Chapter 11

Explaining the migrations from Poland and Bulgaria

The primary goal of this chapter will be to asses the strengths of two theoretical models - the social capital theory and the cumulative causation theory - in explaining the present day migrations from Poland and Bulgaria to Belgium. The grounding assumptions of these two theories have been discussed in detail in Chapter 7, where we have also presented a group of arguments as to why these two theories have been chosen as a potential explanatory basis of the current migration from Eastern Europe to Belgium. In the following sections, we will proceed by evaluating the powers and the drawback of the two theoretical models in explaining Polish and Bulgarian migration flows. In the course of this analysis we will advance arguments that the network hypothesis and the cumulative causation theory fail to account for both Polish and Bulgarian migrations to Brussels, and that an alternative theoretical model is necessary to introduce if the migrations under question are to be understood and positioned in their current migratory context.

1. The social capital theory: the limits of the network hypothesis

To summarize briefly, according to the main assumptions of the social network theory, international migration, unconditionally if legal or irregular, perpetuates over time and indeed becomes a self-propelling phenomenon due to two major factors: the gradual establishment of migrants' networks and migration supporting institutions. These two structures are described to develop over time as a result of the migration flows connecting regions of origin and destination and eventually, to start functioning as a stimulus for migration by their mere existence[1].

The question we have raised in the current research is if we can identify networks developed in the process of the Polish and the Bulgarian migration to Brussels and if so, to

[1] For a detailed description of how the migration networks and the migrants' institutions become a propeller for migration the reader can consult Chapter 7.

what degree these networks have acted as a migration trigger for our respondents. In the same line of reasoning, we will explore what is the impact of the available migrants' supporting institutions on the generation of migration flows from Poland and Bulgaria to Brussels.

As a primary source for assessing the existence and the strength of migrant's supporting institutions and migrants' networks we will use the information collected during the interview work with our research sample of Polish and Bulgarian migrants.

1. 1. What is a migration network?

Before discussing the present research results, the problem of operationalization of "migration network" and more specifically what is the meaning of "migration network" according to the social capital theory, requires some attention.

The concept of social networks as providing support to its members has been advanced as a valuable asset used by people living on the margins of the society (e. g. Roschelle, 1997; Stack, 1974), and who have no access to the support services as provided by formal institutions, which is indeed the case of the undocumented migrants, whose participation in all mainstream institutions of the host society is made impossible by their illegal status in the country. Despite the alleged crucial importance of the network access as a primary source of social support in many areas of the individual's life, the operationalization of the concept for research purposes and especially in relation to international migration has remained rather vague and is based on intuitive and metaphorical notions. The network, is perceived as a self-evident structure, which explains various forms of social behaviors in situations where an individual or a group of individuals would not achieve a certain goal without the formal or informal support of other persons. In this sense, the network has an all-encompassing nature, which can be easily adopted to explain a wide variety of social phenomena, ranging from criminal and terrorist groups, human trafficking, human smuggling, internet services, societies creation, international migration, upward social mobility, achieving access to strategic recourses and the like (for an overview see Krissman, 2005).

In the context of international migration, the general organization of the social networks is presented as a social structure (usually a narrow one involving family members and relatives), within which the social exchanges are reciprocal and symmetrical (Gurak & Caces, 1992). In other words, to give a practical example, a newcomer to a host country is facilitated in many aspects by the members of his or her social network, and is expected to contribute (materially or non-materially) to the network in exchange for the received support. However, the major problem with this approach and understanding of the network, is that the broad and vaguely described nature of the network and its functions does not allow for making any accurate analysis of how exactly the networks initiate and sustain international migration in practice. The network concept as employed by the international migration scholars was also not developed to incorporate the suggestions of interdisciplinary researchers developing the "network analysis" and offering various methods for studying different non-migration related networks (Boyd, 1989). Instead the loosely defined social network, originally designed to analyze the rural-urban migration in Third World countries, where the migrating segments of the population were identically reconstructed in the metropolitan areas, was adopted uncritically to analyze large scale migrations and to explain population resettlement and settlements (Krissman, 2005), without taking into consideration the differential nature of the international migration movements on the one hand, and the lack of the strictly operationalized "network" on the other. Nevertheless, the "network" and the outcomes of such collective structure are advanced as both the implicit reason and the explanation for international migration movements. One such example is illustrated below:

> By and large the effective units of migration were (and are) neither individuals not households, but *sets of people linked by acquaintance, kinship, and work experience who somehow incorporated American destinations* into the mobility alternatives they considered when they reached critical decision points in their individual or collective lives (Tilly, 1990:84) [my italics].

This quotation summarizes the weak points of the network concept as applied to international migration. First, it offers a virtually all-inclusive definition of a network: "people linked by acquaintance, kinship and work experience", without taking into consideration that professional, personal, or family relations to another person/s do not necessarily provoke and sustain migration by itself without the preconditioning role of a personal (or a household) need and motivation for migration. The kinship, acquaintances, and collegial relations with others are also uncritically advanced as equally conditioning migration and even more on the basis of altruistic motives. As illustrated by the present research data and as it was advocated in recent studies (Griffith & Kissam, 1995; Mahler, 1995; Wilson, 1998; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001; Spener, 2002; Krissman, 2005), each of these three networks (e.g. kinship networks, acquaintances networks and collegial networks) promote migration in a different way, and does not function as a social capital resource unless a profit from the supporting of a migrant is foreseen by the assisting party.

Secondly, a major weakness of this understanding of international migration is the lack of support for how exactly the network triggers migration. This is well exemplified by claiming that destinations were "somehow" chosen, thus admitting that the networks per se, do not explain migration, and the precarious knowledge about the reasons for international migration imposed by working from the perspective of the vaguely defined network approach.

The weakness in the conceptualization of how networks relate to international migration has been addressed by Douglas Massey *et al.* (1987) by elaborating upon a pyramidal network structure of all actors composing the so-called "migrant network". In brief, the migrant network includes five actors: kin (at the top of the pyramid), fictive kin, hometown friends, hometown residents and hometown organizations such as voluntary organizations or clubs of interest (at the bottom). Nevertheless, this attempt for conceptual improvement of the network model does not take into account external actors and factors who are indeed shaping the process of international migration e.g., employers, who need international migrants, migration policies in the countries of destination, recruitment agents,

personal or household need for using migration as a strategy for income aggregation, etc. The importance of the latter, however, has been well recognized as crucial in the process of migration stimulation. Its exclusion from a model attempting to explain migration would result only in a weaker explanatory power of the model.

Another aspect of Massey's network which has been criticized is its intrinsic assumption that the network members are presumed to be engaged in symmetrical exchanges and symmetrical relationships, when in fact relationships among network members are rarely symmetrical (Gurak & Caces, 1992). The nature of the network model is thus idealistic and deviates in large part from depicting the actual relationships between community, family and kinship members. This is also the reason why Massey's networks have been called "metaphorical" (Gurac & Caces, 1992).

Another potential weakness of the model stems from its creation of network categories in which groups of people with similar social position, e.g. the group of the friends, the group of the kin, the group of the hometown residents, etc., are collapsed into one category without taking into consideration the precise role each particular actor plays in the process of initiating and perpetuating migration. Indeed one cannot expect that all family members are involved in equal and symmetrical relationships, or that migrants who have been supported by friends indeed return the favor. The interpersonal relationships between people and the level of involvement in migration supporting networks is shaped differentially for each particular migrant. Thus, it is unrealistic to hypothesize that a migrant who has received help by a member of his or her network will return the favor.

Another conceptual problem with Massey's migrant network pyramid originates in the fact that the spouses and the children of migrants are categorized as hometown residents and not as kin or family. Since hometown actors or *paisanos* are only abstractly related, with relatively low-levels of normative obligations, it seems hard to grasp why the closest family members of the migrants are assigned to this category.

Finally, a weakness of the model is its lack of consideration of non-hometown actors, with whom the migrant comes into contact over time. More specifically, a part of a network's supporting structure could include employers or friends and acquaintances from

different nationalities in the destination country. One would expect that a migrant who is living abroad for longer term, or a commuting person who comes to know other individuals have the potential to facilitate or even trigger migration.

To conclude, apparently for Massey the migration network with its various elements, is based and restricted only to a shared community of origin. The attribution of explanation of the migration experiences and practices only to this shared community of origin is however difficult to accept if the complexity of international migration is to be understood.

1. 2. Operationalization of the migration network

Despite the myriad critiques advanced above, if we are to test the network migration hypothesis as introduced by D. Massey *et al.* (1987) in our particular research setting, we cannot deviate too much from the operationalization of Massey's migrant network. However, we will introduce some changes in the concept. Insofar as migration networks are concerned, we include the following groups: 1. The nuclear and the extended family of the migrant; 2. The close friends in Belgium or in the country of origin, if the latter have had an experience of migration to Belgium; 3. The acquaintances in Belgium or in the country of origin, again, the latter having migratory experience to Belgium.

The different aspects of the available migration network structures and migrant supporting institutions (e.g. churches, clubs of interest, NGOs, etc.) for initiating and implementing migration, the importance of social contacts with migrants already established in Brussels in the process of stimulating further migration, the actors motivating and facilitating migrants and the reasons why migrants tend to (or not to) support future migration have been respectively described in detail in Chapter 9 and Chapter 10. Therefore, the collected information will be used as a basis for our analysis of the strength of these networks and their capability for initiating and promoting migration.

1. 3. The social capital theory in the Bulgarian research population

Based on the results about the Bulgarian migrants in Brussels presented in Chapter 9, we would argue that migrants' networks and migrants' supporting institutions are functional only in a limited way in the process of initiating the migratory step to Brussels and respectively, in the case of stimulating further migration from Bulgaria. The reasons for advancing these conclusions can be derived from several research findings:

Firstly, in the Bulgarian research population we have failed to identify strong family networks which have acted as social capital in the migration process. The assumption of the social capital theory that kinship networks relate migrants in countries of origin and destination, and thus promote and trigger migration was not supported by our research findings. One straightforward evidence of this is the fact that in the Bulgarian research population, only ten migrants have been joined by a relative and in all of the ten cases, the joining migrant was a member of the nuclear family, for example, a spouse or a child. However, contrary to the predictions of the social capital theory no single respondent in Belgium was followed by a member of the extended family such as a brother or sister, parent, or another relative. Moreover, none of the migrants are willing to stimulate (in effect, support) an extended family member to migrate to Brussels, or to help a prospective migrant from the family once in Belgium in any way.

Analyzing the impact of the next migration network, advanced by Massey as triggering migration e.g. the network of friends, reveals second evidence refuting the assumptions of the social capital theory. Our data suggests that the migratory step to Brussels was not stimulated, initiated, or supported by a friend already residing in Brussels, or by a friend who is a former migrant in Belgium. We have outlined that 68% of the Bulgarian undocumented migrants did not have *any* friends before migrating to Brussels and 78% did not have family or relatives in Brussels before deciding to migrate. Furthermore, none of the migrants have received any help whatsoever before migrating. Moreover, he or she did not plan to migrate to Brussels based on the information of people who have a history of migrating to Belgium. This fact suggests that the grand majority of

the migration cases to Belgium has occurred out of the context of a migration network of friends or acquaintances.

Another indicator for the existence of the migrants' networks is the degree to which migrants in Brussels have been active in promoting migration and stimulating potential migrants to come to Brussels. Exploring this issue further, we can conclude again that migrant's networks indeed do not operate in the process of migration from Bulgaria to Belgium. This conclusion is based on the Bulgarian migrants' assertion that they have never persuaded prospective acquaintances or friends to come to Belgium and would not attempt to do so in the future. In the cases when an acquaintance or a friend has arrived in Belgium, the respondents have not assisted the newcomer in any way. Despite that fact that there were 28 persons, who had a relative or a friend in Brussels, and migrated with their help, and who would articulate that migration could be undertaken more easily if support is provided, have not assisted another Bulgarian to migrate to Belgium and would avoid a situation in which their help is required by a prospective migrant. The only migrants falling out of this pattern are the persons who have a close family member (a spouse or a child) migrating to Brussels. Exploring the reasons why the Bulgarian migrants are so reluctant to assist newcomers even when receiving some support from other Bulgarians already settled in Brussels reveals that the respondents are preoccupied with their own financial well-being in the country and believe that helping newcomers is a waste of time and resources. Supporting a prospective migrant is also not expected to bring any personal profit. The lack of benefit derived from supporting a new migrant is best understood by a respondent who raises the question "Why should I help someone and only run into trouble and expenses when I cannot expect anything in exchange?". In other words, the logic of the Bulgarian migrants can be translated into: I did it (migrated, found a job, etc.) by myself and on my own, so everyone else can do the same.

Another aspect of social capital, on which the migrants have relied and that is examined in the current research includes the sources for obtaining information about migration and working in Belgium and the degree to which these information sources have shaped personal decisions to migrate. In this context, we have again failed to distinguish

profound and diverse information sources that have triggered migration. Moreover, the choice to migrate was only rarely based on first-hand information provided by a successful migrant. We have dealt with this topic extensively in Chapter 9 where it was revealed that the decision to migrate to Brussels and obtaining the necessary information prior-to migration was based either on the circulating beliefs in the country of origin, and in the case of the false students – on internet sources. Thus, the "human network" factor in the process of undertaking migration of the undocumented Bulgarians is again weak and insignificant.

As a next point, testifying against the action of social capital in the process of initiating and implementing migration, we can refer to the fact that chain migration from Bulgaria did not occur and was not taking place during our research. According to the social capital theory, chain migration is supposed to be one of the outcomes exemplifying the strong impact of one's networks on the process of migration. Our finding that chain migration does not occur in the Bulgarian research population is due to the reluctance of the Bulgarian migrants to enter in chain relations of mutual aid and to support other co-national migrants speaks further for the lack of grounds on which social capital, in the form of migration networks, can be developed and respectively provoke continuous migration flows by the mere fact of its existence or unconditionally of structural or economic reasons as suggested by Massey.

Lastly, the lack of an established Bulgarian community in Brussels is the final illustration of the fact that Bulgarians tend to migrate and survive migration on their own, and avoid association with co-nationals, unless in strictly working situations, when a group of co-nationals works together. By "lack of an established Bulgarian community," we mean that unlike the Polish migrants in Brussels, the Bulgarians have not established any social structures that are run by Bulgarians and serve Bulgarians. For example, there are no Bulgarian markets, Bulgarian newsletters, clubs of interest, cafeterias frequented by Bulgarians, or places where Bulgarians can meet in their free time. The Bulgarian restaurant in Brussels rarely attracts Bulgarian clients and if it does, the occasional clients are Bulgarian students who have find out about the restaurant on the internet and visited the

place only out of curiosity about the quality of the food served there. However, only three of the undocumented migrants (false students excluded) were aware of the existence of the place, and declared no interest in visiting the establishment.

The second element of the social capital theory, argued to promote and sustain migration flows is, as mentioned in the beginning of this chapter and in Chapter 7, the migrant supporting institutions. We have defined migrant institutions as churches, clubs of interest, organizations of co-nationals, NGOs, and similar structures that are active in helping prospective migrants to achieve their goal to migrate successfully, or in facilitating the process of economic and social integration abroad. The lack of such institutions available to the Bulgarian migrants has been described in the paragraph above. Nevertheless, some additional points can be introduced into the discussion. One refers to the function or more precisely, to the virtual absence of this function by the Bulgarian Church in Brussels as an institution than could assist the Bulgarians in the city. Besides their traditional function as churches, the immigrants churches abroad usually serve as a meeting point for migrants, where they can spend some free time together, exchange information about jobs and accommodations, trade small items, ask a co-national for help in case of need (e.g. baby-sitting a child, transport goods or money back to Bulgaria, bringing items from Bulgaria, borrowing money, etc.), and in general, socialize as a group of co-nationals abroad. In the particular case of the Bulgarians, the Church, however, has not succeeded in providing the groundwork necessary for establishing a cohesive Bulgarian community. The church is visited only on rare occasions, such as Easter or Christmas and only by a few migrants (some 3% of the studied population). Those who go to church usually do so alone and not in a group with other co-nationals. Furthermore, once inside the church, migrants only communicate with their co-nationals at a very superficial level, and without exchanging contact information or in a manner which shows an interest in the other person's activities in Brussels. Again, a major argument for such an attitude is the lack of perceived need for communicating with other Bulgarians and the fear that by getting close to the others, it opens up the possibility that they might ask for favors or money. Thus, such socialization is viewed as more harmful than beneficial.

The lack of supporting institutions for Bulgarian migrants in Brussels is also exemplified by the fact that there are no organizations of Bulgarian migrants in the city. In the past five years, there were two unsuccessful attempts of Bulgarians to establish a non-profit organization, which would serve both as a club of interest for co-nationals and as a body promoting Bulgarian culture, crafts, and national dances in Belgium. The establishment of the organization failed due to insufficient involvement of the prospective founders and because of a pervasive belief that such an organization was not worth establishing. For the time being, any attempts to create functioning non-profit organizations for Bulgarians have ceased.

Lastly, the initiatives of the Bulgarian Embassy in Brussels to connect Bulgarian migrants in the country also fail to bring positive results. By such initiatives, we mean for example the attempt of the Bulgarian Embassy to organize common celebration of big Bulgarian holidays in Brussels. Each year the Embassy invites all legally residing Bulgarians in Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg to the festivities, but attendance is low, never exceeding 100 people. Moreover, people who attend these celebrations tend to communicate only with people with whom they are already acquainted. It should also be mentioned that undocumented Bulgarians avoid these gatherings even though they are usually aware of the events organized by the Embassy. The lack of motivation for visiting Embassy-sponsored Bulgarian celebrations can be explained by a couple of reasons. Firstly, it takes precious time to travel to the event site, and there is also a belief that such events are not interesting and cannot offer any personal rewards to the individual.

1. 4. The social capital theory in the Polish research population

Having accumulated evidence that the social capital theory fails to account for the Bulgarian migrations to Brussels, we have advanced by examining the adequacy of the theory to explain the Polish migrations to Brussels. In the following paragraphs, we will introduce our research results, which suggest that the migration networks indeed are already operating in the Polish research group but on the other hand, as already outlined in Chapter 10, the importance of the networks for initiating and sustaining continuous flows

from Poland is largely the outcome of a profit foreseen by the already successful migrants (excluding the migration of the nuclear family members), and in the absence of such profit, the network structures would also fail to operate. In this light we would conclude that migration is rarely being initiated on the basis of access to social capital alone, and furthermore, as in the Bulgarian population, the principal motivation for migration is financial necessity, while social capital serves only to facilitate the migrant in implementing the movement, settlement and work accommodations in Belgium. The secondary, and in this sense only facilitating impact of the access to social capital, in the decision process to migrate can be reduced to the role of social capital to minimize costs of migration (e.g. housing and job arranged in advance) and also the risks awaiting the migrant once in Brussels (e.g. remaining extended periods without a job; not having sufficient job offers; not having an access to a cheap accommodation provided by landlords willing to rent to undocumented migrants; and not on the last place: not knowing how to react in situations of police or work inspection controls; not knowing how to avoid detection by the authorities in Belgium).

The evidence pointing in the direction of social capital functioning as a migration facilitator in the Polish population movements to Belgium has been derived from several particular research findings, which will be outlined in the next sections.

Within the Polish migrant population in Brussels, we have identified strong practices of supporting new migrants or migrants involved in pendular migration. One such area of support is related to the arranging of accommodation for the newcomer by either finding a place for the potential migrant or if possible, sharing one's own accommodation with him or her. We have revealed that over 70% of the studied Polish respondents had an arranged accommodation prior to arriving in Belgium. This fact has made the migration to Belgium easier, because at least one crucial obstacle when undertaking a trip abroad has been resolved well in advance. The access to accommodation was made possible either by having a direct contact with a co-national who is already working in Brussels and who was acquainted with the respondent, or by being introduced to other migrants in Brussels who

were willing to share their accommodations with a newcomer in order to reduce housing expenses. It should be stressed, however, that although providing accommodations occurs, it is usually provided free of charge only if the migrant is a family member or close relative. Most respondents who are involved in undocumented work in Belgium do so with the main purpose of generating additional income to pay for household expenses. It is for this reason that the assistance to newcomers is viewed as a financial opportunity. The average price for providing accommodation ranges from one respondent to another but it could be summarized as falling between 100 € and 200 €, or one monthly rent. Some of the well-established migrants in Brussels with a history of working and commuting to Belgium for more than four years have developed over time, an elaborate system of providing housing service, by bringing together newcomers and parties who are interested in co-renting their accommodations. The service is eagerly used by newcomers, since as mentioned above, it facilitates the migration to Brussels by allowing the migrants to concentrate primarily on looking for employment possibilities, rather than having to secure housing immediately. Indeed, looking at the history of finding employment and clients in Brussels indicates that the Polish respondents have relied extensively on the help of other Poles in Brussels in this regard.

The importance of social networks in the process of migrating to Belgium and the factual reliance upon the Polish community in Brussels is also evident from the accounts of one third of the respondents who confer that the decision to migrate to Brussels has been influenced by knowing Poles who migrated to Brussels and who have informed the respondents of the possibilities for work in the country. Even though the respondents admit to having had the idea to migrate abroad after experiencing a deteriorating financial situation at home, the decision to migrate *specifically* to Belgium is stimulated entirely by other migrated co-nationals who, by providing information of every practical detail about living and working in Belgium reduce the level of insecurity of potential migrants. Furthermore, new migrants who may be undocumented are advised on how to live and work in a way to avoid being discovered and deported. To summarize, the facts that no single respondent have arrived to Belgium without having any information about the living

and working conditions and that a large proportion of the Polish population has chosen Belgium as a target country precisely as a result of the information actively provided by already migrating Poles, offers strong evidence that the access to a social capital plays a significant role in the process of selecting Brussels as a target destination and ultimately, when deciding to migrate.

As presented in Chapter 10, the actors involved in facilitating and stimulating the prospective migrants at all stages of the migration to Brussels include family members, and relatives who were either in Belgium at the time when the interviewee migrated, or who were in Poland, but had a history of migration to Belgium; friends from the home town (again having worked or are working in Belgium), acquaintances who are working in Brussels; bus drivers who operate regular lines between Poland and Belgium and who disseminate the information heard by the commuting Poles; and not on the last place employers in Brussels (either Belgian or Polish). All these actors constitute a form of migration network as described and operationalized by D. Massey, a migration network structure actively employed by newcomers to Belgium especially for overcoming potential obstacles in finding jobs and accommodation in the first couple of months after migration.

Another illustration of social capital as promoting and facilitating migrants from Poland is also the existent practice of Poles to employ co-nationals in Brussels. Polish migrants are contracted either by Polish residents working legally in Belgium as a self-employed or by co-nationals who need various services (e.g. domestic service, baby-sitting) and feel more secure and comfortable to using the services of Poles than those of other nationals in Brussels. As discussed in Chapter 10, over time the migrants whose work has been evaluated as good by different clients, are recommended to other potential clients. Through such referrals, the undocumented Poles reach a stage when personal endorsement and word-of-mouth advertising of one's services is no longer necessary.

A further argument supporting the thesis that migration networks are established among the Polish migrants in Brussels and that these networks play an active role in facilitating migration is deduced from the strong patterns of chain migration from Poland. In the current process of chain migration, a migrant (or migrating family) who has achieved

a steady income in Brussels, will support another potential migrant or a family to migrate. This, in turn tends to promote future migration from Poland, but as it has been stressed before, rarely for altruistic motives, unless in the cases of migration of close family members. In the present research, we have revealed that 72% of the Polish respondents have taken part in not only promoting chain migration but also actually assisting potential migrants to come to Brussels, while even more respondents would advise a co-national to emigrate and would help the newcomer survive as an undocumented migrant in the city.

One final aspect of social capital as a valuable resource for the Polish immigrants in Brussels is the presence and the functioning of strong formal and informal organizational structures established by Poles and to serve to Poles living in Brussels. The wide range of Polish associations, businesses, and services (see Chapter 4) ran by Poles and which have Poles as major clients allows for self-sufficiency of the Polish community in Brussels. It also reduces the necessity for Poles to rely on Belgian-sponsored services. The existence of such a rich gamut of Polish enterprises, as well as the Polish Catholic missions, are unanimously recognized by the respondents as indispensable and essential for assisting Poles living in Brussels in various ways. These Polish profit and non-profit service structures, which constitute an implanted Polish community in Brussels, are valued not only for the services they offer in the Polish language and for the generally lower prices than those requested by Belgian companies for the same type of service, and for supplying various goods which are otherwise not available in Belgium (e.g. Polish food and Polish press), but also for their role as an intermediary between newcomers and potential employers. Furthermore, they serve as places where Poles can meet to exchange information about all aspects of life and work in Brussels, and to offer each other solutions and help in meeting the migrant's specific needs (e.g. finding cheap accommodation, purchasing goods, sending goods or money back to Poland; dealing in tools and machines; dealing in jobs; etc.).

This concise illustration that social capital in the form of migration networks of individuals and of migrant's formal and informal support institutions has offered various

evidence that migration from Poland is facilitated specifically by the presence of Polish community in Belgium, by the individual actions of friends, family members and kin, by employers and Poles trading jobs and connecting undocumented migrants with interested clients. Nevertheless, these described forms of social capital are functional and actively employed by the migrants only after the decision to migrate has been made, during migration itself, and after arriving to Belgium. The decision of the Poles to migrate to Brussels, as was in the case of the Bulgarian migrants, is in the first place result of poverty in the country of origin, the lack of income or sufficient income, and the pessimistic vision about the perspectives for achieving some economic stability if they were to remain in Poland. The Polish undocumented migrants in our research sample have expressed unanimously that migration and working abroad was the only envisioned opportunity for generating income or accumulating enough savings for achieving some personal goals (e.g. purchase of property and households appliances, establishing a small business, supporting family members etc. See Chapter 10 for an overview of the reasons). However, the access to social capital and acquaintance with Polish support networks in Brussels has influenced the decision for selecting Brussels as the target destination for migrating. For example, knowing people who can assist the potential migrant with finding accommodation, or from whom he or she can sublease rooms or beds, in addition to providing a newcomer with contacts with employers, has been advanced as a primary factor for choosing Brussels, because such acquaintances lower significantly the cost of migration and allow for immediate entering the working market.

As another type of social capital in the form of migrants supporting institution as functional in the process of choosing Brussels as a target destination we can point to the well developed and cheap transportation services offered by Poles and operating between various towns and villages in Poland and Belgium and in particularly Brussels. As it was presented in Chapter 4, the number of Polish bus and minibus services connecting Poland and Belgium numbers several dozen, and they offer services several times per day, each day of the weak. The cost for transportation is in this way minimal, while the migrants have the convenience of traveling whenever needed without planning the trip well in advance.

This described transportation structure offers also another advantage for the Poles in Brussels: the possibility to remit money and goods back to Poland in a cheap way and on a regular basis, without the necessity to rely on the services of banks and money transferring institutions such as Western Union. For a small fee, the bus drivers of these transportation firms also operate as couriers. Even though this fact is not advanced by the migrants as influencing the decision to migrate to Brussels, it is eagerly acknowledged as a utility which makes remitting goods and money easier, and in this sense achieving one goal: to support family members who remain in Poland.

This presented function of the social capital as facilitating and moderating the decision to migrate to Brussels should, however, not be overestimated and should not lead to the conclusion that it is the only and the ultimate stimulus for migration, as suggested by the theory of D. Massey. The social capital in the form of migration networks and migrants supporting institutions is in our particular research case, as mentioned above, only a factor facilitating migration and which shapes the decision to migrate to a particular destination, but is not a factor which provokes the decision to migrate. In other words, the mechanism of migration and the interplay between the decision to migrate and the access to social capital can be presented as follows:

Need for extra income/or income → Personal belief that this could be achieved only trough working abroad → Making a decision to migrate → Choosing Brussels because of the available social capital

And not as:

A person has an access to social capital → Decision to migrate just because if this → Migrating without any other reasons → Generating income

Some additional arguments supporting the thesis that social capital is functional only after the decision to migrate has been made and that it does not operate in the symmetrical and altruistic way as suggested by Massey, are presented below.

To begin, the identified support structures, which according to the social capital theory should trigger migration unconditionally on other factors, are operative only if

financial profit is foreseen by the respondents who provide help to newcomers (this not being the case only for the support structures and networks of close family members). Besides the mentioned family members who assist each other free of charge, we have failed to identify a single respondent who has provided help to a newcomer or to an already settled migrant free of charge. As discussed in Chapter 10, securing a job for a newcomer or a commuting migrants cost on average 500 €, giving over one's job to another person in case of return can go up to 600 € or 700 €, providing accommodation ranges between 100 € and 200 € on average. Providing small services such as babysitting for a co-national, is either paid in cash or is performed in exchange for receiving another service (e.g. transporting goods to Poland, bringing back food or cigarettes, etc.). Considering the fact that the Polish migrants in Brussels have steady meeting points and communicate on a regular basis to exchange information about the above described practices, it is not surprising that no single migrant would willingly provide services for free, knowing that the "selling of help" is more of an institutionalized practice rather than an exception.

Subsequently, even though the Poles speak about the community as a major cornerstone around which the life of the migrants can be organized in an easier way in terms of securing jobs and having an access to cheap services, the importance of the community has not been verbalized as a crucial factor in formulating the decision to migrate. The community and the profits for having access to it are viewed as factors which make living, working and settling in Brussels easier, but still, the respondents confer that once migration was considered to be the inevitable solution in their personal situation, it was going to take place with or without the presence of migration networks and the existence (known or unknown) of social capital.

Based on the arguments presented, we will conclude that the Polish community and the migrants' networks, even though strong and well developed, are not the primary stimulus for migration as they should have been according to the social capital theory. Of course, we realize that over time and with continuous and non-decreasing migration from Poland to Brussels, the boundaries between the social capital on one hand and the migration practices on the other sometimes overlap; that networks can begin to foster subsequent

migrations once the migrants have used the services of the network. Nevertheless, we still argue that the social capital plays a secondary role in the migration process, and if the incentives to work abroad were missing, or the migration goals are achieved, the person would not migrate merely because of access to social support structures offered by co-nationals. This conclusion is further supported by our research finding that migrants who have accumulated the desired amount of savings and who had clear goals about how to continue with their occupational activities upon returning to their homes have indeed returned to Poland. The population under question includes 28 migrants, who during the interview have conferred to be returning permanently to Poland. In a follow-up attempt to verify if this were really the case, we have not been able to reach 12 of these migrants during a period of 1-1.5 years after the initial interview took place. In the remaining 16 cases, we have reached another new migrant whom the returning respondent has assisted in coming to Brussels.

To reiterate, for both the Polish and the Bulgarian migrants the factors for coming to Belgium are exclusively of an economic nature and could be summarized as a response to the economic hardships in the country of origin, lack of employment opportunities, extremely low income, bankrupt small business or lack of financial means for purchasing needed goods or establishing a small business. Additionally, the respondents have undertaken migration as a response to the lack of certainty in the future improvement in quality of life in his or her country of origin and the personal feeling of being on a "dead-end street" if he or she were to remain at home.

It is very important to stress again that none of the respondents in both the Polish and Bulgarian group has migrated only as response to the existence of Polish or Bulgarian migrants community in Brussels. The presence of migrants from one's home country is articulated as a factor which facilitates the finding of a job, or the receipt of some financial or material support, but only in two situations: 1) After migration has taken place and only after some acquaintances have been made; 2) In the process of deciding what the migration destination will be, or once the decision to migrate has been made. As outlined above, in

the process of choosing Brussels as a target destination, the presence of migration networks and support institutions of co-nationals was considered as a vital factor in lowering the cost of migration and obtaining faster and easier access to work. In this context, however, we should draw the attention of the reader back to the finding that social capital functions differentially for the Polish and the Bulgarian migrants. While the Poles indeed do draw upon social capital and calculate the profits and costs of migration in a situation when social capital is available or not and as a result choose to migrate to Brussels, the Bulgarians do not consider social capital as a factor for selecting a destination country or city. Taking aside the few cases of family migration, where rudimentary forms of migration networks can be detected, the remaining individual migrants have selected Belgium as a target country (See Chapter 9 for a comprehensive discussion about the Bulgarians' decision to come to Brussels), either based on irrational beliefs, or because illegal migration to other countries is considered to be more difficult (e.g. Germany, Austria, the Netherlands, Italy and Norway are usually cancelled out because the deportation rates of these countries are perceived as higher; the United Kingdom because of the visa regime with Bulgaria; etc.).

The presented research results suggest that the social capital theory or the migration networks and migration supporting institutions are factors for creating and perpetuating migration, but is not entirely adequate to study and explain the origination and continuation of migration flows from Poland and Bulgaria, or at least not in its original form as advanced by Douglas Massey, in which he argues is the ultimate and only factor for migration. Having stressed continuously that the first and foremost trigger of migration is of economic nature, in future pages, we will concentrate in more detail on these aspects of the social capital theory, which could be considered as the major drawbacks preventing the theory to fully account for international migration flows.

The first and probably primary weakness of the social capital theory to explain international migration stems from its failure to account of how migration flows originate. By discarding the primary reasons for migration and excluding them from the analysis of

migration persistence, the latter cannot be attributed solely to the presence of migration networks, as we have shown above. Taking the social capital as the only force triggering migration excludes the importance of a variety of actors and factors crucial for the origination and continuation of migration flows and respectively, leaves the interpretation and the understanding of the reasons for migration and the multiple factors causing migration flows to be explained. Among the crucial factors for presence of migration movements from Poland and Bulgaria, we have identified in the first place the financial need of the respondents and the dire economic and employment conditions in the country of origin, as related to each particular respondent. Once migration is triggered due to economic reasons, we would argue that it is rather the influence of factors different that those outlined as social capital, which underlie the undocumented migrations in general, and the return of undocumented commuters to Belgium for the purposes of work several times per year, especially in the case of the Polish migrants to Belgium.

Among these non-network related factors, a primary importance should be given to the present migration policy of Belgium. As we have discussed in previous chapters, the possibilities for legal migration to Belgium are rather limited and the majority of the undocumented Eastern European migrants in Brussels would not have had the chance to legally enter, secure employment, and settle in the country. Under these circumstances, the only open gate for the most "unprivileged" of the migrants (e.g. those who do not fall under the provisions of any migration program such as family reunification, asylum seeker, professional migrant, or to become self-employed) remains the back door, or illegal migration. Taking one step further and assessing what has triggered this migration has revealed that migration networks (understood as kin, friends and acquaintances) play only a secondary role in the case of the Polish migrants and no role whatsoever in the case of the Bulgarian migrants. The case of the Bulgarian migrations to Brussels is still a rather new phenomenon, should be understood as even more exemplary. It clearly testifies that migration is initiated, made possible and perpetuated over time, without the support structures made available under the wing of social capital, as assumed by the social capital theory. One could advance the assumption that due to the fact that Bulgarian undocumented

migrations are a relatively recent phenomenon (See Chapter 9), the necessary migration networks which would eventually foster continuous migrations could not develop, or probably that such networks are now in the process of construction and establishment and based on this reasoning the network hypothesis should not be rejected. Nevertheless, we have shown that the presence of undocumented Bulgarians in Brussels is stable since the late 1990s, so the most essential question to pose is "How many years are necessary for the creation and the development of migrant networks and support structures which would trigger migration as suggested by the social capital theory?"

We have to admit that there is no answer to this question. Moreover, the work of Douglas Massey does not focus on this issue as well. Migrant networks are in this sense advanced as developing over time but there is no indication of how much time is actually necessary. It is possible that in the case of migrants coming from a small village community with a strong sense of social cohesion and frequent mutual exchanges, and who have migrated together and have supported each other during the trip and abroad, the migrant networks develop much faster and easier than in the case of individual migrants from different cities and towns. In the first case, we can also speak about an existing community that has been transplanted in the destination country and not exactly about a community of migrants that has been established wholly from scratch. Evaluating the prospective for the development of migrants' networks, we have to take into account the propensity and the motivation of migrants to get involved or to participate in such a network. As we have seen in the case of the Polish migrants, the respondents willingly participate in network exchanges because of foreseen personal gratification (in the form of financial profit or in the form of receiving help and services). And, even in situations when the network is not needed for any material profit, the Polish migrants tend to socialize mainly with co-nationals and spend one morning or evening in the company of other undocumented migrants for the mere purpose of having a social life and speaking one's native language. A good example of this is the weekend gathering of hundreds of Poles at the open market in Anderlecht in Brussels, where one can buy Polish food and Polish drinks and has for a while, the feeling of being "at home". On the other hand, as it has been shown continuously

in the present work, the Bulgarian undocumented migrants do their best to avoid the company of other Bulgarians in the city. Without repeating all the reasons for this (e.g. fear to be asked for a favor, distrust towards other Bulgarians, not foreseeing profit from such contacts, feeling of wasting precious time, etc.), suffice it to say that in a situation of mutual avoidance and lack of interest in meeting other co-nationals, the grounds for developing a Bulgarian community are practically non-existent. Based in these research findings we can reason that a Bulgarian migrant network would probably fail to develop unconditionally even when the migration movements to Brussels have started. Before concluding this section, it should be mentioned that the previously described unwillingness of the Bulgarian migrants to communicate and to socialize with other Bulgarians is limited predominantly to the group of the undocumented migrants. The false students and the professional migrants have some contacts with other Bulgarians with the same status in the country. In the case of the false students, such contacts have been established in the universities where other Bulgarians are in attendance and in the case of the professional migrants in the sphere of the workplace. However, even when these two groups of people meet with co-nationals, the meeting is only for the purposes of entertainment: e.g. celebrating a birthday, going out for a coffee, to the cinema, or just taking a walk together. In no single case, did the respondents from these two groups describe these contacts in term of a "network" which had any impact on their decision to migrate, or one that had been used for securing employment, services or help, much less one that offers anything more than just an opportunity to take rest with a friend. Besides, the group of two or three, Bulgarian friends or acquaintances have never developed to include another Bulgarian. So again, we cannot speak about a migration network in the pure sense of the word.

Having outlined that social capital, or the migrant networks and the migrants supporting institutions are not the primary factors that have triggered and made successful the undocumented migrations of the Poles and the Bulgarians, and having pointed several times to the fact that the main reason for migration is of a financial nature, we would like to introduce another potential explanation of what allows the undocumented migrants to survive in Brussels, and what underlies the continuous return of commuting migrants. This

explanation, which has not been discussed until the present moment, is the demand for the work of the undocumented workers force in Brussels or the broad market consuming the services offered by the migrants. The various necessities of employers and clients in Brussels for the labor of the undocumented Eastern European men and women, together with the lack of opportunities for legal migration are of utmost importance if the persistence of undocumented migrations from Eastern Europe to Belgium in particular (and to the older member states of the European Union as a whole, since all member states have similar policy or indeed lack of policy for legal economic migration) are to be understood. Even though the present research could not focus explicitly on the demand side for reasons of limited time and recourses, we have accumulated sufficient indications that the demand and the broad market for the services of the undocumented migrants are high and well developed, respectively.

The first argument supporting this thesis is deduced from the research finding that undocumented migrants strive to have employment and clients in less than three weeks after arriving in Brussels, or to pre-arrange employment before ever coming to Belgium. Subsequently in Chapter 9 and 10, we have revealed that once gainful employment and clients are secured in Brussels, satisfied employers/clients often recommend the services of the undocumented migrants. Over time, the migrants stop seeking employment on their own, instead relying on prospective clients to contact them with requests for their services. Of course, one major factor for such a demand of undocumented work is the prices charged for services by undocumented workers. In the previous chapters, we have outlined that the services of the Poles and the Bulgarians in Brussels are at least 50% cheaper than those charged by their Belgian counterparts and other EU nationals residing legally in Belgium. For the sake of illustration we will provide the following examples: A Belgian removal company would charge 60 € without VAT per hour, for *only* transporting a household from one address to another and will charge the client additionally the half an hour before arrival to the address and half an hour after finishing the job. If the client wants help with carrying the items, either s/he would pay extra or the service is not offered at all. On the other hand, the Poles and the Bulgarian would charge 7 € to 10 € per hour regardless of how many

workers are doing the job[2]. In addition, the undocumented migrants would disassemble the furniture, if needed, and will transport these additional items. Another example involved the repair of household appliances. The authorized distributors of large appliances, such as a washing machine or refrigerator, would charge an average of between 70 € and 90 € per hour to make a housecall and to examine the malfunctioning item and diagnose the issue. In contrast, the undocumented migrants offer the same services for around 10 € per hour. An additional and in a way, a crucial factor in the preference of the services of undocumented migrants over those of Belgians is the flexibility migrants can offer with respect to the time of day the job is performed. Migrants are able to cater to the client's schedule and provide services at more convenient times. For example, during weekends, or in the evenings after official working hours have passed. Migrants may also have increased availability to perform a job immediately after the request is made. On the contrary, an authorized technician from the company would come to inspect the defect item at least ten days and sometimes even three weeks, after the client has requested repair, whereas an undocumented migrant will perform the task the same evening or at a maximum, two days later. The demand for undocumented work by Poles and Bulgarians in Brussels is further stimulated by the long working hours and in effect, the shorter terms needed to complete a task. Consider that a regular working day of an undocumented migrant employed for household renovation, reconstruction, painting, tiles and terracotta laying, insulation, roof repair, etcetera starts at 8 am and finishes 9 pm or 10 pm, while a Belgian construction company would refuse to work after 5 pm or 6 pm.

To prevent oversimplifying the matter, we can state that undocumented migrant workers, who have migrated for economic reasons, are not going to be present in a country if there are no employers or clients needing their services and labor, or to use the words of F. Krissman (2005:13) "…employers are the principal promoters and beneficiaries of informal recruitment".

[2] The so described rates are usually charged if a job should be done by one, two, or three persons. In case four or more workers are necessary for completing the job, the respective rate per hour can go up to 15 €.

In brief, the non-network related factors underlying the process of undocumented migration from Poland and Bulgaria to Belgium outweigh by and large the social capital factors. By way of review, pertaining to non-network related aspects, we have identified a broad range of factors triggering and encourage the migrations under study. For both research groups these factors include financial necessity, the income disparities between countries of origin and Belgium, no hope for long term economic improvement in the case of the Bulgarians and no provisions for short-term improvement in the case of the Poles; the easy and cheap transportation to Brussels, the lack of visa requirements for Polish and Bulgarian nationals which makes entry into Belgium easy; and the reputation of the Eastern Europeans as a hard working, responsible, cheap and flexible labor force.

Concluding this presentation of the factors stimulating and perpetuating undocumented migration from Poland and Bulgaria to Brussels and presenting arguments against the powers of the social capital theory, requires an analysis of why the migrant network hypothesis, which is so widely accepted, fails to be confirmed in the present research. Throughout the following paragraphs, we will introduce several weaknesses of the migrant network explanation from our research perspective.

1) To start from the last discussed topic, by advocating the migrant network as the ultimate reason and propeller for migration, the social capital theory ignores the importance of all non-network related factors and actors. And, as we have just discussed one paragraph above, in the case of the Poles and the Bulgarians, these non-network related factors are indeed more crucial in the process of migration, while the network importance surfaces only after the migrants arrive in Brussels, or only as an aspect which lowers the cost of migration. Moreover, the network relevance was discernible only in the case of the Polish migrants. Of course, we are not the first to criticize the ignoring of the non-network related factors by the social capital theory (*see for example* Wolf, 1966; Mitchell, 1969; Griffith & Kissam, 1995; Krissman, 2005). Nevertheless, the remarks of the abovementioned scholars have not been taken into account by the social capital theoreticians and the ease by which the theory explains international migration has been eagerly embraced over time and has

left the notion of the migration network as the paramount explanation of migration unquestioned until only recently (Mahler, 1995; Wilson, 1998; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001; Spener, 2002; Krissman, 2005). Or, to use the words of Simon Singh (2001:8) who advocates a rigorous testing of widely admired theories, "the danger is that today's theories can become so established that they attain the quality of intellectual common sense, tempting scientists to take on board prejudices that prevent them from seeking and even better understanding of the universe", which is indeed what has happened as a result of embracing the social capital theory as the accepted model for explaining international migration. In brief, the social capital theory has not been adapted to take into account the guidelines for including the analysis of migration as a myriad of non-network related actors (Krissman, 2005) and for redefining the theory's assumptions to incorporate in the migration analysis the demand side, which proves to be vitally important in the ongoing process of undocumented economic migration.

2) A second problem of the social capital theory is that it is build upon the assumption that networks between today's migrants have been created long before migration actually took place. Moreover, these networks were established to connect *paisanos* or people from the same village in the country of origin, and respectively during migration, these social networks based on the traditional relationships (e.g. mutual aid, strong connections between kin, etc.) between members of small villages are called upon as a major rationale for why an immigrant should help a prospective newcomer. However, we can outline at least two problematic areas in this context: Firstly, the assumption that such strong networks are capable of triggering migration, to develop among *paisanos*, is based on the belief that relationships among the people from the same sending hometown are symmetrical. In other words, one could expect that if one member of the network has provided or received help he or she will respectively provide or receive help in the future due to the mere fact of being a member of the same social network. Such symmetrical relationships are, however, difficult to observe in practice and the practices of helping other people are driven by a multitude of motives and cannot be reduced to the simple exchange of services among community members. To understand the relationships among network

members as symmetrical excludes from the picture the crucial role, of a number of material and non-material considerations, which every group or network member has when deciding to assist another person. And as we have illustrated above, the mere membership in a social network of co-nationals, is not a factor per se for assisting other network members, but triggers mutual help when some material or non-material profit is foreseen by the parties who provide certain services, information, or help. The previously advanced symmetry in the social relationships among people could constitute the basis for the creation of a migrant network. Furthermore, it is only probable that it would develop only in the context of small and coherent communities of people from the same village where virtually ever member of the community is acquainted with one another. However, it is quite unreasonable to expect that symmetrical relationships would have existed among migrants from different origins in the home country and to expect that such relationships will develop after migration. A good example for this are our research findings that indicate that symmetrical relationships within the Bulgarian migrants' group have not existed before migration and failed to develop after migrating to Brussels is completed. Respectively, in the Polish community we have detected structures of social networks, where nevertheless, the principle of symmetry is hard to discern, because the relationships are guided exclusively by motives of profit. Secondly, the social capital theory derives and tests its assumption of the "migration network" from analyzing the migration patterns between four communities from Western Mexico and the United States. Obviously, a theory that was constructed on the basis of the very specific Mexican-United States migration movements cannot be expected to apply in the same way for the Eastern European migrations to Western Europe. Some of the reasons for this can be explained by the differential migration contexts relevant in the two continents. More specifically, the two contexts differ in their historical foundations of the development of international migration. In the Northern American scene, the late 20th century's massive undocumented migration from Mexico has its roots in the late 19th century, when the Mexican development policies created a massive population of highly mobile and impoverished rural migrants while the United States' southwestern regions experienced high demand for low-skilled and low-wage labor. Subsequently, the migration

from Mexico was institutionalized by the temporary-worker agreement signed between the two countries and known as the Bracero program. The Bracero program lasted between 1942 and 1964 and accounted for the migration of some 4,5 million migrants (for a comprehensive analysis and historical overview of the Mexican-U.S. migration the reader could consult Chapter 4 of D. Massey's *et al.* "*Return to Aztlan"*, 1987: 39-110). Once the program was closed and similar to the European migratory context, the temporary workers who were expected to return to Mexico, in fact, stayed in the United States, which prompted undocumented migration movements from Mexico to increase rapidly.

The European migratory scene, and in specific, the case of migration to Belgium, is quite different. As described in the first Chapters of the present study, outlining the historical context of migrations in Europe, Belgium and Eastern European emigrations, non-ethnic and non-war related migrations in Europe occurred on a larger scale only in the middle of the 20th century and include migrants from quite different origins from two continents. Indeed, such massive migration of one nationality group, never took place. It is important to understand that migration from Mexico to the United States occurred not only on a very large scale, but also from only four states (which later on are taken by Massey as research units in his construction of the social capital theory) which accounted for 45% of all the Bracero migration between 1951 and 1962 (Massey, 1987: 43). From this perspective, massive migrants' recruitment, and respectively undocumented migration from the same place, one could see how the concept of the migrant network develops: the transplantation of virtually entire Mexican villages and towns in the United States implies transplantation of the existent social relationships among the migrants. A second difference between the American and the European context, stemming from the described historical pattern of migration is also the occurrence (or the lack of occurrence) of differential structures that promote subsequent migration. By this, we mean for example, the development of an elaborated system of smuggling migrants across the border between Mexico and the United States (Chavez, 1998), while such practices and "services" were not established to promote undocumented economic migrations from Poland and Bulgaria. The existence of such smuggling systems between Mexico and the United States and the lack of

a similar phenomenon in Europe is conditioned as well by the distinct migration entry systems into the two continents. In the first case, the Mexican migrants are a subject to a visa regime for entry in the United States, while the Polish and the Bulgarian migrants are free to enter Belgium without a visa and can legally remain in the country for up to 90 days. To conclude, in two such diverging migratory arenas, one could expect that migration networks will develop and function in a different ways, even if the primary stimulus for migration remains economic hardship in the country of origin.

3) Another drawback of the social capital theory can be derived from its assumption that in the presence of powerful and self-sustaining network resources, the migration flows between origins and destinations arise and continue without relation to the primary migration triggering factors or to use the formulation of Massey *et al.* (1987: 302) "Over time, the social process of migration acquires its own momentum and becomes increasingly independent of its structural causes". Translating such an assumption into practical terms engenders the claim that people will migrate *only* because they have the support of a strong formal and informal network, and *unconditionally* if they need to migrate. Recalling that in our research population "the need" to migrate is equal to a dire financial status, unemployment and lack of possibilities in the country of origin, lack of perspectives for the future, impossibility of reaching goals such as building a home, purchasing necessary items, or supporting dependent family members, we have provided sufficient evidence that the explanation of Massey of how migration occurs, is clearly inapplicable to the Polish and the Bulgarian migratory context.

2. The cumulative causation theory: explanatory powers

The cumulative causation theory has been adopted as a second explanatory model for the Eastern European migrations due to the envisaged inability of the social capital theory to account for the circumstances under which the access to potential networks will in fact, result in initiating migration. The outlined weakness of the social capital theory requires the adoption of an alternative perspective for explaining the present day undocumented Polish and Bulgarian migrations to Brussels. Evaluating the strengths and

the weaknesses of the available migration theories (See Chapter 7) we have identified the cumulative causation theory as a possible alternative model due to its various assumptions, which stipulate that the reasons for the contemporary migration flows and continuation of migration are various and indeed promote migration in a cumulative way. The cumulative causation theory takes into consideration also non-network related factors as stimuli for migration and thus, offers potentially a stronger model to account for the Polish and the Bulgarian migrations, especially in the light of the presented criticism that one of the social capital theory's weaknesses is the ignoring of non-network factors is migration related variables. To reiterate briefly, from a cumulative causation perspective, international migration can be understood as an outcome of the interaction of the following factors: the expansion of migrant networks, the distribution of income, the distribution of land, the organization of agriculture, the culture of migration, the regional distribution of human capital, and the social meaning of work. Without being repetitious, the mechanisms of cumulative causation of migration presented in Chapter 7 would serve hereafter as the basis for evaluating if, and to what degree each of the specified elements of cumulative causation explain the present Polish and Bulgarian migrations to Brussels. Similarly, the process of evaluating the powers of the social capital theory in explaining the migration flows under study, the cumulative causation theory will be assessed on the grounds of the information provided by our Polish and Bulgarian respondents, since the interview questionnaire was designed to collect, among others things, information on all aspects of the cumulative causation theory.

As it has been illustrated above, the first factor promoting a sustained migration – the expansion of the migrants' networks – has only limited impact on the actual migration flows from Poland and Bulgaria to Belgium.

The distribution of income, assumed to act as another trigger for migration according to the cumulative causation, was identified to act as an indirect stimulus for migration in the presented research population. The income distribution being defined as the sense of relative income deprivation experienced by non-migrants in comparison with successful individual migrants or migrants' families is indeed argued to surpass by

importance other primary factors for migration such as the desire for improving one's personal or household income (Massey *et al*., 1998). In our research groups, none of the interviews has agreed explicitly that their decision to migrate was stimulated by the observed financial success of other migrants. However, the experience of successful migrants has been mentioned as a good example for illustrating that undocumented work in Belgium is profitable and achievable and thus, reducing the migrant's fears that migration might be unsuccessful. In this sense, the observed success of other migrants has increased the self-assuredness of the new migrants that migration is worth undertaking, and that it will be profitable for them. Therefore, we can conclude that even though not explicitly communicated as a motive for migration, the income distribution has acted as an indirect factor in the process of migration decision making, once the migrants faced the need for a higher income (or an income) that cannot be generated at home. In this way, the income distribution indeed acts in a cumulative way to promote migration by reinforcing an already made decision for migration.

The next factors, advocated by the cumulative causation theory to create and maintain persistent migration flows were described as distribution of land and organization of agriculture. The mechanism denoted as distribution of land is promoted as a propeller of migration based on the assumption that international migrants are more likely to purchase land and to employ workers upon return, but at the same time are more likely to abandon this land, since working in migration still offers better returns than local agricultural activities. Migration causes the local labor force to be reduced and the formerly employed agricultural workers remain redundant and become potential international migrants. On the other hand, what is meant by organization of agriculture is that returning migrants tend to employ capital-intensive methods in their agricultural production and thus diminish again the need for the local force, which is once again assumed to seek increased income and work aboard.

In the current research, however, we have not been able to accumulate enough proof that any of the two so described factors have had an impact on the migration flows form Poland and Bulgaria. The first argument supporting the conclusion that the organization of

agriculture and the land distribution cannot be employed to explain migration from Poland and Bulgaria is based on the fact that the grand majority of the Polish and the Bulgarian migrants to Brussels have not been employed in farming and agricultural activities and do not express any intention to be involved in such activities upon future return to their home countries. In the three exceptions, in which two Bulgarian and one Polish migrants have verbalized an intention to buy land and to establish an agricultural production, the latter plan to do so on a small scale producing at a level which satisfies the family's needs and which allows for the production of a small amount of cheese and milk for local sale (e.g. to a limited number of countrymen only). Secondly, we have not identified respondents who have become migrants as a result of being made redundant by former migrants who have abandoned their land or modernized the mode of production. Those respondents with a history of work in the agricultural and farming sector (two Polish and two Bulgarian respondents) have been employed by the socialist type of communal enterprises and have remained unemployed as a victim of the large-scale restructuring during the transitional period in the late 1980s, but not as a result of the mechanisms so specified by the cumulative causation theory.

Yet, one necessary remark is that the distribution of land and the organization of agriculture cannot be rendered uncritically as an invalid factor promoting migration in a cumulative causation theory based on the present research results. The reason for this is again, that the Mexican-American agricultural and crops sectors cannot be compared to those of Eastern Europe. The first have always been a part of a capitalist system while the latter were centrally monopolized by the totalitarian communist regimes in Poland and in Bulgaria. Respectively, before the fall of the Iron Curtain, the Eastern Europeans never had the chance for being private farmers or ranchers, and after 1989, the process of de-monopolizing and privatizing of the agricultural sectors continued for over ten years and thus, strong privately owned agriculture and farming is still in the process of development. Under these circumstances, we can conclude that the distribution of land and the organization of agriculture are for the moment not relevant aspects for explaining Eastern

European migrations and on these grounds and in the present moment, we cannot falsify these as the cumulative causation theory based on these two elements.

The collected research results do, however, offer evidence against the element of the theory defined as distribution of human capital. We would claim that the cumulative causation proves to be an inadequate model for the Polish and the Bulgarian migrations since its assumption that it is predominantly the well-educated, the skilled, and the highly motivated people, has not been supported by our research data. The outflows of highly skilled and highly educated people are advanced by the cumulative causation theory as strong triggers of migration, since the depletion of human capital in certain areas lowers the local productivity and causes stagnation, which is likely to force the remaining citizens to seek working possibilities abroad. Nevertheless, in the previous chapters outlining the educational and occupational profiles of the Polish and the Bulgarian migrants, we have clearly distinguished that the undocumented migrants from these two nationalities are not the highly skilled and best educated members within their societies of origin. On the contrary, even though the majority of the migrants possess some educational degree (due to the fact that both in Poland and Bulgaria education is compulsory) and professional qualification (usually in a technical specialty due to the fact that the technical schools used to be the only accessible option for people who cannot be accepted in general or specialized secondary schools), neither of the migrants can be described as holding higher levels of professional position before migration. Quite the opposite, the undocumented migrants were forced to migrate because of the limited working possibilities in their countries of origin and have been either unemployed, bankrupting self-employed persons before migration, or low wage workers before deciding to seek better income possibilities in Brussels.

The last two assumptions of the cumulative causation theory: e.g. culture of migration and social meaning of work, have been partly confirmed by the present study. To recall, social meaning of work implies a change of values and life perceptions of the international migrants after experience of living and working abroad. According to this assumption, international migration persists over time because even if financial goals set

before migration and accumulating sufficient capital are achieved, migrants still fail to return to their countries of origin because they have grown accustomed to the lifestyle in the destination countries. Similarly, returning migrants are assumed to fail to settle back upon return, since the general living and working conditions in the destination countries are perceived as better that those at home. In our study, we have found several indicators that such a mechanism for remaining in Brussels might be operational among the Polish and the Bulgarian migrants. Firstly, we have discovered that many migrants procrastinate their planned permanent return for months or in some cases, even years after the desired amount of savings has been accumulated and even after a small business has been established in the country of origin. Even though the main argument for delayed return advanced by the migrants is that the savings could always be increased and that additional income is always welcome, the migrants also communicate that there are other that financial factors keeping them in Brussels. One such factor advanced by the respondents is work related and amounts to the lack of decent work and working conditions in the countries of origin. As is has been described in the previous chapters, the unanimous benefit of living in Brussels is the easy access to work and the possibility to build a new life as an undocumented migrant, which may have negative experiences along the way, but is still perceived as a better option that struggling with unemployment and the lower wages in the home countries. Those who have started a successful small business express the opinion that it can be ran from both the country of origin and Belgium and that by staying in Belgium, more profits can be made than if they were to return home. Even though the respondents communicate a broad array of negative opinions about Brussels, they still prefer to prolong their stay, or to commute on a regular basis, first because of the better income opportunities, but also because of the ease by which the job market is accessed and the facility with which one can function as a productive human being even without having proper documentation.

Finally, due to our research design which does not incorporate studying the preferences of employers about their workforce and the Belgian labor market, we cannot offer proof to confirm or reject the assumption of social meaning of work, according to which the presence of low-paid migrants who occupy the most dangerous, strenuous, dirty

and lower paid working sectors, qualifies over time these jobs as "immigrant's jobs" which cannot be filled any longer by local labor force. We have, nevertheless, accumulated evidence that undocumented Eastern European migrants indeed occupy a certain niche in the labor market of Brussels, a niche with is constituted by exactly those types of jobs: e.g. cleaning, domestic help, reconstruction, renovation, etc; jobs that are highly labor consuming and lower paid. Yet, the evaluation of potential change in the concept of social meaning of work is only possible after comprehensive research of the Belgian labor market, which unfortunately falls out of the scope of the present study.

3. Conclusions

In this chapter, we have evaluated which and to what degree the social capital theory and the cumulative causation theory are capable to offer an adequate account for the contemporary Polish and Bulgarian migration outflows. The arguments for and against the social capital theory have led us to the conclusion that this theory is not the most satisfactory explanatory model for our particular case. The cumulative causation theory, developed to incorporate a combination of network and non-network related factors in order to better understand the process of international migration, has been only partly defended by our study. Out of the seven elements of the theory, we have achieved to sufficiently explain only two: e.g. the distribution of income and the culture of migration. All remaining components have been either rejected (e.g. the thesis of the expansion of migrant networks and the regional distribution of human capital) or have been shown to be inapplicable in the East-West migratory context (e.g. the distribution of land, the organization of agriculture); or have been impossible to test consistently (e.g. the social meaning of work).

As we have stated recurrently throughout this text, the primary reason for the two theories' weaknesses is that by not including in their theoretical framework the possible primary personal motives for migration, the theories discard the importance of many preconditions to migration, which if not met, will not trigger migration. We are aware that these two theories have been developed with the ambition to explain why migration persists

over time, and that this is the rationale behind the decision to exclude from the analysis the personal motivations for migration. Nevertheless, what can be viewed, as persistent or continuous migration from one country to another is at the very base, a flow of individuals driven by the need to migrate. Even though the two theories are indeed refuting exactly this vision of migration, and if we agree to consider the personal motivations as irrelevant, the theories still fail to provide a sound explanation of why migration flows continue and this is because numbers of migration involved actors that are not native to the hometowns from which migration occurs, are excluded from the analysis. These non-hometown actors are for example the recruiters and the employers of undocumented migrants in destination countries who need the services provided by the migrants. These are also all bodies entitled to exercise migration control operations such as border officers, work inspectors, and the police who can at the end of the day make undocumented migration impossible, or by ignoring the phenomenon can leave the undocumented migrations unhindered. Last but not least, these are also all the small transportation companies that offer easy and cheap access to Belgium, which makes the balance between cost of migration and profit from migration, favorable for the migrants.

4. What is the solution?

Taking into consideration all of the above described critiques of the social capital and the cumulative causation theory as well as our research results, the post-1989 migrations from Poland and Bulgaria to Belgium can be better understood and explained if several interacting factors are taken into consideration. These we would suggest include the supply and demand factors as formulated by the classical push-pull theories of migration and a number of non-economic factors, which will be presented below.

The Eastern European migration flows are to a certain degree an exact illustration of the push-pull theories of migration or the interplay of supply-side factors, shaping the decision to migrate and demand-side factors shaping the need for migrant workers in a receiving country (Harris & Todaro, 1970). Thus, we would suggest that a step back to an

economic push-pull model of migration is more fruitful in explaining why migrations from Poland and Bulgaria exist, rather than embracing network related explanations.

First and foremost, since the financial incentive for migration has been communicated as the primary and the only factor for migration, all remaining stimuli for migration as suggested by the social capital theory and the cumulative causation theory can be described as only facilitating migration, but not as a driving force for migration. Income related factors such as expected income of migrating, considering the income discrepancies of working at home and abroad, and financial deprivation at home are proved to be the most important causes for the individual or household decision for migration. In the situation of financial deprivation and expected increases in income if one migrates, the presence or absence of the migrant's networks and supporting institutions has no effect on the actual decision to migrate and the actual migration. To put it differently, migration is taking place unconditionally on the existence and the access to migration networks. The latter are facilitators but not primary factors for migration as suggested by Douglas Massey.

Only once stimulated by economic factors, the migration flows are affected by a number of other non-economic factors among which we can outline the influence of the migrants' networks, the existence of migrants' communities, and the general inefficiency of deportation and detention measures.

Consistently with the propositions of the push-pull theory of migration, the existence and the persistence of the migration flows is also an answer to the respective labor need for the work of the undocumented migrants. That is to say, the undocumented workers in Brussels indeed serve the local labor need for such services. The particular present day migration reality and the general restrictions on migration flows in Europe have largely reduced the channels for legal economic migration, but have not eradicated the need for migrant workers in host countries. If in the period before the economic stagnation of the 1970s, migrant workers had to be recruited to compensate for labor shortages in the industrial sectors, it could be said that in the present day, migrants and especially undocumented migrants are filling a similar labor niche (e.g. labor consuming and lower paying jobs) as during the middle of the twentieth century, but in an illegal way.

Additionally the undocumented workers from Eastern Europe in Brussels have entered the sectors of building, reconstruction, technical maintenance, and household maintenance and have become over time an indispensable working force in these sectors as far as they are able to offer cheaper services in contrast with the Belgian companies or workers and other migrants, good quality services, and flexibility to perform the services at virtually any time and day of the week to meet the needs of the client or the employer.