

East-Central European migrants in Sweden - Migration motives and migration outcome

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Abstract

The disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1989 and the European Union enlargement in 2004 and 2007 respectively have changed the preconditions of east-west migration. However, the geopolitical changes have not resulted in the 'mass migration' that was initially expected from the EU15. Sweden is one of the countries to which migration from East-Central Europe has been modest, although it has increased. Reasons why this migration is still limited in Sweden are not only connected to political structures; occupation, family situation, and social networks are additional issues that matter in the migration decision-making process. This paper explores migration motives and the outcome of the migration in terms of employment, family status and satisfaction with the migration decision for people moving to Sweden from Russia and the East-Central European countries, Poland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

The study is based on a questionnaire survey and reveals significant gender differences when it comes to migration motives, and women tend to state social reasons to a higher degree than men. Although social motives predominate among the migrants, economic reasons tend to become more important over time, particularly after the year 2000. Moreover, the majority of the respondents report that to migrate was a fairly easy decision to make. However, some differences exist depending on country and gender, whereby the decision is perceived as less easy for migrants from Russia and

Poland and for women who stated social and economic motives. There is also evidence that motives are of importance for labour market success among respondents.

Key words: East-west migration; Migration motive; Outcome; Labour market success; International migration

1. Introduction

The disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1989 and the European Union (EU) enlargement in 2004 and 2007, in which a number of East-Central European countries became members¹, have changed the preconditions of east-west migration (Koser, Lutz, 1998; Favell 2008; Drinkwater et al. 2009). The citizens of the new member states, as well as the former EU15, have the right to live and work in any member state, and migration from east to west is a possibility as well as a reality. At the time of the enlargement of the EU, there was a debate in the former member states (EU15) about the possible consequences of a 'mass migration' from the new member states, and fears of great pressure on the welfare systems and labour markets in the EU15 (Muus 2004; van Selm, Tsolakis, 2004; Doyle et al. 2006). A fear of many EU leaders that weaker economies in Central and Eastern Europe would provide incentives for labour migration led to a majority of the EU15 states imposing immigration restrictions on citizens from the new member states (Ireland, Sweden and the UK excluded) imposing restrictions on employment and welfare for citizens from the new East-Central European member states (Barrell et al. 2007; Zaiceva, Zimmermann, 2008).

Migration from East-Central Europe increased after 1990 and a negative net migration was noted in, for instance, the Baltic States, Poland, Bulgaria, Romania, Slovenia, and Albania (Mansoor, Quillin, 2006; Okólski 2004). However, migration has generally slowed down after 2003, although there is still a negative (though small) net migration in many Eastern European countries (Schreiner 2008). In Sweden the geopolitical changes in Eastern Europe after 1990 and also later in 2004, did not result in the anticipated 'mass migration', though migration has

¹ In May 2004 ten new countries became members of the EU: Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Hungary, Slovenia, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Cyprus, and Malta. In January 2007, Bulgaria and Romania became members.

increased (Tamas, Münz, 2006; Doyle et al. 2006; Eðvarðsson et al. 2007). For example, between 2004 and 2009 the number of migrants from new member countries increased by almost 45% in Sweden, yet numbers are low (Statistics Sweden 2010).

The outcome of migrating can be perceived differently between individual migrants, depending on things like the situation in the country of out-migration, the personal circumstances leading to the migration decision, the motive for migration, social (transnational) networks, family situation, and gender. Gender is one factor that is shaping the migration decision-making process and there are different rationales and prerequisites for migration among men and women, e.g., more women move independently instead of as part of a family strategy (Krieger 2004). This study focuses on migration to Sweden from the geographically adjacent East-Central European countries of Russia, Poland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, and the aim is to explore men's and women's motives for migration, and the outcome of their migration in terms of employment, family status and satisfaction with the migration decision. The following research questions are addressed:

1. How has migration motives changed over time between 1990 and 2006?
2. Does satisfaction with the migration decision vary with respect to migration motive?
3. Does the outcome in terms of employment, family status and satisfaction with life in Sweden vary with migration motive?

As the sending countries are different in terms of e.g. history, economy, politics, and not least membership in the EU, it is not fruitful to generalise the results for East-Central European migration. Hence, the five countries are analysed as separate entities.

Migration is generally understood as people moving across national borders with the intention to settle in another country for some minimum period of time, often at least a year (Muus 2004). This definition has its flaws, e.g. how to regard place of residence when it is not the whole household moving but instead only one family member, and the delineation of time. In this paper, a migrant is defined as

a person who has moved from Russia, Poland or the Baltic States to Sweden and is registered in the national population base (RTB). To be registered as residing in Sweden, an immigrant has to declare the intention to stay in Sweden for at least one year (Statistics Sweden 2006). Migrants who for various reasons have returned to their country of origin, or who are not officially registered in Sweden are not included in the survey, which opens for the possibility of selectivity.

This paper uses empirical data from a questionnaire survey undertaken in March 2009, directed at 2,132 migrants from Russia, Poland and the Baltic States. In the questionnaire, the migrants were asked to state their primary and secondary motives for migration, employment before and after migration, family status, and satisfaction with the migration decision.

2. Points of departure

Migration from East-Central Europe after in particular the accessions of 2004 and 2007 has received much attention in research. The motives for migrating, the strategies, performance on the labour market, social networks and attachment are examples on issues that focus on the migrants situation (Burrell 2010). Another approach in research on migration from East-Central Europe deals with consequences on sending and receiving countries (e.g. Blanchflower et al. 2007). This article focuses on the individual migrants from East-Central Europe, and the following section outlines some of the theoretical works that have dealt with motives for and outcome of migration.

Migration is driven by conditions in the sending countries that function as repelling, but also by conditions in the receiving countries that attract migrants (Mansoor, Quillin, 2006; Ciżkowicz et al. 2007). For the migrant, these may not always be clearly discernible or held apart. The motives rather constitute a complex mix of different push and pull factors, which can be summarised according to Table 1.

People's reasons for moving can be analysed on different levels, and theories of international migration distinguish between macro, meso and micro level perspectives (e.g. Faist 1997, 2000). While macro theories emphasize economic, legal and political structures and their importance for migration flows, micro theories deal

with migration motives and choices on an individual level (Massey et al. 1993, Gold 1997, Arango 2004). Network theories provide a meso level (Faist 1997, 2000) perspective, stressing the importance of social networks connecting migrants, former migrants, potential migrants and non-migrants at both origin and destination. These networks form social ties, based on family, friendship or mutual experiences and interests in the area of origin (Faist 1997, 2000). The meso level and the importance of social networks, migration contexts and large-scale structures have clear similarities to the approach of transnationalism (Glick Schiller et al. 1992, Gold 1997). S. J. Gold (1997) argues that the approach of transnationalism is very useful in analysing and understanding motivations for migration. It illuminates the connections between macro-structural and individual reasons for migration, and stresses the international migration process as an on-going process with changing structures and values over time that affect the individuals (Gold 1997).

Table 1. Motives for migration

Motives	Push factors	Pull factors
Economic and demographic	Poverty, unemployment, low wages, high fertility rates, lack of basic health care and education	Prospects of higher wages, potential for improved standard of living, personal or professional development
Political	Conflict, insecurity, violence, poor governance, corruption, human rights abuses	Safety and security, political freedom
Social and cultural	Discrimination based on ethnicity, gender, religion	Family reunification, ethnic migration to homeland (Diaspora), freedom from discrimination

Source: Mansoor and Quillin 2006: 78

Economic motives are often stated in the migration literature as a major motive for migration (Blanchflower et al. 2007, Massey et al. 1998, Arango 2004). In short, individuals will compare the income increase a migration means with the economic and social cost of migrating. Migrating does not have to be triggered by high unemployment in the sending country, but can rather be due to the opportunities for better paid jobs or jobs that match one's qualifications in the host

country (ibid.).

In neoclassical economic theory, wage differentials are seen as key drivers in explaining migration, and people migrate to equalise differences in wages and living conditions (Fischer et al. 1997, Arango 2004). According to Blanchflower et al. (2007) and Cizkowicz et al. (2007) the income factor, and to a lesser extent the situation on the labour market, are also main drivers for out-migration from several Eastern European countries. Economic hardship in the country of origin and a wish to migrate in order to find better economic opportunities are motives to emigrate; however, income differentials only explain a minor fraction of why people migrate. Increases in quality of life, expressed in terms of housing and education as well as security or safety are also important motivations for people to move (Hazans 2003).

Furthermore, there are gendered differences in migration behaviour (Kofman et al. 2000; De Jong 2000; Bilsborrow, Schoorl, 2006). Both women's and men's migration decisions are driven by economic and non-economic reasons. However, E. Kofman et al. (2000) argue that non-economic reasons are the primary determinant of migration decisions for women. This is also shown in B. E. Bilsborrow and J. Schoorl's (2006) study on gender and international migration, in which male migrants state nearly only economic motives for their migration decision while women's motives are much more diverse and tend to be more family-driven. The importance of family ties as enabling and constraining factors in migration has to be recognised (Bailey et al. 2004; Smith, Bailey, 2006). Diverse family structures give different conditions and outcomes for family migration. E. Kofman (2004, cited in Smith and Bailey 2006) distinguished between four types of family migration: family reunification, family formation, marriage migration and family migration. Family reunification refers to "bringing in immediate family members" (ibid.: 1328) and is growing in magnitude in places like the UK and Sweden. Family formation refers to second and subsequent generations of children of migrant origin who bring in a fiancé(e) or spouse from their parent's homeland or diasporic space, while marriage migration consists of citizens in the host country who have met a partner abroad and bring this partner to his/her home country. Family migration, finally, refers to married or cohabiting households that migrate jointly. R. King et al. (2006)

also add a fifth type of family migration, split-family migration, whereby only one member of the family migrates and leaves the rest of the family behind. S. Haug (2008) argues that the family is an important determinant of migration, and that demographic structure (such as age, sex and position in family) and social structure of families (such as kinship patterns and the family's social network) affect migration decisions. Previous research has shown that women in the past migrated to a large extent to join their men in the new country. However, contemporary women migrants are increasingly migrating independently for e.g. economic reasons or as students (Kofman et al. 2000).

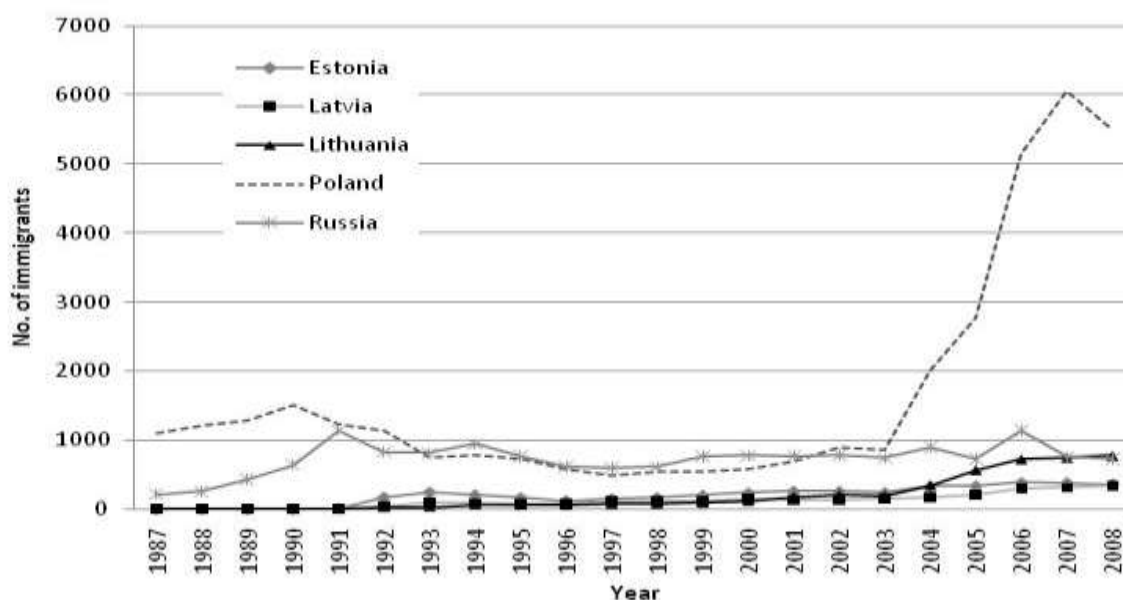
3. Migration from East-Central Europe to Sweden

A new phase in east-west migration took place with the opening up of borders in the late 1980s, early 1990s, and later with the entrance of several East-Central European countries into the EU. The motives for migration from East-Central to Western Europe have altered: while political reasons have been more frequent in the past, today economic and social motives dominate among migrants from East-Central European countries (Blanchflower et al. 2007; Mansoor, Quillin, 2006). The changed preconditions for migration have resulted in an increase of westward migration, although not in the volumes that were initially anticipated (Wallace, Stola, 2001; Malačič 2002; Okólski 2004; Doyle et al. 2006; Zaiceva, Zimmermann, 2008). However, there has been a change to a more diverse migration flow from East-Central European countries, and recent international migrations are much more complex with, for example, more temporary and highly skilled migrants (Malačič 2002; Malakha 2002; Iontsev, Ivakhniouk, 2002). The dominating migration flows from Central and Eastern European countries (CEEC) are interregional. In the east-west population movement, Germany and Austria receive most of the East-Central European migrants, and Poles are a predominant nationality among the emigrants from these countries (Okólski 2004; Keipińska 2005; Tamas, Münz, 2006). Measured in increase of migration after 2004, the effect is limited, and the main part of the increase could be attributed to Austria, Ireland and the UK. The outcome can also be described in number of migrants from East to West within the EU: approximate 2.75

million people from the 12 latest member states formed part of the working age population in the former EU15 in 2007, equivalent to 1.1% (Eurofound 2008).

Migration from Eastern Europe to Sweden is not a new phenomenon. At the end of the Second World War 35,000 refugees came to the country from the Baltic States. Many stayed permanently in Sweden (SOU 2004: 73), thereby establishing social networks that exist today. After the Second World War and during the Soviet era, Eastern migration was limited to citizens from three of the new EU member states: Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia. Until 1990 there was no registered migration from the Baltic States, as the few migrants from these countries were officially registered as former Soviet Union citizens. As indicated in Figure 1, the events in 1989 and 2004 increased immigration from Poland and Russia in particular, and in total there are close to 100,000 residents in Sweden who were born in Russia, Poland or the Baltic States (Statistics Sweden 2010). Of a total of more than 83,000 immigrants in Sweden in 2008 almost 14,000 (16%) came from the East-Central European countries in the EU (Migrationsverket 2009), and the share from the Baltic States, Poland and Russia was 9,592 (11%). Yet, these numbers have to be seen in the light of total migration from East-Central to Western Europe – and Sweden is a minor destination country with less than five per cent of the total migration from the above mentioned countries.

Figure 1. Immigrants per year from Russia, the Baltic States and Poland, 1987-2008. (Source: Statistic Sweden, 2010)



Like in most destination countries, migrants from East-Central Europe are generally highly educated and single. However, there are more women than men migrating to Sweden (Statistics Sweden 2007; Gerdes, Wadensjö, 2008). The language could be regarded as a barrier as Swedish is so completely different to Polish, Russian, etc., while on the other hand the geographic proximity and historic connections between Sweden and particularly the Baltic States, Poland and Russia might balance the language barrier (Doyle et al. 2006; Gerdes, Wadensjö, 2008).

4. Method and data

The empirical data analysed in this study are based on a questionnaire survey conducted in Sweden in March 2009. The survey was directed at immigrants from Russia, Poland and the Baltic States who migrated to Sweden at an adult age (at least 20 years old at the time of immigration), and before 1987 or after 1990 (before and after the fall of the Iron Curtain). To ensure that the respondents had some experience of Sweden and had had time to reflect upon their migration, the last year of migration was set to 2006. Thus, the most recent arrivals had been in Sweden two years.

From a total population of 39,668 individuals, a stratified random sample of 2,132 individuals was drawn, which represents 5.4% of the population. As noted in Table 2, immigration from Poland is much greater than that from the other countries, while immigration from Latvia is low. To ensure a minimum number of observations from each country a stratified sampling was done, which resulted in immigrants from Latvia being overrepresented and immigrants from Poland underrepresented.

Table 2. Population (in January 2009), sample size and response rate

Country of outmigration	Population (N)	Sample (n)	n/N (%)	Response rate (%)
Russia	7,094	693	9.7	49.2
Estonia	2,171	249	11.5	54.6
Latvia	1,153	248	21.5	52.1
Lithuania	2,107	247	11.7	48.6
Poland	27,143	695	2.6	47.9
Total	39,668	2,132	5.4	49.7

The questionnaire submitted to the respondents was in Swedish; however, on request the respondents could receive a version translated into their respective country's official language. It can be noted that only eight respondents asked for this service. The distribution and collection of data were administered by Statistics Sweden, who was also responsible for the sample and an analysis of drop-outs. After two reminders, a final response rate of 49.7% was noted. It turned out that the response rate was higher for women than for men, and also increased with age and education. In order to correct these deviations data have been calibrated (weighted) with respect to age, sex and education level as well as country of outmigration.

The questionnaire focused on the migrants' major motives for migration and their perceptions regarding the move and how the outcome of the migration decision turned out. Furthermore, questions were asked about their socio-economic situation before and after migrating to Sweden, the conditions at their current place of residence, and their social network. To encompass aspects of social integration, the migrants were also asked about their knowledge in terms of writing, reading, understanding and speaking Swedish prior to and after migration. They were also asked about their knowledge of institutions such as the Migration Board, police, justice, the Swedish social insurance office, the Swedish employment agency, etc.

The migrants were asked in retrospect about their migration motives, expectations and knowledge of Sweden, etc. It is possible that the answers given after migration do not fully reflect the situation or perceptions at the time of migrating; there is the possibility of rationalising answers, forgetting, etc. Another question is whether the answers reflect the respondents' notions of what an acceptable or politically correct answer is, rather than their attitudes and perceptions at the time of migrating. However, the respondents gave different reasons for migrating, and stated different degrees of initial knowledge and expectations regarding the migration, which can indicate that different migration rationales were captured at least partly.

Polish citizens have a longer history of migrating to Sweden after WWII compared to people from the Baltic States and Russia (Tamas, Münz, 2006). It was easier for Polish citizens to migrate, whereas residents of the Baltic States and Russia

were registered as citizens of the former USSR and had limited migration possibilities. As a consequence of non-existent or very low migration to Sweden from the Baltic States and Russia until 1990, there were only three respondents from these countries who had migrated before 1990. To ensure similar preconditions for migration, only migrants after 1990 in the analyses are included.

Group comparisons were made by means of chi-square tests (distribution) and univariate ANOVAs (mean values), and all commented differences are statistically significant.

5. The respondents

In Sweden as a whole, a majority (70%) of the migrants from Russia, Poland and the Baltic States are women (Statistics Sweden 2007), which is reflected in the results where 70% of the respondents are women. As indicated in Table 3, there are differences worth noting between respondents from the five different countries. The share of women was considerably lower from Lithuania and Poland. Half of the respondents are between 23 and 42 years old; however, it should be noted that the survey was directed at those who were at least 20 when they immigrated (and hence supposedly made their own immigration decision) but not older than 65 at the time of the survey. At the time of migrating to Sweden, they were on average of 32 years old. The respondents are fairly highly educated: Over 40% had a university education when they migrated, and the education level has generally increased after migration. Further, women had a slightly higher education level than men, especially women from Russia and Lithuania. The Russian migrants were also the highest educated, with two of three having a university or post-graduate education. Only a third of the respondents from Estonia had a higher education when they arrived, but quite a large number have acquired a university education since arriving in Sweden. Data from Statistics Sweden (2007) confirm this: Women from Russia and the Baltic States are highly educated. Of all women in Sweden aged 25-64 years, those born in Russia have the highest education, and 59% of all Russian women in Sweden have a university education. In second, third and fourth places are Ukraine (57%), Lithuania (56%) and Latvia (50%). The opposite situation applies to

immigrants from Poland, with more men than women having a university or post-graduate education.

Almost half of the respondents came to Sweden as singles and without children, about 17% came with a partner, and almost 20% migrated together with a partner and children. Concerning their civil status, more than half were singles when arriving in Sweden, but only one-fifth were single at the time of the survey. There is also a significant differences in marital status between migrants from the different countries. Migrants from Estonia were single to a higher degree when they came to Sweden, and are also the group that have married or entered a cohabiting relationship to the greatest extent after migrating.

Table 3. Respondent characteristics (respondents arriving after 1990)

Characteristics	Estonia	Latvia	Lithuania	Poland	Russia	Total
Female (%) ^c	82	84	57	63	81	70
Age when migrating ^c (average)	29	29	28	32	33	32
No. of years in Sweden ^c (average)	9	7	6	7	8	8
Single (%)						
before migrating ^c	72	58	60	47	60	54
after migrating ^c	15	19	23	19	24	20
Employed ^a (%)						
before migrating ^c	57	73	61	65	73	66
after migrating ^c	73	65	75	73	64	70
Univ. education ^b (%)						
before migrating ^c	35	44	43	30	67	42
after migrating ^c	49	51	47	34	69	46

^a Gainfully employed (part-time, full-time or self-employed)

^b University or post-graduate education

^c p<0.001

6. Results

6.1. General remarks

People migrate for different reasons, and it is likely that in many cases there can be a mix of reasons or conditions leading to the migration decision (see Mansoor, Quillin, 2006). Further, the reason or reasons might not always be something that the migrant can put into words. As time goes by, it can also be difficult to remember how

one reasoned when making the decision, or the outcome and life today can affect how one looks at the past. Despite the known difficulties in describing decisions in the past, the respondents were asked about migration motives and their experience connected to migration.

6.2. Motives for migration

The respondents were asked about their primary motives for migrating, and were to tick only one alternative. Following Table 1, the motives were grouped into three categories: The five alternatives (1) got a job in Sweden, (2) partner got a job in Sweden, (3) workplace moved to Sweden, (4) wanted to look for a job in Sweden, (5) and economic reasons constituted *economic* motives. *Social* motives held the alternatives (1) moved with family and (2) marriage or moved in with partner in Sweden. Finally, the three alternatives (1) wanted to move from my home country, (2) wanted to move to another country and (3) came as a refugee formed the *environmental* or *political* motives. About three per cent of the respondents used this opportunity to freely write their motives, but a review showed that the majority of these motives were relatively identical to the given fixed alternatives and has been left out of the analyses.

Differences in living conditions, economy, political situation, etc., between the countries become very evident when looking at the migration motives. Unquestionable, membership in the EU plays a central role both for motives and for the magnitude of migration. As of 2004, citizens from Poland and the Baltic countries have the right to migrate within the EU while potential Russian migrants are subject to procedures of acquiring residence permits. Social motives (almost exclusively marriage or moving in with a partner) formed the main reason for migrants from Russia and to some extent Estonia, while economic motives were more frequent among migrants from Lithuania and Poland. Almost every fifth migrant from Russia stated political or environmental (wanted to move to another country or move from Russia) reasons for migrating, while these motives were less frequent among migrants from the Baltic States and Poland.

Men and women state different reasons for their migration decisions ($p < 0.001$). Overall, as indicated in Table 4, men give economic reasons for their

migration to a higher extent (70%) than women do (31%) while women state social reasons to a higher extent than men do (60 and 15% respectively), and almost exclusively marriage or moving in with a partner in Sweden. The same pattern was discerned in a study by the European Foundation for the improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Krieger 2004), in which female migrants from Eastern Europe (ACC13: the 13 acceding and candidate countries) were oriented towards traditional family rationales for migrating while men to a larger extent had more economic rationales. There were, however, some significant gender differences depending on country: Political (42%) and social (30%) reasons were more frequent for men from Russia. Women from Lithuania stated economic reasons to a higher degree than did women from the other countries ($p < 0.001$).

Table 4. Migration motives for men and women in the five countries (%)

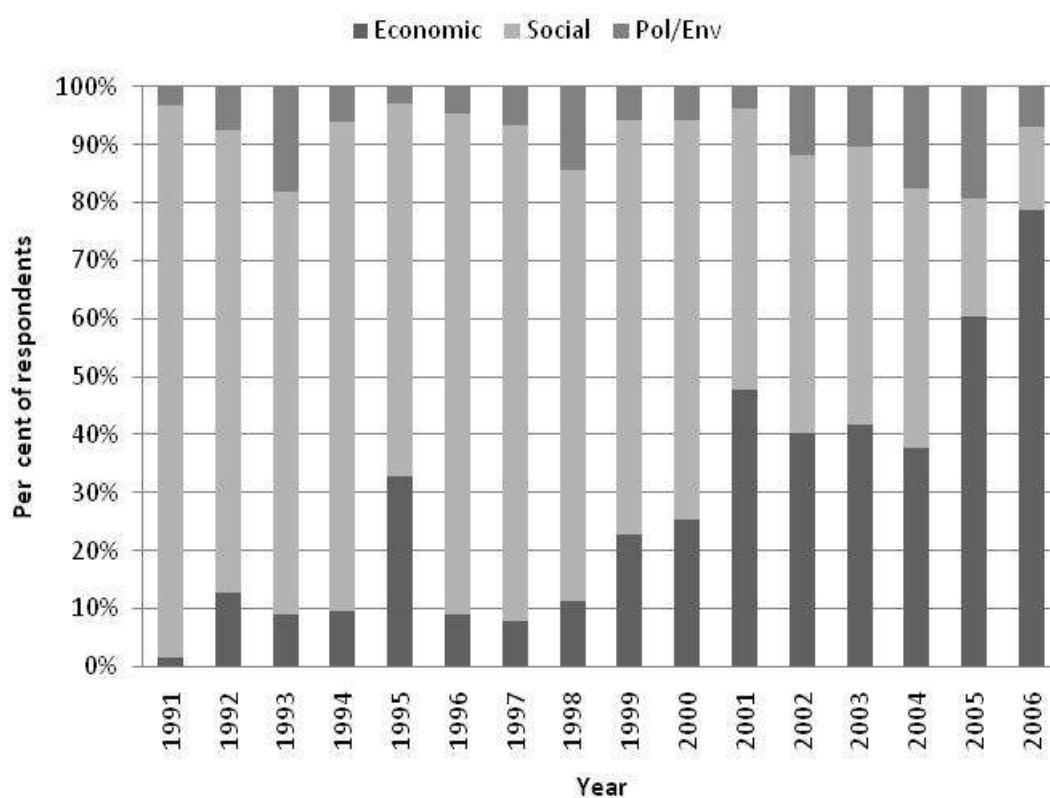
Country	Economic		Social		Political or environmental	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Estonia	71	32	13	62	16	6
Latvia	71	35	7	58	22	7
Lithuania	80	44	14	49	6	7
Poland	80	37	11	56	9	7
Russia	28	18	30	69	42	13
Total	70	31	15	60	15	9

One could expect that people with economic motives would have a higher education level than, e.g., migrants whose main reasons for migrating are not economic. This applies to male respondents, but not to females: Highly educated women were the ones who stated social reasons as their main migration motive (60% compared to 18% among male respondents). There are also significant differences depending on which country a respondent migrated from. Among migrants from Estonia, Latvia and Russia, the majority of those who were highly educated stated social motives for migrating in contrast to high educated migrants from Lithuania and Poland, who stated economic motives to a higher degree ($p < 0.001$). This can partly be explained by the fact that the share of male respondents is higher for Lithuania and Poland.

Further, the reasons for migration change with age: Economic motives decrease and social reasons increase with age. The importance of political and environmental motives tends to be higher among the oldest age group ($p < 0.001$). Many of the older respondents migrated in the early 1990s, and their experiences of the situation in their home country refer to the time before the fall of the Iron Curtain.

Furthermore, the motives for migrating have changed over time. Although motives vary over the period, there is a trend towards economic motives having become more important, and even more so after the year 2000 (see Fig. 2). This increased importance relates to all aspects of economic motives: Migrants who moved because they had got a job in Sweden, their spouse had got a job, they came to look for a job, etc. At the same time, social motives seem to have become less important. There are a few differences between migrants from the five countries, and environmental or political motives, for instance, have become more important in recent years (2003-2006) for migrants from Russia.

Figure 2. Migration motives according to year of migration

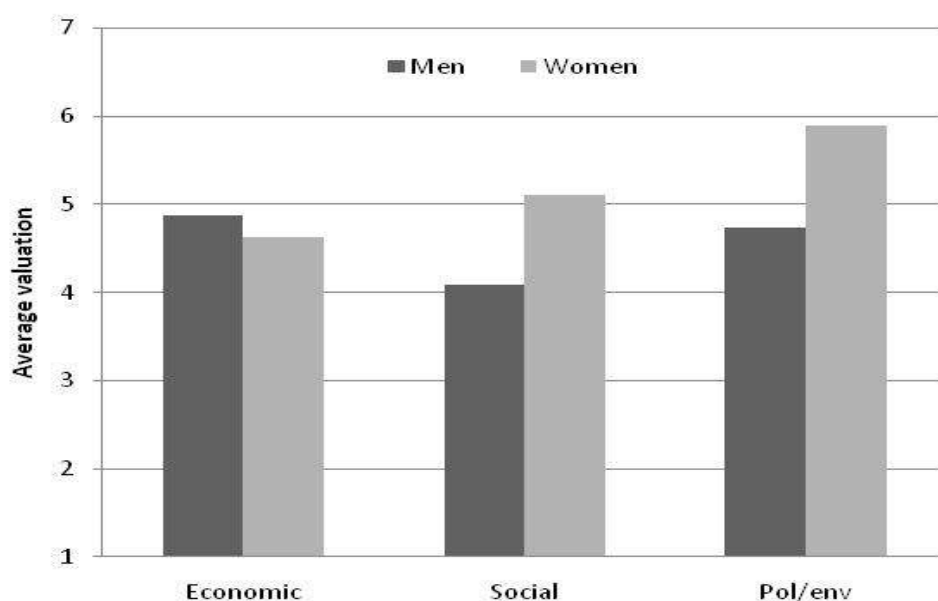


6.3. The decision to migrate

With membership in the EU and the ability to move within the Union, it could be expected that the decision to migrate is not necessarily a 'final' migration decision. Labour market migration in Europe is often temporary, and studies from the UK and Ireland, for instance, have shown that return migration of workers from places like Poland is increasing (Home Office 2006). If migrating from the migrant's point of view is not intended or seen as permanent it can be argued that the decision to migrate is neither too hard to make nor involuntary. Indeed, the respondents stated that they migrated because they wanted to, and that it was a fairly easy decision to make. Those who migrated for political or environmental reasons stated higher levels of voluntariness and ease. However, migrating for political reasons, such as being persecuted or belonging to a suppressed minority group, does not as such mean that one wants to migrate to start with, but the conditions reach a level at which it is not acceptable or possible to remain in one's home country, making migration the only solution. The same reasoning can also hold for some of the migrants with economic motives - when one cannot make a living or feed one's family, migration is the solution. The decision was also less easy for migrants from Russia and Poland, and primarily for those who had stated economic reasons for migrating.

Men and women made different valuations of how voluntary their migration was (Fig. 3), and women who had migrated for social or political or environmental reasons stated a higher degree of voluntariness than men did ($p < 0.001$). Despite women regarding the migration decision to have been voluntary, those women who stated economic or social motives for migration perceived it as having been harder to make than men did ($p < 0.001$).

Figure 3. Degree of voluntariness in men's and women's migration decisions depending on motive ('Did you move because you wanted to?'; Measured on a scale, where 1 = did not want to migrate and 7 = wanted to migrate)



The respondents' knowledge of Sweden² before their migration correlates to the voluntariness of the migration decision. Those who moved because they wanted to had more knowledge about Sweden than did those who looked upon their migration decision as more involuntary (correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)). However, the result does not reveal whether high knowledge of Sweden made the decision feel more voluntary, or whether migrants who wanted to migrate were also more apt to acquire knowledge. Further, there are also significant differences with respect to migration motive, whereby those who came to Sweden for economic reasons had more information about Sweden concerning the labour and housing market, regulations, authorities, etc. However, knowledge about the society and culture in general was more common among respondents who stated social reasons for moving.

6.4. Work in Sweden

Men's and women's different migration motives are also shown to affect the outcome of the migration. Success on the labour market (i.e. match between

² The respondents were asked if they had any knowledge about the housing market, labour market, society or culture, regulations, authorities, citizenship rights and political system in Sweden prior to migration.

employment and skills) is one way to measure the outcome for the respondents. Migrants with economic motives, to a larger extent than those with social and political or environmental motives, regard that it was easier to acquire their first job in Sweden (Tab. 5). These migrants were also employed within a year after arriving to Sweden, in comparison to approximately two years after arriving for migrants stating social and political or environmental reasons for moving. However, among migrants with social motives the self-reported correspondence between skills and education is much higher than for those who came for economic reasons. Moreover, the results show significant gender differences, with male migrants generally finding it easier to acquire their first job and having a higher correspondence between employment and skills. An exception to this is Russian men, who considered it much harder to obtain employment and reported higher dissatisfaction with the match between their education and current job. The opposite applies to Estonian and Latvian migrants, who stated higher degree of ease in acquiring employment and a higher match between employment and skills than the others did.

Moreover, one can assume that those who migrated to Sweden after the opening of the European borders in 2004 would perceive it to have been easier to acquire their first job in the new country. The results of the survey show that respondents who moved to Sweden after the EU enlargement in 2004 consider it to have been slightly easier to get their first job, although their current work has a lower correspondence with their education compared with those who migrated before 2004.

Table 5. Perceived degree of ease or difficulty in acquiring first job, and match between employment and skills (mean values)

Characteristics	Easy or hard to acquire the first job? ^a	How well does your current work correspond to your education? ^b
Gender		
Male	0.20 ^c	4.40 ^d
Female	0.09 ^c	4.29 ^d
Migration motive		
Economic	0.37 ^c	4.11 ^c
Social	-0.08 ^c	4.29 ^c
Political or environmental	-0.44 ^c	4.06 ^c

Country of birth		
Estonia	0.48 ^c	5.18 ^c
Latvia	0.49 ^c	4.66 ^c
Lithuania	0.33 ^c	4.27 ^c
Poland	0.18 ^c	4.21 ^c
Russia	-0.23 ^c	4.26 ^c
Education level		
High	0.10	5.08 ^c
Low	0.15	3.67 ^c
Immigration year ^c		
Before 2004	0.19 ^d	4.99 ^c
After 2004	0.29 ^d	3.78 ^c

^a Measured on a scale, where -3 = Very hard, 0 = Neither hard nor easy, 3 = Very easy;

^b Measured on a scale, where 1 = Not at all, 7 = Completely;

^c $p < 0.001$;

^d $p < 0.01$.

Although there are some differences among the migrants concerning how they experienced the ease of getting their first job, the majority of the respondents stated that social ties and local networks had significant importance in acquiring their first job. More than half of the immigrants stated that their contacts through friends and acquaintances, or direct contact with the employer, led to their first job.

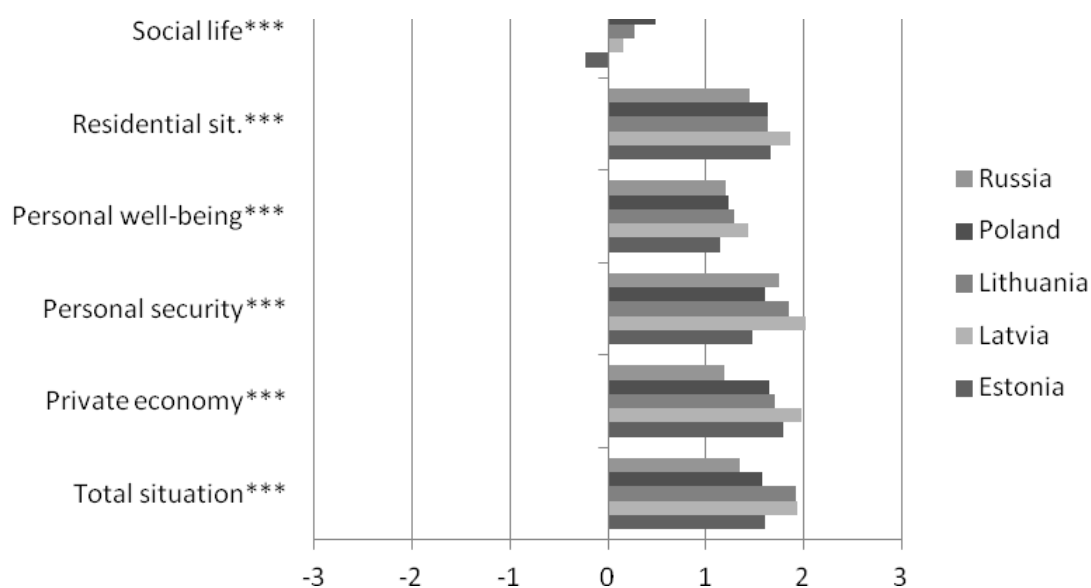
6.5. Social life in Sweden

The decision to migrate was stated to have been relatively easy and voluntary for most respondents (80%), and at least part of their objective with migrating was achieved as they to a high degree perceived that their current situation is better than before migrating. However, eight per cent responded that their present situation is worse than before migrating; the Russian migrants had a more negative experience in this respect than other migrants ($p < 0.000$), the share of women who perceived that they were worse off after migrating was higher than that of men (9.4% and 4.2%, respectively, $p < 0.000$), and those who had migrated for political or environmental reasons were less content with the outcome than were those who migrated for economic and social reasons ($p < 0.000$). A number of items were used to describe what had changed in the respondents' lives after migrating. A Cronbach's alpha of 0.803 indicates that the items, presented in Figure 4, are internally consistent.

In general, private economy, personal security and residential situation or conditions have improved significantly ($p < 0.000$), while the migrant's social situation has changed very little. The outcome of the migration is perceived differently between respondents in the different countries. As indicated in Figure 4 the country differences are accentuated when assessing changes of private economy, with the Latvian respondent's perceiving the largest improvement and the Russian respondents the smallest improvement.

Further, men perceived larger improvements than women did for all items ($p < 0.000$) except when it comes to residential situation.

Figure 4. Change of personal conditions after migrating to Sweden
(Measured on a scale, where -3 = much worse, 0 = no change and +3 = much better)



Another aspect of how the outcome of migration is perceived is whether or not it is regarded as permanent, whether the respondents have a belief that they will return to the country they left or not. In general, about half of the respondents said they were certain they would stay in Sweden in the future, and 10% said they would return. However, 40% were uncertain, which can be interpreted as either their not being all too content with their present situation, or that the migration was not intended as permanent. There were some differences in intention to stay or return depending on migration motive: Those who had migrated for social reasons reported

that they want to stay in Sweden in the future to a higher degree than did those who had migrated for other reasons, and the intention to return was higher among those who had migrated for economic reasons (10% compared to 5% and 6% for those with economic and environmental or political motives, respectively). Furthermore, migrants from Russia and Poland stated a higher intention to stay (60% and 57% respectively) than did migrants from the other countries, while migrants from Estonia reported the lowest intention to stay (41%) and a higher intention to return to their country of origin in the future (17%). This can be a reflection of different socio-economic conditions in the sending countries, which shape different prerequisites for migrants' desires and intentions to move back to their country of origin.

The ability to speak, read, write and understand the language in one's country of destination is in many instances important for one's possibility to migrate and to be included in the local society (Valenta 2009, Bayram et al. 2009). It might be crucial to at least have a basic ability to speak and understand the language to be able to find work or establish local networks (ibid.). In general, self-reported abilities before migration to Sweden were low among the migrants from Russia, the Baltic States and Poland: More than half of the respondents reported that they had no skill at all in talking, speaking, writing or understanding Swedish before migrating to Sweden. Some differences with respect to migration motive were noted, whereby those who migrated for economic reasons reported the highest ability to speak, read, etc., and those who had migrated for political or environmental reasons reported the lowest ability ($p < 0.001$), which probably indicates that their decision was less planned. As expected, it was found that the ability to speak, read, write and understand the Swedish language increased considerably after migration, and significantly more so for women. Furthermore, migrants from Estonia reported a higher ability in all respects, both before and after migration, compared to migrants from the other countries ($p = 0.000$).

The establishment of social ties and networks, both before and after migrating, with native Swedes and/or their own ethnic group increases the possibilities for the immigrants to find a place in the new country (Valenta 2009, Bayram et al. 2009). One could assume that when migrating on a more voluntary basis, i.e. not for political

reasons, the migrants have some kind of relationship with the destination country. This is partly true for the migrants in this study. A majority had visited Sweden before migrating, however about a fifth of the respondents had never been to Sweden before migrating (Tab. 6). Those who had never been to Sweden beforehand stated economic and political or environmental motives for their decision. Further, one would expect that when migrating for social reasons there is an established connection to the destination, and most of the respondents who stated social motives for their migration had visited Sweden before, often more than once. Moreover, a majority of the migrants had a social network to a smaller or greater extent in Sweden before migrating. As Table 6 shows, a majority of the migrants had friends and/or family in Sweden before migrating. However, every fourth migrant had neither friends nor family in Sweden before migrating, and 11% of the migrants neither had a network in Sweden nor had visited the country before migrating. This group had primarily economic motives for their decision, but also to some extent political reasons. Very few of the respondents with no network came for social reasons, but those who did stated 'to get married' when asked what their motive had been.

Table 6. Social ties in, and number of visits to, Sweden prior to migration (percentages)

Social ties	Never visited	1 previous visit	2-4 previous visits	>4 previous visits	Total
Family or friends	10.4	11.3	28	23.4	73.1
No family or friends	11.4	6.6	6.9	2.1	26.9
Total	21.8	17.9	34.9	25.4	100,0

Intermarriage with a native is one factor that potentially influences the integration process (Meng, Gregory, 2005; van Tubergen, Maas, 2007; Dribe, Lundh, 2008; Bayram et al. 2009). The results of this study show that 36% of the respondents are married to or cohabiting with a Swedish-born person, and 44% state that their partner resided in Sweden during their childhood. However, there are significant gender differences ($p < 0.001$) among the migrants: Half of the women are married to

or cohabiting with a Swedish-born person, while only eight per cent of the male respondents have a Swedish-born partner. Moreover, a majority of the female migrants (57%) have reported that their partner resided in Sweden during the main part of their childhood, and the opposite applies for male migrants.

7. Concluding discussion

This paper has focused on migration from the East-Central European countries of Russia, Poland, Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia to Sweden. Migration motives have changed over time, and social motives were most important for those who migrated in the 1990's, and this group encompassed almost exclusively marriage or moving in with a partner in Sweden. The respondents who migrated in the following years, until 2006, were more driven by economic motives. This is in line with other studies, which indicate that although there are job opportunities in the country of origin the possibilities of acquiring a better paid job is a driver for migrating (e.g. Blanchflower et al. 2007). This trend can also be an effect of the eastward expansion of the EU. Favell (2008) argues that East-Central European migrants are more temporary and transnational and affected by changes in business cycles.

The analysis showed that there are distinctive gender differences when it comes to migration motives. Men and women tend to have different reasons to why they migrated to Sweden, and women state social reasons to a higher degree, while men report that they migrated for economic reasons. Although, women report social reasons as the major motives, almost a third of the women stated economic reasons. It is possible that social and economic motives partly describe the same aspect. Migrating in order to get a job and improve living conditions can be a precondition for achieving social goals or aspirations, and vice versa. Men's and women's different reasons for migrating can mirror different aspirations, but also gendered conditions and relations in the country they left. The differences in stated motives can also to some extent be a result of norms: how men and women express themselves, and how they are expected to express themselves. Women are high-educated and arrive as singles, and substantial part of women (30%) that report

economic migration motives might be an indication of increased economic orientation and independence among female migrants. Yet, in line with findings from Krieger (2004) female migrants still seem to have a stronger orientation towards traditional female rationales, e.g. family formation.

In general the migrants are satisfied with the conditions after migration, for instance personal security and private economy is perceived to be better than before migrating, but less so for those who migrated for political and environmental reasons. Most respondents state that they are content with their present situation, and that their migration decision was both easy and voluntary to make. Half of the respondents' state that they intend to stay in Sweden, yet almost every third is uncertain about whether or not to return to their country of origin. This could be regarded as potential ambivalence, i.e. being content with the present situation but not sure about whether or not to stay. However, a conceivable return migration may be an indication of perceiving the country of origin as home, while at the same time having positive experiences of the new country of residence.

There are differences between migrants from the five countries in this study, yet there are no clear-cut and consistent patterns where one country always stands out. This illustrates the hazard of generalising migrants according to country of emigration. Motives, preconditions, outcome etc. are very individual and it might be the characteristics of the individual migrant that are more relevant when discussing outcome of migration rather than where the migrant comes from.

This paper has focused on migrants from the geographically adjacent East-Central European countries of Russia, Poland, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, who came to Sweden between 1990 and 2006. The respondents constitute a sample of those who have decided to stay in Sweden, at least for the time being. Migrants who have resided in Sweden for some years but, for various reasons, left to go back to their home country or maybe another country, may have had different motives and experiences. The issue of selectivity has thus to be taken into account when interpreting the data.

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