a limited amount of influence over where they ended up because there were only a few jobs/positions to apply for and they had to be prepared to be mobile. However others were only considering the specific job they applied for and would not have considered moving to the UK (or anywhere else) had it not been for this specific opportunity.

For two interviewees, their spouse/partner being offered a job at Birmingham University was the main reason to move to Birmingham, but none of the other interviewees were influenced in their decision to locate in Birmingham by family members. Two interviewees brought their spouse/partner and young children with them when they were offered a job at Birmingham University. Both these interviewees mentioned the initial difficulties of their non-working spouse/partner settling into life in the city and meeting other people and making friends, whereas this was not a problem interviewees who were working and had colleagues/networks of friends at university. However, the strong ethnic community was seen as helpful in this respect. Finally, one interviewee had moved to Birmingham with a partner who commuted to London from Birmingham for work. The choice of Birmingham rather than a location equidistant between Birmingham and London was made because both enjoyed what Birmingham had to offer as a city and a place to live.
7.3.4 Remaining in Birmingham West Midlands

The job situation played the dominant and central role in interviewees choosing either to remain in or leave Birmingham – liking or disliking the job and the university/work environment or the termination/continuation of a contract or gaining a permanent position/promotion at the University or the offer of a good job elsewhere were the most important considerations, and so for some, the city played very little if any part in this equation. Interviewees also recognised that mobility was necessary for academic career progression and so they were also prepared to leave Birmingham as well as the UK despite enjoying living in the city.

However, for others, the positive ‘quality of life’ aspects of living in Birmingham did have more influence the decision to remain in the city – Birmingham was seen as a ‘convenient city’, with a shorter commute to work than other cities interviewees had lived in (London, Tokyo) and with good international transport links; environment around the university campus was considered particularly attractive as were the number of green areas not far from city centre; Birmingham was seen as being more ethnically cohesive and more accepting of different cultures; and the city was welcoming and interviewees could ‘relate to the people more’/‘feel at home in Birmingham’.

The influence on ‘soft’ factors was noticeable especially in the case of interviewees who had family and small children (who had settled into a nursery or into schools) as well as those who had become more ‘socially integrated’ into the city (meeting partners while working in the region). Two interviewees commented that Birmingham’s central location in the UK would make it possible to commute to a job elsewhere in the country while still living in Birmingham to maintain this continuity. Liking the city as a place to live also meant that if a job came up in Birmingham or another city in the UK, Birmingham would be the preferred option.

Again, the length of time interviewees planned to remain in Birmingham prior to their arrival depended purely on the job situation - the length of the initial contract offered/how the job panned out etc. Also, Birmingham being an unknown factor as a place to live (or initial negative perceptions about the city) meant that for most, this was initially seen as a temporary move to the city for only a year or 2-3 years up to 5 years at the most. Those with families or who had met partners or had children while working in Birmingham were more likely to have changed their plans in favour of remaining in Birmingham, as their families were settled and children had made friends and had places in nurseries/schools etc. These interviewees were therefore developing strong social ties with the city – see also section 7.3.11.
7.3.5 Career and job situation

As already discussed, the majority of those interviewed had made the decision to move to Birmingham based on job opportunities at the university and the majority viewed this as a positive career step:

‘I think if I had been anywhere else in the UK I don’t know if I would have been able to get a good research post in a place like a university here which… I don’t know whether I would have been able to do that in another place.’ (HE4)

‘This autumn I applied for a job back home in XXXX, leading the international strategy section at the University of XXXX and I have just been offered it. It is definitely a career move as it pays more than a professor’s salary in XXXX - it’s not as much as here - and it is a very interesting job I think. I would never have been offered this job if it weren’t for my experience from Birmingham.’ (HE8)

Interestingly, one interviewee mentioned Birmingham’s location/international transport links as an advantage in that it was easier than many other places to get colleagues from Europe or USA to visit; ‘I think it is one of those cities in Europe where it is actually quite easy to gain professional visibility. The city definitely doesn’t hinder that sort of thing.’ (HE1)

Only one interviewee stated that moving to Birmingham had been a setback to his career (decision to move had been because of spouse/partner’s career).

7.3.6 Activities outside of work/for relaxation

Interviewees made use of many of the cultural, leisure and recreational facilities both within the in the city and in the wider region. In terms of culture they felt there was enough going on in Birmingham (or other towns in the West Midlands such as Warwick or Stratford) to keep them interested - they required only occasional visits to London catch a particular play or exhibition for example. Some interviewees particularly appreciated that the cultural offer in Birmingham was also multi-cultural (strong Asian arts culture within the city). Equally, they the rural countryside surrounding Birmingham and how easy it was to get out of the city into the countryside to cycle or walk - Birmingham combined the two elements of rural recreation and city culture well. The canal network was also particularly popular recreationally (and for using to cycle to work). Interviewees with young children also commented on the good range of activities available and the family friendly nature of the city, also lots of parks and green spaces within the city (Cannon Hill Park, Edgbaston Reservoir, Lickey Hills playground) which were child safe.

‘every time we do have like a few hours or a free weekend we actually try to make the most of the city. So we go to museums or just simply go out and have a drink somewhere in some café really…which is I think what we are going to do this weekend, as simple as that - a couple of exhibitions we want to see, we are going to go out with friends and go to a bar we have never been - very simple, banal ways and just explore the city.’ (HE1)
‘Yes, I use it a lot. We go to events almost weekly or bi-weekly. I love the NEC and the NIA so we go to a lot of concerts. We do make very good use of all the cultural things that exist in Birmingham. There was only once or twice an instance where I needed to go to London to see what I wanted to see, but apart from that I think that in Birmingham I find everything and I do make good use of it.’; ‘there’s plenty. I mean if you keep up with what’s coming to Birmingham, there’s always plenty to do’ (HE5)

‘If I don’t need to go to the city or if I don’t want to go to the city centre for a particular reason to see something, I’d rather go south to the countryside, ride or hike or walk, but at the same time living right in between those two worlds, is ideal, because if there’s something that interests me and I want to come to the city centre it’s a ten minute drive. If I want to, you know, grab my bike and go for a bike ride, it’s a ten minute ride at the same time. So I think combined the two together quite nicely.’ (HE5)

‘Cycling along the canals, ‘I’m taking a lot of bike rides’. ‘that’s what I did when I lived in Berlin too so it’s just what I do here. Along the canals’’. (HE2)

‘Restaurants and cafes, I’ve been to several and to the cinema, but not to a theatre, not in Birmingham I’ve been once to Warwick or to Coventry, but not to, but I plan to go in October to a theatre here in Birmingham so it’s part of my, what I have in mind’ (HE2)

‘we quite appreciate say in Birmingham we got young kids and there are quite a lot of things going on in the city.’; ‘The most often we use the central library for centre for children quite a lot they have quite a lot of activities and also the various other festival, festival maybe not that much, but say for example the Christmas market, everyone likes that.’ ‘we like the free space for example, the Victoria Square, the Centenary Square where people go on a fine day then, people with small children. We usually go to city without a particular purpose, but if children can have place to walk around, play around it’s good and for example we have the Canon Hill Park or there is Edgbaston Reservoir near. It also help, yes.’ (HE10)

‘We go to Canon Hill park to feed the ducks, or the Lickeys, there’s a great children’s playground there’; ‘Many performances are offered for a very young audience, for example at the dance expo last spring we went to see an amazing dance production aimed at young toddlers like my girl. She sat mesmerized through the whole 45 min performance.’ (HE8)

‘I would love to say that we go the Symphony Hall every other week, but we don’t. We used to before we had XXXX - we would go to the theatre, to the Rep, down to Stratford and the Symphony Hall - but if you try and combine a busy career and bringing up a child there is just not much space for other things. So I have got friends here from outside work who I am seeing and we would spend time going off hill walking and sitting round drinking coffee and chatting. (HE7)

‘I quite like going out into the countryside, because I am quite happy to be outside. But there are also lots of things you can do within Birmingham - so there are areas like round the Mail Box, round the canals that are quite nice, that you can go out and if you don’t go into certain areas it is also a pretty safe city to be in - so there is not an awful lot of crime as far as I understand it.’ (HE7)
‘We’re very happy with the ICC in Birmingham and we’ve been to a couple of concerts there and Symphony Hall and lot of activities in the MAC in town, my daughter goes to dance classes and singing down there, so there’s a lot of cultural things happening, it’s much less compared to London area, but I mean all the factors, I mean we are quite privileged to have such big arts and culture, music thing going on in Birmingham.’ (HE9)

‘we just travel around the countryside. Discover the region.’ (HE3)

‘my main sort of thing is that we go to the cinema quite a bit and that’s probably one of the activities which I tend to do quite often, also often restaurants and things – I think those would be the main 2 aspects.’; ‘mostly we would be going movies wise to Star City for example and eating out to the city centre or anywhere else. My parents were visiting a month or so back and we went to the Canon Hill park a couple of days, we went to the city centre a couple of times and it was good.’ (HE4)

### 7.3.7 Perceptions of the city: ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ factors

Again, interviewees generally had a very positive view of Birmingham as a place to live and work, and regarded many of the ‘soft’ factors and associated ‘quality of life’ aspects about Birmingham as positives. They liked the friendly city/relaxed atmosphere of the city (and frequently compared this with London) and felt the city was a vibrant place where they could meet lots of lots of people. One interviewee commented that they could relate more to the people living in Birmingham than other cities in UK (e.g. Oxford). However, Birmingham was also big enough to be an international city, and the cultural and ethnic mix of the city and the diversity of the population was seen as a positive by most. Similar to interviewees in the other two sectors, it was commented on that everyone was a foreigner in Birmingham so they felt more accepted. There were mixed feelings about the level of integration in the city – interviewees did not feel uncomfortable or fearful and there appeared to be less racial tension than other cities experienced. However some commented that there were still very white, middle class areas of Birmingham which were separate from the more ethnically diverse parts of the city and region:

‘...people are having a lot of fun here, so that’s maybe a bit too much alcohol in the evenings, but what I remember the Chinese quarter or the Arcadian...what I think when I go to a pub, it’s very relaxed, compared to Germany.’ (HE2)

‘What I like about Birmingham is it is very diverse and most people are really very friendly. So say I stand around on the street looking slightly confused or something, within minutes there would be somebody asking me ‘oh, can I help you love’ and I think people are a bit more laid back and a bit friendlier than in London.’ (HE7)

‘One of the advantage it is well mixed in a way, not segregated...’; ‘when I’m walking it happens, when I’m walking in Birmingham, I don’t feel the stress of being worried by any kind of pressure, like I would see in some areas in Paris or even in Lyon. I don’t feel that in Birmingham - it’s quite relaxed I would say.’ (HE3)
‘More multicultural, more peaceful. Peaceful in terms I mean not much tensions between communities and, we do hear about stuff from the media, but on a personal level, I don’t.’ (HE9)

‘What I like is that it’s really diverse.’; ‘In terms of people who live here...I don’t feel - like what I remember, my home town, for example, where everyone is German or nearly everyone, that’s not true nowadays, but I think it’s quite difficult to get in to the system, in to the city if everybody is the same and that’s quite easy for me here, because everyone, or seems to be, from somewhere else.’ (HE2)

‘I love the Black Country and that’s something that improved my relationship with the region in general. I like the relationship of people as I said in the Black Country a lot more than in the place where I live. I live in a white area of Birmingham and I have to say that I like it less than that part of the country, or the region, but I can’t leave there because it’s so far away from work.’ (HE5)

In terms of the physical aspects of Birmingham, interviewees appreciated the many green spaces and parks; the canal network which was good for walking/cycling; and the easy access to the countryside from Birmingham. There was a feeling that the city was ‘on the way up’ in terms of its regeneration. The city centre offered good shopping facilities – the new Bullring as well as old market (preferred to new shopping by some); and there was a good cultural offer in Birmingham which included a variety of events for children:

‘Many performances are offered for a very young audience, for example at the dance expo last spring we went to see an amazing dance production aimed at young toddlers like my girl. She sat mesmerized through the whole 45 min performance.’ (HE8)

‘I was looking forward to living in a big city, multi cultural environment, good cultural life, just the size and therefore the diversity of people and activities was attractive. But that was also reinforced by what I find is actually a nice - basically the results of all the renovation of the city centre, the regeneration of the city centre - so it is quite nice to move to a place that is actually obviously on the way up, as it were, and which does project that, rightly or wrongly.’ (HE1)

‘I mean, all the amenities you can think of are just there - cultural life is actually very important - for example cinemas, exhibitions, museums, galleries, the possibility to go to gigs and these sort of things - and the fact that Birmingham seems to be a rather vibrant place where we could actually meet very different people and it is big enough obviously to be an international city.’ (HE1)

‘It’s a lot greener, I mean the first thing that hit me about Birmingham is it’s a lot greener than others, so many parks and so many trees and it’s not the concrete jungle that it was portrayed to be. Especially if you stay away from the core of the city, the city centre. So that was the first pleasant surprise and the surroundings, the fact that five minutes down the road from my house, I cross the M40, M42 and I’m in Cotswold country where I go and cycle for hours with no car passing me. That’s a big luxury.’ (HE5)
‘...it’s a big city which has its bad points, but a good point is that many things happen, you can really have a lot to do.’; ‘...that there are many opportunities both in terms of cultural events or things for children you know.’; ‘but again you can escape fast. I would say for the size of the city if I compare to Lyon which is probably even smaller than Birmingham, it’s much more dramatic to get out than Birmingham.’ (HE3)

‘It is a friendly city, it’s a green city, and there is good shopping, very good cultural exposure, national ballet, the amazing symphony hall, several good theatres and very good dance companies.’ (HE8)

‘About city centre, we like the free space for example, the Victoria Square, the Centenary Square where people go on a fine day then, people with small children.’ (HE10)

‘...although I don’t like the shops it’s a very, very convenient city centre. You go there and you find absolutely anything you need in a pretty condensed area.’ (HE5)

‘Birmingham offers quite a lot of culture in the city centre. I think that in comparison to the exposure that I had in London, when I was in Oxford I’ve done more things in Birmingham than I have ever done in London for a fraction of the price, it’s more affordable.’ (HE5)

In terms of ‘hard’ factors, the lower cost of living (than London or Oxford) also meant it is more affordable to go out and enjoy free time. Housing was also felt to be more affordable than other cities in the UK (particularly London or Oxford) and interviewees could purchase their own home. There were also good national and international transport links and the proximity to London, mean interviewees did not feel ‘cut off’ from rest of country.

‘I think Midlands is kind of more sensible than in London area in terms of house prices and things like that’ (HE9)

‘Well, the cost of living is very important and that came as a really nice surprise even compared to Oxford - lots cheaper to live here. So that’s the first thing and as a result obviously the quality of the accommodation was good - we could hope to get for the same amount of money compared to London.’ (HE1)

‘Housing is more affordable than when I was in Oxford, there was absolutely no way that I would afford the house as an academic, there was absolutely no way, so that was a big positive about Birmingham.’ (HE5)

‘Birmingham is obviously a good place you can virtually go anywhere. It’s good railway network, for example’; ‘obviously we all go back to our home country from time to time and again Birmingham is a convenient place compared with we go some other cities and also inversely, if my family members they visit from somewhere else, Birmingham is easy place for them to come.’ (HE10)

‘The other good thing for us - because we move quite a lot, for personal reasons or professional reasons - transport infrastructure are actually quite good and that’s another reason why we actually feel quite - we felt that Birmingham is pretty nicely located, regardless of the state of the British Railway system - but that’s another story.’ (HE1)
...we are very mobile so we are not afraid of hopping on a train if we actually want to go to London.....so we don’t feel cut off from the rest of the country and definitely not cut off from London.’ (HE1)

Respondents also liked the University campus and their working environment. It was well situated with its own train station, had an attractive physical environment in a green leafy area, but was also close to city centre so it was not ‘in the middle of nowhere’:

‘But the good point of working on the campus for instance it’s because it’s also on the train station which is really very, very nice... the campus also is very attractive. For me, but also for I see many students coming here, especially foreigners and they’re really impressed.’ (HE3)

Many of the aspects about living and working in Birmingham that interviewees disliked were similar to those already commented on by interviewees in the other two sectors:

♦ City designed for cars and not people friendly
♦ Not cyclist friendly (other than the canal network)
♦ Physical aspects - ugly areas very close to city centre, New Street Station particularly
♦ Lack of an historic core or an area that is identifiable as a central area
♦ Environmentally poor/scruffy/cleanliness/lack of recycling facilities
♦ Overdoing it in its effort to get away from its past/destroying own culture and becoming too mainstream/designed around shopping – city losing its identity
♦ Media portrayal/perception of crime (gun and knife)
♦ Segregation – diverse population but still pockets of ethnic deprivation
♦ Too much focus on city centre regeneration at expense of other areas of city
♦ Not enough publicity of events /very difficult to find out what’s going on in the city
♦ Public transport within the city expensive/difficult to navigate/services chaotic/difficulty getting to/from airport if having to travel late at night/early in morning

‘I think it’s very much designed for cars the whole city. So there are not many cycle paths over the city and you have to be very careful when you drive your bike.’ (HE2)

‘It’s bad for cycling, some parts of Birmingham is really scruffy and feels quite dangerous – it’s often in the news in the context of gang crime and gun crime.’ (HE8)

‘I don’t feel very safe in around the city centre like late in the night, yes, especially in the bus stops and stuff like that. I’ve seen a few incidents of people being robbed and stuff like that even though not personally involved, but I’ve seen a few cases of mugging and picking up and running mobile phones and stuff like that.’ (HE9)

‘There are some really ugly areas I think and I didn’t expect cities, they are very close to the city centre and of course I know the cities have these areas, but what I didn’t expect is that they are so close to the city centre. That’s what I didn’t expect. It’s rather negative.’ (HE2)
‘Well in terms of I mean living it’s, the city itself isn’t - compared to many other cities - is not a very exciting city from my point of view. In respect of the beauty of the city to start with - I’m more used of cities where you can just stroll along little roads and streets and yes I feel it’s a bit too much of a kind of shopping centre oriented, but I think it’s because of the history of the city. So the city per se is not very attractive to me although there is a lot to do there.’ (HE3)

‘Well the architecture is close to zero I would say or it’s very, very special. It’s a kind of post-industrial. They tried their best for sure, I mean the canal area in the centre is, but the feeling of a city is not there it’s, and I’m used to, I mean I lived in Vienna, I lived in Lyon, I lived in Toulouse, where you have this kind of although cities can be smaller, but you have that centre feeling there. In Birmingham you don’t really feel that.’ (HE3)

Although the physical ugliness of the city was not particularly important to those living there, it was an issue when bringing friends or family to visit and wanting to project a good impression of Birmingham:

‘It still looks industrial.’; ‘I mean once you are here it doesn’t matter....but if you are bringing some friends over and you know from a different country, then if you want project them Birmingham then definitely these architectures and the way the places where you could take them out is probably limited. I would say except for a few places there’s nothing much that I mean you can take them city centre, Bullring etc, which has tremendously transformed the city centre I would say. Bit more places like that instead of just focusing on the city centre and of course New Street there is something happening so it’s all positive. That’s definitely one of the gloomiest places, because that’s the window in to the city, because when people do come in from elsewhere that’s the first place they come out and then it looks very dark and dull and gloomy. So I’m glad something is happening to that’ (HE9)

‘In terms of architecture, it’s still a lot of differences could be - I know Brindley Place and all that has been tremendously transformed, so I would see that happening to other pockets of the city, rather than just concentrating on the city centre. So I mean moving the developments to all parts of Birmingham and also just to keep the retain the local, what do you call, culture and local essence, local character, while doing these.’ (HE9)

‘I think that Birmingham is making a big effort to break away from what it was and sometimes they over do it and doing so I think it might limit the culture aspect of improving the city. It’s, what I don’t like about the city centre is that it’s designed around shopping and not as much around culture and I think that Birmingham has the background to present culture a lot more than presenting Selfridges and The Gap and John Lewis or whatever is down there. I think that’s a bit of mistake, although the city looks nicer, I think it’s losing it’s identity at the same time, it’s just becoming another city centre which might as well be a replica of another city. In many ways I prefer the concrete jungle parts of the city that they have been left unaffected from that, rather than the city centre itself. But there’s nothing to say that providing a cleaner and safer city is not an improvement. I just hope that they realise that building flats and flats and flats and shops and shops and shops is not the way forward and they have to maintain Birmingham culture for what it is and I think Birmingham has a lot, has plenty.’ (HE5)
'When I first came to Birmingham I went down to the city centre I was trying to find a book that would tell me all about Birmingham and the only thing that I found was a small guide called the Itchy Birmingham something like that. I mean they told you where the restaurants and stuff like, but they don’t really tell you much. And you’re absolutely right, this is something that it took me a while to realise where I go to find information and I have my, not my work address, my other email address has a list of emails that comes through mailing lists that I joined so I keep in touch with what’s coming to Birmingham through that. But you have to actually go and find these things and sign up.’ (HE5)

‘What I would dislike is probably could be a bit more cleaner. And more emphasis on recycling for the initially when I came I struggled to find, talk to people in the city council to, I mean there was no concept of recycling a the moment when I arrived in 2003.’ (HE9)

‘What I could regret is that the transport is a bit chaotic and expensive. Especially the train it’s crazy.’ (HE3)

‘..one problem which I faced was lack of public transport - at least not during peak hours, but in later evenings and late nights and stuff like that.’; ‘Just for shopping from here, commuting to shops and visiting city and etc and especially from airports and stuff which was quite tough and I did not drive when I arrived in the city and I had to wait for a year to get learn driving and get my license.’ (HE9)

‘...every time I had to go outside the city I had to rent a car or say my family was there and we use their car. In terms of transport the bus service actually seem to be a bit difficult to navigate, as it were. It is pretty hard to get a sense of how it works. So that’s the impression that I have.’ (HE1)

‘On the negative side it is a Birmingham problem, but it is a British problem, it is basically inequalities. There are massive contrasts between where we live, that is essentially an affluent, very middle class enclave in the middle of a working class constituency, pretty much. So because it does correspond to my political and social concerns, that’s something that I am aware of and when you drive or walk across the city you notice the big differences that there are.’ (HE1)

‘It’s fairly segregated I think, despite the fact that it is ethnically diverse. I think that it’s and despite me finding many positive things about that, in certain areas. At the same time I think that it’s quite segregated and you know where you can find the wealthy whites, the working class whites, the Pakistanis, the Hindus, so and that’s something I never liked, I really, really, never liked segregation and it’s one of the things for which I love New York.’ (HE5)
### 7.3.8 Social networks

Other than a few colleagues already working at the university, most interviewees did not know anyone in Birmingham prior to moving to the city. Unlike interviewees working in the creative industries sector, once here, it was not important to them to develop close networks for professional reasons – any networks formed were mainly for social reasons. Also a large number of university colleagues meant that other sources of friends/networks did not have to be sought out.

Social and community networks were more important for spouse/partners at home looking after children and who did not have the advantage of meeting people through work. One interviewee commented that the lack of spouse/partner involvement in social networks and the feeling of isolation was probably the biggest influencer in leaving the city: ‘If you go to work you immediately meet people and join a network, but it can be very isolating to sit at home with your young children and be in a country where you have got no social network.’ (HE7)

Cultural networks were important particularly to Indian and Pakistani interviewees; ‘to keep in touch with your cultural background and roots’, and expat networks were also important for those with children - so that they grew up with an understanding of their native culture or were bi-lingual and able to communicate in English as well as their parent’s native language. However, other respondents actively wanted to distance themselves from involvement in expat groups.

### 7.3.9 Residence and neighbourhood

Only two interviewees chose to live in the city centre (one near the Chinese Quarter and one in the new Mail Box development). The majority chose to live in Birmingham’s urban villages (Edgbaston, Harborne Moseley, Bournville) or else slightly less expensive areas with easy access to the university (Selly Oak or Kings Norton). Only one interviewee chose to live outside the city boundary in a rural village to the South West of Birmingham.

The city centre location was chosen by interviewees who liked living in big cities and who wanted the buzz of being near other people in a vibrant area and to be near amenities (pubs, cinemas, shops, museums, galleries) and all that ‘city-living’ offers; ‘I like big cities and I like to live in the centre of the city and when I get out of my flat or my house that there are people on the streets that there is a pub or a cinema or whatever, the shop is available and I don’t have to walk too long to get to these things.’ (HE2).

The ‘urban village’ suburbs were chosen because they were green, leafy areas and there was more outdoor space in the form of parks and private or large communal gardens while still being fairly centrally located; they also had good local amenities – local (independent) shops as well as supermarkets; and there were good schools in the locality; ‘there is a High Street and you can get absolutely anything on this High Street - from children’s schools to a Post Office and everything... ’ (HE7). These areas were also considered to be safe and people living there friendly: ‘...it is a pretty good neighbourhood going on, so I know the neighbours who are across the street and two or three houses down on either direction and they are very
friendly so there are at least 10 doors there that I could knock on if there was a problem.” (HE7)

Convenience for work was an important aspect in choosing an area to live; ‘the locality for example of where I live, it’s not too far from the city centre, it’s not too far from my place of work. So it’s pretty much central to everywhere.’ (HE4) – ability to walk or cycle to work was mentioned as a factor several times; ‘I like the fact that it’s very close to the university, so when I cycle to work it takes me about ten minutes to get here;’ (HE5); ‘We live in Harborne which is very, very convenient because I can walk from home here in the mornings, so I walk half an hour through a fairly green area, so it is fairly safe.’ (HE7)

Many of the interviewees had chosen to live in fairly expensive/middle-class parts of Birmingham – so higher rents were a trade off for nicer accommodation or a bigger garden. ‘it [Harborne] is fairly expensive so it was a major financial investment to move there, but I think it is worth it.’ (HE7). For others, housing affordability was an influence in choosing where to locate; ‘That’s [Kings Norton] where I could afford the house when I got my job.’ (HE5). Some interviewees mentioned other places they would prefer to live, but housing was too expensive in these areas plus they were not so convenient for getting to the university (Solihull to the East or Bromsgrove to the South West of the city – both very middleclass/professional areas on the periphery of Birmingham).

Those with children commented on the lack of family housing/predominance of flats without gardens in the city centre as a reason for not living there:

‘If I was young and single and wealthy, I would consider living in the city centre, but if you try and bring up a family in a flat in the city centre it is just not very attractive - I think it is more a sort of a yuppy thing to do. So family wise it will not make me change. And for myself I do enjoy being outdoors, so I enjoy gardening and it is sort of like a green island, so if you come home from work being completely frazzled and tired, you just walk out in the garden, look in the garden pond to see what the goldfish are doing, get an apple from the tree and that’s very relaxing.’ (HE7)

For the interviewee who chose a village location, it was also about having more outdoor space, ‘we wanted a little house with a garden.’(HE3). The village chosen was also very convenient for travel into work as it was near the main train line into Birmingham.

For some, a sense of ‘community’ was unimportant - living close to friends and colleagues was more important; whereas for others it was one of the most important aspects of the neighbourhood in which they lived – one interviewee was worried about the increase of ‘buy-to-let’ in her neighbourhood and that new people moving in would spoil this sense of community. Some interviewees commented that although people were friendly enough, living in a professional neighbourhood where everyone was out working made it difficult to get to know neighbours. Interestingly, only one interviewee mentioned the importance of living near to people with the same ethnic and cultural background. However, this interviewee did not choose to live in one of the more migrant-dense areas of the city such as Sparkhill or Yardley Wood, preferring one of the urban villages nearby - this choice was aspirational as the neighbourhood was considered to be better for bringing up a family:
‘I also think that Moseley in the sense has got both aspects so it’s not too far from the community and you can get the, for example Halal food for example is important, so that’s not too far from me, I can actually walk out of my house and in 15 minutes I can get it. At the same time it’s a good place where there is no problems in terms of where you are staying long term down the line when you have kids and things and the neighbourhood is decent so that’s important as well obviously.’ (HE4)

7.3.10 Experiences, support

Initial experiences for the majority of interviewees were generally good – the friendliness/helpfulness/supportiveness of colleagues and also people in Birmingham generally helped them settle easily into the job and life in the city - ‘Pretty good because of both the place and the people - I found the place very welcoming, both the University and the city.’ (HE1). Expectations of the city were also quite low prior to moving so the city itself was a pleasant surprise.

Only two interviewees had negative experiences - one described this as ‘traumatic’ - ‘having to deal with temporary accommodation, finding a house, dropping your children at school, who didn’t speak the language.’ (HE6), the other found the job initially ‘overwhelming’, and did not have time to make friends or to find out about the city, so the initial experience of living in Birmingham was very stressful and ‘totally negative’.

Some initial support was offered by the university (relocation expenses, temporary university owned rented accommodation), but generally interviewees received no formal help - ‘No, there wasn’t anything. You basically had to find out everything yourself. So there wasn’t anybody who told me how to get a National Insurance number or things like that - so you had to ask around, find it out yourself.’ (HE7). A lot of informal help was obtained from colleagues (advising which areas to live etc).

The provision of temporary university accommodation was regarded as important as it enabled interviewees to get to know the city before choosing an area to buy or rent themselves. However, the service was criticized by several interviewees as being ‘poorly managed’.

Interviewees mentioned different forms of support that the university could provide (some of which it has been initiated since interviewees arrived):

- Support network for family/spouse/dependants
- Advice on housing/accommodation searches and transport within city/how to apply for national insurance number (NINo) and how to deal with other legal requirements
- International staff support network – to meet other international colleagues
In terms of what the city could provide:

♦ better marketing of the city/knowing what is going on/events etc
  ‘I think that it would be helpful if people could find out a little bit easier what the city has to offer and what the city can offer instead of making it a bit of a struggle to find this information. That would simplify things quite a lot. That could be something the city council can do...it would be nice if they could make an effort to tell you what great place Birmingham is about, you know.’ (HE9)

♦ English language tuition for school-age children
  ‘If the schools could apply for extra funding for having somebody who gives language tuition for instance, to children who come from abroad’ (HE7)

7.3.11 Future plans

As discussed in section 7.3.4, for most interviewees, future plans to remain or move from Birmingham hinged on job opportunities and career progression of interviewees or their spouse/partners. For some, the decision of how long they intended to remain in the city were based purely on these career-based terms - those on short-term contracts who had strong social and personal ties with their home country, would return home; others would develop their current position, so would be looking at a minimum of 5 years and then would probably move on, those who had been in their current position for a while would start looking for other positions/’the next step up the ladder’ which would mean moving from Birmingham fairly soon.

‘...because I only came here for a fixed time so to provoke a change in me is something very, very outstanding must happen. I don’t know what, so I think my plans have been, have always been to go here for two to three years, that are my plans and then go back to Germany that’s... and that hasn’t changed too much.’ (HE2)

‘In the immediate future definitely staying in Birmingham. I don’t know where I will be in 10 years time – it’s difficult to say where you’re going to be in 5 years or 10 years time but I would want to be staying in Birmingham and it will all depends on how research goes and how, what sort of job opportunities come after I’ve completed my research and training, which will probably be 3 to 5 years down the line.’ (HE4)

‘for sure at least the next five or six years yes, because it’s not like a job where you come for a year as a post doc and you know that it’s a temporary job. Here it’s a job where you commit yourself to develop things so if your mind is not set up for that, then it doesn’t really work.’ (HE3)

However, interviewees with young families, as well as for those who had met partners here and were more ‘socially integrated’ into the city were more likely to consider staying in Birmingham for the longer term, however, some were still weighing up job/career progression with their settled life in the city and so were faced with the dilemma of staying or moving from Birmingham.
‘My focus I say at the moment is family. So at the moment my plans - also I quite enjoy current job - so I would like to stay here longer - but thinking about future obviously I sort of working here for about six year and reaching a point I’m thinking well I should go up one step perhaps and it does, it is, I’m sort of at cross road if you like, and I actually I am contemplating whether I should move or not.’ (HE10)

‘My career is important to me but it is not the only thing, so I think the second thing is the family, so as long as I combine career and family here I would be quite happy to stay on here.’ (HE7)

‘I have bought my own house. I’ve improved the house so much that I don’t want to move out of it...In terms of my job, it’s probably the best job I could have imagined having. In terms of the city, I’m happy being there, I have found my feet in the city and I have a very good life and good friends and everything, so I can’t see myself leaving Birmingham until retirement.’ (HE5)

Several interviewees indicated they would return to their home country at some point: 1) when they reached retirement age as the UK was not considered a good place to live as an old person; 2) inheriting property; 3) if they got married and decided to start a family; 4) to ensure children did not loose dual nationality.
8 MAIN LOCATIONAL DRIVERS FOR TRANSNATIONAL MIGRANTS IN THE WEST MIDLANDS

The final chapter of the report draws out some of the key emerging themes and provides some policy recommendations based on the results of the analysis of migrant motivations presented in the report:

- Deciding to live and work abroad
- Attractiveness of Birmingham for incoming migrants
- Importance of personal and professional networks
- Importance of ‘hard’ or ‘soft’ factors and quality of metropolitan region
- Diversity, segregation and integration

8.1 Trans-national migrant workers in Birmingham and the West Midlands

As discussed in previous ACRE reports (see Brown et al 2007), Birmingham and the West Midlands have a long history of attracting immigrants and migrant workers from around the world. Today, the city has one of the most ethnically diverse populations in Britain - some 29.7 per cent of the city’s population coming from minority backgrounds.

In the last 10 years, like the rest of the UK, Birmingham and the West Midlands have seen a dramatic increase in the number of international migrants, partly due to enlargement of the European Union. Non-UK nationals now account for some 5 per cent of regional employment in the West Midlands. The majority of these recent migrants come from the new European accession states (particularly Poland) and have replaced New Commonwealth countries as the largest source of new labour migrants in the region.

Trans national migrant workers in the West Midlands are predominantly young (around 45 per cent are aged 25 years and under and a further 40 per cent are aged 25 – 34 years) and in general males outnumber females (3 males to every two females). The majority of economic migrants are in employment and they present a varied profile in terms of their occupations and industry sectors. However, according to available data, around 15 -20 per cent work in the creative and knowledge intensive industries.
8.2 Profile of surveyed trans-national migrant workers

In this report, we have focused on the experiences of ‘highly skilled’ trans-national-migrants working in the Visual and Performing Arts, Higher Education and Business and Management Consultancy sectors in Birmingham. These sectors were chosen as they are important components of the broader knowledge and creative industries sector in the city.

The migrant workers varied markedly by sector, demographics and source country. Those working in Visual and Performing Arts had the youngest profile (90 per cent aged between 25 – 34 years, compared with only 30.0 per cent of those working in the Higher Education sector and 66 per cent in the Business Consultancy sector. Males outnumbered females in both the Higher Education (80.0 per cent male) and Business Consultancy (66.6 per cent male) sectors while females outnumbered males in the Visual and Performing Arts sector (60.0 per cent female). None of those in Visual and Performing Arts sector had children while 60.0 per cent of those in Higher Education and 33.3 per cent of those in Business Consultancy had young families. The nationality of interviewees in the Higher Education and Business Consultancy sectors were from EU countries (60.0 per cent and 66.7 per cent respectively) whereas nationalities of those in Visual and Performing Arts sector was more diverse: only 30.0 per cent of interviewees in this sector were from EU countries (and two thirds of these from A8 countries) and the remainder from New Commonwealth (40.0 per cent) and the Rest of the World (30.0 per cent). Finally, the majority of interviewees had lived in Birmingham for less than 10 years.

8.3 Deciding to live and work in the UK

The research suggests that there are a mix of push factors, including satisfaction levels related to individual’s circumstances in their home country, and a number of pull factors, particularly opportunities for career and personal development, which attracted migrants to particular destinations.

The migrants surveyed all shared two common factors: their career ambition and the fact that most were living relatively advantaged life in their home countries. In broad terms, the knowledge workers were drawn by career advancement and training opportunities and to centres of global or European excellence, while a high proportion of creative workers attached value to both career and personal development resulting from travel and experiencing another culture. Improved earnings and economic advancement were not dominant reasons for migrating, although they were important for some migrants from A8 countries as well as some from developing countries.

For respondents who already had careers and relatively settled lives in their home countries, push factors were less prevalent, although in many cases they (or their spouse/partner) did not have the quality of opportunities for career advancement or to use their expertise in their home country and this was a key driver to move.

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1 Defined as individuals holding a degree-level or equivalent vocational qualification.
The driving factors in choosing the UK were familiarity with the country and the language, and/or a job/career or educational opportunity having been made available. The most common alternatives being considered were the US or Canada, Europe, or Australia.

8.4 Attractiveness of Birmingham and the West Midlands region to highly skilled trans-national migrants

Understanding which factors attract highly-skilled international labour and, consequently, shape the economic geography of talent, is fundamental given the importance of creativity and knowledge for regional innovation, growth and development.

The majority of interviewees knew very little, if anything, about Birmingham or the West Midlands region before arriving. For some, the city and what to expect was a complete unknown. For others, the perception they had from colleagues, friends, the media, etc., was very negative - a grey, post industrial city with high crime levels and problems associated with the extreme ethnic diversity of the population. However, there were also some positive perceptions relating to the diversity of the city, including the acceptance of foreigners, and the overall friendliness of people living in the city, especially when compared to London.

The majority of interviewees were attracted by a good job offer or career opportunity or by the quality of a specific further or higher educational programme in the region, not by the city itself. The pull to Birmingham appeared to be mainly related to its size - it was known as one of the major cities in the UK, and therefore potentially offered good employment and career development opportunities for international migrants.

Although some migrants had chosen to come to Birmingham specifically, this was mainly for personal reasons - following a partner/spouse who had already been offered a good job in the city or deciding to settle in the city after meeting their current partner there, or because of having relatives or friends nearby. However, many interviewees indicated that they had wanted to come to the UK, rather than Birmingham or the West Midlands and originally they had no strong preference for any particular location within the UK. This evidence suggests that location in the West Midlands was largely attributable to serendipity, rather than a positive choice, and mirrors the findings of other research carried out in the region (Green et al., 2007).

In the Higher Education sector, the reputation of the institution (in this case, the University of Birmingham), a particular academic department, or the opportunity to work with key professionals in their particular academic field, played a central role in the decision to move to Birmingham. In the Business Consultancy sector, the presence of large international professional firms with overseas secondment opportunities, the general depth of the professional sector and the quality of courses at universities in the region were the main factors drawing people to Birmingham. In the Visual and Performing Arts sector, the majority were initially attracted to the region by the offer of very good, sector-specific courses in new media and creative industries and the opportunity to gain a qualification in a specific area not available in their home country, while others moved because they were offered a good, career-level job opportunity.
Nonetheless, most interviewees cited a number of advantages of being located in Birmingham, which satisfied their requirements of ‘hard’ economic and ‘soft’ quality of life factors - as a large city it offered a good variety of work and career opportunities; was centrally located in the UK and had good (international) transport infrastructure; was more affordable (in terms of general ‘cost of living’ as well as buying or renting housing) compared to London; it also offered a very ‘liveable’ working environment - as a city that is still fairly compact, it was easier to commute to and from work, for example. The multicultural aspect of the city in general and the acceptance of different minority groups was a particularly strong influencing factor for locating in Birmingham, some interviewees also felt Birmingham was a very friendly city and more welcoming to and inclusive of foreigners.

The majority of interviewees found their experiences of Birmingham to be better than expected. This generally stemmed from the friendliness of the people and the acceptance of foreigners. Interviewees were also pleasantly surprised by the physical aspects of the city – it was far more green and leafy than imagined (especially in the suburbs), and had a good mix and variety of culture and recreational activities.

### 8.5 Importance of networks: personal and professional

Migration is a process that both depends on, and creates, social networks (Vertovec, 2002). Social ties in pre-migration networks are related to factors affecting which people migrate, the means of migration, the destination (including locality, accommodation and often specific job) and future prospects for physical and occupational mobility. For migrants, social networks are crucial for finding jobs and accommodation, as well as psychological support and continuous social and economic information: ‘Connections with earlier migrants provide potential migrants with many resources that they use to diminish the risks and costs of migration: information about procedures (technical as well as legal), financial support, job prospects, administrative assistance, physical attendance, emotional solidarity.’ (Meyer, 2001: 93).

However, highly skilled migrants are usually considered to be as reliant on formal networks – such as intra-company transfers and academic exchange schemes – as on informal social ones (Lowell and Findlay, 2002; Meyer, 2001; Vertovec, 2002). And, in terms of informal networks, they are less likely than unskilled workers to rely only on friends and family members, and instead ‘have more extensive and diverse networks consisting of colleagues, fellow alumni, and relatives’ (Meyer, 2001: 94). But overall, higher skilled individuals are thought to rely less on migrant networks in order to integrate into the host society and labour market of their destination (Meyer, 2001).

Interviewees in the Higher education sector tended to enter the migration stream through their own ad hoc networks of colleagues and project collaborators; whereas Business consultancy workers tended instead to move through more institutional ‘migration channels’ such as recruitment agencies or via company transfers, where relocation services including dealing with immigration authorities and arranging accommodation were provided by the company and further resources were available to facilitate settling into the host country. For
interviewees in the Visual and Performing Arts sector, being a foreign student - which facilitated the development of a network of friends and potential professional or collaborative opportunities - was an important factor in further migration decisions. Indeed, many studies show that the experience of being a foreign student significantly increases the likelihood of being a skilled migrant at a later stage (e.g. Salt 1997).

The duration of residence in the host country is also an important factor in the formation of networks. The longer the migrant’s stay (intended or actual) the more developed the network of friends and people in the host country. For some migrants who intend to come to the UK for a short time, it may be more important to keep networks with the home country than to create new and strong networks in the destination country. For those anticipating a longer stay or permanently relocating, the opposite may be true.

For both knowledge and creative workers, the length of stay directly affected their social networks and how well-established they were in Birmingham. Most interviewees still had maintained strong links with their home country. This is not surprising given the relatively short time most had been living in the UK. These links revolved around family and friends rather than job and career. Over time, creative and knowledge workers tended to expand their networks and to become more connected with the local society.

It is interesting to note that personal and social networks (family, friends) while not as important in attracting international migrants to Birmingham, played a key role in retaining them. A number of interviewees met their partner/spouse while working in Birmingham, which provided a strong motivation for them to remain. Others had moved with their partner/spouse and small children who had settled into nurseries or schools in Birmingham and were therefore reluctant to move. These interviewees and their families therefore became more socially embedded in the city. Others commented that the rich social network of friends they had in the city was one of the reasons they had chosen to stay. Nonetheless, some interviewees stated they would return home to be nearer ageing parents or at the point of starting a family so that children could be near to other family members, so the presence of close family links in the home country was also an influence on return migration.

In terms of forming new networks, interviewees who were on short contracts or academic exchange programmes maintained strong social links with their home countries and did not seek to develop extensive personal networks or become involved in social, political or community organisations while living in Birmingham. These individuals had fairly settled lives in their home countries and working in Birmingham was seen as a purely temporary move. Interviewees who were here for medium to long term tended to develop more extensive personal networks, and were more likely to become involved in community and other organizations, although this tendency varied among individuals interviewed.

Interviewees had different views on the value of belonging to social networks with people from similar nationalities and origins. Interviewees in Visual and Performing Arts sector in particular preferred to distance themselves from ‘culture of origin’ networks in order to position themselves as ‘globally cosmopolitan’ and benefit from cross cultural contacts both at the personal and professional levels.
Across sectors, migrants from Europe as well as Australasia tended to distance themselves from expatriate communities and groups. However, migrants particularly from India and Pakistan valued these types of close cultural networks within Birmingham.

Interestingly, belonging to an expatriate community or social group was more important for the non-working partner/spouse who did not have the opportunity of meeting people through work and professional networks. Several interviewees commented that if their partner/spouse felt isolated and unhappy and was unable to make friends, this would be a major reason for choosing to leave the city. Interviewees who had small children were also more likely to be involved in cultural groups as they felt it was important for their children to grow up knowing about their own culture and language.

The ability to develop professional networks was especially important in the Visual and Performing Arts sector. Interviewees reported that they had access to strong and positive creative and cultural networks in Birmingham, which were important ways into employment or commissioned work. These networks were accessed through formal and informal means and were especially important for freelancers, who used them to learn about potential new project work and as a means of support with individuals who understood the pressures and isolation of this type of employment. Some interviewees compared Birmingham’s creative networks favourably with London’s: Birmingham’s were considered more collaborative and less competitive.

Knowledge workers in the Higher Education sector developed networks with immediate colleagues more for personal than professional reasons, as career progression was dependant more on developing wider (international) networks within the academic field. Nonetheless, personal networks tended to blur with professional networks as social networks tended to be closely associated with colleagues. In Business Consultancy, networks were important for career and job opportunities within the sector and the sector is highly networked. There was a similar blurring of professional and personal networks as social networks are mainly based around colleagues and this was evident not only within firms, but across the professional services community more generally, which is very tight knit in Birmingham, particularly for a city of its size. With time, these networks also expand, although these wider social networks are not seen as essential to their professional life.

8.6 Why people stay: Importance of ‘soft’ and ‘hard’ factors and quality of life in the West Midlands region

The decision to remain in Birmingham for most interviewees was dependant on job/career opportunities (for self and partner/spouse). However, for some, the positive aspects of living in Birmingham (hard and soft factors) as well as personal factors were also becoming important as retention factors – those who had become more socially embedded in the city in particular, were more likely to want to remain.

For most interviewees, the negative pre-conceptions of Birmingham were completely overturned with their actual experience of living and working in the city. The majority seemed generally satisfied with their life in Birmingham. They found the city extremely
welcoming to foreigners and they felt accepted and found it easy to integrate both socially and professionally.

Birmingham was also seen as a ‘vibrant’, international city, with a good (if incomplete) cultural offer. Overall, interviewees found that the Birmingham was good for social activities, pubs, restaurants, shopping and mainstream cultural activities. The heritage of the city and how that was reflected in the built environment was liked - areas such as the Jewellery Quarter and Digbeth were seen as ‘hidden gems’. Several interviewees also enjoyed the traditional city centre markets. Although the regenerated city centre received mixed responses, areas like Brindley Place were generally liked, though more alternative areas of the city, such as Moseley, were preferred for their mix of niche, independent shops, cafes and more relaxed ambience. Interviewees also found the city much greener than expected and particularly liked using the regenerated canal network for walking and cycling, the city parks and open spaces and the leafy suburbs as well as the easy access to the countryside. In terms of ‘hard’ factors, the lower cost of living and more affordable housing (compared to London); good international transport links and central location within the UK; and proximity to London were frequently mentioned as advantages.

Nevertheless, this positive image does not deny the presence of challenges. The city was seen as car oriented and difficult/unsafe for pedestrians and cyclists; some of the physical aspects of the city were also criticised – ‘ugly’ rundown areas very close to the city centre; New Street Station was considered unattractive and unsafe at night and gave a very poor first impression of the city; and the city was regarded as environmentally poor in terms of overall cleanliness/lack of recycling facilities. Interviewees commented negatively on the ‘look and feel’ of the city, particularly the lack of an identifiable and defined central area; a lack of landmark buildings and good architecture; lack of third spaces to meet up with friends.

In addition, interviewees were very critical of the external marketing of the city and the focus on mainstream retail and entertainment in the city centre – they commented negatively on the lack of niche and independent shops and the over-focus on high street chains in the Bullring and Broad street commercial entertainment zone, which they felt did not reflect all there was to the city. There was a feeling that the city was ‘overdoing it’ in its effort to get away from its manufacturing past and was losing its identity, a finding which resonates with previous ACRE reports (See Brown et al 2008a and 2008b). Interviewees also expressed that the city did not market its cultural activities well – there was not enough publicity around events and it was very difficult to find out what was going on in the city. Creative people mentioned the presence of a hidden underground creative milieu. However, this was difficult to access for those not already in the city’s cultural and creative networks. The overall feeling was that Birmingham was very good at mainstream cultural activities, but there was a lack of ‘bohemian type’ cultural activities such as small cafes, independent cinemas or more alternative cultural production. This is felt particularly by international migrants who had lived in or visited other ‘cosmopolitan’ cities (such as Melbourne, Paris, London, Chicago, Berlin).
8.7 Diversity, segregation and integration

According to the empirical findings of Florida (2000) the location of talent is strongly influenced by high levels of ‘diversity’ (low entry barriers for human capital): talented people are attracted to locations that display a high degree of demographic diversity, i.e. places, where anyone from any background, race, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation can easily plug in.

As already discussed in Chapter 4 of this report, Birmingham and the West Midlands have a long history of inward migration. As of 2001, Birmingham had one of the most ethnically diverse populations in Britain, with 29.7 per cent of the city’s population coming from minority backgrounds, and was second only to inner areas of London in terms of ethnic diversity.

The diversity of Birmingham, including the acceptance of foreigners and the friendliness of the population as a whole, especially compared to London, were particularly positive aspects in relation to perceptions interviewees had about Birmingham prior to moving to the city. For some interviewees, the known diversity of the city and the tolerant attitude of the people was a factor in deciding to move there rather than choosing another city in the UK.

The diversity of Birmingham was attractive to interviewees on both a personal and professional level and they felt accepted and were able to integrate well. As commented by one interviewee; ‘in Birmingham everyone is a foreigner.’ Although half the interviewees were European, there was no evidence that interviewees from non-European ethnic minorities found it more difficult to be accepted. On the contrary, the presence of, for example, large Indian and Pakistani communities made it easier for them to settle into the city.

For most, the multiculturalism of Birmingham was seen as an asset. For example, interviewees commented on the wide variety of difference cuisines available in the city, there were good ethnic food shops, different cultures were represented in a variety of traditional and modern music and dance productions as well as art exhibitions and cinema and this made life in the city more interesting. In the creative sector, it widened access to job opportunities in more mainstream activities within the sector. The ethnic diversity of Birmingham also seemed to have a positive impact in terms of creativity - the mix of different cultures and influences assisting in the creation of new cultural products.

Many interviewees, particularly in the Higher Education and Business Consultancy sectors, were in relatively privileged positions – they had good incomes, were working in skilled occupations and living in the city centre or in middle class, professional areas of the city – so they encountered few of the social integration or segregation problems associated with some migrants in lower skilled occupations in the city. Despite these advantages, and the feeling of greater integration compared to other UK cities (particularly London), some interviewees still felt the city was segregated spatially.
8.8 Future mobility

The literature on labour migration suggests that there is likely to be a diversity of migratory strategies and intended lengths of stay. Some migrants come to the UK for a fixed period, either for study or to learn English; as a career development opportunity with an international company; whereas others come with the intention of settling permanently. What is meant by ‘permanent’ and ‘temporary’ migration is, however, not straightforward and there are strong links between the two: ‘permanent’ migration often occurs indirectly, resulting from periods of ‘temporary’ migration. Also, the initial intention of temporary migration may be transformed into permanent migration and vice versa depending on a number of factors including migrants’ initial experiences in the host country. Temporary migration (which is characteristic of young and graduate migration) may satisfy the desire for new experiences and boost marketable skills in the domestic labour market, obviating the need for permanent emigration. Alternatively, temporary migration is a learning experience, which may provide enhanced knowledge and self confidence, thereby facilitating permanent migration (Baláz et al., 2004).

The degree of mobility of migrants and how long they anticipated remaining in Birmingham varied by sub-sector, but was predominantly associated with job and career opportunities available to them in Birmingham. For those in the Higher Education sector, labour market mobility is an important feature and many interviewees saw their stay in Birmingham as offering short to medium term (18 months to 5 years) career development - they were prepared to move to another institution (in the UK or abroad) if an opportunity presented itself as a standard pathway of career progression. Others who were on shorter academic exchange programmes viewed their stay in Birmingham as very temporary, and their future intention was to return to their home countries on completion of the programme.

Migrants in the Business Consultancy sector presented different profiles: some employed by large international firms had been sent to Birmingham on short-term ‘secondment’ for career development opportunities and would be returning back to their home country within the next year to eighteen months. Others expected to remain longer term, not so much within the same company, but rather within the city’s professional sector more generally. Again, it was the depth of career opportunities offered by the number of firms within the sector in Birmingham that was important.

Interviewees in the Visual and Performing Arts sector were typically more mobile and ‘footloose’ than those in the other two sectors. Moving regularly between jobs and employers in order to develop experience and skills for career purposes is common in this sector generally. Nonetheless, these interviewees seemed to have a more transient mindset and they did not feel overly tied to a particular place - moving to experience life and culture in another city was frequently cited as a reason for leaving Birmingham. These interviewees were not moving because of particular ‘push’ factors, rather they would expect to move on to other locations whatever city they were in. The majority of interviewees indicated they would plan to leave Birmingham within 1-2 years.

Nonetheless, some interviewees in this sector also cited specific ‘push’ factors which would influence their decision to leave Birmingham. These included the limited scope for career
progression in the city due to a lack of client base and few commissions from public organisations to underpin their activities; a limited offering in terms of artist led spaces/galleries or studio spaces to hire in city as well and the proliferation of short term contracts in the city and the feeling of insecurity this engendered. Some interviewees also felt that to succeed career-wise they must move to London, while others regard the more competitive nature of the creative industries in London as unattractive and preferred the more collaborative ambience across work and life that Birmingham seemed to offer. This applied especially to those wanting to develop intercultural products as these require significant cross-cultural collaboration.

Finally, an important determinant of the length of stay in Birmingham of international migrants across all three sectors is the successful integration of their partner/spouse and family in the city. While most migrants found it easy to settle in the city, what is really important is for their partner to be able to develop a network of friends and activities over the longer term. Several interviewees commented that if their partner/spouse felt isolated and unhappy, this would be a major reason for choosing to leave the city.

8.9 Typology of skilled migrants

There is clearly no such thing as a ‘typical’ migrant as motivations, aspirations and intentions vary, for example, according to country of origin, life stage and occupation. Nevertheless, there is some value in attempting to create a typology of skilled migrants. First, we review the literature on skilled migrant ‘types’ then set out an ‘idealised’ typology that identifies highly skilled trans-national migrants according to the characteristics observable from our research.

8.9.1 Review of literature on skilled migrant ‘types’

According to Iredale (2001) a number of typologies, or ways of categorizing professional migrants, emerge from the literature on highly skilled migration, and skilled migrants have typically been classified under the following themes or subgroups: 1) Motivation for migration; 2) Nature of source and destination (originating in less developed or more developed countries and moving to more developed or less developed destinations); 3) Channel or mechanism of migration; 4) Length of stay at destination; 5) Nature of integration into host economy; 6) National/International nature of the profession, and the global labour market demand/supply situation. Although, as noted by Iredale (2001), none of these typologies as yet adequately explains the process of skilled migration.

Iredale (2001) also points to the unique situation that exists in each professional area and the need to differentiate by profession when examining skilled migration. However, the nature of migration of highly skilled workers varies not only across types of professions but also with the type of work. Mahroum (2001) identified five major groups of professions for which the ‘push’ and ‘pull’ factors differ from one group to the other: 1) Managers and executives – described as ‘accidental tourists’, because the decision to relocate is often temporary and unplanned and involves intra-company transfers, or may be driven by mergers, expansion or
career development plans; 2) Engineers and technicians – described as ‘economy-class passengers’, because they are primarily pushed and pulled by economic factors from and to places where their skills are most needed and best rewarded; 3) Academics and scientists – described as ‘pilgrims’ because they are attracted by the type of work and working conditions in terms of the strength of a discipline or area of research, and the international repute of an institution. The importance of international contacts and exchange between scientists is an integral part of scientific life and the movement of this skilled labour group is most often the result of bottom-up developments in academia and science and is a natural feature of the spatial diffusion of knowledge and ideas; 4) Entrepreneurs – described as ‘explorers’ who bring capital and ideas aimed at setting up business activities. These individuals are attracted by supportive government policies in areas such as taxation and employment flexibility, the availability of finance and the openness of markets; and 5) Students - described as ‘passengers’, being the main source of employment for the labour market and contributing to local and global knowledge. These migrants are mostly affected by inter-governmental or inter-institutional policies.

In this chapter, we have analysed the main elements behind the decision of highly skilled creative and knowledge migrants to move to Birmingham to live and work and also the factors that affect their decisions either to remain here or to move on. The research indicates that there are different types of migrants, with different pathways. Broadly speaking, we can differentiate knowledge migrants from creative migrants: Knowledge migrants have more defined career paths and come to the region either because they have been seconded by an international company, because they have a firm job offer, or for a career development opportunity. As these migrants have established positions in their companies, or are employed at a graduate or post-graduate career grade level, they also earn good salaries. Their motives for moving to Birmingham are primarily career and job related. This determines what they need from the city and their opinions of it. ‘Hard’ factors such as lower cost of living, affordable housing, good national and international transportation links are particularly important - and ‘soft’ factors related to the quality of the environment, the cultural and leisure offer also influence their willingness to stay in Birmingham once they are here; but do not in themselves attract or retain these individuals.

Creative migrants broadly speaking, come to Birmingham without a clear plan and on individual pathways. These migrant are attracted by the creative potential of Birmingham and are looking for quality of life and a creative environment in which to develop their talent and to interact with other talented creative professionals. The ability to develop strong, closely bound networks of likeminded people within the city is essential to both their personal and career development which are regarded as equally important. They consider that the cultural life of the city is an important asset from a professional perspective. They are attracted by the micro-initiatives and ‘underground culture’ that emerge from the interplay of creative networks and civil society.

However, there are yet more nuanced differences between sectors and so the ‘idealised’ typology that we set out below identifies highly skilled trans-national migrants according to the characteristics observable from our research. Although the three sectoral profiles created in table 8.1 are different, Birmingham has elements that attract all three types of migrant. The
presentation of migrant types that follows, and what influences them, should be considered as a ‘work in progress’ and not as a definitive proposition:

8.9.2 Migrant ‘Types’: Understanding the Motivation for skilled migration in Birmingham

Firstly, we need to understand what seems to motivate transnational migrants in the Birmingham case.

There are a variety of drivers and combinations of factors leading to voluntary migration. The highly skilled migrants interviewed were influenced predominantly by ‘pull’ factors. These include; (1) career advancement opportunities; (2) economic reasons (aspects of employment such as wage differentials); (3) quality of life factors (i.e. living conditions, lifestyle preferences); (4) the opportunity for personal development associated with travel and the experience of another culture; and (5) relationships (meeting spouse/partner while living/working abroad).

In broad terms, the knowledge workers were drawn by career advancement and training opportunities, while a high proportion of creative workers attached value to both career and personal development resulting from travel and experiencing another culture. Improved earnings and economic advancement were not dominant reasons for migrating, although they were important for some migrants from A8 countries as well as some from developing countries.

Beyond this broad first level categorisation of migrant type by the factors that drive or influence their location decisions, we can identify a number of second level differentiators that offer a more fine-grained picture and a consequent ‘working’ typology:

‘Independents’

Migrants can be divided into two main categories: those migrating individually (constituting the bulk of what is usually termed as the ‘brain drain’) or in the framework of an organisation.

Business Consultancy workers migrate through more institutional ‘migration channels’ such as recruitment agencies or via company transfers have more structured organisational support. Incentives to mobility for employees of large multinational companies include relocation packages, such as accommodation being provided and costs of moving being paid which eases movement. These migrants are also often exempted from the institutional barriers that are erected to individual migrants, including the procedures for the recognition of skills and diplomas.

Migrants in the Higher Education sector tended to enter the migration stream through their own personal networks of colleagues and project collaborators. Typically they and their families move with little support, although they sometimes receive assistance with temporary accommodation or more general integration opportunities for their families. Interviewees in the Visual and Performing Arts sector followed individual migration paths, and they and their
families move with no assistance or support and are more likely to rely on networks of friends in terms of finding accommodation and work in the host country.

‘Active Networkers’

Again, migrants can be divided into two main categories: 1) those who actively network and who develop wide social and professional relations - both at a local and international level, which are essential for the development of their professional careers and in which professional and personal relations mix; 2) those with limited social networks developed mainly with immediate colleagues, whether local or international, that are not essential to the development of their professional careers.

Migrants in the Visual and Performing Arts sector are highly networked. The ability to develop strong professional and social ties with others in the sector constitutes an essential route into employment or helps them to obtain commissioned work. These networks are accessed through formal and informal means and are especially important for freelancers, who exploit them to learn about potential new project work and as a means of personal support. Social relations are extensive, and it is difficult to separate personal from professional relationships. These networks extend internationally and aid movement from one location to another.

Knowledge workers in the Higher Education sector develop networks with immediate colleagues more for personal rather than professional reasons, as career progression is dependant more on developing wider (international) networks within the academic field. Nonetheless, personal networks tended to blur with professional networks as social networks were closely associated with colleagues.

In Business Consultancy, networks are important for career and job opportunities within the sector and the sector is highly networked locally and also internationally via offshore offices of multi-national firms. There is a similar blurring of professional and personal networks, which is evident not only within firms, but across the professional services community in Birmingham more generally, as social networks are mainly based around colleagues. With time, these networks also expand, although these wider social networks are not seen as essential to their professional life.

‘Global citizens’

This refers to the degree to which migrants are ‘transnational’ in that they move to different locations, looking for the most promising career opportunities and interesting places to live and work. These people are living as ‘global citizens’ seeking careers and personal development across the world. They are somewhat distanced from both their own society and their co-nationals in the host society and they wish to present themselves as culturally autonomous from their own national groups. They assert a strong sense of entitlement to live and work in any place in the world of their choice and they freely move around the globe, unconstrained by state authorities.
Labour market mobility is an important feature of the HE sector and many interviewees saw their stay in Birmingham as offering short to medium term\textsuperscript{2} career development - they are prepared to move to another institution (in the UK or abroad) if an opportunity presented itself as a standard pathway of career progression; Migrants in the Business Consultancy sector presented different profiles: some employed by large international firms on ‘secondment’ to offices in Birmingham would be returning back to their home country in the next year to eighteen months. Others intended to remain within the city’s professional sector for a longer period of time; Moving regularly between jobs and employers in order to develop experience and skills for career purposes is common in the Visual and Performing Arts sector. Nonetheless, these interviewees also seemed to have a more transient mindset and moving to experience life and culture in another city or country was common. The majority of interviewees indicated they planned to leave Birmingham within 1-2 years.

\textit{\textbf{‘Place preferencers’}}

We are also interested in the degree to which places—cities in particular—can determine who goes where in the global economy, therefore the degree to which aspects of the city itself influence the attraction or retention of migrants to Birmingham is an important consideration here.

Migrants in both the Higher Education and Business Consultancy sectors were attracted by job and career opportunities and not the city itself. However, their decision to remain in Birmingham was influenced by ‘hard’ factors such as lower cost of living, more affordable housing, good national and international transportation links which were seen as particularly important; as well as ‘soft’ factors related to the quality of the environment, the cultural and leisure offer which influenced their willingness to stay in Birmingham once they were here. But these ‘soft’ factors do not in themselves attract or retain these individuals.

Creative migrants were attracted much more by ‘quality of life’ factors and a creative environment in which to develop their talent and to interact with other talented creative professionals. ‘Soft’ factors, such as the cultural life of the city, were an important reason to move to Birmingham and to remain there and the perceived lack of ‘quality of life’, whether that be related to the mainstream cultural offer, poor aesthetics, lack of interesting third spaces to meet friends or absence of niche shopping in the city was a major reason for moving from Birmingham.

\textsuperscript{2} In this study, we define temporary migration as either short term (up to 18 months), medium term (18 months to 5 years) long term (more than 5 years).
8.9.3 A ‘working’ typology

Table 8.1 below presents these migrant types and adds the further dimension of sector. We have ‘qualitatively weighted’ the presence of each of the four migrant types discussed above across the three sectors that are the subject of the Birmingham WP7 study, namely, Higher Education, Business Consultancy and the Visual and Performing Arts. Where the presence of a migrant type by sector is high we have awarded ✔✔✔; where there is a medium level presence we have awarded ✔✔; where there presence in a sector is low we have awarded ✔.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Higher Education</th>
<th>Business Consultancy</th>
<th>Visual &amp; Performing Arts</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Independents</td>
<td>✔✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active networkers</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
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<tr>
<td>Global citizens</td>
<td>✔✔✔</td>
<td>✔✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
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<tr>
<td>Place preferencers</td>
<td>✔</td>
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To summarise, migrants in the Visual and Performing Arts sector and are typically ‘independents’, ‘active networkers’, ‘place preferencers’ and ‘global citizens’; whereas migrants in the Higher Education sector are typically ‘global citizens’ but are less likely to be ‘independents’ and are not ‘active networkers’ or ‘place preferencers’. Finally, migrants in the Business Consultancy sector are not ‘independents’ or ‘place preferencers’, but tend towards ‘active networkers’ and ‘global citizens’.

8.10 Problems and opportunities for the Birmingham metropolitan region – some policy observations

Overall, the generally positive view about the ‘quality of life’ reported by highly skilled migrants living and working in Birmingham does not negate concerns about the potential fragility of some of these sectors within the city. For example, the creative sector is marked by a very high ‘churn rate’ which means the sector is not maturing but to some extent remains at the early development phase. The footloose nature of creative people means that, from a public policy perspective, the city may simply need to come to terms with this high turnover as a feature of the sector – it is more the attraction of creative workers that matter in this case rather than their retention. However, for Higher Education and Business Consultancy sectors, Birmingham has some real strengths and resilience – a strong research and scientific community based around the city’s universities which attracts highly skilled people from both the UK and abroad, and the institutional thickness of the professional services sector in Birmingham, which enables those working in the sector to develop their careers while remaining within the city. While there may be policy actions that can be taken to build on these strengths (and these are discussed below) the starting position should not be that these sectors have yet to establish themselves or are highly marginal.
Nonetheless, the implications of the interviews completed in this part of the ACRE research project are that there is now a need for a new phase of investment in Birmingham in order to attract skilled workers and enable the creative-knowledge economy to flourish within the city. Although the physical regeneration of the city centre and the development of existing cultural and physical infrastructure have provided a strong base from which to build, in order to consolidate past achievements and move to the next stage of development this involves a finer grained and more integrated policy approach. While the ACRE research findings point towards the importance of traditional ‘hard’ economic factors in attracting international skilled migrants to Birmingham, with ‘soft’ factors playing a key role in retaining these individuals within the city, this is tempered by the different mobility patterns of migrants according to their sector of employment as well as their life-stage. This has important implications in terms of policy - and also for the re-thinking of leadership approaches for the development of creative knowledge cities more generally:

Firstly, the major role of universities as skills provider and employers of skilled people has implications in terms of local and regional inward investment policy in the region. While attracting international businesses to the West Midlands is critical to the development of a strong and productive knowledge economy, the role of the internationalisation of universities in local and regional economic development strategies deserves greater attention. Although the West Midlands International Business Action Plan recognises there is an opportunity to attract new R&D led international inward investment into the region based upon niche university strengths, this remains largely undeveloped in the region. Of particular importance are attracting international research collaborations and international flows of students and researchers. Fundamental in the recruitment of international students and staff is the manner in which universities facilitate the integration process of their students, employees and their families. For example, in the past two years, the University of Birmingham has begun looking at the integration of its international staff, notably by organising events for partners and family to help their integration into the city. The University is also developing an international strategy. However, the city itself must also be an attractive place for students and young graduates as well. As recognised in the Birmingham ‘Big City Plan’ (BCC, 2008) Birmingham’s city centre needs to become more diverse, more multicultural, and more appealing to young people.

Secondly while Birmingham seems to meet many important ‘quality of life’ requirements for creative and knowledge workers and international migrants, the city and the region would benefit by addressing the lack of more varied cultural offer - encouragement of alternative arts venues, and a diversity of cultural activities with different profiles, costs and character - a more mature (more ‘cosmopolitan’) city offer that would appeal to people with different backgrounds, life styles and preferences. An approach that supported both the production and consumption of these activities and integrated them with wider planning initiatives and developments could create a more urban ‘cosmopolitan’ feel and allow Birmingham to compete more effectively with other (UK and European) cities in this domain. This type of initiative would mean complementing current local redevelopment, mainly focused on city centre retail and the Bullring, with the development of a wider cultural offer. In order to exploit the positive outcomes of the international mix and ethnic diversity that exists in Birmingham, this initiative could be combined with policy support and initiatives fostering
the production of creative products and activities inspired by the mix of cultural influences in the city.

Promoting the development of the city’s cultural offer could also help overcome the third biggest challenge for Birmingham in its path to become a creative knowledge city: the perceived negative image from outside the city. This would require a clear shift in the way Birmingham markets itself currently, and a more aggressive presentation of the cultural offer of the city to match its emphasis on retail and historic factors. The capacity of Birmingham to enable collaborative creative projects and the development of inter-cultural products should also be highlighted. It is essential for the public sector to promote the ‘quality of life’ in Birmingham both to those who have recently arrived to work or to study as well as those who are considering Birmingham as a place to live and work. The provision of information on the Internet for people new to the city or thinking of moving to Birmingham is one area suggested by this study and one in which the city council is already working on together with the WMSMP. The ‘Welcome to Birmingham’ website is a guide to information and services for those who are new to the city and includes information about the wealth of cultural and arts activities available and where and how to find out what is going on in the city. This site could also be expanded to promote Birmingham to those thinking of moving to the city.

Fourthly, in order to cater for the needs of all creative knowledge workers as well as migrants, it is important that Birmingham continues to broaden its housing and neighbourhood offer. As our findings show, limiting the choice of ‘professional’ accommodation to city centre flats is not sufficient. While this city living market has been important in providing residential choice for young professionals and retaining them in the heart of the city, there is a need for more varied housing near the centre, particularly for those with families. At the moment, Birmingham’s housing options for skilled workers in knowledge and creative sectors are effectively limited either to city centre apartments or apartments and houses in a small number of highly sought after suburbs where high demand creates price pressures. The historic nature of these suburbs also limits the potential for significant development of new housing. However there is ample scope on the city centre fringe and in the inner city to create new sustainable, mixed, urban neighbourhoods, incorporating a range of apartments and townhouses that are able to meet people's changing demands throughout their life-cycle and the needs of different types of family, and with a full range of social and community amenities. They could also provide opportunities for new small business accommodation and small-scale leisure and cultural outlets that would further enhance Birmingham’s appeal as a place to live and work. Creating such new residential districts is a complex and long-term planning task and will necessarily need to involve both spatial and community planning in order to create strong, cohesive neighbourhoods. However this kind of creative planning, together with funding mechanisms to realise the vision, should be seen as an integral part of city’s economic ambitions and its ability to attract and retain skilled migrants in important growth sectors.

It seems crucial that these findings and recommendations should be taken into account by partners such as the West Midlands Strategic Migration Partnership, Government Office for the West Midlands (GOWM), the Regional development agency - Advantage West Midlands (AWM), local authorities and the education sector when trying to address migrants’ priorities and issues through Local Area Agreements and other means. Given the ‘regional strategic
coordinating role’ that the WMSMP has for all migrants, it is in a strong position to encourage collaborative working on these issues.
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Appendix 1: ACRE Topic guide for interviews with highly skilled migrants

1. Start of the interview:
   - Short introduction of ACRE
   - Permission to record the interview

2. Country of origin/coming to live and work in the UK
   - Where did you live/work before you came to the UK (country/city)?
   - How long did you live/work there?
   - Have you lived/worked elsewhere in the UK? (If yes, where did you live? Why did you work/live there?)

3. Motivation to live/work in Birmingham/West Midlands
   - How long have you lived/worked in Birmingham/West Midlands? (month/year)
   - Why did you decide to come to live/work in Birmingham/West Midlands region?
   - What did you know about Birmingham/West Midlands before you came here? (consider soft and hard factors)
   - Who/where did your perceptions of Birmingham/West Midlands come from? (friends, family members who were already here, employers, website etc)
   - At the time you decided to move to Birmingham/West Midlands were you considering any other alternatives in the UK or elsewhere? Where were they?
   - What factors made you decide in favour of Birmingham/West Midlands?
   - Did other family members play a role in your decision to move here (e.g. spouse job, schools for children)?
   - Did you bring any members of your family with you to Birmingham/West Midlands?
   - Do you plan to bring any members of your family over in future?

4. Remaining in Birmingham West Midlands
   - What is your main reason for remaining in Birmingham/West Midlands (same as reason for coming or different reason?)
   - How long did you plan to stay in Birmingham/West Midlands before you arrived?
   - Have these plans changed now you are here? If so, why?
   - How long do you intend to stay in Birmingham/West Midlands now?
5. Career and job situation

**Before arriving in UK**
- What was your job (job title/duties) immediately *before* you came to the UK?
- Was this full/part time, contract, freelance, etc?

**After arriving in UK**
- What was your first job (job title/duties) immediately *after* you came to the UK?
- Was this full/part time, contract, freelance, etc?
- How did you find your *first* job when you came to the UK?

- What is your *current* job (job title/duties)?
- How did you find your *current* job?
- What is your current employment status (full/part time, contract, freelance, etc)?

- Is the job you do now different from the one you had/were looking for *before* you came to Birmingham/West Midlands? If yes, why is it different?
- Has moving to Birmingham/West Midlands improved your career prospects? Why?

6. Activities outside of work/for relaxation

- How do you spend your free time? (use of cultural, leisure, recreational facilities etc)
- Where do you like to spend your free time? (city or elsewhere)

7. Views on the city

- What do you like/dislike about Birmingham as a city? (soft and hard factors)

8. Social networks

- Did you know anyone in Birmingham/West Midlands before you moved here? (family, friends, colleagues)
- Have you become involved in any community/business/cultural networks? How did you become involved in these?
- How important are social or community networks to you/your family?

9. Where you currently live:

- Where do you live at the moment? (Inner city, suburbs etc)
- Why did you choose this area?
- What do you like/dislike about this area as a place to live?
- What do you like/dislike about your immediate neighbourhood?
10. Initial experiences, support offered/sought, future plans:

- Thinking back to your first months in Birmingham/West Midlands, what was your experience like (good/bad)? And why?
- Did you get any support? (language, training, help finding accommodation)
- Who provided this support (company, friends/family, council, community support groups etc)
- Is there anything you think could/should be done (e.g. relocation service, language training, labour market orientation, accommodation searches) to improve the experience of highly skilled migrants in the creative knowledge industry in Birmingham/West Midlands?

11. Future plans:

- What are your plans for the future (remain in UK/West Midlands or move elsewhere)?

12. Final thought:

Is there anything else you wish to add?

Personal background questionnaire – please complete the questionnaire

END OF INTERVIEW
Appendix 2: Categories of overseas nationals who may be classed as ‘migrant workers’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of migrant</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nationals of the European Economic Area (EEA)</td>
<td>Nationals of the European Economic Area include the 25 European Union (EU) member states and the European Free Trade Countries of Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU15 Countries</td>
<td>The first 15 European Union member states - no comprehensive statistics are collected upon their entry to the UK.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accession 8 (or A8) Countries</td>
<td>This refers to Central and Eastern European countries that joined the EU in May 2004. No restrictions were imposed to access the UK labour market in the UK, but the Worker Registration Scheme (WRS) was introduced as a transitional measure to regulate labour market access.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accession 2</td>
<td>Romania and Bulgaria joined the EU in January 2007 with additional restrictions placed on these member states in terms of accessing the UK labour market.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British Overseas Territories and Nationals of Switzerland</td>
<td>Require clearance to enter the UK but do not require a work permit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationals of all other countries/Work Permit Holders</td>
<td>Nationals of all countries other than those stated above, require a work permit, which is obtained by an employer who is unable to find a suitable national to fill a post, or by applying for one of the many schemes run by Work Permits (UK), which is a part of the Home Office.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commonwealth Working Holiday Makers</td>
<td>These are individuals between the ages of 17-30 who can work in the UK for up to 2 years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students from outside the EEA</td>
<td>These students are allowed to work part-time in the UK whilst enrolled on a course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refugees and Third-country Nationals</td>
<td>A person who has been granted leave to remain, humanitarian protection or discretionary leave to remain in the UK, in accordance with the 1951 UN Convention on Refugees. Refugees granted status in EU member states also enter the UK, e.g. Somalis from Denmark/Netherlands and are often termed ‘third country nationals’ and have the rights and the documentation to work legally in the UK. An asylum seeker however is a person who has arrived in the UK after fleeing their homeland, has made an application to be granted asylum to the Home Office under the UN Convention and is awaiting the outcome of their decision. The majority are prohibited from working.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undocumented Workers/Individuals</td>
<td>This includes both individuals who have entered the UK legally but are working without a legal right to do so and those who have entered illegally. Failed asylum seekers can also remain in the UK either legally or illegally depending upon their circumstances, but are prohibited from working in the UK.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme (SAWS)</td>
<td>SAWS allow full-time students over the age of 18, from outside the EEA, to provide low-skilled agricultural work for farmers and growers in the UK. Students are allowed to work in the UK for six months in any year. The Home Office has proposed to phase out this scheme by 2010.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highly Skilled Migrants Programme</td>
<td>This Programme is designed to allow highly skilled people to migrate to the UK to search for work or self-employment opportunities. Unlike the Work Permit Scheme, applicants do not need a specific job offer in the UK to apply. Successful applicants are granted permission to stay in the UK for a year to seek work or self-employment opportunities. If such workers are economically active after one year they can apply to stay longer. After living in the UK continuously for four years with Home Office permission, workers can apply to live in the UK permanently.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: West Midlands Strategic Migration Partnership (WMSMP) Regional Migration Scoping Exercise 2007