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POPULATION DECLINE AND (RE)DISTRIBUTION IN BULGARIA

MASTER THESIS PRESENTED TO OBTAIN THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF URBAN GEOGRAPHY

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Abstract: *This thesis investigates migration from and within Bulgaria as a major mechanism of population decline and population redistribution. Starting from a system migration approach, it describes the shifts in migration that occurred after the collapse of the Communist regime in 1989. Analyses over the last two decades show that Bulgaria suffered major population loss due to migration. Only part of this loss is captured by official migration statistics. The census shows that unregistered migration accounts for most of the decline. The regional patterns show wide differences in both population loss and migration balance between planning regions. As a consequence, the central urban region of Sofia has become more populous while the peripheral North-East region has suffered substantial population loss. The pattern of internal migration corresponds to Fielding's theory of the escalator region. People move from peripheral regions to the urban core area of the country, leading to further decline in the periphery and modest decline to modest growth in the urban core. The same phenomenon appears within the regions at the district level, with people migrating from villages to central cities and in the case of Bulgaria - mainly towards the capital Sofia.*

These processes are bound to result in a loss of human capital, raising the question whether this 'brain drain' is a temporary or more a structural phenomenon. Analysis of a survey among university students and graduates in Bulgaria reveals the motivations behind the migrations flows of the higher educated. The migration history and intentions show that the economic factors are the major drivers of their migration behaviour. A lack of educational and employment opportunities in their home towns drives young people to the capital and abroad. However, the survey also reveals that the family and other social ties play an important role, in particular in the consideration of future return migration.

Key words: Bulgaria, Population Decline, Skilled migration, Regime change

I. Introduction

With the fall of the Communism in 1989, Central and Eastern Europe experienced varying degrees of shock. The social, political and economic transformations resulted in demographic changes. These changes in fertility, mortality and migration were of such dimensions that the consequences will be irreversible for generations ahead. One of those consequences is population decline. Population decline is a process driven by negative natural change and/or a negative migration balance. In many former socialist countries both factors are present, which makes the demographic situation even more severe. Negative net migration is observed in all Central and Eastern European countries after the fall of the Communism in 1989, but varies in size and composition. For Bulgaria, three aspects are crucial. The first is that the balance seems to be more negative than in other countries, the second is that population decline is not evenly distributed throughout the country and the third is the potential long term effect of the "brain drain" that seems to be part of the process.

Compared to countries, such as Romania, Poland, Czech Republic and Slovakia, in Bulgaria the political and economic transitions were slower. The fall of Communism in November 1989 brought democratic changes in the political structure, including parliamentary elections. A complex system of changing coalitions caused frequent changes in government policies. The inconsistencies led to slow economic growth and several economic crises, with concomitant employment loss and even food shortages. The political and economic transformations are bound to have an effect on the migration within and from Bulgaria during the past 20 years. In this thesis the relation between the political and economic transformation and the migrations is therefore studied. The international and internal migration may be linked. A local lack of opportunities might drive both migration within and from the country, and internal migration could be a stepping stone to international migration. The shift in the political system removed the constraints on migration common during Communist rule. It might be expected that the relative unrestricted migration shows a pattern more common in Western and Northern Europe: redistribution from more peripheral to central urban regions. Therefore, migration is analysed at three geographical levels in this thesis: (inter)national, interregional and intraregional. The first goal is to uncover whether the patterns in internal and international migration reflect the changes in the political and economic situation in Bulgaria.

Directly related to the issues of internal and international migration is the role of education and employment opportunities. Various reports from Bulgaria mention that a "brain drain" is occurring as a result of increased international migration. The internal migration does not only create variety in population decline, but might also be selective with respect to the human capital involved, as skilled migrants will move to regions rich in educational and employment opportunities. This raises the question whether this migration leads to population concentration within the country and to what extent. A related question is whether this migration is permanent or whether a return to the place of origin is considered. The relation between education, economic opportunities and the (re)distribution of the population in the country will be investigated by looking at individuals migration history and intentions. The second goal of this thesis is to show the connection between the geographical distribution of educational/career opportunities and the migration history and intentions of higher education and to establish the role of social ties in considering return migration.

To be able to examine the migration flows both from and within the country data was gathered from the archives of the National Statistic Institute[1] (NSI), Sofia, Bulgaria. The analysis is conducted at three levels: nationwide, the planning regions and the city of Sofia. The planning regions are defined according to European Nomenclature of Territorial Units (NUTS). This is suitable for comparisons with the information from other European Union countries. It should be stressed that the officially registered migration captures only part of the process. As many migrants do not register their move, much of the migration is "hidden" from the statistics. The net results of migration however do show up in the census. Access to the migration data is further restricted, because most of the available data set have not been translated, which makes the information inaccessible to non-Bulgarian speakers. Extensive recalculations were needed due to changes in data format during the years. In the process of improving the national data gathering the areal units to define migration have been adjusted several times.

The statistical information regarding migration among the population is very limited, and does not provide insight into the "brain drain" and underlying motives or future intentions. In the second part of this thesis information about those migration processes is gathered through a web survey among individuals with a Bachelor or Master degrees. The number of the participants in

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[1] In Bulgarian - Национален статистически институт (НСИ). Web site http://www.nsi.bg/indexen.php

the survey is too small to generalise the outcomes. Yet, it gives in-depth information on the migration behaviour of the Bulgarians with higher education, their life-time mobility paths, and individuals' considerations and reasoning for their migration decision-making.

There are two main goals that this thesis is aiming to achieve. First, investigating the migration processes to give a clear view of the migration patterns within and from the country. Second, to analyse individuals' considerations and intention for migration at national or international level and showing the role both opportunities and social ties in these processes.

In this chapter, the main goals of this research, together with short information of the available data are presented. The theoretical background used in the research, the conceptual model and the research questions are given in Chapter II. The political and historical background of Bulgaria for better understanding of the country's development and the current situation inside the country is presented in Chapter III. The methodology for data gathering and processing is given in Chapter IV. The analyses of the statistical data can be found in Chapter V. The analyses of the web-survey are presented in Chapter VI. The final chapter provides conclusions and a reflection.

II. *Theoretical framework and Conceptual model*

In order to investigate the connection between migration processes, population decline, population (re)distribution in Bulgaria and the search for a higher education and a better quality of life among the Bulgarians, appropriate migration theories are needed. In this chapter the core concepts are defined and the choice of the three theoretical frameworks is elucidated.

1. Definition of population decline and migration

In the following research two main concepts are used – population decline and migration. *Population decline* is defined as the process of reduction of the number of inhabitants in a geographic area as a result of negative natural increase and/or a negative migration balance. Rates of population decline are usually expressed as a negative growth rate in percentage. Two migration processes can be distinguished: internal migration and international migration. *Internal migration* is the movement of people within the country. In the case of Bulgaria this process will be analysed at the level of migration between planning regions and the migration to and from the capital. The *international migration* is primarily the movement of people from Bulgaria mainly towards countries in Western and North-Western Europe and return migration from abroad.

2. Theoretical base

Due to the political situation in Bulgaria, the mobility and the migration processes were strongly controlled by the Communist Party before 1989. The migration processes were highly constrained and were not based on individuals. There was no "free choice" and therefore, no residential change that would correspond to market oriented migration theories. After the fall of the Communistic regime and with the transformation of the political system, this situation changed. This raises the question whether "western" theories can explain the migration after 1989.

During Communism, migration processes and population (re)distribution mostly concerned individuals with a higher level of education and members of the controlling party. This migration process had a double effect. It led to a concentration of skilled workers and trained specialists in certain parts of the country, while in other areas there was a clear shortage of experienced and

qualified individuals. Political rather economic mechanisms determined the process. International migration was very limited and geographically confined to the Soviet Bloc. After the collapse, migration to European Union became viable option.

Therefore, in the context of Europe at the present time, the sending countries are the countries with economies in transition (i.e. from Central and mostly East Europe), while the receiving countries are the ones with developed economies mostly in Western and North Western Europe. These population flows, especially of people with higher education driven by the search for better education and career opportunities contribute to the economic growth in the receiving countries and undermine the development of the countries in transition. Some parts of the latter countries will be more affected then others, in particular peripheral regions will witness population decline.

To be able to understand the migration processes that occurred in the period 1989-2008 in relation to Bulgaria's economic and political situation, the following migration approaches are chosen: migration system approach; skilled migration and "brain drain" processes, and the formation of 'escalator' regions.

2.1. Migration system approach

Neo-classical theories of migration are not apt in explaining the migration flows in (post-) communist countries. Institutional forces in planned economies also control population redistribution and the lifting of controls will create major shifts in the patterns. A system approach to migration is therefore more appropriate, as it includes a wide range of factors in relation to the specific situation in the country and conceptualises migration as an outcome of the changes in national and regional political and economic patterns. The first, to look at migration as a system was Mabogunje (1970). Mabogunje's model consists of four main components: the environment, the migrant, control sub-systems and the adjustment components. The environment is 'the context in which the migration system sits' (Boyle et al., 1998). Mabogunje understands the environment as the interplay between governmental policies, agricultural practices, economic conditions, wages, industrial development, transportation, communications, and social welfare (Boyle et al., 1998; Kaczmarczyk and Okólski, 2005).

Migrations are also result of the behaviour of different actors (individuals, families, governments, etc.) that come into play at different geographical levels (community, local, national and international). High living standards, closeness to family or cultural similarities can be powerful pulling factors, while imbalance of the economic development, economic hardship, low consumptions standards, and unemployment can be the pushing factors. Also, individual's migration choices are based on family, friendship and community ties. Putting all these factors together in a system where they are investigated in their interconnection and interrelation would give the opportunity to see their impact as a whole (Bonifazi et. al, 2008; Romaniszyn, 1997). These interactions make it difficult to distinguish the leading influencing components of the migration processes. Therefore, the original concept by Mabogunje was "adapted" and developed to be able to understand the complexity of the migration processes. The migration system approach was reformulated as "a network of countries linked by migration interactions whose dynamics are largely shaped by the functioning of a variety of networks linking migration actors at different levels of aggregation" (Kritz and Zlotnik 1992:15; Bonifazi, 2008; Boyle et.al, 1998:57). This approach focuses attention to the context that determines the flows of the migration. Migration itself could be seen as a system that links the receiving and the sending areas and is influenced by the relationship between all the components involved in the migration processes (Boyle et al., 1998, Kaczmarczyk and Okólski, 2005).

Each of the environmental sub-components, or their combinations a combination of them, will in Portes' words (cited in Chompolov, 2000) either 'push' or 'pull' the individuals that take part in the migration processes. The political and the economic diversity produce a variety of push and pull factors that are responsible for the migration flows. These factors are incorporated on macro and micro levels of analysis. Due to socio-economic or cultural factors the mobility within the countries may become stronger (Kaczmarczyk and Okólski, 2005:16). Here the connection with the chosen case study becomes obvious. During the Communist regime the migration processes were mainly "controlled" and "driven" by the political situation in the country. The Regime was "famous" for its closed borders with other countries as well as constraints on resettlement within the country. It was also known for its forced migration of the "inconvenient" population.

After 1989 the situation changed completely. The pressure shifted from politics to economics. On one hand, environmental components such as wages, prices, economic conditions and

development started to have a major impact on the migration within the country i.e. 'primacy of market-led forces over political efforts' (Favell, 2008:708). On the other hand, the 'migrant component within the system itself was being encouraged to leave. The "energy" was seen to vary with the individual but was related to factors such as awareness of potential opportunities.' (Boyle et.al., 1998; Kaczmarczyk and Okólski, 2005). At that stage of shifting, the individuals had the freedom to choose whether or not to migrate and their decisions were based on the economic situation. This shows that despite the "freedom" of choice, the decision of individuals to migrate still depended on institutions. Therefore, the migration system approach is applicable for the investigation of the migration processes during the whole research period and it is used for the analysis of the data from the National Statistic Institute in Chapter V.

2.2. Student migration and the 'brain drain'

Apart from the economical, political and cultural reasons for the migrations flows, the major concern about emigration is the so-called "brain drain." The emigration potential appears to be the highest among people with the highest education levels and among students (Ådnanes, 2004:797). Student mobility is a form of highly-skilled migration, which can also be referred as "brain drain". In recent years student mobility has been made easier because of the developments in communication, faster information flows, and the "opening" of the borders when it comes to the European Union (EU) countries. This leads to skilled migration which "causes the most talented and entrepreneurial individuals to flee from the countries of origin" i.e. highly-educated and well-trained specialists. They are seen as the ones that will have major impact on the economic development in the poor countries and the early adopted in the transition to market-orientated economies. Therefore, their migration is seen as a process, which "severely hampers the growth prospects". The lack of skilled specialist, especially in the area of science and education, has also a long-term impact on the population in the country. The lack of creative research deprives the country from developing a strong educational system, which can "produce" the social elite that can create an "effective and responsive social and political order" (Tremblay, 2005; Checchi et. al, 2007; Glytsos, 2009; Markova, 2010). Student migration is also a precursor of further mobility processes. This mobility is due to the fact that having a tertiary degree in the host country gives individuals certain advantages, such as proficiency of the language of the host country, easier adaptation and last but not least, the degree itself which goes together with the country-specific

knowledge (Tremblay, 2005). Once having experienced the particularities of living abroad during their higher education, individuals take under consideration the country-specifics in their future migration or settlement decisions. So, the choice of country of study can be seen as the first step towards future immigration processes (Tremblay, 2005).

When it comes to the migration within the borders of the country the situation is similar to the mechanisms mentioned above. In the case of inmigration processes, the provision of education and training contributes to a growth in the local, regional and national stocks of human capital. The flow of graduates into or from a region indicates the extent to which a region is net recipient of newly-acquired human capital (Bradley and Taylor, 1996; Faggian and McCann, 2009). The geographic mobility implies maximization of individuals' welfare and therefore is directed towards regions that can provide the necessary conditions. Also, the possession of such factors defines 'the regional rates of return to higher education' since they 'depend on the migration behaviour of university graduates' (Faggian and McCann, 2009:318).

Migrations are also influenced by family connections and the social environment. Migration involves many social connections across national and internal borders. It includes those who left and went abroad or to another city in the same country, those family members who stayed, and those who return (Falicov, 2007). Living near family members or being part of a community can define individuals' decision to either stay at the place of origin or to relocate. Social relationships provide specific capital that is connected to the actual place of residence and that significantly influences decisions. Migration takes place when a comparison of the outcomes of either staying at the place of origin or move to the place of destination reveals the latter alternative to be more attractive (Haug, 2008; Marko, 1995 sited in Counsel and Popova, 1996; Waters, 2006). When the decision is in favour of the latter, the individuals may keep strong contacts with their families, relatives and friends in their place of origin by commuting "movements back and forward and the strong links they maintain with family networks" (Ryan, 2004:355).

The mobility of individuals due to economic, political or educational factors, leads to a concentration of skilled population in certain regions. In most of the cases these regions are central urban areas that can offer educational and career opportunities. To understand these processes the concept of the 'escalator' region is most appropriate

2.3. Fielding's concept of 'escalator' region

Fielding's concept of the 'escalator' region is concerned with pull factors, which attract people with a higher education and economic ambitions. These pull factors are mainly related to future 'career building', realisation, financial stability and independence (Favell, 2008). Using this concept gives the opportunity to observe the connection between individuals' choices and the spatial consequences of those choices. Both of them are part of the system i.e. the environment in the system approach mentioned earlier. In the context of this research this concept is used in the analysis of the data from the web survey.

In Fielding's model of selective regional migration flows, an urban centre may function as an "escalator" helping people to become socially mobile. The central city therefore has an important function in a certain stage of many people's lives (Musterd et.al., 2006:365). To be categorized as an 'escalator region', three main conditions need to be fulfilled: first, the region should attract many young people at the start of their working lives. These young people have qualifications or are seeking them and are prepared to change their living area to obtain them. This is the first stage: people are 'stepping on the escalator' (Fielding, 1991:3,4). In the context of this research this can be seen first, when individuals decide what steps to take in relation to their higher education and second, when they finish their education and look for job opportunities within the country (Fagian and McCann, 2009). The population flow towards certain areas in the country as a result of these two decision-making periods, will determine which region(s) meets that fist condition. In most of the cases the areas that are "sending" population are from the periphery of the country towards "centre".

Second, the region should provide the context for all residents (emigrants and the one born and brought there) to achieve accelerated upward social mobility through progression within the region's labour market. This is the second stage: being taken up by the escalator (Fielding, 1991:4). This stage is connected to the educational and job opportunities that a certain region possesses and is related to the "post-graduation" part of the analysis in Chapter VI.

Finally, the region should lose a significant proportion of those having experienced this upward social mobility through outmigration. These outmigrants would be in the middle to later stages of their working lives at or near to retirement. This is the third and final stage: stepping off the

escalator (Fielding, 1991:3,4). At that stage the young people (mainly in the 20–39 age range) that moved into the region to study or start their housing and labour career during the first stage, in Fielding's concept, move out of the region in a later stage of their lives (Musterd et.al., 2006:382).

Even during the Communist period many of the educational and job opportunities were concentrated in Sofia city and to a latter extend in some regional capitals, but migration to those places was very restricted. Migration to the cities accelerated in the period of transitions as the universities opened up to all people with proper qualifications and job opportunities were lost in rural areas in particular.

3. Conceptual model and research question

The theory on skilled migration and the concept of "escalator" regions are two sides of the same coin. The driving force for the migration is the search for better career opportunities and the concentration of these opportunities in central urban locations directs the flows and redirects the accumulations of stocks of human capital both between and within countries. Once migration bans are lifted the process gains more momentum and migration networks provide feedback to potential migrants, making migration a self-propelling mechanism. This is fully in line with migration system theory which stresses the role of institutional context and the network of interactions between origins and destinations.

3.1. Conceptual model

Applying the system approach to the transition of Bulgaria allows a more detailed conceptual model. This conceptual model describes the phenomena that could explain the shifts in migration in Bulgaria (see Fig. 1).

At the left hand side are the major shifts in the institutional environment, both politically and economic. This is detailed in the central column that shows the major determinants of migration both before and after 1989. In the Communist period international migration was blocked and internal migration was driven by the allocation of people to places to serve the requirements of the planned economy, to hamper spontaneous urbanisation and to remove the "inconvenient" population from places of power. After 1989 various forms of institutional change occurred. The

borders were opened and access to educational and job opportunities both within the country and abroad improved. This did not only create a vast potential for emigration mainly to countries of European Union, but also have shifted the population redistribution within the country. One of the hypotheses that can be derived from this model is that Sofia city is increasingly meeting the conditions as an escalator region. Another is that highly educated individuals will search for career opportunities abroad and that peripheral regions in particular will not only be confronted with population decline but also with a brain drain.

Fig. 1 Conceptual model
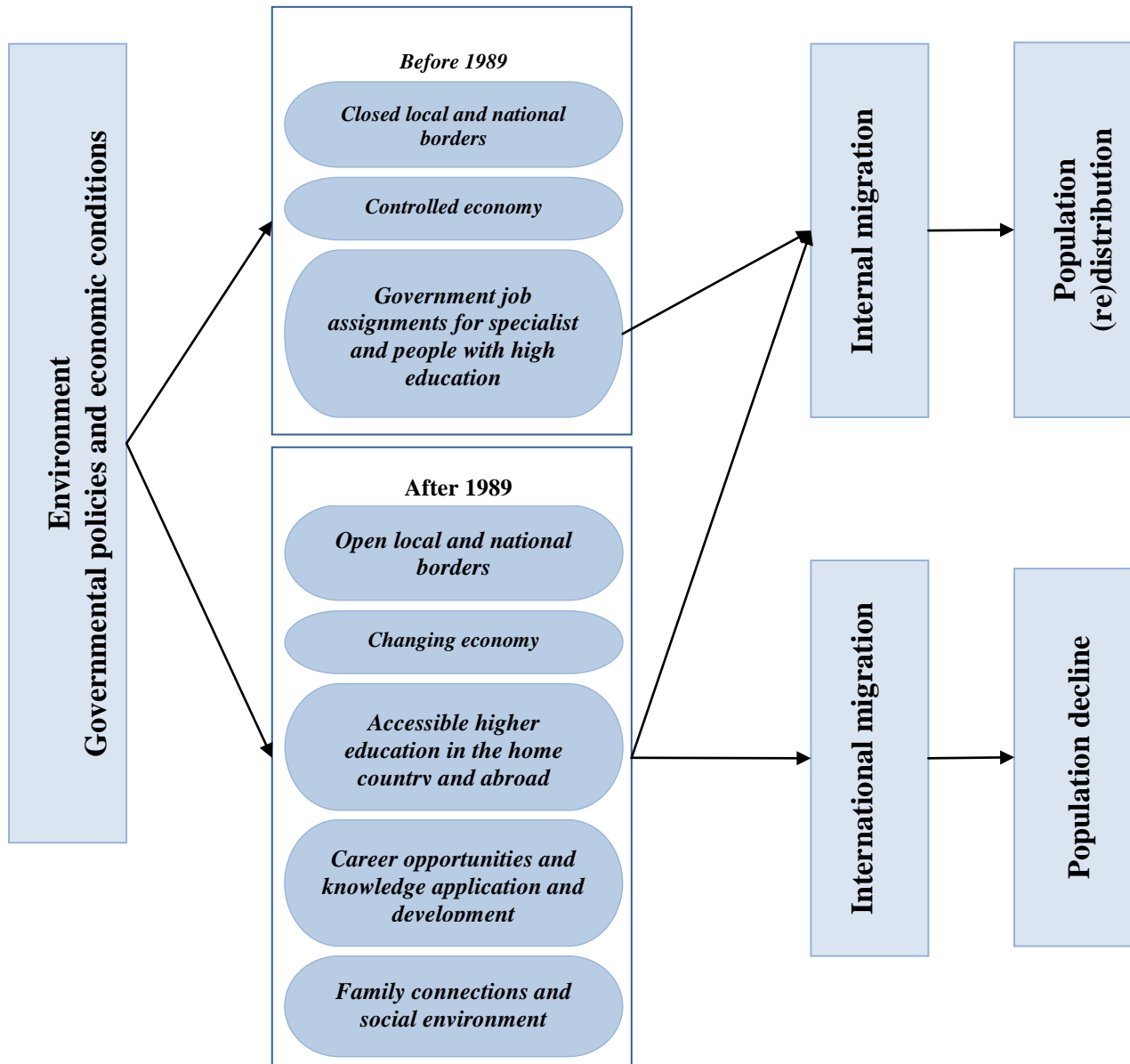
3.2. Research questions

The model gives rise to the following research questions:

1) To what extent does the international migration balance of Bulgaria reflect the shifts in the international constrains on international migration from the country in the period of transition?

2) To what extent do the regional migration flows and the migration to and from district Sofia city correspond to the rise of the capital as an escalator region?

3) To what extent is the migration of students and post graduates driven by the (lack of) educational and career opportunities and under which conditions will they contemplate a return to the area they originated?

To find the answers to these questions, the shifts in the political and economic landscape of Bulgaria and the concomitant changes in population policy will be analysed in detail in Chapter III. This will serve as backcloth to interpret population change and migration at national and regional level in Chapter V. Chapter VI will seek the answer to the last research question using the web survey among Bulgarian graduates.

III. Bulgaria – historical and political background

Europe has to brace itself for profound changes in its population structure (EC, 2007), since the population in the European Union will decline in the years to come. However, two different sets of population dynamics are to be observed. The natural increase is positive in Western Europe and some countries in the Eastern Europe, such as Turkey. Second, population declines in Central and Eastern European Countries (Monnier, 1998). Changes occurring in post-communist countries in Central and Eastern Europe are mainly driven by the migration flows. Population flows from those countries to the rich Western and North Western European countries. (The general demographic situation in Europe is illustrated in Fig. 2.)

For the post-communist countries like Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland, it is predicted, for the period 2005 – 2050, that their population loss might be lower (10%) compared to Romania and Bulgaria, where population losses mount up to 21% and 34%. The population decline in Bulgaria and Romania is driven by large outmigration flows. Slovakia, Poland, Bulgaria, and Romania reported a net emigration for the period of 2000 to 2005 (Eurostat yearbook, 2008). Turkey's population, on the other side, is still growing at slightly over1% p.a. The population growth in Turkey is due to high fertility rates. This implies that Turkey will grow by more than 6% on a sustained basis until the end of this decade. Currently, the country has over 70 million inhabitants and a very small of the population being 65+ (5.9% in 2006). (Derviş, K. et al., 2004).

Bulgaria is one of the countries in Europe with steady tendencies of population loss and is placed highest in the list of 'exporting' countries. To understand this 'export' of population insight into the historical and economic development is necessary. The political and economic review of the Communist and post-Communist area in the country, gives an idea of the possible factors driving migration in Bulgaria.

Fig. 2 Driving forces of growth and decline on European level

Source: Lanzieri (2007:7), http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu
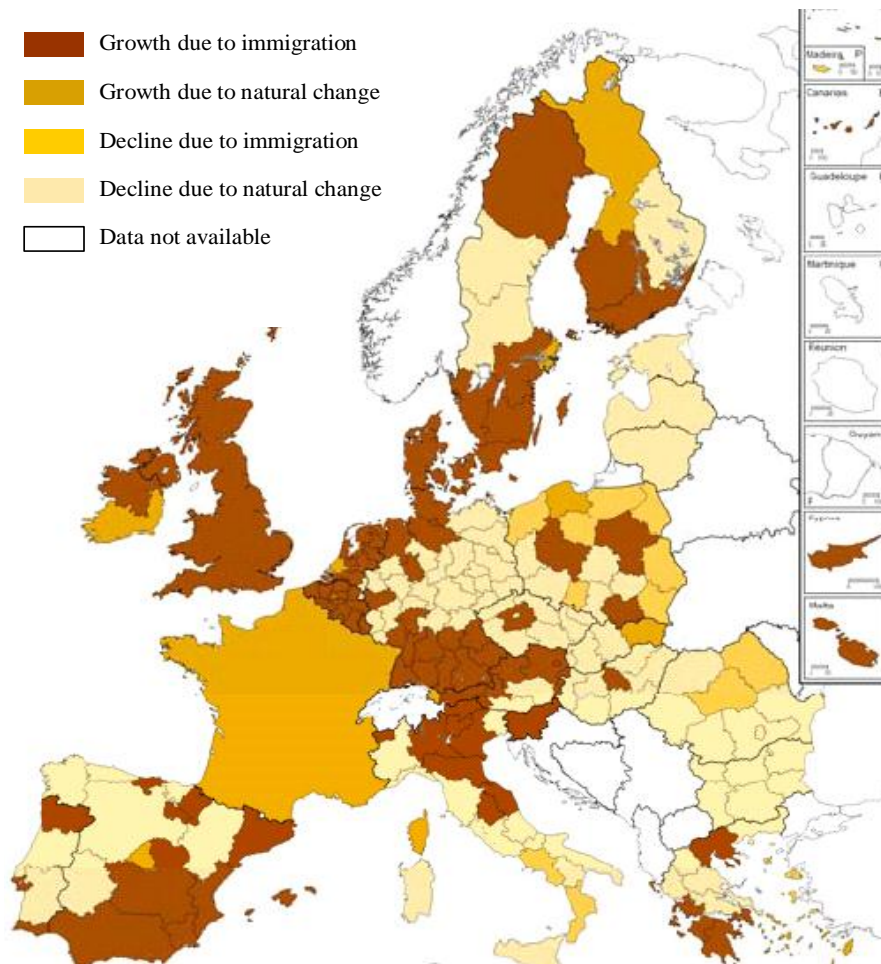
Population growth came to halt during the 1980's, turned into decline after 1989 and the decrease accelerated in the period that followed (Ibryamova, 2002). The demographic development is influenced by processes such as low marriage and birth rates, increased urbanisation, increased mortality rate and intensive emigration (Kaczmarczyk and Okólski, 2005). The existing demographic condition of the Bulgarian population is the outcome of the prolonged working of a variety of factors, related to the political and economic situation in Bulgaria during Communism and in the years after its collapse.

1. Political and economic situation in the country before 1989

➢ Political situation during the Communist regime

The Bulgarian Communist Party (BCP), through a series of institutions, engaged in spatial stratification and geographic management of the population. Party's legal officials elaborated categories of citizens linking civil rights to specific geographical locations, while state and local authorities implemented these rights in their policies of territorialisation. The form mainly used to control people's movement was the prescribed residence. The prescribed residence targeted the whole population of the country. It was used to strictly regulate admission to the cities, starting with Sofia city, as well as the access to scarce public resources. This regulation was motivated by a lack of sufficient housing, food and other provisions, which might become the source of disorder. Temporary residence was permitted for business trips or guest visits, and in case of illness. The first restrictive measures specified a circle of exclusion from living in Sofia: people appointed to do state or municipal public work, students, owners of property in Sofia, sick and old relatives of Sofia residents and those married to Sofia residents were exempt from the limitations (Guentcheva, 2006).

Over the next decades access to urban residence was further reduced by adding new cities to the list of controlled settlements. A decree postulated limitation of the acceptance of new residents in additional six Bulgarian cities – Plovdiv, Varna, Burgas, Ruse, Stara Zagora and Pleven. At that point the residence was inscribed in the passport and became an instrument of stringent control of the access to scarce public goods such as housing (state and non-state alike), medical treatment, kindergartens, and education facilities. The climax of limitations came with the decree on the temporary limitation of residence in all cities in the country except for 30 small towns in poorer regions and areas populated with ethnic minorities.

Besides closing virtually all urban settlements to new residents, this last piece of legislation featured an extremely detailed list of people who were allowed to settle in cities and towns. Young specialists with university or technical education were among the ones included in that list. The decision where to live and work upon graduation was not an individual but a Party decision. The state assigned highly educated specialists to places that experienced a lack of qualified personnel. There was also a meticulous enumeration of reasons why residence – once

gained – might be lost. In this sense the control on movement became a viable instrument of redistributing privileges among a host of entitled people and urban settlement became a privilege for carefully selected social groups (Guentcheva, 2006; Vachudova and Snyder, 1996; Gang and Stuart, 1999).

Above all, BCP dedicated special efforts to elaborate a differentiated approach to the exiled citizens. It was entitled "Regarding the categorization of enemies of the people's power, their banishment and settlement in special regions" and listed three categories of undesirable citizens who could be forcefully displaced from their places of residence. The first consisted of comprised former police and army officers, state security personnel, former owners of industrial enterprises and relatives of individuals sentenced to death. In second category where those 'who have seemingly repented and whose families did not have ill thoughts about the people's power. They were exiled to specific regions where they would receive land and build special villages. The third category consisted of those already banished from Sofia and other bigger cities. They were to be settled in villages in Northern Bulgaria and were to be encouraged to find work in agriculture, brickyards, small cooperation, and textile enterprises. The prescribed residence and the banishment were tools of the Regime for the management of human mobility (Guentcheva, 2006, Vachudova and Snyder, 1996).

Together with the constraints on mobility within Bulgaria, the migration from the country was prohibited officially. It was almost impossible to legally cross the country's border. There were exceptions in the cases when the travel destinations were countries of the socialist bloc. Even then people needed to provide the reason of the trip and the period of stay. Part of Bulgaria's foreign policy was agreements to provide qualified workers for USSR, Cuba, and Libya. These agreements included specialists with medical education – doctors, nurses; or engineers and construction workers for specific infrastructure projects. In these cases the specialists were sent to the respective destinations for periods between 3 to 5 years as employees of a Bulgarian company licensed to provide this service. The salaries were paid in Bulgaria and not returning was an offence. The company was held responsible by the authorities and was taken to court if employees emigrated.

Another population policy addressed the Turkish minority in Bulgaria. Although they represent a significant proportion of the population, the Turks did not constitute a majority in any region but

were concentrated at the border with Turkey. The government feared this minority to be effectively organised. To prevent and restrict these "organised minorities" the Bulgarian authorities repealed all educational, religious, and cultural privileges and pressed Turks to emigrate. Communist policy varied from times of repression to periods of indifference until the 80's when the so called "regenerative process" began. This process included forcing name changes, bans on the public use of the Turkish language, and restrictions on Muslim rights. That led to a large movement of Turks towards Turkey (Vachudova and Snyder, 1996; Ådnanes, 2004; Kaczmarczyk and Okólski, 2005).

This was the political situation in Bulgaria with respect to population movement at the end of year 1989, which is the starting point of this research. Up to that point there was no "free movement" of people or "free will" in changing residence. Migration processes were forced, as in the case of ethnic exclusion, or of being part of a "selective" group. This lead to low (official) outmigration rates and relatively equal distribution of the population in the territory of Bulgaria. Although the living standard during the Regime was low by western European standards, the social system with its guaranteed full employment, free medical services, free education, price controls, cheap public transportation, good pensions and other social benefits had a great appeal for the masses. The Regime 'offered a certain degree of safety for people' (Ådnanes, 2004:812). Both factors, government restriction of the migration processes and good social system led to an increase of the population and a relatively stable demographic development. From the political point of view a new era of demographics came about with the 'peaceful end of Todor Zhivkov's Communist regime' November 10th 1989.

> ➢ Economic situation during Communist regime

Bulgarian post-war economic development can be divided into four phases: the revolutionary period – 1944 through 1948; the development of socialism – 1949 through 1960; the age of intermittent reform – 1961 through 1989; and the transformation to a market economy – beginning in 1990 (Curtis, 1992:35). Here the third phase of economic development is of interest, the age of intermittent reform.

In this phase Bulgaria had a command economy based on centralized planning rather than on market forces. In such a system, crucial economic decisions such as allocation of inputs, rates of

expansion of various sectors, values of goods and services, and the exchange rate of the national currency were made explicitly by the Party's 'personal consideration'. Bulgaria's faithful adherence to the Soviet model of economic planning included rapid growth of heavy industry. Large-scale investments and other resource allocation came at the expense of light industry and agriculture. Public spending for capital investment got priority over stimulating consumption and was accompanied by forced nationalization of industry and collectivization of agriculture (Curtis, 1992:34; Jackson, 1991, Kaczmarczyk and Okólski, 2005).

Bulgaria's consistent emphasis on the development of heavy industry at any cost, created raw material demands well beyond the country's domestic resources. This problem was exacerbated by the inefficient industrial use of energy and raw materials. Bulgaria used more energy per unit of net material production than any Western economy. For this reason, one of the most salient aspects of the Bulgarian post-war economy was reliance on imported Soviet natural resources and close economic ties to the Soviet Union (Jackson, 1991; Curtis, 1992). The economic relation with the Soviet Union had a double positive effect for the Bulgarian economy. On the one hand, Russia supplied raw material, while on the other it was an export area for Bulgarian manufactured goods. This led to an enormous Russian influence on governmental policies concerning the branches of industry that were to be developed in Bulgaria (Jackson, 1991). This tendency changed when the first steps that were taken towards the establishment of market-based economy.

2. Political and economic situation between 1989 and 2008

➢ Political development between 1989 and 2008

A central aspect of the economic and political life in Bulgaria after 1989, and before the European Union (EU) accession in 2007, was the development of an active and competitive private sector and a stable political and social system in the new democratic society that the country had to build. The pace of political change in Bulgaria outgrew the economic developments easily. In 1990 Bulgaria had a democratic parliament and an elected president for the first time. Since the start of the democratic changes in the country in November 1989, the state has had 10 governments.

In 1990 the Union of Democratic Forces (UDF), at the time a coalition of democratic parties and organizations, won the election. These elections were vital as they signified the so called "autumn of change", which indicated the country's transition from the Communism Regime towards the new-undiscovered realm of democracy. A lot of changes took place, which had an instant impact on peoples' migration and mobility. Restrictions on moving to cities, including Sofia, were removed. People were allowed to travel freely within the country and abroad. Travelling abroad was primarily due to employment offers from the United States and Western European companies that targeted highly qualified Bulgarian employees. In the context of Bulgaria, this change can be compared to the fall of the Berlin wall. Despite it being a positive feature this created new challenges for the national economy. One of the challenges in the national economy was the loss of highly-qualified individuals. This was partially caused by the government decision to create a small elite of very rich people. The aim was to create a business class comparable to the 'Russian oligarchs' rather than maintaining a well-formed middle class of citizens. This coalition of democratic parties ruled until 1995.

In 1995, the Bulgarian Socialist Party[2] (BSP) came into rule. This government contributed to one of the biggest economic crises in Bulgaria. Despite the promises for change, the stagnation that had characterized the entire post-communist period since 1989 persisted. So did the shady privatization schemes and the underfunding of social services. One significant initiative was the government's launching of a campaign for mass privatization. In this mass privatization ordinary citizens were to acquire shares in the factories and firms that were being de-nationalized. According to the Bulgaria-based Institute for Market Economics (Hristova, 2004) and the near-general consensus in Bulgarian politics, the hyperinflation was caused by the government's inept finance policy. The result was a severe economic crisis and a decline in the standard of living. The population policy saw no drastic changes, yet regional economic inequality became more severe. The government ruled until 1997.

In 1997, UDF came into power. For the first time since 1989, five parliamentary groups backed the government. The UDF had the difficult task to control the hyperinflation caused by the previous government. This led to harsh political decisions, such as: reduced employment in public administration; closure of multiple factories; and cuts in public spending to meet the terms of a loan

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[2] Former Bulgarian Communist Party (BCP)

by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). This ultimately led to high levels of unemployment and reduced industry levels. That is when the "discouraged workers" effect hit the country. "Discouraged workers" are people who have been unemployed for a large period of time and have become de-motivated, with extremely low self-confidence and low self-esteem. As a consequence, they cease looking for a position that will suit their education and skills. This has a negative effect on the geographic mobility of individuals. The UDF party ruled until 2001.

In 2001 the National Movement for Stability and Prosperity (MNSS) won the elections. They ruled the country in a coalition with the Movement for Rights and Freedom (MRF). This was the first government to complete its term of office and to gain increasing public trust. During the rule of the NMSS, Bulgaria attained strategic national goals – such as the accession to NATO and the signing of the Treaty of Accession to the European Union. The major changes, which this government is going to be remembered by, are the reduced levels of unemployment and the unconditional removal of the European Union visa requirements. The removal of the visa requirements encouraged the migration flows from Bulgaria towards Western and North-West countries in Europe. The government ruled until 2005.

In 2005 BSP in coalition with MNSS and MRF came into rule. The government adopted an economic model more consistent with right-wing policies (10% flat tax, trimming down governmental assistance programs), and initially built on the economic growth and stability achieved in previous years, increasing state-paid salaries and pensions. However, in the second part of the coalition's term, Bulgaria, now a member of the European Union, lost millions of Euros from the European financial aid – in the wake of allegations of widespread corruption. The cabinet was also unable to react to the encroaching world economic crisis and its term ended with a budget deficit after several surplus years. This coalition was into power until 2009.

> ➢ Economic development between 1989 and 2008

Since 1989, Bulgaria (together with Czech Republic, Romania, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia) has started two fundamental transformations: from a one-party state to a pluralist democracy and even more precariously, from a state-owned and directed economy to free-market capitalism. In these transformations the pace of reform has been uneven among post-communist countries. Bulgaria and Romania are struggling to reverse steep declines in production (Counsell and

Popova, 2000; Vachudova and Snyder, 1996; Dobrinsky, 2000; Chopmpolov, 2000). In some countries, such as Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary, the openness toward the "outside world" and restructuring, led to a better quality of life and a better economic environment. For other countries, such as Bulgaria, Slovakia, Romania, the "better life standard" and "stable economy" are still not completely achieved.

The early years of the 1990s saw economic reforms, bringing some successes, such as curbing the inflation as well as slowing the economy's decline. However, the early 1990s also saw a significant increase in emigration (Counsell and Popova, 2000). Bell (1998) suggests that those having left were `likely to be among the best educated and possessing the skills most needed to lift up the Bulgarian economy'. The process of 'lifting up' the Bulgarian economy was also slowed down by the dependence on trade with the former USSR. This dependence became a serious economic 'handicap' during the first years of Bulgaria's transition. Bulgaria had always been most closely attached to the Soviet economy (Dobrinksy, 2000).

In 1991 the first signs of transformation showed in the Bulgarian economy. These signs were envisaged wide-ranging price liberalisation, opening up of the economy, abolition of central planning and free entry of private economic agents to the market as well as liberalisation of foreign trade. These changes were implemented by the UDF forging the new way towards democracy. The first phase of this transformation was characterised by slow reforms, political instability, and lack of public consensus over the course of reforms. Bulgaria recorded big losses in exports during the first years of transition. Most of them were in the manufacturing industry, which meant that a large number of industrial state-owned firms started to experience serious financial problems (Dobrinksy, 2000, Jackson, 1991).

Over a period of three years (1989 – 1992) Bulgaria registered a 10% drop in its GDP. (Vachudova and Snyder, 1996:12; Kaczmarczyk and Okólski, 2005:12). For the majority of the Bulgarians this transition period from a state-planned to a market economy turned into a rough period of insecurity. Unemployment was high and young people were affected the most (Counsell and Popova, 2000:362). Roberts et al. (1999) identified unemployment among younger people as having risen because their "old routes into the labour markets had disintegrated during the 1990s'.

The BSP government "set up" the foundations of the first hyper inflation in the country. Despite the small growth of 2.5% in 1995, the country suffered enormous inflation, ranging to 60%, compared to 'only' 32% in Romania. Prices of the main food supplies and services sky-rocketed, and the devaluation of the national currency – leva – became a fact. The population did not manage to cope with the rapid price increase and the devaluation of leva. In 1996 interest "holiday" on Bulgaria's foreign debt ran out and no further postponement was granted despite Bulgaria's inability to pay. This initiated the destabilization of the financial system. In a short period of time, more than half of Bulgaria's commercial banks went bankrupt, with hundreds of thousands of people losing their savings, while the so-called "credit millionaires" profited enormously from the situation because their immense debts to the banks were reduced to nothing. Despite the party's forced decision to consider implementation of the monetary board in the country, the Government lost Bulgarians' trust in its ability to cope with the economic situation. This forced the prime minister at that time, Zhan Videnov, to resign.

In the beginning of 1997 the inflation reached its peak. The new Government in power, UDF, officially implemented the monetary board in July 1997. Its measures came too late and the economic reforms in the period after the hyper inflation caused the breakdown of the smooth passage into the labour market. Kovatcheva (2001) referrers to economic hardships, lack of clear-cut career tracks from school to work and a youth unemployment rate reaching 39% in 1998. However the reforms also created the conditions for substantial foreign direct investments, leading to new job opportunities in the larger cities.

These reforms were continued between 2001 and 2008. During this period the unemployment rates dropped drastically from 18 to 6 percent in average. These changes were implemented by the MNSS party and their leader Simeon Saxe-Coburg Gotha who rose to power in 2001. With his name and status in Europe, as being part of the royal family Saxe-Coburg, Gotha managed to attract further foreign direct investments in the country. This process was strengthened by Bulgaria's accession to NATO and the signing of the Treaty for Accession of Bulgaria into the European Union. With the 10% flat tax rate and other economic reforms by this government the investments in country went up and new companies and factories were established. In the period between 2002 and 2005 the number of enterprises in Bulgaria increased by ten thousand. Nevertheless, the stress that the Bulgarians experienced in the years before as a result of the

instability in the economic situation was still "fresh". The signing of the Treaty had a double edge. It gave Bulgarians the opportunity to travel abroad without visa limitations. This together with the poverty experience and high unemployment in the past, and the high living standards that West and North West countries assured, led to continued high emigration.

The process of job creation by new firms continued during the government of the coalition BSP, MNSS and MRF. The number of enterprise increased with approximately fifteen thousand in the period between 2005 and 2007. However, the low average unemployment figures disguise the regional differences in this process. Sofia city, Plovdiv and other big cities in the country were the main "receiver" of the foreign investments and profited more from the subsidies by the European Union.

3. *Implications for population decline and redistribution of the population*

From a migration system perspective it is very clear that the institutional constraints in the Communist era were a major factor in controlling the migration process. Without these, Bulgaria would have witnessed a much stronger urbanisation as most of the constraints are aimed at reducing "spontaneous" migration to the city and preventing people from moving abroad. It is therefore to be expected that lifting the ban on migration in 1989 will not only have caused severe population decline as a result of international migration, but also uneven population development between the regions with the larger cities and the agricultural and industrial regions elsewhere in the country. The economic crises in the second half of the nineties exacerbated this trend. The huge employment losses hit the cities less than the countryside and it can be expected that international migration was further fuelled and that agrarian districts will have suffered more population loss than the urban regions. Although one might expect that the economic recovery after 2000 could have reversed these trends, this chapter has shown that the opposite is probably the case. Political reform lifted the last ban on foreign travel as Western and Northern Europe now became accessible for Bulgarians. The process of job creation led to new opportunities in the larger cities at the expense of more peripheral areas, driving young people to the places where they might start their careers.

This leads to two expectations for the empirical analyses in Chapter V. The first is that population decline at the national level is probably most strong in the period 1990-2000, but will hardly lose pace after 2000. The second is that Sofia was an escalator region even before the change in Regime and has become an even more dominant node in the migration networks within the country not just after the Regime change, but even more so after 2000 when job creation centred on this city-region in particular. In the beginning of this chapter the politics during the Communist regime towards 'inconvenient people' and their forced settlement in North-West and Central North Bulgaria were elaborated on. It is expected that the return of those people to their "home towns" will play an important role in the migration behaviour of the Bulgarians after the fall of the wall in that area. In addition, those areas were host to the artificially supported industries and their "closure" in the years after the fall of the Regime would have led to loss of qualified specialist. This politically and economically defined double effect in those regions/districts will negatively affect the migration processes. As for the North-East planning region it is assumed that the transition of the economy into a free market system will have the biggest influence on the migration behaviour of the local population in this territory. This planning region also holds the so called "Granary of Bulgaria", an area with a mainly agricultural economic orientation. This granary became of less importance, as the economy orientates itself towards service industries. Despite this decline in economic importance, this region holds strong positions in the travel and tourism industry due to the presence of the Black Sea. This should balance or at least slow down the processes of population loss and population distribution for the bordering districts.

The political and economic particularities of Bulgaria before and after 1989 and the geographical specifics both of the planned economy and population directives form the environment influence the migration history and behaviour of the Bulgarians. This is the 'environment' that gives the initial impetus to migration processes, as explained in the migration system approach. In this 'environment' political and economic institutions hold the central place, despite their shift during the transition period after the fall of the wall. These specifics are used as a starting point in the following analysis.

IV. Methodology

For the purposes of this research a mixed method approach has been chosen. Following this approach, multiple data collection methods are combined with analysis techniques allowing the research findings and conclusions to be strengthened. In this way, the combination of qualitative and quantitative generates mutual corroboration (Bryman, 2004).

Quantitative and qualitative data are collected for the analysis in Chapters V and VI. The data for analysis conducted in Chapter V is from the archives of the National Statistic Institute, Sofia, Bulgaria. The data analysis in Chapter V is conducted at three levels. The first analysis is made at the national level and concerns the international migration. The second is at the planning regions levels and refers to both international and internal migration. The third is an analysis of the internal migration patterns within district Sofia city. The planning regions are defined according to European Union requirements. This implies some clarification regarding the administrative division in the country and brief explanations of some particularities in the data gathering. For the analysis in Chapter VI a web survey was conducted. That provides the opportunity to analyse the qualitative information on Bulgarian individuals' behaviour, considerations and plans.

Therefore, in this chapter, the research methods applied for data gathering is explained first. Second, definitions of the administrative division of Bulgaria and data manipulation are given. Additionally, some specifics of the databases from the National Statistic Institute are presented. Third, details for the conducted web survey are presented.

1. **Data gathering and processing**

 The statistical population data is taken from the officially published resources of the National Statistic Institute (NSI), Sofia, Bulgaria. Some aspects of this data warrant specific attention. Many migrations are 'hidden' from the official statistics for various reasons. The first reason is that registration of a change of living residence, within or outside Bulgaria, is not mandatory, and the time-lag between the move and the registration can be considerable. The second reason is that the individuals do not feel comfortable sharing personal information with the authorities. Last but not least, the lack of information exchange between authorities themselves. The local stations treat most of their statistical information as "confidential" and do not share it with relevant

departments within the NSI. Although this sharing is assumed to be mutual it is not obliged by law. All these factors lead to a discrepancy between the numbers reported in this thesis and the real values. Although the absolute numbers are not reliable, the relative patterns tendencies of Bulgarians' mobility will be indicated by the data.

On top of this statistical data, qualitative data was collected through a short web survey. A web survey is preferred over a survey by e-mail, because of several advantages. The web survey has the option of filtering questions e.g. "if yes, go to question ..., if no, go to question ...". It gives the possibility of downloading results into a database automatically i.e. eliminating the daunting coding of questionnaires. Also, a wide variety of types of questions that can be included: open, closed, and multiple choice questions (Bryman, 2004:245,246). This survey provides insights into Bulgarians' motivations behind their mobility, and more in particular in connection to their mobility in seeking higher education.

2.   Administrative territorial division and data-gathering particularities

In order to properly understand the processes taking place in Bulgaria and to evaluate the consequences that they provoke, data were collected for three different levels: national, regional and local.

2.1. *National level of investigation and NSI data information*

The term "national level" refers to the whole territory of Republic Bulgaria. The borders of the territory have not changed since the signing on the San Stefano Treaty in 1878 and more in particular the Unification of Bulgaria in 1885. It is assumed that when the population decline is discussed on a national basis, it is considered as an outcome of the negative net natural and migration changes. These changes are under investigation in Chapter V. To be able to study the processes of population decline and migration on national level specific information is required. This information is (partly) available in the archives of the National Statistic Institute.

The majority of the quantitative data is gathered from the Statistic Yearbooks for the years between 1989 and 2008. The Statistic Yearbooks have two main parts. In the first part the available data for the population at national level is given. The main category used in the

demographic statistics and population censuses is the 'resident population'. This category includes people who live in the country permanently and have not left it officially for a period more than one year, as of 31.12 of the respective year. The data for the population and its movement are given with the respective changes in the structure as of 31.12 of the year before i.e. data published in 2009 is the data recorded until 31.12.2008.

A note in relation to the number of immigrants and emigrants, recorded in this part, should be made. The data for in- and outmigration is gathered on the basis of the official registrations of changing address within (inmigration) or outside (outmigration) Bulgaria. These registrations are not obligatory. People can still register their move either years after the actual move or they might never change their official residency, for instance if they plan to return to the former address. However every ten years the census takes stock of the resident population, registering people at their usual living address.

In December 1992 a population and housing census was conducted. In that year recalculations of the population and its structures were made. Information was gathered until 31st of December of 1992. The census of March 2001 was the next (and last until now) census in Bulgaria. This census was the first in Bulgaria's census history that was not conducted following the usual time span: at the beginning or the end of December. This change was made as per European Union Statistics' recommendations. This change gives the opportunity to compare the information that was gathered for Bulgaria with statistics of other European countries. The data can be used as part of the population information in Europe as a whole. Part of the included information is about the number of the population and mainly the migration of the Bulgaria's population from 1st January 1993 until 1st March 2001. The information included is given on national, districts and municipality level.

2.2. *Planning regions and NSI data information*

The next level of investigation is the planning regions. In defining the planning regions there are two main criteria. First, is the geographic "encoding". The names of each planning regions show the location of the latter within the territory of Bulgaria. The second criterion is connected to the administrative requirements defined by the European Union for the regional statistics. Based on

those two criteria, Bulgaria is divided into six planning regions. Those planning regions are used for the purposes of the national statistics and in cases of comparison to the rest of the European Union countries. The term planning region defines a territorial unit which consists of several neighbouring administrative districts with specific geographic location. The six planning regions division is officially accepted and used by the international institutions.

For the purpose of the research the European Hierarchical list of the Nomenclature of Territorial Units (NUTS) is used. The planning regions are in the second administrative division level according to NUTS. The planning regions have to have population between 800 000 and 3 million people (Eurostat statistical book, 2009:9,10). Due to Bulgaria's official entrance in the European Union, in 2007, the planning regions borders were changed in order to answer this requirement. The division itself and the districts[3] included in each of the regions are in Table 1 bellow. Followed by illustration the planning regions' territorial range and location (Fig. 3). The basic advantage in choosing this division level for the upcoming analysis is that the data is easily "readable" and comparable with the data from the rest of the European Union countries.

Table 1 Planning regions in Bulgaria and included districts[i]

Planning regions	included districts	Planning regions	included districts
North-West	Montana[ii] part of Lovech	**South-East**	Burgas part of Haskovo
Central North	part of Lovech part of Razgrad	**Central South**	Plovdiv part of Haskovo
North-East	Varna part of Razgrad	**South-West**	Sofia city Sofia region

Source:NSI

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[3] The included districts are according to the territorial division of Bulgaria until 1999.

Fig. 3 Planning regions in Bulgaria

Source: NSI
Created with ArcGIS v9.2 by Anna Vasileva

This classification has been applied since year 2008 and is used for the analysis at planning-regions level. To analyze the shift over time the data for planning-regions had to be recalculated for the years preceding 2007. The recalculations are made on the basis available information per district and/or municipalities included in their borders, as shown in Fig. 3. For instance to calculate the statistics for the North-East region, the data for the Varna district has been used, complemented by the data on the municipalities in Razgrad district that are also part if the region. In this way, the analysis for planning regions' processes the data for the population in the regions as well as the number of immigrants/emigrants is recalculated on the basis of the data organised per district or per municipality. The data for in- and outmigration is gathered on the basis of the official registrations of changing address within (inmigration) or outside (outmigration) Bulgaria. As information on the flows between regions could not be calculated this way, the results will only show the migration balance for each region.

It can be seen that the planning regions are located either in the north or south part of Bulgaria. This "north-south" geographical division is due to "a natural border" – the mountain range, Stara

planina. This mountain "divides" the territory of Bulgaria into two parts. The foothills of the Stara planina define the south borders of the planning regions and districts in North Bulgaria. The mountain plays an important role when it comes to migration processes as well. There are 18 passages that allow transport between the northern and southern part of the country. Most of these passages are closed during the winter season due to their impenetrability. It is only logical that this influences the mobility of the population among regions or districts, situated in the opposite parts.

2.3. District Sofia city

The third level of analysis is based on data for the district Sofia city. Figure 4, bellow, is an illustration of the district division of Bulgaria and it shows the geographical location of district Sofia city. The reasons for choosing this particular district for the next stage of analysis are twofold. First and foremost, the theory of the escalator predicts growing number of migrant to this city as this is the urban core of the country. Second, the Statistic Year books provide information on the mobility between districts – emigrants and immigrants. That gives the opportunity to investigate the flow of the population towards and from the district of Sofia city. In that way the connection between individuals' mobility and the Fielding's 'escalator region" concept can be tested.

Fig. 4 Districts' territorial division of Bulgaria
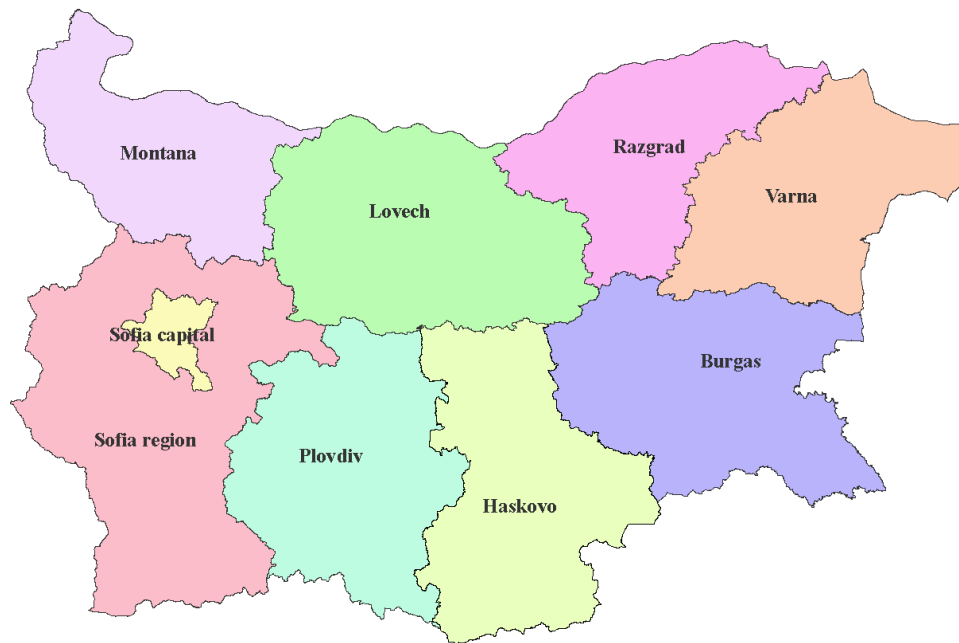
Therefore for that stage of investigation the following data is used: number of people in district Sofia city, number of immigrants/emigrants, and migration flows between district Sofia city and the other districts. For the latter the information published in tables "number of people migrated between the districts" is used. This indicator gives (incomplete) information about the migration flows.

3.   Web survey

Migration flows are dependent on characteristics of people and places. They revolve around the actions of individuals pursuing their life choices based on their own skills and the economic opportunities available to them. In other words, the overall adjustment of a given region to an economic shock is linked in part to individual migration decisions (Feser and Sweeney, 1999). To be able to analyse the history and the intentions that are behind these flows qualitative information is needed. For theoretical and practical reasons the survey has been restricted to students and graduates. They play a decisive role in the theory of skilled migration and in the debate on the brain-drain. The practical issue is that only a small sample could be collected and a survey among

the general population would generate too much heterogeneity to arrive at any understanding. The chosen method is a web survey with open, closed and multiple choice questions. The web survey was distributed among Bachelor or Master students completing their studies at this moment, or having graduated between 1989 and 2008. The respondents study or have studied mainly at universities in Sofia city. A total of 63 participants in the age between 23 and 56 completed the survey, of which 33 between the age of 23 and 29, and only six above 40 years old. Approximately 60% of interviewees are female i.e. 38 participants. The sample is urban i.e. all of the participants are coming from big cities in the country, mainly from Sofia city. As it was cited above the target group for this research is people with tertian education. From the respondents 63% are with a Master degree at the moment of conduction of the survey. The survey was in Bulgarian in order to avoid as much misreading or misunderstanding of the questions as possible. The translated questionnaire and summaries of some the answers (Table 9) are to be found in Appendix 2.

The questionnaire consists of 31 questions. They cover areas from the respondents' place of residents before during and after their higher education, their degree of education and specialty, work experience in relation to their future plans, their reasons for choosing a particular location and programme to study and their prospects of future migration. The respondents' answers are used for presenting the motives and tendencies in relation to migration processes. The information included in the analysis is the directions of their movement, of the role of education, field of study in relation to their employment opportunities, their reasons for (not) changing living residence and their plans after graduation.

For the web survey a "snowball" sampling method was used. This is a non-probability sample i.e. the result from this survey cannot be used to infer from the sample to the general population (Brayman, 2004). Therefore, the results from this survey will not be used as a "statistical adding" to the migration processes. Their role is to give an idea of the Bulgarian individuals' considerations and reasoning behind their mobility and choices. Choosing the survey's respondents was defined by one main requirement – participants should either have obtained their higher education between 1989 and 2008 or they are presently studying in Bachelor or Master programme. The web survey was sent among friends of the researcher and students sites and they were asked this to be forward to others answering the same requirement.

The web survey designed to look at the patterns among the population with a higher education. That gives an opportunity to see how, and if, the "better general education implies more specific skills which in turn imply longer job duration" (Börsch-Supan, 1990:47). Furthermore it helps gaining insight into whether the individuals' respective access to good higher education and job opportunities – typically considered a necessary, though not sufficient condition for generating a liveable income and better 'quality of life' – are the basic driving forces for the population mobility (Findlay and Rogerson, 1993).

The mix methods research approach allows the present analysis to investigate the tendencies in the Bulgaria's population loss and (re)distribution by looking at the available statistical data. The web survey goes deeper into the reasons for the migration processes that lead to these tendencies. Due to the number of the respondents the data is not statistically sufficient for generalisation of the outcomes. Nevertheless, for the purposes of this research it shows individuals' considerations in relation to life choices, education, and career development.

V. Population decline and redistribution analysis based on official National Statistic Institute data

Migration is a major source of population decline and (re)distribution in Bulgaria. However it is hard to establish the exact yearly figures for this phenomenon. The registration of population change by the National Institute of Statistics deviates from the actual situation. As explained in chapter IV many Bulgarians might change their address without officially registering this move. The official statistics therefore underestimate population decline both at the national and the sub national level. Every ten years the actual situation is updated in the national census. Following the census of 1992 and 2001, these years give a more realistic picture on the population stock in the country in the period preceding the survey.

The analyses of the population decline and (re)distribution in Bulgaria are conducted at the national, regional and local level. The national level analysis gives an overview of the population stock and migration loss that the country experienced during the past 20 years. Next steps in the analysis of the statistical data are on the population loss and (re)distribution at the level of planning regions and. offers the opportunity to see which areas record a population loss and which experienced population growth. Also it shows some patterns in the migration process occurring within Bulgaria. The third analysis on district Sofia city allows a deeper and closer look at population (re)distribution of Bulgaria's population and the migration patterns towards the capital. It seeks to investigate the role of district Sofia city as an "escalator region". Those three analyses start by documenting the net population change over time, after which the patterns in the registered migrations are analyzed.

1. National-level analysis

In the period 1989-2008 the population of Bulgaria decreased with approximately 1.3 million people. The majority of this population loss is due to outmigration flows after the fall of the Communist regime. During the Communist regime the authorities strictly controlled people leaving the country, even if for business travel. Unapproved travel was prosecuted by the law. This situation changed after the fall of the wall in 1989. The partial removal of those restrictions encouraged Bulgarians to move more freely. During the following years, this mobility was

strengthened by the economic situation in the country. In 1992 a downward economic trend started. This process had its peak in 1996/1997 when the country suffered a real crisis. This crisis brought about panic among Bulgarians, since the population had never experienced economic instability. In 2001 the country started procedures to enter the EU which led to a reduction of travel requirements and to better conditions for applying for work and education abroad.

Chart 1 and Table 2 below show the changes in the number of Bulgaria's population since 1980. It can be observed that for the first nine years there were ups and downs in population rates but in general the population grew. The peak was in 1989 when Bulgaria's had 8 992 316 inhabitants.

Chart 1 Population in Bulgaria for the period 1980-2008
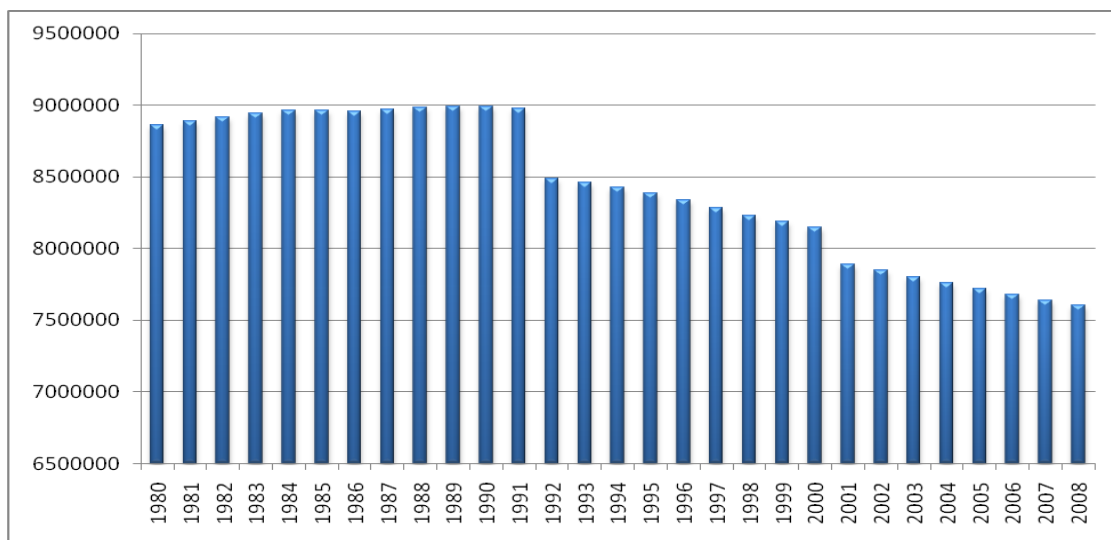
Sources: NSI Year statistic book and http://www.stat.bg/en/indicator/584/

Between 1989 and 2008, the official registration shows a decline from year to year, in particular after 1992. Since a large part of the (informal) migration is not registered in these official statistics, these figures represent only part of the process. The update from the census from 1991 shows a loss of nearly half a million by January 1992 (see Table 2).

Table 2 Population loss between 1898 and 2009 (number of people)

1990-1999	values	2000-2008	values
1989/1990	3 151	1999/2000	41 400
1990/1991	14 304	2000/2001	258 400
1991/1992	490 061	2001/2002	45 300
1992/1993	25 037	2002/2003	44 300
1993/1994	32 363	2003/2004	40 200
1994/1995	42 700	2004/2005	42 300
1995/1996	43 764	2005/2006	39 400
1996/1997	57 736	2006/2007	39 100
1997/1998	52 829	2007/2008	33 649
1998/1999	39 471		

Source: NSI Statistic Year books

The statistics suggest that population decline happened in the year 1992. In fact most of the outmigration mobility occurred in the period 1989-1991, when international migration became an option. The registration improved after 1991 and the census of 2001 shows a less dramatic fall in population numbers of 260 000 inhabitants over the preceding ten years on top of the decline of 330 000 registered in the migration statistics. It might be expected that the 2011 census will again show a higher decline than can be expected based on the trend until 2008. However, the correction should be smaller due to improved registration. According to the NSI population projection (2008) the population is expected to be around 7 528 000 in 2010 and 7 137 000 people in 2020[4]. If the negative migration balance and the negative natural change remain the same, Bulgaria's population will count 5 475 000 in 2060 (Statics Yearbook, 2008).

Even though the formally registered migration does not capture the total migration, the pattern from year to year is indicative of the changes. Chart 2 shows the yearly net migration balance based on data available for the number of emigrants and immigrants per district (absolute numbers are available in Table 3, Appendix 1). It can be observed that the first two peaks of population loss are in the years 1992 and in 1995/1996. The third peak occurred in 2001 and the fourth in 2007. The driving forces differ over the years.

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[4] According to recently published statistic data by the NSI the population in Bulgaria until 31.12.2009 is already 7 563 710 or approximately 43 thousand people less compared to 2008.

Chart 2 Migration balance for the period 1989-2008 based on number of emigrants and immigrants[5] per district
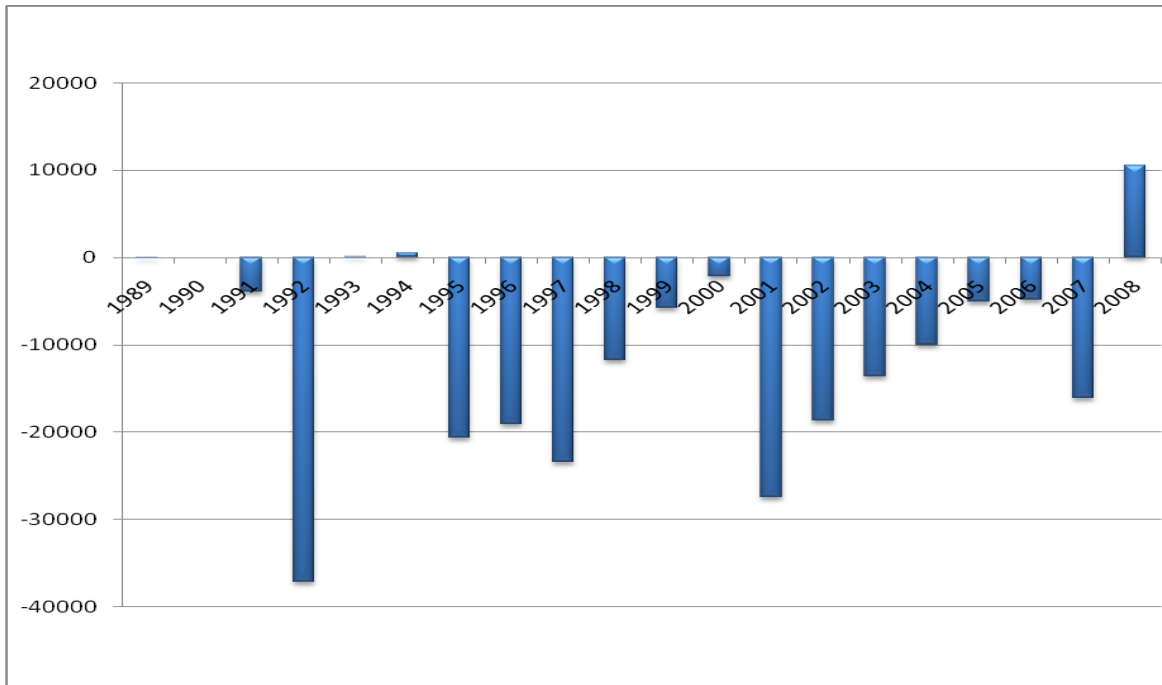
Source: NSI Statistic Year books

The first peak in 1992t can be explained by the economic situation in the country at that time. At the end of 1991 and during 1992 Bulgaria experienced the first effects of the economic crisis during the government of Filip Dimitrov. For the Bulgarians, used to a secure wages and food prices during the Communist regime, this was a completely new experience. The loss of "security" led way to migration flows leaving Bulgaria. The second reason for the population loss recorded that year is the outmigration of Turkish minorities occurred in response to the discriminatory acts at the time of the transition (see Chapter III) More detail can be found in the next section when the result for the Central South planning region are discussed.

The second peak in outmigration occurred in the period 1995-1997, not coincidently during the leadership of Zhan Videnov. As elaborated in the Chapter III during this administration massive privatization and hyperinflation eroded the standard of living for the Bulgarian population. The graph shows a clear response of the migration balance to this crisis.

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[5] Includes <u>only</u> Bulgarian citizens officially declared to the authorities for changing of their living residence

Bulgaria experienced its third high negative migration increase in 2001. Two driving forces might explain this peak in emigration. The first reason is the "lost patience" attitude among Bulgarians. The 10-years barrier stage was crossed, the long awaited "big positive changes" did not appear and people decided to look for a better life and more opportunities abroad. In some regions, such as the North-West and Central South, highly qualified specialists were forced to move abroad due to the closure of industries that were artificially subsidised during the Regime. This was exacerbated by the second force. At that time Bulgaria took its first steps towards membership of the EU which simplified migration procedures and allowed free movement of Bulgarians in Europe. People experienced less administrative constraints for travelling abroad; higher education abroad became more feasible and affordable. Obtaining an internationally valid Bachelor or Master diploma pushed Bulgarians towards Western European countries, but also to US and Australia. The access to work opportunities expanded and procedures for applying were facilitated. This lead to a process of searching for decent jobs in Western Europe, better living and economic conditions abroad.

After 2001 the trend reverses. Year by year the net migration balance becomes less negative and in 2008 a positive balance is recorded. This coincides with the period of increased foreign investment and the decrease in unemployment rates since 2001. Nevertheless in 2007 the statistics record another peak in the loss of population, which coincides with the official entering of Bulgaria into EU. This led to the removal of almost all restrictions on free mobility of the Bulgarians within the borders of the Union. More important ten[6] of the EU-member countries opened their labour markets for Bulgarian citizens and another two (Italy and Hungary) accepted quota of labour migrants.

The analysis above shows that international migration processes is influenced by the economic and political changes that occurred in Bulgaria during the transition period. When Bulgarians first experienced the symptoms of an upcoming crisis and later the crisis itself, they looked for opportunities other countries had to offer. The first ten years after the fall of the old Regime clearly show migration patterns driven by economic hardship. Later on, Bulgaria's political development lead to lifting of migration constrains. This explains why even in a period of

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[6]In alphabetic order these countries are – Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia and Sweden.

economic recovery and decreasing unemployment international migration was very high in 2001 and 2007, the successive stages of entering the EU. Even taking into account the weaknesses in the data, the pattern of the population loss clearly coincides with political and economic changes. The more stable Regime and economic recovery after 2001 seems to correspond to a diminishing migration from Bulgaria or an increase of return migration to the country.

2. Planning-regions level analysis

Even without taking into account unregistered and hidden migration, the migration balance on national level shows high negative values during most of the years of the researched period. National data might obscure severe regional disparities in economic development and concomitant migration. What happens when the migration processes are investigated at the regional level? Does the population decline occur in areas with specific economic push factors? Do other regions profit from, for example, the 'concentration of companies and economies that offers a pooled market for workers' or the availability of institutes for higher education, universities and colleges..." (Krugman, 1991:484).

The number of inhabitants per planning region is shown in Chart 3 below (absolute numbers available in Table 4, Appendix 1). The first impression is that all regions are faced with a steady reduction in numbers that continues to this very day. The South-West region however is the exception. It is the only region holding a population above 2 million for the whole of the researched period and the population numbers show modest growth after 2006. The Central South region was rather stable after the first drop in the early 90-ties, but loses population after 2000. Population loss over the full period amounts to 18.1%. In the South East decline since 1989 amounts to 15.7% and the decrease is very steady.

Chart 3 Population in the planning regions for the period 1989-2008
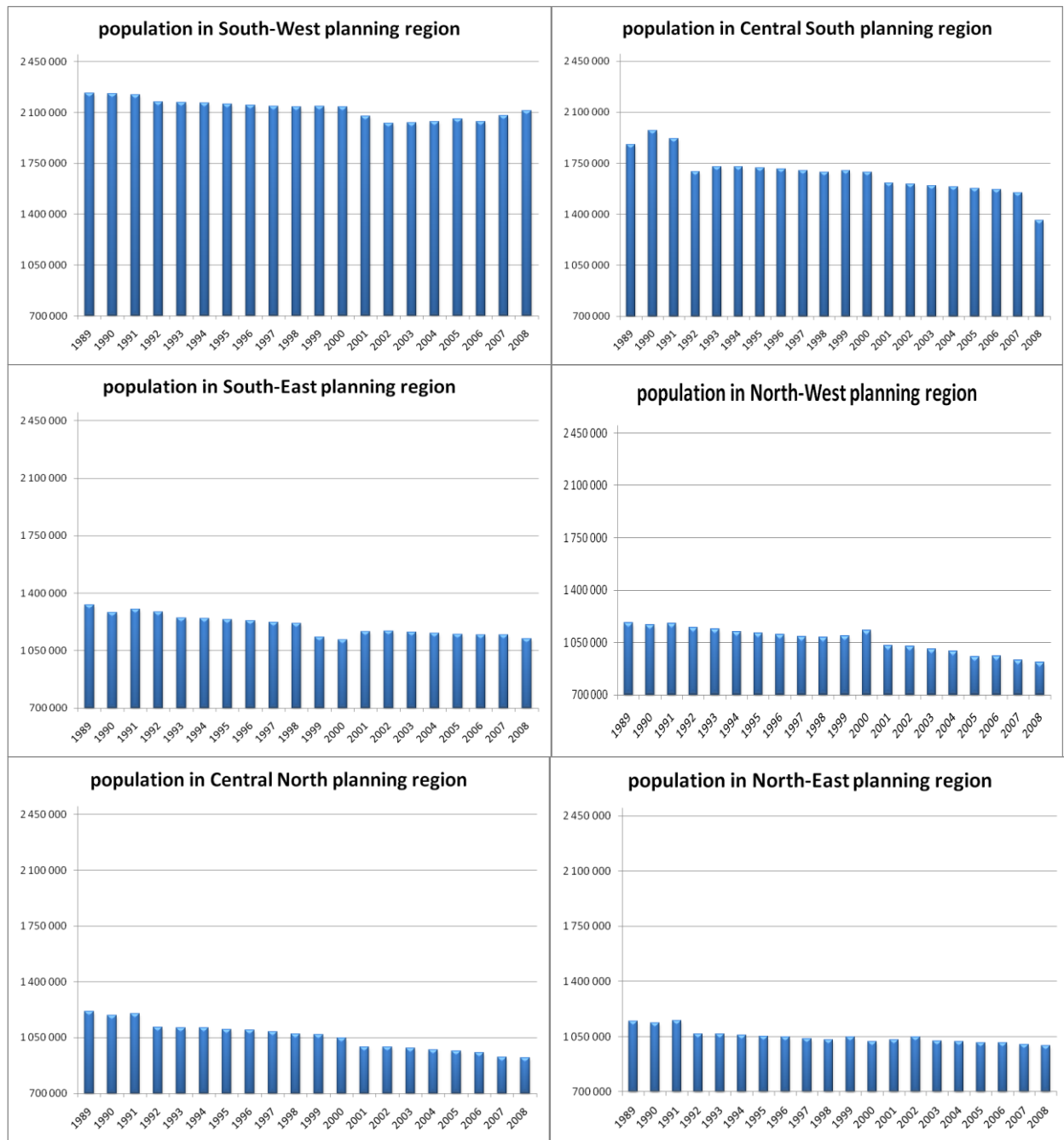
Source: NSI Statistic Year books

The Northern Planning regions suffer more from the negative migration tide. In particular the North-West (a loss of 22.5%) and the Central-North regions (minus 24%) are hit hardest by population decline. The situation is less severe in the North-East region where decline is limited to 13.7% 'only'.

This raises the question: To what extent is the diversity in population decline triggered by the migration balance (both internally and internationally) of the regions? In order to come to a deeper understanding of migration processes and their causes, an analysis of the migration balance based on the officially registered emigrants and immigrants is made. In Chart 4 this migration balance per planning region is shown (absolute values in Table 5, Appendix 1). The South-West planning region, lost quite a few people in the early nineties, but has had a positive migration balance since 1994. In 1996, 1997, 2006 and 2007 the values are lower compared to the other years. This echoes the national trend of the economic downturn in 1995-1997 and the effect of entry into the EU in 2007.

In the theoretical part of this research it was mentioned that the availability of job opportunities, higher remuneration levels, higher education facilities, and the search for specialised employees act as pulling factors and attract migrants. It is fair to assume that district Sofia city is the magnet that causes the positive migration balance for the South-West planning region. Over 50% of the total number of universities and colleges in Bulgaria (between 15-17 universities and colleges) are situated in this region[iii] (NSI Education bulletins). In section three of this chapter this will be analyzed in more detail, by analyzing the internal migration flows to and from Bulgaria's-capital district.

The North-East planning region records a negative migration balance between 1992 and 2007, but the loss is less substantial than in the other Northern regions. The main reason for this situation is the economic orientation of the region towards agriculture and tourism. This region holds "Granary of Bulgaria" (almost 80% of the corn and the wheat are produced there). The ineffective national policy during the time of transition leads to one of the biggest economic crisis in the country. The agriculture was one of the sectors suffering the most.

Chart 4 Migration balance by planning regions
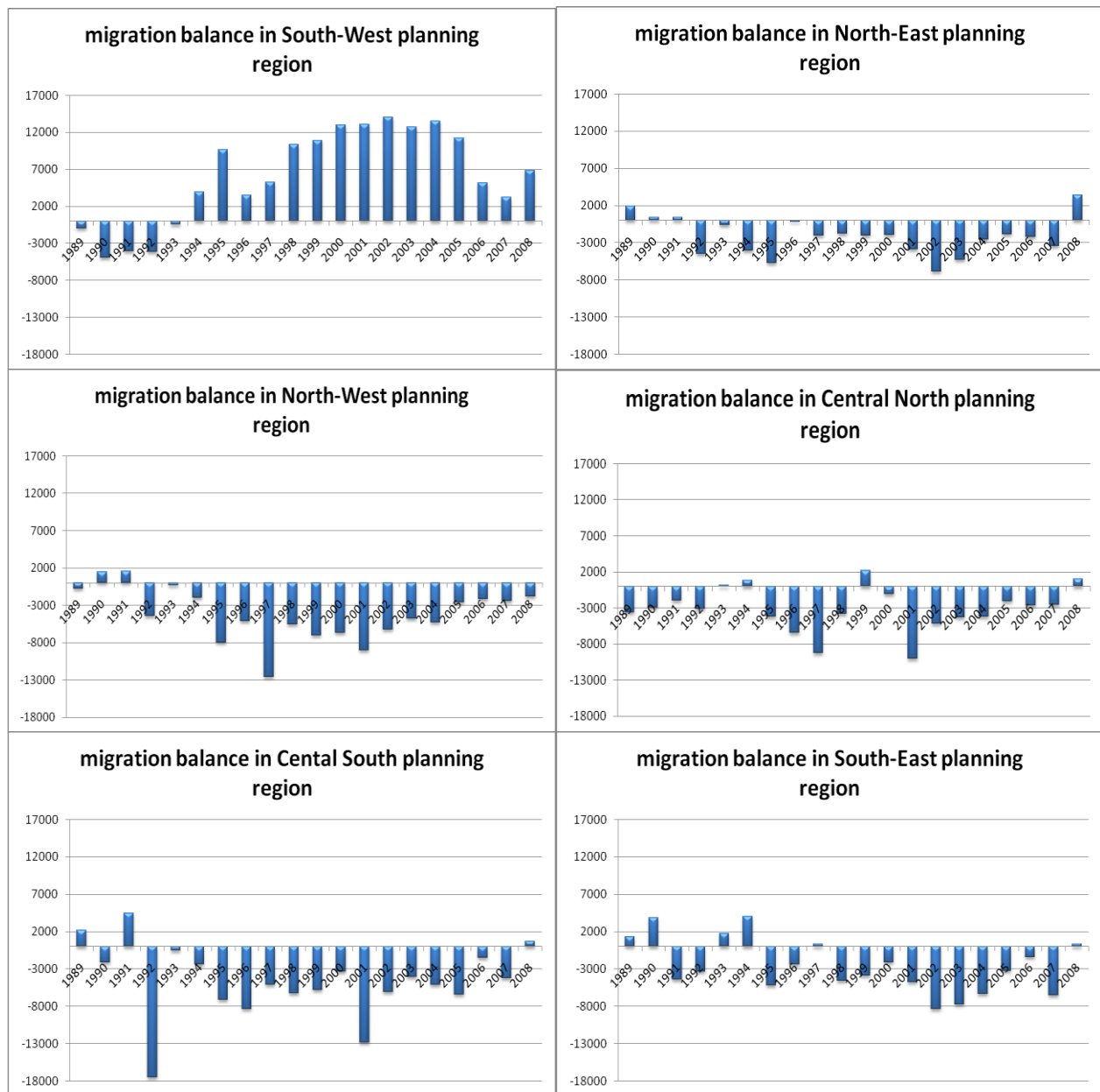
Source: NSI Statistic Year books

At the same time the process of privatisation started, returning land to its private owners. That led to long periods of deadlock and insecurity regarding ownership which slowed up the investments and the development in this sector. These two factors damaged agricultural production. It also forced the local population to re-orientate their businesses towards other economic sectors, such as tourism.

This region's east border is the Black Sea coast, which gives the opportunities for establishment of touristic activities. The region have specialised institutes for higher education in the area of Marine discipline, the availability of the biggest port in Bulgaria in its borders, as well as private universities in tourism, leisure and services. Therefore the region does not only offer opportunities for gaining specific qualifications but also jobs for the qualified graduate specialists. The combination of those factors slowed down the process of population loss. This can be an example of how a population-loss process can be slowed down.

This is in contrast to Central North and North-West planning regions, which were hit hardest by the crisis in the period 1995-1997. During the Communist regime an industrial production was developed in these regions and was artificially supported and subsidized by the Government. Many of the inhabitants of these regions were allocated to these areas after graduation or were part of the 'inconvenient' population that was forced to resettle in the North by the authorities. After the Regime change production started to decline. At the end these industries disappeared which led to a high percentage of unemployed qualified specialists. These people were forced to search for a specific employment elsewhere either within or outside Bulgaria. Migrants were eligible workers, attractive to the international labour market. They could not realize the ambitions that paralleled their qualifications in Bulgaria. These migrants could be classified as "highly qualified" migrants and these were the ones that left the country and are included in the 'brain drain' processes. The migration balance of these regions over the years reflects these mechanisms. The highly negative balances in the period 1995-1997 reflect the upsurge in unemployment in the industries and the 2001 migration balance shows that the opening up of the EU contributed considerably to the population loss in these regions. For the future, however, the EU might have a positive effect on the North-West region in particular as funds will be available to stimulate investment in border regions.

Looking at the migration balance of the Central South planning region one year (1992) stands out. This year shows a population loss through migration of almost 18 thousand people. This negative balance corresponds to the large population loss measured in the 1992 census (see Chart 4). The most probable case for these huge losses is the international migration with Turkey. Central South is the region with the large Turkish minority (see Chapter III), which was under heavy stress during the final days of the Communist regime. Many fled the country to Turkey,

although quite a few returned in the period after 1992 in particular when the political climate changed. One of the new parties that arose after the Regime change was the Movement for Rights and Freedom that vehemently supported the rights of ethnic minorities in Bulgaria. However, Turkey is not the only destination for international migrants from this region. The year 2001 also shows an exceptionally negative balance for the Central South region.

The analyses of the planning regions indeed show large regional disparities in population development that are linked to the economic down- and upturns in the regions. The Northern regions in particular have suffered from the economic crisis in the nineties and have profited less from the economic recovery after 2001. The development of the (heavy) industry during the Communist regime laid the foundation for the decline after the fall. Not only in terms of rising unemployment, but also in the migration of qualified personnel that did not choose to live there in the first place. Yet the North also shows that regions that are successful in shifting towards a post-industrialist economy will suffer less population decline. The crisis in agriculture that hit the North-East region forced a shift towards new economic drivers in the form of tourism.

Last but not least, the high level of population concentration and the low percentage of population loss recorded in South-West planning regions show that factors such as education facilities, job opportunities as a result of Foreign Direct Investment and economic stability attract population. This raises the question whether this region can be labelled as, in Fielding's (1991) terms, the 'escalator region' for the territory of Bulgaria. Whether this is the case or not, will be investigated in the subsequent section, where the district Sofia city, as part of South-West planning region, is analysed.

3. Analysis district Sofia city

One of the outcomes of the analysis of the planning regions made above is that the South-West planning region shows high concentration of population for the whole research period (1989-2008) over 2 million people. It was hypothesized that is not so much the region as a whole, but district Sofia city in particular that serves as a magnet for the internal migration within Bulgaria. If this is true, than it is safe to conclude that modern migration patterns in Bulgaria show a large resemblance to the patterns found in Western Europe, where the central urban core is the escalator region.

The analysis starts by documenting the net populations change over time in the districts Sofia city and Sofia region, as part of South-West planning region. The next step is to analyse the internal migration flows within Bulgaria to and from the capital's district, excluding the effects of the international migration.

In Chart 5 below the population change in districts Sofia city and Sofia region are shown. Although the overall tendency of a population reduction applied within the country as a whole in most of the planning regions, district Sofia city records a population of over 1.5 million for the whole researched period (absolute values available in Table 6, Appendix 1). Based on the censuses made in 1992 and 2001, the district of Sofia city has suffered two limited reductions in the number of inhabitants. On the other hand, during the period 1997-2000 the population of the district grew. On the other hand the second district within South-West planning region borders, Sofia region, does not show any divergence from the national tendency in the population reduction – steady population loss ever since 1990. When geographically comparing districts Sofia city and Sofia region, the latter holds a far bigger territory, but far less institutions for higher education and less potential for investment in modern industries.

This leads to the hypothesis that the stability and even limited growth of the population numbers in district Sofia city is the result of population redistribution within the country. This lead to questions such as: to what extent did the crisis that started in 1992 and had its peak in 1997 force people from all over the country to move towards this district?; and did the capital of Bulgaria that attracted most of the national and foreign investments in the years 2001-2008, succeed in attracting migrants from other districts in this period? If so which are the "sending" areas? Also, is the emigration the main reason for population loss in district Sofia region and if so which is the "receiving" area of those emigrants?

Chart 5 Population in districts Sofia city and Sofia region
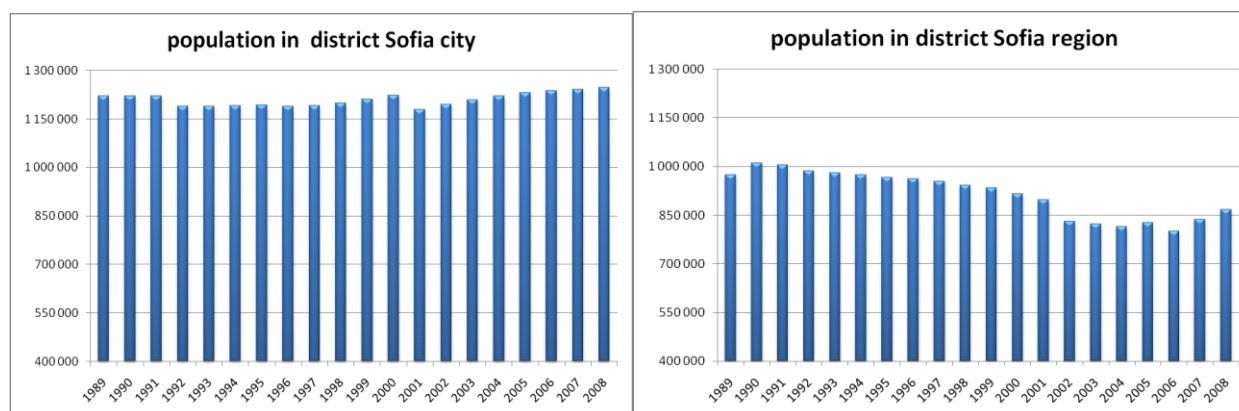
Table 7 shows the migration to district Sofia city from the other districts in Bulgaria. The row with the totals per year, show that migration to district Sofia city indeed accelerated after 1992 and continued at a very high level after 2001, although there is a substantial drop in immigration after 2005. In the first period 1989 to 1998 at total of 167 thousand registered migrant from the rest of the country settled in district Sofia city. In the second period this number was even higher (254 thousand). The major 'sending' area is district Sofia region as expected. No less than 109 thousand (45.7+63.6) people moved to the city from this surrounding region. This big migration flow confirms the hypothesis that district Sofia city with its economic stability, educational opportunities and geographical proximity is an "attractive destination". This attractiveness is valid not only for the neighbouring districts such as Sofia region, but for all districts in Bulgaria.

Table 7 Immigrants for district Sofia city

From district	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	Total
Sofia region	2 879	2 450	5 323	3 846	3 681	5 069	4 967	4 846	5 682	7 038	4 5781
Montana	1 194	1 097	2 282	2 182	2 058	3 338	2 923	3 038	3 278	4 471	2 5861
Lovech	1 080	961	2 068	1 094	1 883	2 993	2 459	2 629	3 006	3 817	2 1990
Plovdiv	1 101	928	1 799	1 528	1 525	2 540	2 471	2 528	2 676	3 032	2 0128
Razgrad	584	469	907	846	914	1 689	1 686	1 538	1 710	2 028	1 2371
Varna	595	532	1 142	955	9 66	1 519	1 381	1 191	1 395	1 901	1 1577
Burgas	798	710	1 368	1 138	1 199	1 729	1 531	1 495	1 999	2 231	1 4198
Haskovo	994	662	1 285	1 161	1 149	1 964	1 771	1 861	2 001	2 166	1 5014
Total	9 225	7 809	16 174	12 750	13 375	20 841	19 189	19 126	21 747	26 684	16 6920

From district	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Total
Sofia region	7 113	7 975	8 416	6 970	7 616	6 577	6 430	4 300	4 170	4 069	*63 636*
Montana	4 877	4 979	4 999	4 075	4 629	4 290	4 279	2 797	2 877	2 856	*40 658*
Lovech	4 123	4 235	4 521	3 839	4 572	3 956	4 112	2 615	2 880	2 745	*37 598*
Plovdiv	3 239	3 394	3 459	3 051	3 664	3 513	3 898	2 104	2 352	2 202	*30 876*
Razgrad	2 120	2 190	2 277	1 944	2 163	1 976	2 106	1 185	1 268	1 330	*18 559*
Varna	1 893	1 938	2 132	1 863	2 170	2 003	2 108	1 708	1 501	1 323	*18 639*
Burgas	2 315	2 453	2 563	2 435	3 857	2 444	2 532	1 773	1 482	1 309	*23 163*
Haskovo	2 097	2 198	2 387	2 218	2 659	2 281	2 408	1 336	1 564	1 359	*20 507*
Total	*27 777*	*29 362*	*30 754*	*26 395*	*31 330*	*27 040*	*27 873*	*17 818*	*18 094*	*17 193*	*253 636*

Source: NSI Statistic Year books

From the other seven districts, Montana district (66 519 people) holds the second place when it comes to losing people in favour of district Sofia city. Especially in years 1999, in the period 2003-2005, and in 2007, district Montana "gave" district Sofia city over 20 thousand new inhabitants. From the total amount of people emigrated from district Montana for the whole researched period 51% are towards district Sofia city. The Montana district is situated north from district Sofia city. That confirms the worldwide tendency of migration towards neighbouring, economically developed regions.

In third place is district Lovech, also situated north from district Sofia city. This district "sent" almost 60 thousand people to district Sofia city. This is another region of forced settlement during the Communistic regime. Situated in the north part of Bulgaria the industry had artificially been subsidised. After the fall of the Regime the area quickly became poor. The presence of big cites, one of which is Veliko Turnovo, the cultural capital of Bulgaria, with a highly developed touristic function and an institute of higher education, did not compensate the negative impact of the economic situation and the status of the investments in the area. This at the end led to high percentage of emigrants.

District Plovdiv, situated just east of district Sofia region is on the 4th place in the "sending" list. That district has a lower share in immigration towards district Sofia city – only 12% of the total number of immigrants. This can be explained with the fact that this district holds city of Plovdiv. The city of Plovdiv is the second largest city in Bulgaria and has the same pull-qualities as the capital in the central south Bulgaria. For the population in Central South planning region, Plovdiv is the most attractive place offering economic and educational opportunities, and development. The

second reason is the geographic proximity to the city of Sofia. The distance between these two cities is only an hour and a half by car and the infrastructure is in very good condition. This contributes to their beneficial economic relation, as well as to the districts' development. The city of Plovdiv plays a similar role as the Bulgaria's capital. The investments are relatively stable and offer job opportunities to the city's inhabitants as well as to the ones coming from the surrounding areas.

The districts from the North-East (Razgrad and Varna) and the South-East (Burgas) are farther away from district Sofia city. Yet they too have provided more than 30.000 migrants each to the city over the total research period. District Sofia city attracts most of the population not only from the neighbouring countries but from all over Bulgaria. It has become clear that one of the reasons for the population growth and concentration in this district is the inflow of migrants.

However, to gain a proper insight into the redistributive effects of internal migration, one should also include the outmigration from the area. Table 8 therefore shows the balance in the migration flows of Sofia city.

The table shows a number of interesting differences with Table 7. In 1989 district Sofia city had a positive balance with all the Northern districts (Montana, Lovech, Razgrad and Varna), but a negative balance with the districts in the South (Plovdiv, Haskovo and Burgas). In 1990 there were only two districts from the North-East (Razgrad and Varna) with a positive balance and the overall balance was negative for district Sofia city. It is only after 1993 that district Sofia city established a positive migration balance with all the other districts in Bulgaria. The total redistributive effect of the internal migration in the period 1989-1998 is only 46 thousand, much less than would be expected on the basis of the immigration into the city (166 thousand). The Northern districts, which were hit hardest by the crisis in 1995-1997 provide most of the net flows into district Sofia city in this period (apart from district Sofia region). The conclusion for this period seems obvious. In the first years of the transition overall mobility increased in Bulgaria, with people moving both to and from the capital the South and to the capital from the North.

Table 8 Migration balance flows of district Sofia city (between 1989 and 2008)

With district	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	Total
Sofia region	1 299	593	2 422	2 266	862	1 714	1 209	1 733	2 458	4 145	18 701
Montana	122	-732	-607	1 110	-384	725	254	281	592	2 372	3 733
Plovdiv	-707	-1 260	-518	-1 182	-24	454	1 047	1 120	1 426	2 292	2 648
Lovech	434	-296	-889	861	164	1 184	763	484	616	1 486	4 807
Haskovo	-427	-681	-419	-165	50	259	-296	-15	487	987	-220
Burgas	-105	-324	-459	255	13	80	241	224	643	762	1 330
Varna	280	189	334	620	473	1 069	847	588	1 253	1 440	7 093
Razgrad	660	280	853	827	640	1 211	832	821	952	1 239	8 315
Total	1 556	-2 231	717	4 592	1 794	6 696	4 897	5 236	8 427	14 723	46 407

With district	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Total
Sofia region	4 477	7 122	1 783	4 150	3 143	2 677	1 339	1 424	-244	934	26 805
Montana	2 701	4 182	2 093	2 639	2 801	2 843	2 335	1 695	1 175	1 641	24 105
Plovdiv	2 602	2 608	2 819	2 868	3 415	3 027	2 840	1 685	1 532	966	24 362
Lovech	1 594	2 951	1 469	1 930	2 364	2 302	2 285	967	757	856	17 475
Haskovo	1 011	1 390	1 117	1 296	1 494	993	1 102	639	511	702	10 255
Burgas	1 267	1 225	921	1 257	1 542	1 327	948	843	124	324	9778
Varna	1 922	2 090	1 959	1 927	3 313	1 763	1 710	1 117	515	218	16 534
Razgrad	1 143	2 078	1 233	1 532	2 064	1 667	1 643	779	873	764	13 776
Total	16717	23646	13 394	17 599	20 136	16 599	14 202	9 149	5 243	6 405	143 090

Source: NSI Statistic Year books

This trend changes rapidly after 1997. The total migration balance for district Sofia city in the period 1999-2008 amounts to 143 thousand. Immigration to the city was much higher (253 thousand) than in the previous period, but outmigration was lower (100 thousand) than in the period before. In the years of economic recovery the city attracted large numbers of people from all the other districts in Bulgaria. However, after 2005 the situation changes again. The total yearly balance drops below 10 000 and by 2007 the redistributive effects have become very limited. Even if district Sofia city has strengthens its position as an escalator region in Bulgaria at the beginning of the new millennium, this positions seems to weaken currently.

4.   Conclusion

Both the political and economic shifts during the transition had a great effect on the migration from and within Bulgaria. The Regime change brought the "political" freedom to move, the opening of the international borders, and the removal of the Government job assignment after graduation. Bulgarians' started to experience the pros and cons of these changes. They experienced the freedom to study work and settle in the city they want according to their own personal preferences. On the other hand, the instable democratic government during the years of transition did not managed to bring about a growing economy. That had an impact on the feelings of security in with respect to income, job opportunities and "career building". Bulgarians' started to feel the pressure of the economic factors which was shown to define their migration behaviour after 1989. The driving forces for migration were shifting from political to economic.

Although 'free' in their choice where to move, individuals were driven by the economic situation in country. Regions that have stable or relatively stable local industries, offer higher education facilities for those at the beginning of their professional development, and offer career opportunities for the graduates are the ones that "gain" human capital. South-West in particular is the region that gains population concentration at the expenses of regions such as the North-West and the South-East. This shows that the shifting of the institutions had a direct impact on Bulgarian's mobility. The ups and downs in the migration flows correspond to the ups and downs in the economy in the country. The analysis on district Sofia city shows that this district holds the conditions to be labelled as an 'escalator region'. The district plays that role not only for the neighbouring districts such as Sofia region and Montana but at a national level as well. The population leaving district Sofia city towards other districts in the country is less compared to the one that settled in its borders. This tendency leads to the process of population loss in the peripheral rural areas and population concentration in the central urban ones. The peripheral rural areas are the ones loosing human capital. The major "beneficiary" is district Sofia city. Therefore in the next chapter the pulling factors of the city of Sofia will be investigated. The analysis looks at the personal choices and considerations of Bulgarians with Bachelor and Master degrees. Their migration history is analyzed and linked to other events in the course of their lives.

VI. Migration and education: a micro approach

1. Introduction

Theory predicts that migration is driven by individuals' decisions based on their skills and on the educational and economic opportunities that a certain location can offer them. It also suggests a strong relationship with family ties even when it comes to decisions in relation to the choice of education and job opportunities. To track people's life paths and to uncover the main driving forces of the migration qualitative information is required. The latter can be gathered by a biographic approach, allowing the longitudinal aspects of the migration processes to be analysed.

The information gathered through the web survey is used to better understand the migration process and in particular its connection with higher education and post-graduation career opportunities. The data from the web survey focus on the migration towards Sofia city[7], because the city has the biggest share in the migration balance in the country as a whole as shown in the last analysis in Chapter V. The assumption is that the capital, in the terms of Fielding (1991), gives young people opportunities to be 'taken up by the escalator'. Therefore, it plays an important role in defining the migration flows and can be labelled as the 'escalator region'. By using snowball sampling, 63 people were asked to respond to questions on their migration history, their motives for moving and their future migrations plans. 75% of the respondents (75%) lived and studied in Sofia for a period during or after their university education. Only 7 people of them went abroad as part of their education or the start of their labour career. In this chapter, first, the participants' mobility during their secondary education is analysed. Following this, details of the reasons and factors that influenced the interviewee's decision-making in relation to higher education and future perspectives is investigated. Third, participants' "after graduation" behaviour and plans are discussed.

2. First stage: place of secondary education

To study the participants' mobility before entering "higher education" the questionnaire included items regarding their place of birth and place of secondary degree graduation. The results from

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[7] Summary of some of the results from the conducted web survey are available in Table 9, Appendix 2.

the web survey show that when it comes to the early stage of people's life-time-mobility behaviour, change in residence is not that common. Individuals that were born in the cities also had their secondary education in the same place. The reason is that all cities have secondary schools that offer a wide range of educational and development areas. Cities such Sofia, Plovdiv, Burgas, Svishtov and Vidin attract people from neighbouring villages who are in their search for good secondary education, but most of them are able to commute to school and remain in their original village. The geographical distribution of secondary educational opportunities in Bulgaria and the facilities for public transportation allow young people to stay in their familiar environment, living with their families, relatives, and friends.

Most of these cities have at least one state or private university or college, providing the opportunity for the individuals to keep their social and family environment by choosing to enter their higher education locally. Therefore, the interviewees have the opportunity to gain at least a Bachelor diploma in the same city. This raises the question whether they actually took up this opportunity.

3. Second stage: entering higher education

After secondary education people start exploring their future opportunities not only concerning their field of education but also paid employment. This is the time when individuals decide, if necessary, to move. At this stage choosing a university or college may still be influenced by the family, particularly by parents. Nevertheless, career opportunities and options for development as an outcome of good education and the "right" programme are the motives that drive the decision. The nearest opportunity for higher education might therefore be less favourable to ambitious young people.

The results from the survey show that many respondents, 38%[8], moved temporarily or permanently. Of all the respondents (50%) that lived in Sofia city before entering university, only one moved to another city. The respondents in the other cities show a radically different pattern. Only half of them choose to do their Bachelor programme in the same city and Sofia is the destination for those that moved away. After the Bachelor programme again only half chooses to

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[8] In this percentage are included participants No 21, an immigrant from Moldova, and participant 16 who moved abroad for his Bachelor degree.

do the Masters programme in the home city. The other half moves to Sofia. A total of six respondents chose to do a (second) Master abroad.

The participants that changed their residence at the time of entering higher education facilities were asked to explain their choices. To them closeness to family is not a priority. These individuals are more career oriented. There are two leading reasons choosing university or college: universities' reputations in the business environment and the specific programmes that the university offers and cannot be found somewhere else.

> *"the only university that offers this Master and I can gain specialisation in the area of geography"*
> *(participant 12, Bachelor and Master in Sofia)*
>
> *"close to home town and then a university with more prestige"*
> *(participant No 18, Bachelor in Plovdiv, Master in Sofia)*
>
> *"because the diplomas from that university were highly appreciated by future employers"*
> *(participant 21, Master in Sofia)*

The high percentage of people moving towards Sofia city and the immobility of people in the capital towards other cities in the country arise from the economic and educational opportunities that this city offers. The total number of universities and colleges in Bulgaria was 53 in 2008 and they are not by any means equally distributed. Of these 53 institutions 24 are located in city of Sofia. In the capital the offer of educational programmes is wider; the institutions have a better reputation among graduates. After the transition the "local" students and the "new comers" gained equal opportunity for admission, and the city offers part-time job opportunities for financial independency during the education period.

Among the ones that stayed in Sofia there are some who changed their university. Their choices are mostly related to the quality of the programmes although one respondent mentions the opportunities of combining work with studies.

> *"change of the university due to the option for night and weekend lectures which provides the opportunity for work during the day, also because of the location"*   *(participant 20, Bachelor and Master in Sofia)*
>
> *"the Master degree was the continuing of my previous education and gave me better opportunities for work in the educational area "*   *participant 23, Bachelor and Master in Sofia)*
>
> *"different university because of environment, teachers and colleagues"*
> *(participant 36, Bachelor and Master in Sofia)*

Surprisingly only one of the Sofia-born students moved abroad. Those that did, come from district cities like Burgas, Kurdzhali, and Haskovo. They all gained their first level of higher education in Sofia i.e. Bachelor or Master degree, and moved abroad for their (second) Master. Respondents' reaction to the question "why you chose to study abroad?" indicates that even Sofia falls short of meeting their ambitions. They explain their choice with the need for better education or the wish to obtain an international acknowledged diploma, preferably in one of top 100 universities in Europe.

> *"wanted international acknowledged diploma from the top 100MBA programme in the world"*
> *(participant No 3)*
>
> *"old system of education, not satisfied by the programme and the methods of education, lack of practical knowledge*
> *(participant No 25)*
>
> *"wouldn't have moved outside Bulgaria if there was a university programme in the area I am interested and I wouldn't have stayed abroad if I could work in my area of education in Bulgaria".*
> *(participant No 39)*

The survey confirms the role of Sofia city as an escalator region and as a stepping stone to educational opportunities abroad. Of the 63 interviewees, only 27% did not obtained their Master degree in the capital of Bulgaria. The ones that stayed in their home towns indicate that the universities there offered the right programmes and are *"highly ranked"* among the graduates. Migration of the high potentials in Bulgaria is clearly driven by the quality of higher education.

4. Third stage: post-graduates

When it comes to the migration after graduation some participants (8%) from relatively large cities such as Plovdiv, Burgas, Vidin, and Kurdzhali returned to their home towns and villages. The return migration towards small home towns or villages is related to the opportunities that can be found in the area, in particular to transport connections to the cities where they studied. In that case people are close to their families and at the same time have the opportunity to start and develop career. Figure 5 illustrates some of the interviewees' migration paths during their higher education and after graduation. There are cases in which during their higher education individuals change their residence a couple of times, achieving better education to be more competitive in the local labour market. An example of such case is the migration path Omurtag – V. Turnovo – Sofia – Omurtag.

Fig. 5 Migration paths

Source: NSI
Created with ArcGIS v9.2 by Anna Vasileva
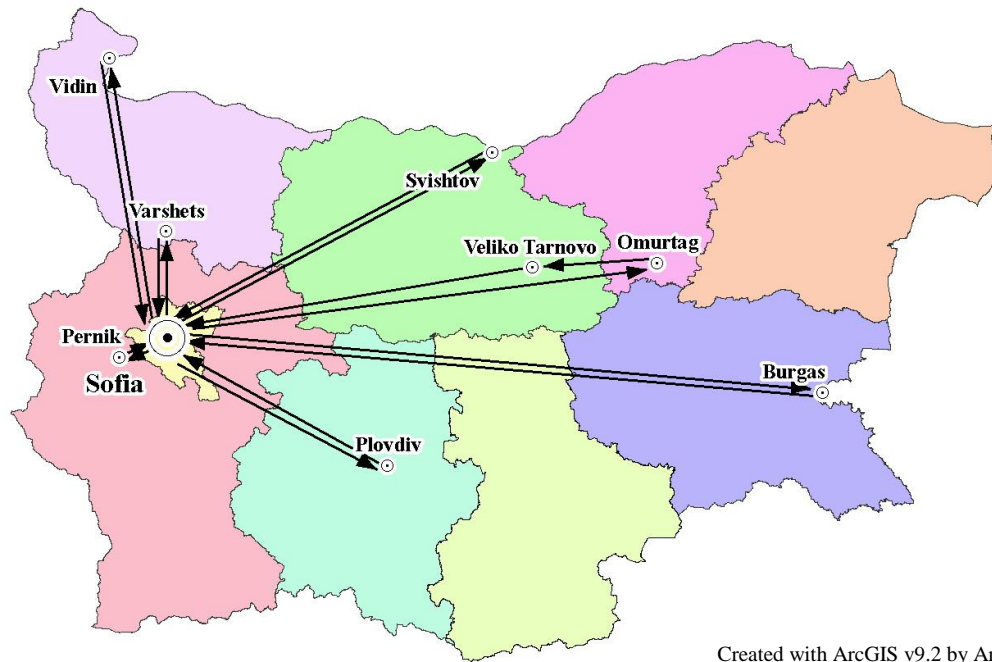
The group of returning migrants is relatively small comparing to the one that did not move back after graduation. The most important reasons not to go back to their home towns are the *"career opportunities and better life standard"*, in the place where they graduated. Another reason for their decision to stay in the city/country of graduation is due to family formation – they got married and started a family.

Most of the people that did not moved after graduation are graduates from different universities in Sofia. Relatively good transport connections with cities all over the country and abroad; high levels of both foreign and national investments that create career opportunities; and the "prestige" of living in the capital, make Sofia city an attractive place of residence. After graduation, Bulgarians are looking at job opportunities that meet their qualifications and ambitions. If these factors are not present in their current location they start search for alternatives. The capital is then a logical choice. Figure 6 illustrates some of the migration flows after graduation towards the capital of Bulgaria.

Fig. 6 Migration flows to Sofia city
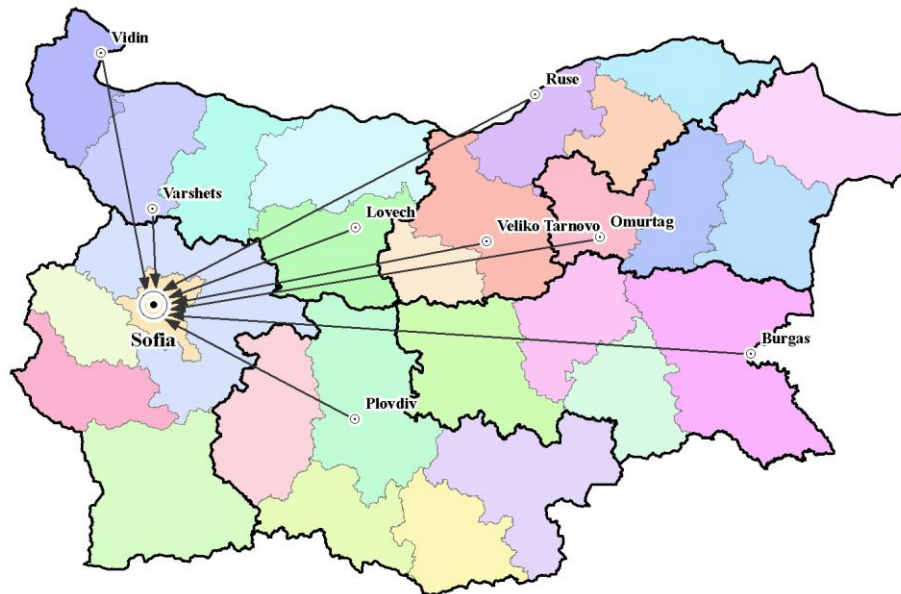
<div align="right">Source: NSI
Created with ArcGIS v9.2 by Anna Vasileva</div>

Population redistribution within the country is also an outcome of the mobility behaviour of the individuals in their search post-graduation career opportunities. This is also one of the reasons for migration flows from Bulgaria to Western European countries and therefore one of the reasons for the population loss in Bulgaria as a whole. Sofia city is a stepping stone in this process. The emigrants are the ones that do not see further realisation in Sofia. The city is the "last destination" in the country that can offer better career opportunities and the inability to find these, leads to a reorientation toward the opportunities abroad.

Once people have left the country the question for their return arises. The willingness to return to Bulgaria among the participants currently living abroad differs. Half of them do not plan to go back and the other half would like to but only under certain conditions. The results from the survey show that the main conditions are career opportunities, possibilities for personal development, better payment and last but not least family. Respondents living abroad were asked to give three motives that would make them return to Bulgaria.

"1) family, 2) better life conditions - low taxes, low prices, better welfare, 3) career opportunities"
(participant No 25)

"1) family, 2) career opportunities and better salaries, 3)transfer within the company"
(participant No 31)

"1) well paid job, 2) family, 3) if I cannot find career opportunities abroad"   *(participant No 41)*

One of the participants stated that she would not have moved at all if she had had the opportunity to specialise in her field of education and to find a career. Despite her willingness to return in Bulgaria, she specifies that if she is back in the country it is in Sofia city which is not her home town.

"I would go back if Bulgaria is a part of international organisations which are in the field of my education or there is implementation educational plan or expansion of the already existing one, which will train students and create opportunities for work in my area of education".
(participant 39)

Nevertheless, there are participants that would like to come back in their home towns if the conditions mentioned above are met. Family relations and family connections are very strong not only concerning outmigration but also when the migration within the country is examined – 10 people of the interviewees gave – *"family"* as a reason not to move to another city in Bulgaria

The survey does not cover a representative sample. However the results support the main hypotheses of this thesis. First, Sofia city with its facilities for higher education and its career opportunities for both natives and newcomers is the 'most wanted' area for settlement. This underpins the current status as an 'escalator region' in Fielding's terms. Second, Bulgarians do not want to change their residence if their educational and career ambitions can be realised at their home towns. Third, families and family relations do matter and influence individuals' choices in relation to education but they are not the leading factor when it comes to professional development and economic independency.

5. Institutional change

In Chapter III Bulgaria, the particularities of the population mobility during the Communist regime were elaborated and explained. It was stated that during the Regime the mobility of the population after graduation was controlled by the authorities. People were restricted not only in

their mobility outside the country but also within. For example moving into Sofia city and at a later stage to other cities, was restricted and allowed only under certain conditions. One of these conditions was allocation by the authorities due to the "needs of the country" of specialists in certain developments.

Two of the participants in the conducted survey graduated during the Communist regime – 1989, and in 1977. Both of them did not have their higher education in their home town. Participant 27 stayed in the city of university graduation, and participant No 52 moved to a different city. Reason for that in both cases was *"I was sent there".* Their personal preferences did not play a role in the decision making. The participants were Master in mechanical engineering (participant No 27) and Master in the area of economics and management (participant 52). Forced migration still occurs after the Regime change but for different reasons. Participant 57, born and raised in Sofia, studied Aircraft engineering in the small city of Dolna Mitropola and was 'assigned', to a job in Sofia upon graduation.

6. Formal registration

The participants that changed their residency were asked when they registered within the local authorities after their settlement. The ones that moved outside Bulgaria cited that they registered in the local municipalities within a month. The picture among the ones that moved within the country is different. Some of the participant did not register until the moment of the web survey. The most common reasons not to register were too much administration, registration does not provide any advantages, as well as that one of the conditions for registration in the municipalities is the possession of rent contract which in many cases was missing due the landlords' unwillingness to declare taxes. The ones that did register were asked to give the time-span after the move. The most common answers were 2-6 and 6-12 months, there were 2 participants that registered after one, three and even eight (participant No 19) years. This shows that the data gathered by the NSI in the years between censuses do not record the actual situation in the country; neither do they show the absolute number in the migration flows.

7. Conclusion

The results show that less than 50% of the participants are born in Sofia, but more than 70% are currently living there. The educational and career opportunities, as well as the high life standard make Sofia city an 'escalator region' and the city attracts people not only from the neighbouring districts but from all over the country. This leads to the population concentration in South-West planning region and more in particular in district Sofia city.

The results also show a double 'East-West brain drain'. Many students opt for Sofia to go to university. Even if they get their Bachelor degree in their home town, many switch to Sofia for their Masters. Few of them return. On the contrary, to some Sofia city is a stepping stone to migrate even further west to other countries in Europe to finalize their education or start their career. This East-West "brain drain" causes a loss of human capital in the Eastern and Northern regions of Bulgaria, but to the nation as a whole. However, most of the international and internal migrants would prefer to go back to their home towns if certain conditions, mainly economic, are met. This shows that the "brain drain" could be reduced if the economic situation improves. The previous chapter showed that migration abroad and migration to Sofia is gradually slowing down, yet the present economic situation in (the peripheral areas of) Bulgaria is far from meeting the needs and demands of the educated population in particular. Getting them to return will indeed be a major challenge to the present administrations.

VII. Conclusion

The aim of this research is to analyse the current demographic situation in Bulgaria. In particular its goal is to study the connection between population decline and population (re)distribution in the country as a result of political and economic change. These factors were investigated in the context of the search for financial stability and independence in the period 1989 – 2008. The leading thought of this thesis is to show the major influence of institutions, as part of the environment, in the terms of migration system approach, for individuals' mobility. The investigation of this influence is conducted at three levels: the first two being the national and planning regions level. Third level of investigation is the process of population concentration and migration in connection to district Sofia city. The bases of this investigation are the statistical data in the archives on the National Statistic Institute.

At the national level it was observed that the population loss in years 1995 to 1997 corresponds to the economic crises in the country. Another factor leading to population loss is the opening of the national borders. The process of population loss was facilitated by the opening up of both inner and national borders right after the fall of the Communism at the end of 1989. Next stage in relation to migration processes was the "opening up" of the national borders after year 2001, with the procedures for entering the European Union (EU). Bulgarian citizens gained additional freedom to travel within the borders of EU. This removed the constraints on economic-driven migration by the Bulgarians. It was shown that even having the political freedom to move within and outside the country, Bulgarians started to experience the economic institutional constraints. The restructuring of the economy had diverse effects in different parts of the country and the influx of foreign direct investments concentrated in the South West. In other words the shifting of the institutions did not bring full freedom in the migration process. Economic rather than political forces are now shaping the migration.

The second stage of the analysis of the statistical data is at regional level. One of the aims of this analysis was to investigate the population loss and redistribution within the country. It was shown that the pattern of population loss examined at national level is also valid at the planning-region level. Population loss is recorded in all of the six planning regions in the country, but is far less dramatic in the South-West. The second aim of the analysis at planning-region level is the

redistribution of population. The investigation, based on the officially registered migration in- and outflows, showed a relatively equally distribution in three of the planning regions South-West, South-East and Central South. South-West records values of over 2 million, and South-East and Central South over 1 million people for the whole research period. This outcome led to the hypothesis that the population concentration in the South-West planning region in particular might be at the expense of the rest of the country. That warranted extra analyses of the migration flows to and within this planning region and more in particular to district Sofia city.

The third stage of the analysis uses official statistics on the internal migration flows to and from district Sofia city with all the other districts in the country. The district Sofia city meets all the requirements for an 'escalator' region and it can be "labelled" as such. It was confirmed that the 'escalator' region role of the district is not only for the neighbouring territories but for the country as a whole. The city of Sofia is a major "pulling" centre and hardly experienced any population loss during the whole researched period. This was reconfirmed by the analysis of the migration flows between this district and the rest of the country. It was shown that the majority of the population migrate towards district Sofia city. The two major "sending" districts are Sofia region and Montana. The migration balance with the other districts was neutral in the first period of transition. However, after 2000 this shifted rapidly. District Sofia city became the most important migration sink for all the other districts. This is related to the influx of foreign direct investment in the country that was concentrated in the capital in particular. After 2007 the effects seem to waver off. It looks as if position of the city as an escalator region is currently weakening

The second goal of this research delves deeper into the underlying motives of migration, in particular by individuals with Bachelor and Master degree. To be able to study these relations a web survey among Bulgarians in this target group was conducted. It was shown that the search for higher education is defined by the career opportunities as "tools" for future economic independency. The geographical proximity to family and friends at that stage of the migration behaviour of the individuals is not a priority but an "extra". Nevertheless, if people find proper educational programmes in areas in or near their home town they would not have moved. However, if the university does not offer the desired programme, or does not have prestige among members of the business community, individuals are willing to change their residence. That points to the business orientation of the student migration. After graduation family ties

regain some of their influence. Many people studied outside their home towns or abroad, mentioned family as an important motive to consider a return. Yet they also indicate that a lack of economic opportunities is keeping them in the places where they graduated.

As a final result from the both analysis – of the data from the National Statistic Institute and from the conducted interview, three main conclusions can be made: first, institutions still matter. Despite the lifting of the political constraints after the fall of the wall and later the opening towards EU countries, Bulgarian's migration behaviour within and outside the country is driven and constrained by the economic environment. Second, a key concept for understanding the internal migration flows is Fielding's 'escalator region' concept. It explains why the capital has hardly experience population loss that hit the rest of the country so hard. Third, family ties and closeness to relatives matter. Individuals are economically and business driven in their choice of tertiary education, nevertheless, decisions for staying in their current location or returning back home after graduation, are based on either on their already started families or because of families in their home towns.

The research shows that the migration peaks, both international and internal, correspond to the peaks of economic instability in the country and that therefore migration is to a large extent economically driven. On the other hand, data from the limited web survey carried out during this study shows that individual's family and social ties matter and may contribute significantly to the outcome of the migration decision. The third aspect in relation to migration processes is the migration direction – where do individuals go. Here the available data for the Bulgarian migration is lacking. Nevertheless, this third aspect of the migration process has a major influence on the likelihood with which individuals who migrate will reach their socio-economic goals, with the social network possibly facilitating the process. It would be worthwhile to study this process in more detail using a larger and wider survey. Does the social and cultural identity of a migrant determine the location of migration? What is the role of social networks in transnational migrations? Traditionally Bulgarians are known not to rely on such network when migrating abroad and therefore it would be interesting to verify if the social network does really 'pave the way to establishing the transnational migration networks' (Haug, 2008:588).

The migrations in recent years in Bulgaria become more selective in terms of level of education among the migrants. The survey showed that individuals with Bachelor and Master degrees are

"open" to change of residence if they do not find the conditions for proper education and career development. It would be interesting to study the effect of social and cultural identity and the role of the social networks in the mobility behaviour of those individuals. Second, studying their situation after migration in other countries in Europe, could give insight in the extent to which their initial goals are accomplished and whether social networks facilitated those accomplishments.

Having this information the "brain drain" process can be better understood. The "receiving" countries can use the information to increase the countries future benefits from those migrants, for instance by facilitating migrants that gained their tertiary education in the country to stay. This can be also used for a selective migration policy inviting "wanted" migrants or those who have specific expertise which is scarce in the country. The receiving countries could use the opportunities of this "brain gain" much more than they do now. As for the "sending" country, in this case Bulgaria, further research could have an influence on the educational policy as well as on the labour market policy at national level. It could show what specialists and in which industries Bulgarians are preferable employees and this information can be used to facilitate establishment of those types of international businesses in the country.

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APPENDIX 1

Table 3 Migration balance for the period 1989-2008 based on number of emigrants and immigrants[9] per district

Year	Immigrants	Emigrants	Migration increase	Year	Immigrants	Emigrants	Migration increase
1989	149 577	149 580	-3	1999	110 092	180 211	-70 119
1990	153 338	153 338	0	2000	139 279	204 546	-65 267
1991	150 177	164 029	-13 852	2001	136 889	244 026	-107 137
1992	165 028	238 798	-73 770	2002	87 207	128 201	-40 994
1993	179 388	179 348	40	2003	89 579	152 269	-62 690
1994	195 317	194 756	561	2004	89 369	137 421	-48 052
1995	109 375	190 026	-80 651	2005	97 942	150 196	-52 254
1996	108 030	194 080	-86 050	2006	78 054	116 087	-38 033
1997	190 649	193 917	-3 268	2007	89 063	155 454	-66 391
1998	125 955	186 150	-60 195	2008	123 456	122 220	1 236

Source: NSI Statistic Year books

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[9] Includes <u>only</u> Bulgarian citizens officially declared to the authorities for changing of their living residence

Table 4 Population in Bulgaria by planning regions

Years	Statistical planning regions					
	North and South East Bulgaria				South-West and Central South Bulgaria	
	North-West	*Central North*	*North-East*	*South-East*	*South-West*	*Central South*
1989	1 182 898	1 215 807	1 149 159	1 330 401	2 235 311	1 878 742
1990	1 169 916	1 190 926	1 137 253	1 283 299	2 231 869	1 975 904
1991	1 177 232	1 201 257	1 149 941	1 302 983	2 223 872	1 919 366
1992	1 148 053	1 115 623	1 067 248	1 287 469	2 175 593	1 690 877
1993	1 140 478	1 111 345	1 064 816	1 250 314	2 169 161	1 725 089
1994	1 123 944	1 109 905	1 057 657	1 245 052	2 165 613	1 725 247
1995	1 112 330	1 102 194	1 052 601	1 239 043	2 159 237	1 719 310
1996	1 102 681	1 096 222	1 046 557	1 233 444	2 151 772	1 710 258
1997	1 090 494	1 086 754	1 038 431	1 224 187	2 143 882	1 699 452
1998	1 083 068	1 073 507	1 030 312	1 214 854	2 141 745	1 686 883
1999	1 094 269	1 070 725	1 048 234	1 131 911	2 145 662	1 700 100
2000	1 129 143	1 049 303	1 029 265	1 116 586	2 138 175	1 687 030
2001	1 027 780	989 636	1 017 054	1 166 096	2 076 313	1 614 221
2002	1 023 422	992 263	1 027 814	1 170 609	2 025 729	1 605 965
2003	1 006 798	982 679	1 021 624	1 162 337	2 031 798	1 595 964
2004	990 302	974 353	1 017 266	1 155 524	2 036 776	1 586 779
2005	956 281	964 918	1 012 348	1 150 258	2 058 404	1 576 492
2006	958 941	957 190	1 009 499	1 145 796	2 038 036	1 570 150
2007	929 833	926 026	1 003 450	1 148 085	2 078 442	1 551 450
2008	916 054	924 273	991 471	1 121 569	2 115 042	1 538 142

Source: NSI Statistic Year books

Table 5 Migration balance between year 1989 and 1998 (per planning regions)

Year	North-West	Central North	North-East	South-East	South-West	Central South
1989	-808	-3 628	1 949	1 317	-1 019	2 186
1990	1 459	-2 917	424	3 889	-4 971	2 116
1991	1 560	-1 960	465	-4 399	-4 029	4 424
1992	-4 423	-3 181	-4 522	-3 379	-4 155	-17 471
1993	-338	205	-634	1 752	-435	-510
1994	-1 985	862	-4 026	4 064	3 941	-2 355
1995	-7 986	-4 157	-5 708	-2 228	9 655	-7 163
1996	-5 108	-6 410	-230	-2 384	3 510	-8 411
1997	-12 597	-9 233	-1 995	332	5 234	-5 118
1998	-5 563	-3 854	-1 731	-4 627	10 335	-6 281
1999	- 7 058	2 208	-2 020	-3 916	10 872	-5 861
2000	-6 662	-1 070	-1 948	-2 141	13 018	-3 385
2001	-9 070	-9 989	-3 875	-4 788	13 098	-12 816
2002	-6 283	-5 128	-6 905	-8 364	14 053	-6 067
2003	-4 809	-4 301	-5 328	-7 781	12 720	-4 059
2004	-5 251	-4 228	-2 571	- 6 318	13 509	-5 093
2005	-2 642	-2 084	-1 878	-3 295	11 247	-6 396
2006	-2 175	-2 673	-2 218	-1 454	5 186	-1 468
2007	-2 420	-2 597	-3 448	-6 566	3 247	-4 269
2008	-1 808	1 017	3 395	375	6 871	729

Source: NSI Statistic Year books

***Table 6 Population in the districts between 1989 and 2008***

Districts	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Sofia city	1 221 436	1 220 914	1 220 196	1 189 641	1 188 563	1 191 743	1 192 735	1 189 043	1 190 547	1 199 708
Burgas	875 319	875 426	878 094	851 669	850 005	849 046	846 524	841 798	834 367	829 627
Varna	986 942	989 821	991 742	915 949	914 079	908 065	901 160	898 583	891 877	887 517
Lovech	1 053 895	1 048 471	1 047 975	1 016 391	1 009 196	999 051	990 307	982 368	971 938	960 082
Montana	658 284	655 806	653 238	630 313	626 205	621 406	615 629	609 967	603 024	593 546
Plovdiv	1 279 381	1 287 614	1 289 865	1 220 402	1 221 464	1 219 681	1 213 966	1 206 644	1 199 423	1 194 044
Razgrad	848 742	843 584	835 685	768 271	765 719	762 984	760 029	754 542	748 840	741 759
Sofia region	101 387	1 010 955	1 003 676	985 952	980 598	973 870	966 502	962 729	953 335	942 037
Haskovo	1 054 442	1 056 374	1 054 390	906 275	903 934	901 572	897 863	895 262	889 849	882 051

Districts	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Sofia city	1 211 531	1 222 180	1 178 579	1 194 164	1 208 930	1 221 157	1 231 622	1 237 891	1 240 788	1 247 059
Burgas	714 608	705 975	672 974	597 717	654 203	650 675	646 368	640 676	645 179	768 075
Varna	883 701	871 401	861 785	872 526	867 831	864 862	861 569	859 285	859 310	860 238
Lovech	953 558	935 554	905 965	916 003	904 698	894 777	866 435	873 744	829 250	857 182
Montana	587 795	626 841	530 390	521 951	512 593	503 065	493 708	484 620	449 380	468 303
Plovdiv	1 272 365	1 259 665	1 234 851	1 233 935	1 227 398	1 220 958	1 215 045	1 211 863	1 205 269	1 123 127
Razgrad	740 625	727 892	692 344	685 955	679 080	672 423	665 284	660 131	623 086	646 075
Sofia region	934 131	915 995	897 734	831 565	822 868	815 619	826 782	800 145	837 654	867 983
Haskovo	880 410	870 473	806 536	801 416	795 149	790 303	784 817	780 117	774 004	768 509

Source: NSI Statistic Year books

Chart 6 Migration balance by districts

migration balance district Varna

migration balance district Burgas

migration balance district Haskovo
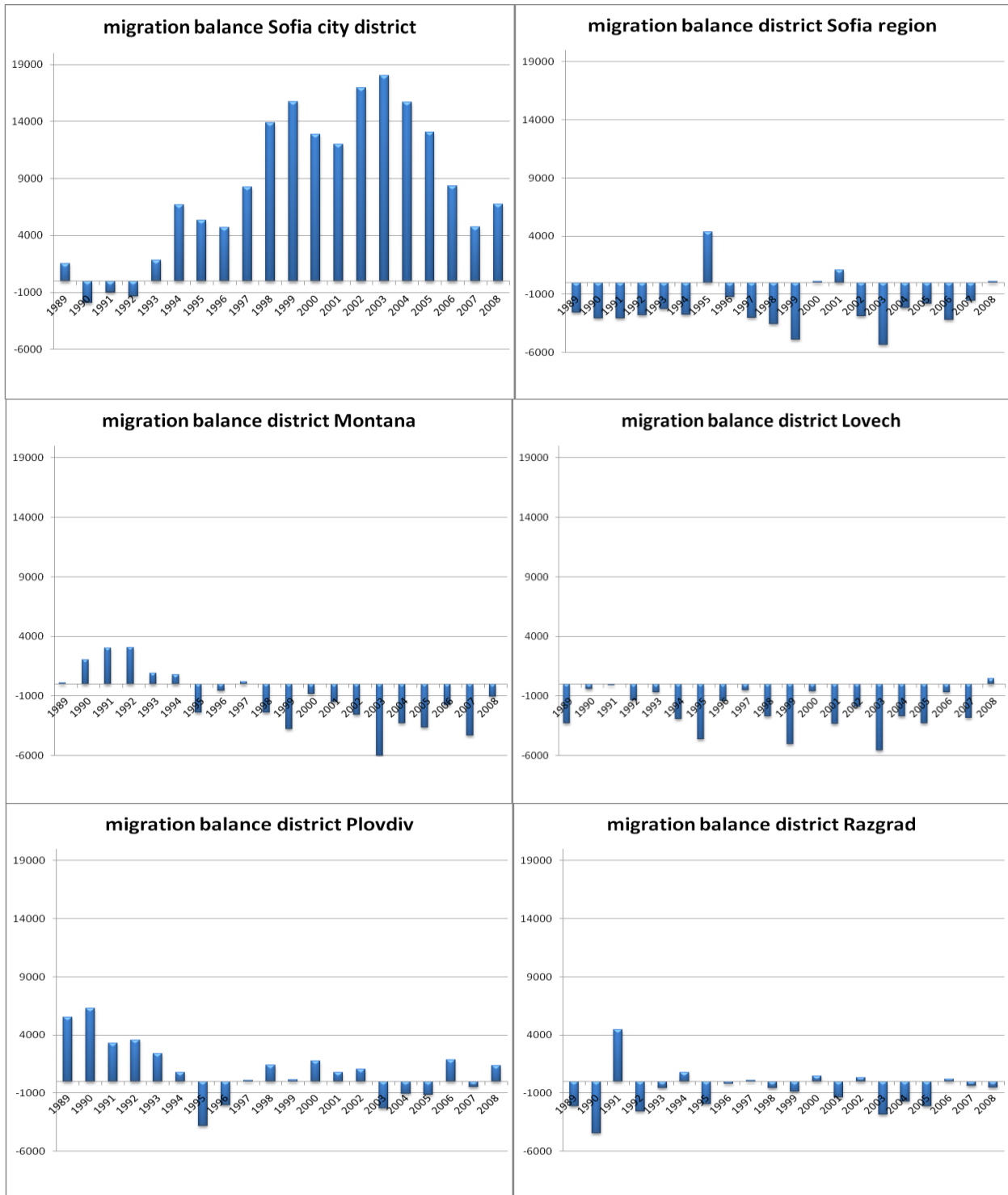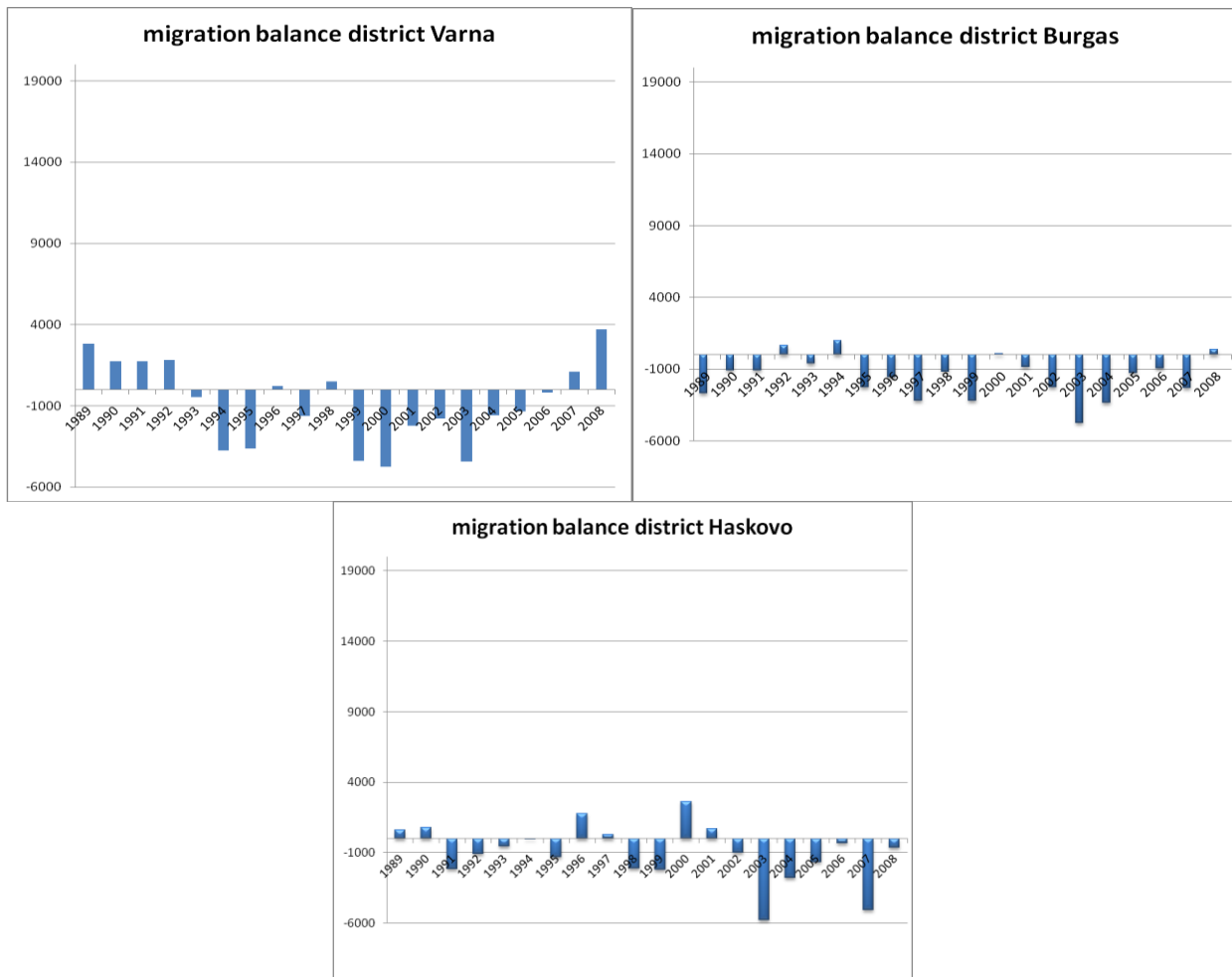
Source: NSI Statistic Year books

APPENDIX 2

Web survey questionnaire

Q1. Where do you live at the moment? (please, specify city, as well as country if you live abroad)

Q2. Where were you born? (please, specify city, as well as country if you were born abroad)

Q3. What city did you enjoy your secondary education in?

Q4. What is your current level of education?

- Bachelor
- Master

Q5. At which university and city did/do you study? (please, specify country if it is/was abroad)

Q6. What is your Bachelors/Masters programs name(s)? (if you finished your education, please, specify both)

Q7. What year did you obtain your Bachelors/Masters degree (if you have a Bachelors and Masters degree please specify both years of graduation)

Q8. Do you plan to / did you continue your education after your Bachelors degree?

- Yes
- No (go to question 10)

Q9. Is/was your Masters program organized at the same university/city

- Yes (please specify why you chose to continue at that university/city)
- No (please specify why you changed university/city)

Q10. If you studied in a different city you:

- Also lived there (go to question 12)
- Lived in a different/home city

Q11. During your education you were:

- Part-time student
- Full-time student

Q12. How long do/did you stay in the university city?

- Only for the period of the lectures (part of the day)
- For the semester
- Only for the exams
- Other *(specify)*

Q13. What are your plans after graduation? (if you have graduated already, please mark the answer that corresponded to your decision at that time)

- continued studying (Master, PhD)
- start professional career connected with my studies
- just find a job
- other (specify what)

Q14. If you are studying abroad do you plan to go back to Bulgaria for future realization (if you study/live in Bulgaria please go to question 17) (if you have graduated, please mark the answer that corresponds to your decision at that time)

- Yes (go to question 17)
- No

Q15. What motives would make you return to Bulgaria (please, name at least 3 starting with the most important one)

Q16. Why did you choose to study abroad? (please, name at least 3 starting with the most important one)

Q17. Did you move to a different city after graduation

- Yes
- No (go to question 23)

Q18. What were your motives for changing the city/country after your graduation?

Q19. During the changes of residency (i.e. cities) did you register the change of residential address officially at the local municipality officially?

- Yes

- No (go to question 21)

Q20. In what time-span did you register the move?

- in 1 month
- between 2 and 6 months
- between 6 and 12 months
- more (please specify)

Q21. Why didn't you register?

Q22. The decision of choosing to study in a different city or abroad was influenced by (please, specify the reason/people that most influenced you):

- Your parents/family
- Relatives/friends living there
- Entirely own decision
- Other (specify what)

Q23. Why did you stay in the same city after graduation?

Q24. Was your study discipline your first choice?

- Yes – for Bachelor and Master programme (go to question 26)
- No – for Bachelor and Master program
- Other (specify what)

Q25. If it wasn't your first choice, do you plan to/do you work in your field of study?

- Yes
- No

Q26. Did/do you work during your studies?

- Yes
- No (go to question 29)

Q27. Where did you work /have you worked at? (if it is more than one job, please specify at most 3)

Q28. How many hours per week? (approximately)

Q29. Is your current employment/work connected to your studies?

- Yes
- No

Q30. What is your age?

Q31. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

Table 9 Summary of some of the results from the conducted web survey

res. No	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q30	Q31
1	Sofia	Sofia	Sofia	Master	Sofia	International Economic Relations	1997	35	f
2	Sofia	Pleven	Sofia	Bachelor	Sofia	Bachelor Spanish philology, 2nd Bachelor Psychology	2003 2006	29	f
3	The Netherlands	Sofia	Sofia	Master	Sofia The Netherlands	Bachelor Finances; Master Business Administration	2007 2009	25	m
4	Vidin	Vidin	Vidin	Bachelor	Sofia	Library and Information Science	2007	25	f
5	St. Zagora	Yambol	Yambol	Master	St. Zagora	Medicine	2010	24	f
6	The Netherlands	Vratza	Vratza	Bachelor	Sofia	Bachelor Accounting and Control	2005	29	f
7	Sofia	Omurtag	Ruse	Master	Ruse Sofia	Bachelor KST and Master Business Administration	2008 2010	25	f
8	Sofia	Sofia	Sofia	Master	Sofia	Bachelor Energy technologies, Master Business Administration	1998 2010	34	m
9	Kurdzhali	Kurdzhali	Kurdzhali	Bachelor	Plovdiv	Marketing	2005	24	m
10	Sofia	Sofia	Sofia	Bachelor	Sofia	Geography	2006	30	m
11	Sofia	Sofia	Sofia	Master	Sofia	Bachelor and Master in Technology and management of transport	2005	29	f
12	Sofia	Burgas	Burgas	Bachelor	Sofia	Bachelor - Geography, Master Geographical Information Systems	2007 ongoing	25	f
13	Sofia	Sofia	Sofia	Master	Sofia	Master Law	2002	31	f
14	Burgas	Burgas	Burgas	Master	Sofia	Bachelor PR, Master Electronic media	2009 2011	23	f
15	Sofia	Sofia	Sofia	Bachelor	Sofia	Accounting and Control	2004	31	f
16	Sofia	Sofia	Sofia	Master	Ireland The Netherlands	Bachelor - Computing Science, Master in Science and Business	2004 2010	25	m

17	Sofia	Sofia	Sofia	Master	Sofia	Bachelor in History and Geography, Master European relations, Master Cultural tourism	2006 2009 2010	27	f
18	Pernik	Pernik	Pernik	Bachelor	Plovdiv Sofia	Bachelor in Bulgarian and French language, Master Business Administration	2008	25	f
19	Svishtov	Svishtov	Svishtov	Master	Svishtov	Accounting and Control	2000	35	m
20	Sofia	Sofia	Sofia	Bachelor	Sofia	Bachelor - Public Administration, Master - Accounting and Auditing	2008 2010	24	f
21	Sofia	Moldova	Moldova	Master	Svishtov	Master - Accounting and Control	2004	28	m
22	Sofia	Sofia	Sofia	Bachelor	Sofia	Geographical Information Systems and Applications	2007	28	f
23	Sofia	Sofia	Sofia	Master	Sofia	Bachelor - Social help-specialist social pedagogy; Master - teachers' trainer for kids with special learning abilities	2007 2009	30	f
24	Burgas	Burgas	Burgas	Maser	Svishtov	Accounting and Control	2000	36	m
25	The Netherlands	Burgas	Burgas	Bachelor	Sofia The Netherlands	Bachelor - International Economic Relations, Master - European law	2009 2010	24	f
26	Sofia	Berkovitza	Berkovitza	Bachelor	Blagoevgrad	Bachelor Chemistry	1997	35	m
27	Vurshetz	Chelopech	Vurshetz	Master	Vurshetz	Master mechanical engineer	1989	43	m
28	Sofia	Sofia	Sofia	Master	Sofia	Master mechanical engineer	2002	32	f
29	Sofia	Burgas	Burgas	Bachelor	Sofia	International Relations	2009	23	m
30	Sofia	Sofia	Sofia	Master	Sofia	Technical University	1991	43	f
31	The Netherlands	Harmanli	Harmanli	Master	Sofia The Netherlands	Bachelor and Master in Business Administration	2002 2004	34	m
32	Sofia	Plovdiv	Plovdiv	Bachelor	Sofia	Finances	2006	26	f
33	Sofia	Sofia	Sofia	Bachelor	Sofia	Engineering Physics	2009	27	m
34	Sofia	Ruse	Ruse	Bachelor	Sofia	European Studies	2003	30	m
35	Sofia	Lovech	Lovech	Master	Pleven	Tourism/Finances	2004	30	m
36	Sofia	Sofia	Sofia	Master	Sofia	Bachelor - International Economic Relations Management Master in Management and Business Administration	2004 2007	29	m

37	Omurtag	Omurtag	Omurtag	Master	V.Turnovo Sofia	Bulgarian Philology and Public Relations	2001	35	m
38	Sofia	Moscow	Sofia	Master	Sofia	Law	2000	35	m
39	The Netherlands	Plovdiv	Plovdiv	Master	Plovdiv	Engineer in electronics and microelectronics	1994	37	f
40	Sofia	Sofia	Vidin	Master	Sofia	Geography	2000	33	f
41	The Netherlands	Haskovo	Lovech	Master	Sofia The Netherlands	Bachelor - Psychology, Master - Advertising Communication	2008/2010	24	f
42	Sofia	Pleven	Pleven	Bachelor	Blagoevgrad	English philology	2003	29	f
43	Sofia	Pleven	Sofia	Master	Sofia	Bachelor - Engineering physics, Master - Microelectronics and Information Technology	2002	30	f
44	Sofia	Sofia	Sofia	Bachelor	Sofia	Preschool and Primary Education	2010	23	f
45	Svoge	Sofia	Svoge	Bachelor	Sofia	Preschool and Primary Education	2010	24	f
46	Botevgrad	Botevgrad	Botevgrad	Bachelor	Botevgrad	Accounting and Control	2010	23	f
47	Sofia	Sofia	Sofia	Master	Sofia Botevgrad	Bachelor - Media Management, Master - Business finances	1998 2009	35	m
48	Sofia	Sofia	Sofia	Maser	Sofia	Communication Technologies	2000	34	f
49	Sofia	Sofia	Sofia	Master	Sofia	Clinical Psychology	2006	26	f
50	Sofia	V.Turnovo	V.Turnovo	Master	Sofia	Master Microelectronics and Information Technologies, Master Quantum Electronics and Laser Technology	2000 2003	32	m
51	Sofia	Plovdiv	Sofia	Master	Sofia	Bachelor - Spanish philology, Master - Spanish translator-editor, 2nd Master - Theory of literature	2003 2005 2007,	29	f
52	Sofia	Svishtov	Svishtov	Master	Svishtov	Scientific organization of management	1977	56	f
53	Sofia	Lovech	Lovech	Master	Sofia	Bachelor and Master in Finances	2005/2007	28	f
54	Sofia	Plovdiv	Svishtov	Master	Svishtov	Accounting and Control	2000/2002	35	m
55	Svishtov	Svishtov	Svishtov	Master	Svishtov	Economy of the industry, Accounting and Control	2004	29	f
56	Sofia	Nikopol	Svishtov	Master	Svishtov	Accounting and Control	1992	42	f
57	Sofia	Sofia	D.Mitropolia	Master	D.Mitropolia	Operation of Aircraft Equipment	1993	41	m

58	The Netherlands	Vidin	Vidin	Master	Varna The Netherlands	Automation and Control Engineering Information, Computing	2008	25	m
59	Sofia	Sofia	Sofia	Master	Sofia	Bachelor - Accounting and Control, Master International Economic Relations	2001 2003	32	f
60	Sofia	Sliven	Sofia	Master	Sofia	Medicine, medical management and medical chemistry	1994	40	f
61	Sofia	Sofia	Sofia	Master	Sofia	History	2002	34	f
62	USA	Sofia	Sofia	Master	Sofia	Bachelor - Engineer chemistry; Master - Industrial management	2002 2004	29	m
63	Sofia	Sofia	Sofia	Master	Sofia	Bachelor - European Studies, Master Business administration	2008 2010	25	f

IX. Endnotes

[i] The official names of the units on the different levels in the official documents, as well as in NUTS classification list, are not translated in English. Nevertheless, for better understanding and because the names, themselves include the territory and the location of the units, is translated. The translated names is used in the thesis

[ii] The name of the district (and the city) from 1945 until 1993 was Mihaylovgrad. Since year 1993 is Montana and for the purposes of this research and to avoid any confusion this name is used.

[iii] The number of universities and colleges varies due to the different years of the official registration and admission from the state authorities after the foundation of the university/college.