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FUTURE PLANS OF BULGARIAN CIRCULAR MIGRANTS: EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE FROM BUS TRAVELERS

The paper provides evidence about the future plans of Bulgarian migrants that use regular bus lines to travel to the European destination countries. The analysis utilizes data from a questionnaire survey conducted in 2018 among 305 migrants interviewed at the major nodes of the international bus transport infrastructure in Bulgaria. The future plans of these migrants are focused mainly on: (i) continuing their life in both home and host countries or (ii) searching for options to stay abroad for a longer period. In the same time, non-negligible shares of respondents (iii) still hesitate about their future plans or (iv) have expressed intentions to stay permanently in Bulgaria. Using multinomial logistic regression model, a set of variables that reflect: (a) socio-demographic status, and (b) the migration experience have been tested for potential significant effects on the choice reflecting the individual future plans of respondents.
JEL: F22; C35; J15

Introduction

Circular migration is not a new phenomenon concerning the international migration of Bulgarian citizens since the start of the social and economic transformation in the early 1990s. The debate about the impact of short-term labor migration on the domestic labor market is not only academic but has also various political dimensions, e.g. economic, demographic, social, etc. There is still not a clear definition of circularity and in many cases an individual can be identified as either circular or return migrant depending on the implemented criteria.

Generally, economists argue that a more liberal regime of intra-EU labor mobility can potentially uphold the efficiency of the common EU labor market at a degree even higher than the liberalization of capital and product markets. Notwithstanding the adverse demographic trends and the voices for emphasizing a "demand-driven" European immigration policy regarding the non-EU incomers, the processes of temporary intra-EU labor migration still attract a high interest from both researchers and policymakers (Schneider & Wiesbrock, 2011). Engbersen et al. (2017) discuss the recent trends in the

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intra-EU mobility following the EU enlargements in 2004 and 2007 that induced new migration flows from Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). The analysis reveals that the current migration regime has induced a substantial diversity and complexity of contemporary intra-EU labor migration. Nevertheless, labor migrants from the new EU members from CEE are mostly involved in a temporary kind of labor mobility, however, often aspiring to achieve a long-term – or at least mid-term – settlement in Western or Northern Europe.

Indeed, the spread of the phenomenon during the last few decades still keeps the debate in Europe concerning the potential benefit of the circular labor mobility which focuses the interest of EU migration policies (Geddes, 2015). This definitely requires a collection of relevant information to support a knowledge-based decision making at EU level that can legitimate the respective institutional roles. In this respect, numerous researchers have focused their attention on the typology of labor migration with a special emphasis on CEE source countries. Using empirical data, Engbersen et al. (2013) have developed such a typology concerning migrants from CEE in respect of their attachment to (i) the home and (ii) the host country. Analyzing data about Polish, Bulgarian, and Romanian migrants hosted in the Netherlands these authors identified a diversity of temporary migrant types, e.g. (a) weak attachments to the destination country; (b) transnationals having strong attachments to both host and home country; (c) low-committed individuals with weak attachments to both countries; (d) individuals expressing weak attachments to the home country (potential settlers). In this respect, other authors emphasize on the need for designing policies specific to the different types of mobility taking into account the consequences of circular migration for the social welfare of the migrants and their families. Although there is no doubt that short-term migration supports the subsistence and helps to minimize welfare risks, the long-term pattern seems to have a much higher potential to substantially improve the economic situation of those involved in intra-EU mobility (Skeldon, 2012). In this line, Doomernik (2013) discusses the extent to which circular mobility could in effect substitute any practiced "guest worker" schemes in light of the fact that EU labor market demand grows regarding both the highly skilled and the unskilled segment. What concerns the latter, such demand could be satisfied by schemes facilitating an effective circular intra-EU migration especially supported by the European Commission.

Survey evidence about short-term mobility: A short review

Along with the expanded intra-EU migration policy interests in temporary migration, research work has been focused intensely on the circular migration drawing from the revealed potential benefits to any party involved in it, including the host and the home country, notwithstanding the participating migrants themselves. Leading authors on the economics of short-term migration discuss the advantages of circular movement of labour "back and forth" between the destination and sending countries (Constant et al., 2013). It is not surprising that such conclusions are supported by numerous studies indicating a mixture of effects.

In this respect, evidence for temporary labour mobility is provided by many studies of Polish and Romanian international migration as far as the population scale of these countries dominates the phenomenon in its CEE dimension. For example, by studying the migration of healthcare and eldercare workers since the full EU membership of Poland Goździak (2016) shows that Polish migration "*has become 'liquid' and has often taken on a form of 'pendulum' or 'circular' migration and, in some cases, transnational commuting*". It is especially valid for the residents of border settlements that have more opportunities for short-distance traveling and even commuting to the host country cities located close to the border; this is however not the case with far destinations that are not suitable for circular labour migration. In the same time, a similar situation emerges also at the Polish-Ukrainian border due to a temporary migration regime promoted by Poland. Based on a study of this case Górny (2017) suggests a typology of temporary migrants by analyzing the interactions between the individual characteristics of the short-term migrants and their mobility patterns – it is shown that the majority of migrants are circulars practicing either regular or sporadic temporary cross-border moves.

Short-term mobility is also well known practice of the migrants from the Balkan sending countries. Various studies are focused on the migration inflows to Greece as the closest destination job market for more than 20 years. Sintès (2007) summarizes the main features of the Balkan workers' mobility to Greece where they succeeded to find "*low-paid, unattractive jobs rejected by nationals*". The evidence from that period showed that guest employees originate mainly from Albania (57%) and in much lower extent from Bulgaria (5%) and Romania (3%), with a predominantly seasonal character of their mobility (getting jobs for few months per year) highly dependent on informal migration networks. Balkan short-term mobility happens in a substantial extent out of the regulated employment channels which have been studied recently by Didier and Nesturi (2018). These authors develop a model of the individual choice of unauthorized migration evaluated empirically on the basis of data from interviews with Albanian return migrants. This analysis shows that unauthorized mobility happens predominantly in a circular mode and is performed mainly by young and male individuals (prone to risk-taking) typically without family and/or social duties.

Numerous studies on the international mobility of Bulgarian citizens explored the phenomenon that boosted since the start of the social transformations at the end of the 1980s. The country passed through several periods each of which contributed to the external migration of Bulgarians, albeit in different ways, e.g. economic and international trade collapse during the market reforms of the early transition period (1990-1995); bank system and hyperinflation crisis (1996-1997), introduction of the currency board agreement and macroeconomic stabilization (1998-2000), abolishment of the Schengen visa regime for Bulgarians and EU accession period (2001-2006), and the period of full EU membership since year 2007 (including a 7-years-long initial restriction period for Bulgarians on the labour markets of several EU member states). In a comprehensive study of IOM Guentcheva et al. (2003) present a review of the available information about the international migration of Bulgarian citizens that gives a hint about a tendency of domination of the temporary (e.g. seasonal) over permanent migrations, identifying Greece, Spain, Italy, Germany, and The Netherlands as most preferred destination. At the start of the EU accession period, the research revealed the search for better-paid jobs as a major

motive for outmigration of Bulgarians as well as the main sectors of employment of the seasonal migrants, namely agriculture, housekeeping, domestic care, construction, tourism (i.e. hotels and restaurants), etc.

A highly informative review of research on Bulgarian external migration is provided by Mancheva and Troeva (2011) in relation to issues of gender, intercultural interactions, religion, and transnational families' occasions. When considering the option for a return, however, major barriers to the integration of the migrants into the Bulgarian labour market are identified. In this respect, Zareva (2018b) presents evidence regarding some effects of the return of Bulgarian migrants evaluated on the basis of representative sample survey considering the work status, employment by economic activities and qualifications, and comparison of the labour market status prior to departure and after the return to the home country. In a migration policies context, Zareva (2018a) provides an analytical overview of Bulgaria's migration policy intended to promote and sustain the return of Bulgarian migrants.

Mintchev (2009, 2016a) presents rich empirical evidence from a series of representative sample surveys concerning the profiles of Bulgarian migrants interviewed at home during periods of return as well as their inclination towards new migration moves. On the contrary, Markova (2010) and Kovacheva (2011) discuss findings concerning the experience of Bulgarians interviewed during their visits abroad. A variety of evidence regarding the short-term movement of Bulgarians after the EU integration of the country is provided by numerous studies. Ricci (2015) confirms that since the start of the EU accession period the southern host countries (not only Greece but also Italy and Spain) became popular destinations for Bulgarian migrants – both permanent and temporary – characterized by intensified social- and work-related integration, particularly in agriculture and service sectors. Viruela and Marcu (2015) analyze the shifts in individual strategies of Eastern European immigrants in Spain since the start of the global economic crisis. Their analysis is based on in-depth interviews with 64 citizens of Romania and Bulgaria residing in Spain, along with interviews with family members and returnees at the home countries. The study reveals that both internal and transnational geographical mobility of the Romanian and Bulgarian migrants emerges as a response to the worsening of the Spanish labour market conditions – particularly, options for circular migration, return to the home country, or a move to a third country. In the same time, some evidence about seasonal unskilled labour migration from Bulgaria is provided regarding the employment of Roma pickers in the Swedish berry industry (Mešić and Woolfson, 2015). After describing the living and working experience of these migrants the authors derive challenges for the European labour market originating from a possible erosion of labour regulations and standards.

Very few studies are focused on external migration that utilizes international bus lines routes. Mihailov (2016) provides empirical evidence from a sample questionnaire survey of Bulgarian migrants travelling to Switzerland by two transportation means: airplanes and busses. In a search for indications about any divergence of the profiles of Bulgarian migrants that use the two options the author shows how approaching the individuals from different social strata – one of them allocated predominantly at the airport and the other at the bus station respectively – can reveal diverse patterns of migration concerning the networking models, education, and employment abroad. In a more focused study Mintchev

(2016b) presents a variety of results from a sample questionnaire survey of Bulgarians that use bus lines to travel from Bulgaria to Germany in 2012. Analyzing data from about 800 face-to-face interviews with passengers leaving from major cities of the country (Sofia, Plovdiv, Varna, Ruse, Stara Zagora, Pazardjik, Kardjali, and Haskovo) two main profiles are delineated: those residing permanently or temporary in Germany. For example, temporary migrants express a much clearer intentions regarding their future moves, namely, to retain in short-term circulation (over 70% of the respondents from this category).

The latter study provided important indications about the incidence of the case of circular labour migration that utilizes international bus routes.

There is no doubt that short-term mobility could be an important alternative for job seekers from CEE as compared to emigration with a settlement purpose. The current study contributes to the existing literature on Bulgarian labour migration by providing empirical evidence about a major set of determinants of the intended future moves of Bulgarian migrants travelling by bus lines.

Data source

The current empirical study utilizes data from a sample questionnaire survey conducted among Bulgarian travelers that use international bus lines for their trips abroad (more details in Mintchev et al., 2019). The sample is selected on target locations – major bus stations for international lines, mainly to Central and Western European final destinations. Three main strata are defined: travelers that use one of the main international bus stations located in the cities of Sofia (capital), Plovdiv, and Varna. These locations provide bus lines for the vast majority of travelers that use such type of transportation means (i.e. points of concentration of transport flows). At the first stage, a random selection of busses (nests) has been performed using the list of buses departing from each location during the survey period (4 weeks). At the second stage, from each nest, few respondents are selected randomly and invited for an interview. The circumstances of such fieldwork do not allow a long duration of the interview, so a specifically developed short questionnaire[2] has been utilized.

The planned sample size was 300, however, 305 interviews have been successfully conducted in the period April-May 2018 – 205 in Sofia, 58 in Plovdiv, and 48 in Varna. The unit is defined as: (i) individual of 18 or higher age; (ii) who has been at least once abroad; (iii) for a period of at least 3 months; (iv) during the last 10 years period: 2008-2017; (v) with a purpose of work or study abroad; and (vi) at the moment of the survey departs to foreign country by an international bus line. During the last stay abroad, the vast majority of respondents declared to have worked as employees (279); minor groups

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indicate to have been self-employed (11), students (13), taking care for relatives (1) and non-responded (1). When asked for the type of labour contract which they had during their last stay abroad, almost half (49%) of those that have worked declared a temporary contract, 32% a permanent job contract, and 15% no formal contract. As a main destination countries of the last visit have been reported: Germany (35%), Austria (18%), Greece (15%), Czech Republic (7%), etc. On this basis, the analysis further is restricted to the major subsample of 290 labour migrants (employees and self-employed/family firm workers) that has provided data for the analysis in the current study.

Research framework

The goal of this analysis is to identify the main characteristics of the travelers using international bus lines that significantly correlate with a systematical choice of one or another alternative for the individual plans for her/his future. Appropriate variables have been constructed for each of these characteristics in order to incorporate them into a multivariate response model. In order to test for significance of the effect of each variable on a net basis, i.e. other things equal, a multinomial logistic regression model is adopted in the current study. This model has been estimated in the following nonlinear form:

$$Ln\left(\frac{\pi[Y=j]}{\pi[Y=1]}\right) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \cdots + \beta_k X_k + \varepsilon \tag{1}$$

and in its estimated forms:

$$Ln\left(\frac{p[Y=j]}{p[Y=1]}\right) = b_0 + b_1 X_1 + b_2 X_2 + \cdots + b_k X_k \tag{2}$$

$$\frac{p[Y=j]}{p[Y=1]} = e^{b_0 + b_1 X_1 + b_2 X_2 + \cdots + b_k X_k} \tag{3}$$

$$\frac{p[Y=j]}{p[Y=1]} = e^{b_0}\left(e^{b_1}\right)^{X_1}\left(e^{b_2}\right)^{X_2} \ldots \left(e^{b_k}\right)^{X_k} \tag{4}$$

The estimates $b_0, b_1, b_2, \ldots, b_k$ of the model parameters $\beta_0, \beta_1, \beta_k, \ldots, \beta_k$ are obtained by the maximum likelihood estimation method using the sample data. The dependent variable in equations (3) and (4) is the odds ratio of the probabilities for an individual to choose alternative "j" against alternative "1" (the latter selected as a reference category of respondents). Equations (1) and (2) are in the form with a log-odds ratio as a dependent variable modelled as a linear function of the independent variables.

The reference category for this study is the subsample of respondents that have clearly expressed a wish to stay in Bulgaria (i.e. "stayers"). The categories contrasted to the reference one are:

- j=2 "My intentions are to live both in Bulgaria and abroad" (i.e. "circulars / temporary migrants" or just "circulars");

- j=3 "My intentions are to stay for a long time or permanently abroad" (i.e. "permanent migrants" or "settlers");

- j=4 "No particular intentions / plans for the future" (i.e. "hesitaters").

Estimation of this model requires a dependent variable that partitions the sample into mutually exclusive subsamples – four in this case. All quantitative independent variables (age, number of children; a number of visits abroad during the last 10 years; length of the last visit abroad) have been transformed into categorical using fixed numerical values or appropriate intervals.

Table 1

Variables used in the analysis

Variables	Variable values	N	%
Future intentions (dependent variable)	1= Stay in Bulgaria (reference cat.)	38	13.4
	2= Circulate between BG and abroad	101	35.7
	3= Stay predominantly abroad	71	25.1
	4= No clear intentions	73	25.8
Independent variables			
Gender	Female	112	39.6
	Male (base group)	171	60.4
Age group	1) Age 19-30	87	30.7
	2) Age 31-45	111	39.2
	3) Age over 45 (base group)	85	30.0
Marital status	Married/Cohabitating	167	59.0
	Single/Divorced/Widow(er) (base gr.)	116	41.0
Children in the family	Yes	114	40.3
	No (base group)	169	59.7
Ethnical group	Minority	51	18.0
	Bulgarian (base group)	232	82.0
Educational level	1) Basic or lower	49	17.3
	2) Secondary general	74	26.1
	3) Secondary vocational	84	29.7
	4) Higher (base group)	76	26.9
Number of visits abroad	1	117	41.3
	2	69	24.4
	3	50	17.7
	4 or more (base group)	47	16.6
Length of last visit abroad	1) 3-12 months	104	36.7
	2) 1 to 3 years	112	39.6
	3) Over 3 years (base group)	67	23.7
Remitting	1) Regular	110	38.9
	2) Occasional	107	37.8
	3) No remitting (base group)	66	23.3
Attachment to family / friends	Yes	166	58.7
	No (base group)	117	41.3
Valid observations (included in the estimation)		283	100.0
Total observations (7 missing observations)		290	

The frequency distributions of the sample by each variable is presented in Table 1. It is obvious that the largest share of the labour migrants travelling by international bus lines (36%) have a clear goal to circulate between Bulgaria and a foreign host country. Yet, one of each eight respondents is allocated to the reference category – i.e. those expressing a wish to cancel the international mobility and to settle down in Bulgaria. However, one-quarter of the labor migrants sample expresses an intention to leave Bulgaria at least for a long period, most likely to leave for good.

The socio-demographic profile of this sample consists of 6 variables. The frequency distributions by these attributes show that the majority of the labour migrants which use international bus lines are predominantly men (60%), married or cohabitating (59%), without children (60%). They are relatively equally distributed by age, with a highest share of those aged 31-45 (39%), and with expected distribution by ethnicity (18% in summary for the traditional minority groups). The educational level of the labour migrants is however quite dispersed – the majority (56%) is held by secondary educated respondents (30% with professional qualification), along with 37% having higher education; still, each one of six have reached just basic or even lower educational degree.

Four variables comprise the set of features reflecting the migration experience of the respondents – those assumed as relevant concerning the formation of the future plans of the labour migrants. It can be seen that the majority of these individuals has a very modest experience in international mobility – 41% have travelled just once for a period of at least 3 months during the last 10 years; additionally, one quarter have been only twice abroad (and 18% three times abroad) for such periods. Only one of six respondents declare a higher number of visits to a host country (4 or more). Another important variable is the length of the last visit abroad – that should reflect another dimension of the migrant's recent experience. The majority of respondents here (over three quarters) is split between short-term (3-12 months) and medium-term periods (1 to 3 years); yet, about one-quarter of the sample is comprised from individuals that in the last time have been abroad for quite a long period (over 3 years).

It is important here to explore an assumed link between the remitting inclination of the labour migrant and her/his future plans. This can be plausibly tested as far as a large subsample of individuals (39%) declares a regular practice of remitting money to Bulgaria during their last visit abroad. Still, another 38% indicate occasional remitting practice, including the act of bringing money with their return home. In this line of reasoning, an important aspect related to the future plans of these migrants is the psychological attachment to family members or close friends that live in Bulgaria – an attitude expressed by the majority of respondents (59%).

Empirical results

Table 2 presents the results from the log-likelihood tests regarding the estimated multinomial logistic regression model. The overall significance of the model (Final-Sig<0.001) shows that the included independent variables, taken as a whole, succeed to

differentiate between the three categories of interest and the reference category (stayers) at a negligible level of risk (less than 0.1%).

Table 2

Likelihood ratio tests of the multinomial regression model

Effect	-2 Log Likelihood*	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Gender	518,984	2,432	3	,488
Age group	545,526	28,974	6	,000
Marital status	521,619	5,067	3	,167
Children in the family	520,480	3,928	3	,269
Ethnic group	522,686	6,134	3	,105
Educational level	548,369	31,817	9	,000
Number of visits abroad	531,883	15,331	9	,082
Length of last visit abroad	529,616	13,064	6	,042
Remitting to Bulgaria	535,765	19,213	6	,004
Attachment to family/friends	529,648	13,096	3	,004
Overall model:				
Intercept only	716,768			
Final	516,552	200,216	51	,000

Note:The chi-square statistic is the difference in -2 log-likelihoods between the final model and a reduced model. The reduced model is formed by omitting an effect from the final model. The null hypothesis is that all parameters of that effect are 0.

Significant effects are observed at 0.1% level of significance for two socio-demographic variables ("age" and "educational level") and four migration experience variables – "length of the last visit abroad", "remitting to Bulgaria", "psychological attachment to family/friends in Bulgaria", and "number of visits abroad (the latter at 10% level of significance). The estimated parameters of each dummy variable separately for each response category compared to the reference category are reported in tables 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3.

When comparing the largest target category (circular migrants) with the reference one (stayers) several predictor variables show significant effects on the odds ratio, i.e. the odds of choosing to circulate over the odds of choosing to stay in Bulgaria (table 3.1). At 5% level of significance, practically all socio-demographic variables reveal no effects on the odds ratio, except educational level – for respondents with secondary vocational education (especially, secondary vocational) relative to those with higher education, the relative chance for preferring to circulate than to stay would be expected to increase by a factor of 13 (given all other variables are held constant); in other words, migrants with vocational education are much more likely than higher educated individuals to choose to circulate between home and abroad over choosing to stay in Bulgaria. A similar effect is observed also for the secondary general educated respondents, albeit with somewhat lower effect on the odds ratio (8.8).

Table 3.1

Parameter estimates of the multinomial regression model
Response category: Circulate between Bulgaria and abroad*

	B	Std.Err.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Intercept	-1,557	1,059	2,163	1	,141	
[gender=1]	,384	,588	,426	1	,514	1,468
[gender=2]	**	.		0	.	.
[agegr=1]	1,341	,928	2,088	1	,148	3,823
[agegr=2]	1,241	,738	2,828	1	,093	3,461
[agegr=3]	**		.	0	.	.
[marital=1]	-1,086	,630	2,974	1	,085	,337
[marital=2]	**		.	0	.	.
[children=1]	,131	,730	,032	1	,857	1,140
[children=2]	**		.	0	.	.
[ethnic=1]	1,105	,925	1,427	1	,232	3,020
[ethnic=2]	**		.	0	.	.
[educ=1]	1,263	1,001	1,592	1	,207	3,538
[educ=2]	2,175	,715	9,263	1	,002	8,801
[educ=3]	2,579	,645	15,962	1	,000	13,181
[educ=4]	**		.	0	.	.
[num_visits=1]	-1,230	,679	3,284	1	,070	,292
[num_visits=2]	-,219	,846	,067	1	,796	,803
[num_visits=3]	,157	1,002	,025	1	,875	1,170
[num_visits=4]	**		.	0	.	.
[length_last=1]	1,629	,637	6,535	1	,011	5,101
[length_last=2]	1,477	,662	4,973	1	,026	4,381
[length_last=3]	**		.	0	.	.
[remit=1]	,476	,761	,392	1	,531	1,610
[remit=2]	1,379	,832	2,747	1	,097	3,972
[remit=3]	**		.	0	.	.
[familyatt=1]	-,632	,568	1,238	1	,266	,532
[familyatt=2]	**		.	0	.	.

Notes: * The reference category is: Stay in Bulgaria.
       ** This parameter is set to zero because it is redundant.

Yet, one particular marginally significant result (at 10% level of risk) deserves noting – namely the parameter estimate for the "marriage/cohabitation" status. This estimate is negative leading to an odds ratio for the predictor less than 1 (Exp[B]=0.337) which shows that having a family acts as a "hold down" factor for the respondents when considering the two alternatives (i.e. rather staying than circulating).

Among the variables related to migration experience, the most distinct effect is observed for the length of stay during the last visit abroad. Here the base group (third) consists of those with the longest periods of stay (over 3 years). Other things equal, for respondents with shortest periods of the last stay abroad (especially, up to 1 year) the odds ratio for choosing to circulate than to stay in Bulgaria is about 5 time higher than this ratio for the base group (in other words, migrants with short-term period of the last visit abroad are

more likely to choose to circulate between home and abroad over to stay in Bulgaria, than individuals with much longer periods of the last stay abroad). The estimate of this parameter for the second group – those with a medium term of the last visit abroad (1-3 years) – is not much different from the first group: about 4.4 times. Both effects are statistically significant at 5% level. Another result supporting the one for the length of stay is found regarding the variable "number of visits abroad", albeit at 10% risk – here those migrants having least experience (just 1 visit abroad) are much less likely to choose circulating than staying, as compared to those with a largest experience (4 or more visits up to now). This confirms the conclusion that having already experience in periodic short-term relocations to foreign host countries induces an inclination to continue the same way.

Another migration experience variable deserves a notice, namely the remitting behavior of the individuals. In this respect, there is no indication of any difference between those who used to remit on a regular basis and those who did not remit at all, concerning the choice of circulation against staying home. However, at a marginal risk of 10% a slight evidence is observed for group 2 – those remitting "occasionally" (mainly, carrying the money during their arrivals) – to be more likely to opt to circulate between home and abroad over to stay in Bulgaria, than the base group individuals (group 3 – not remitting). This seems rational as far as regular remitting behavior is expected mainly from long (or medium) term migrants. As expected, having a stronger psychological attachment to the family and close friends in Bulgaria does not concern the preference for circular mobility, when compared to the option for staying home.

Table 3.2 presents the results from the comparison of the "permanent migrants" with the reference category (stayers), after taking into account the circulation choice. Few predictor variables have significant effects on the odds ratio, i.e. the odds of choosing to stay permanently abroad over the odds of choosing to stay home. As expected, the strongest effects (at 1% level of significance) are found regarding the age – for the youngest respondents (up to age 30) relative to the oldest, the relative chance for the preference to settle abroad than to stay in Bulgaria would be expected to increase by a factor of 15, given all other variables are held constant. Unexpectedly, even a stronger effect is observed for those aged 31-40 (a divergence of the odds ratios almost 20). In other words, migrants of lower ages are much more likely than mature migrants to choose a longer period of stay abroad, including to emigrate for good, over choosing to stay in Bulgaria.

Almost all other socio-demographic variables, as well as migration experience, reveal no effects on the odds ratio for this target category. The only exclusions observed at 5% level of significance are: (a) marital status – those having families are more likely to opt to stay in Bulgaria over to leave for a long term, than the base group of singles and divorced; (b) remittance behavior – those who used to remit regularly (during their former visits abroad) are more inclined to choose to stay in Bulgaria over a long term move, than the base group of non-remitters. Here a hypothesis emerges that such individuals might have "completed" the task for providing funds from abroad, and/or any eventual permanent migration is rather not "remittance-oriented".

Table 3.2

Parameter estimates of the multinomial regression model
Response category: Stay predominantly abroad*

	B	Std.Err.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Intercept	,320	1,048	,093	1	,760	
[gender=1]	,855	,606	1,989	1	,158	2,351
[gender=2]	**	.	.	0	.	.
[agegr=1]	2,691	,929	8,390	1	,004	14,752
[agegr=2]	2,987	,781	14,609	1	,000	19,819
[agegr=3]	**	.	.	0	.	.
[marital=1]	-1,424	,655	4,722	1	,030	,241
[marital=2]	**	.	.	0	.	.
[children=1]	-,688	,760	,820	1	,365	,502
[children=2]	**	.	.	0	.	.
[ethnic=1]	-,940	1,204	,609	1	,435	,391
[ethnic=2]	**	.	.	0	.	.
[educ=1]	,668	1,074	,387	1	,534	1,951
[educ=2]	,303	,739	,168	1	,682	1,353
[educ=3]	1,000	,656	2,325	1	,127	2,719
[educ=4]	**	.	.	0	.	.
[num_visits=1]	-,247	,769	,104	1	,748	,781
[num_visits=2]	,535	,944	,321	1	,571	1,708
[num_visits=3]	1,252	1,072	1,365	1	,243	3,498
[num_visits=4]	**	.	.	0	.	.
[length_last=1]	,198	,669	,088	1	,767	1,219
[length_last=2]	,080	,679	,014	1	,906	1,084
[length_last=3]	**	.	.	0	.	.
[remit=1]	-1,605	,763	4,433	1	,035	,201
[remit=2]	,025	,804	,001	1	,976	1,025
[remit=3]	**	.	.	0	.	.
[familyatt=1]	-,814	,586	1,932	1	,165	,443
[familyatt=2]	**	.	.	0	.	.

Notes: * The reference category is: Stay in Bulgaria.
** This parameter is set to zero because it is redundant.

Regarding the willingness for a long-term move, some expected attributes did not show any significant effect out of the bus travelers' survey. For example, the necessity for caring for children, ethnical group, or educational level does not seem to stimulate or restrain the inclination to migrate permanently. Intriguingly, the feeling of attachment to home, family, and friends does not show any hold down effect neither. In contrast, this attachment shows a significant effect in the estimated model for the "hesitating" migrants as compared to stayers (table 3.3). As a whole, the results are similar to those for the permanent migrants, with the attachment to family/friends as a major exclusion – it is found as a "source of hesitation" here at 1% level of significance.

Table 3.3

Parameter estimates of the multinomial regression model
Response category: No clear intentions *

	B	Std.Err.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Intercept	-2,409	1,225	3,866	1	,049	
[gender=1]	,404	,634	,405	1	,525	1,497
[gender=2]	**	.	.	0	.	.
[agegr=1]	3,032	,974	9,691	1	,002	20,749
[agegr=2]	3,033	,802	14,283	1	,000	20,755
[agegr=3]	**	.	.	0	.	.
[marital=1]	-1,045	,673	2,413	1	,120	,352
[marital=2]	**	.	.	0	.	.
[children=1]	-,784	,756	1,075	1	,300	,457
[children=2]	**	.	.	0	.	.
[ethnic=1]	,498	1,016	,241	1	,624	1,646
[ethnic=2]	**	.	.	0	.	.
[educ=1]	1,346	1,060	1,611	1	,204	3,840
[educ=2]	2,032	,743	7,478	1	,006	7,626
[educ=3]	1,940	,688	7,943	1	,005	6,959
[educ=4]	**	.	.	0	.	.
[num_visits=1]	,263	,839	,098	1	,754	1,301
[num_visits=2]	1,100	,995	1,224	1	,269	3,005
[num_visits=3]	2,182	1,109	3,875	1	,049	8,866
[num_visits=4]	**	.	.	0	.	.
[length_last=1]	1,168	,695	2,823	1	,093	3,216
[length_last=2]	1,135	,704	2,600	1	,107	3,111
[length_last=3]	**	.	.	0	.	.
[remit=1]	,208	,775	,072	1	,788	1,232
[remit=2]	,706	,847	,695	1	,405	2,026
[remit=3]	**	.	.	0	.	.
[familyatt=1]	-1,697	,582	8,492	1	,004	,183
[familyatt=2]	**	.	.	0	.	.

Notes: * The reference category is: Stay in Bulgaria.

** This parameter is set to zero because it is redundant.

An interesting result can be indicated regarding the length of stay abroad, albeit at 10% level of risk – for the migrants with the shortest period of stay (up to 1 year) relative to those with the longest period (over 3 years), the relative chance for deeming a possible future move than to staying in Bulgaria would be expected to increase about 3 times, all other variables held constant. However, a much more noticeable effect is observed regarding the educational level. When considering to stay in Bulgaria, the migrants with both secondary general and vocational education clearly tend to hesitate more about new migration moves in the future, than higher educated individuals. On the other hand, the lowest educated migrants cannot be distinguished from the highest educated ones in this respect.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that short-term labour mobility in Europe, especially in the new EU member states of CEE, gains popularity and increasing public interest. In relation to this, the intensified concentration and focus of the governmental agencies on the issues of short-term migration management is understandable. Whatever the steps are to be taken in this line, informed choices should be made having in mind the fact that circular migration has become a distinctive pattern of mobility. This can be reasonably owed not only to traditionally operating migration networks but also to an expanded implementation of temporary and seasonal labour mobility schemes.

Based on a specifically focused survey among bus travelers from Bulgaria to major European destinations this article provides empirical evidence about several personal features that contribute to the formation of a willingness to circulate between home and host countries. In this respect, if circular migration is to be put in the focus of migration policies, it needs to be clearly distinguished, as a complex socio-economic phenomenon, from the other types of international mobility of the population, especially as a typical form of temporary labour migration. The evidence provided about a specific segment of Bulgarian international migrants, i.e. traveling by major bus lines to European destinations, could be of particular interest for such policy analysis. The standpoint shared here considers the circular migration as having a substantial potential to provide sources of subsistence and even some development in many settlements located in depressed regions of the sending country.

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