

NEGOTIATING IDENTITIES AND FRIENDSHIPS WHILE LIVING ABROAD: EXPERIENCES OF LATVIAN MIGRANTS

Inta Mierīņa, PhD

Ilze Koroļeva PhD

University of Latvia, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology , Latvia

Abstract

By moving, a person loses at least some of their social contacts, causing not just psychological distress and anxiety, but also loss of support networks one can rely on in times of need. Latvia was one of the typical ‘sending countries’ in Europe, and since year 2000 about 10% of the population has emigrated. Here we would like to use the data gathered in the Latvian migrant survey to analyze how the migrants integrate into the local communities, and to what extent they still maintain close ties to their home countries; how does it change with time and what factors affect it. A special attention will be paid to how do emigrants’ identities change with time – do they retain their national identity, do they integrate also in terms of belonging and identification with the host community, perhaps it is a mix of both, or they develop a new, global or European identity? These are just some of the questions this research tries to answer. The paper is based on a recent Web-based survey of more than 10 000 Latvian emigrants abroad, in all regions of the world (including USA, Europe and Asia). The study was conducted with the support of by the ESF research grant “The emigrant communities of Latvia: National identity, transnational relations, and diaspora politics” (Nr.2013/0055/1DP/1.1.1.2.0/13/APIA/VIAA/040) – the largest survey of emigrants from one country so far conducted in Europe.

Keywords: Migration, identity, migrant networks, migrant integration

Introduction

A new wave of migrants from East-Central Europe swept across Europe in 2000’s following the EU accession of the new member states, and it was intensified even more by the recent global recession. Considering that Latvians are one of the most mobile European nations (Hazans 2003), the fact that Latvia was one of the countries hit hardest by the crisis (Mierina 2014) resulted in unprecedented rates of emigration from this small country

of about 2 million inhabitants. According to the Central Statistical Bureau (CSB), long-term emigration rates starting from 2008 significantly increased (see also Table 1), mainly driven by more attractive employment opportunities abroad (Krišjāne 2007). Since the crisis begun, every year more than 30 000 people left Latvia for some other country, mostly - some other country in the EU (usually Great Britain or Ireland)

Table 1. The net outflow of Latvian inhabitants, in thousands

	2000-2010	2000-2001	2002-2003	2004-2008	2009-2010
M.Hazans	200		40	80	80
O. Krasnopjorovs	177.6	10.7	11.1	65.3	90.6

Source: Hazans (2011), Krasnopjorovs (2012).

According to the OECD report since the beginning of the 21st century, Latvia has lost 9.1% of its population (OECD 2013: 66). 88. They are usually people with lower income and from less developed areas of Latvia (Krišjāne 2007; Hazans 2003). Most recent surveys show that more and more people choose to move abroad with all their families, and plan to stay there permanently. This, according to the authors of Latvian Human Development Report 2010/2011, points to the “importance of research on a sense of belonging of the people in exile, since the way how belonging to homeland and to country of residence is formed will influence choices of Latvian people in the future – whether to return home or stay in another country” (Latvija. Pārskats par tautas attīstību 2010/2011: 64).

From the perspective of host countries, an open identity of migrants and their sense of belonging to their new country and community is important for the integration of migrants. Successful integration of immigrants into the society and the labour market are considered a key for reducing xenophobia, and lessening anti-immigrant sentiments in the receiving countries, and creating a cohesive and better functioning society (Jackman & Volpert 1996; Golder 2003; Arzheimer 2009; Lubbers et al 2002). Nowadays, immigration and integration policies have been placed at the forefront of many Western European parties’ agendas, and occupy a significant place in the political landscape (Rydgren 2005; Yilmaz 2012).

At the backdrop of increasing skepticism as regards to the desirability or even possibility of a multicultural Europe (Etzinger 2003; Heath and Demirova 2014)⁸⁹, several policy initiatives have been put forward in the

⁸⁸ Migration statistics in Latvia is not very precise, since many of those who move abroad, especially at the beginning, do not report it to the authorities in Latvia. According to Hazans (2011) and Krasnopjorovs (2012) estimates, from 2000 till 2010 Latvia has lost close to 200 000 people due to emigration, and mainly – young people.

⁸⁹ According to Penninx (2005) in Europe the paradigm where immigrant principally is seen as an alien and outsider, one who is only temporarily part of that society is dominating, in contrast to the inclusionary paradigm is the Anglo-American one, in which immigrants are

European Union to facilitate the integration of migrants (European Commission 2013). In 2010 core indicators (the so-called ‘Zaragoza indicators’) were approved that measure the results of integration policies. They measure integration outcomes in four areas: employment, education, active citizenship, and social inclusion (European Commission 2013).⁹⁰ Recent evidence suggest that there is still a significant ‘gap’ between the migrant population in comparison with the total population in terms of employment, education, income and social exclusion still remains (European Commission 2013). In this paper we would like to focus on the social aspect of immigrant integration, mainly, identity and social networks. Building on a recent large-scale emigrant survey “Emigrant communities of Latvia: national identity, transnational relations, and diaspora politics”, we explore how well are Latvian emigrants integrating into their new host societies, how emigration affects their identity, and whether they keep in touch with the family and friends at home. We will also analyse which factors are associated with more successful integration outcomes.

A significant drawback of the existing quantitative studies is that they usually analyze the integration of immigrants from several countries of origin into one country (Vermeulen and Penninx 2000). The problem with this is that characteristics of immigrant groups differs from country to country, and a number of ecological factors could be responsible for the specific outcomes. The analysis is complicated by the fact that migration is selective, i.e., depending on socio-economic context countries are likely to attract different types of migrants from different countries (e.g., Alexander 2003). A cross-national comparative study of emigrants from one sending country in different receiving countries (e.g. Rath et al. 2001; Penninx and Roosblad 2000) such as the “Emigrant communities of Latvia” is needed to discover what factors facilitate integration of migrants.

Social networks are extremely important in regards to mobility, yet their role is still not fully understood. Existing diaspora in the receiving country serves for future emigrants as both a gate and a safety net, reducing all kinds of moving costs and risks by providing information channels and ensuring necessary help in terms of housing, money, logistical support and advice in times of need (Koroļeva and Mieriņa 2014). While some emigrants help their friends and family to move abroad, for others family and friends at home might become an obstacle to emigration or lead to re-emigration.

also expected to have or take up citizenship individually. This has pervasive consequences for how immigrants are perceived, and what place they are attributed in society in general, and in the immigrant integration policies in particularly (Penninx 2005).

⁹⁰ The fifth category „Welcoming society” is also sometimes added to account for the fact that the receiving society also plays a role in the integration of immigrants (e.g., via discrimination).

Emigration can create a bridge between countries and communities, facilitating economic ties, innovation and exchange of knowledge. On the other hand, strong bonding ties with an existing diaspora from one's home country might become a wall and prevent immigrants from successfully integrating into the local community.

Research on identity suggests that the identity of an individual is dynamic and is open to potential changes during the whole life. Young peoples' search for identity and identity choices play important role in research because these processes have effect on future life and characterize ability of young people to integrate into society. Importantly, three quarters of Latvian adult emigrants are below the age of 35 (OECD 2013), thus, very much in the process of identity formation. In the case of youth research we can speak about at least two different approaches to the study of identity: with emphasis on individual identity as a process of self formation, describing identity as personal integrity and continuity (Eriksons 1998) and with a focus on social identities that characterizes inclusion of young people into society, occupation of certain social status and position, understanding social identity as a part of individual self-image that results from their knowledge about belonging to a social group (or groups), and value and emotional significance that they give to such affiliation (Tajfel 1981). There are also approaches that emphasize both aforementioned aspects by extending the identity to notions of being and belonging, to the ways in which individuals make up an image of themselves. In this view, process of identity formation involved individual cognitive mechanisms, and political and economic forces that promote certain ideas about existence and belonging (Bisley 2007).

The concept of belonging is used to explore relationships between the self and society due to several reasons: it is oriented towards individual, it is used in daily life that's saturated with formal and informal relations, and it allows to establish a perspective on complex relations between the self and society while capturing changes (May 2011). Young migrants are at a stage in life when identity is being actively shaped, when it's important for a person to understand who he/she is and they aspire to achieve. During formation process identities are variable, they can still be unacknowledged and undefined, which is why it is easier for young people to comprehend the concept of belonging. Research on belonging helps to uncover the identification process, not so much identity itself, rather the result of it, but both these aspects are closely related and are hardly separable in daily thinking.

Within the context of aforementioned problems, we examine in this paper not just the questions on how emigrants preserve or build new identities, but we also analyse how they keep in touch with the people at

home or build networks in their new communities, thus facilitating more successful integration in their new community.

Data and methods

This paper is based on the European Social Fund project “Emigrant communities of Latvia: national identity, transnational relations, and diaspora politics”. 14 068 emigrants age 15+ from Latvia were quantitatively surveyed during August-October 2014 in 118 different countries. Most respondents – same as the Latvian diaspora in general - come from the UK, Ireland, the US, Germany, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium, Russia, Canada, Finland, France and Austria. The survey was conducted as a Web-survey, using different sources of recruiting respondents: social networking sites facebook.com, draugiem.lv, vkontakte.com, odnoklassniki.ru, latviesi.com, the three largest news portals in Latvia delfi.lv, apollo.lv, inbox.lv, embassies, diaspora organizations, diaspora media, etc. The data was statistically weighted, using the most recent data from OECD, Eurostat, and The Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs of Latvia, and the The Office for National Statistics (ONS) in the UK, in order to correctly represent the different country/ age/ gender/ ethnicity/ education proportions of Latvian emigrants.

Using the data from the aforementioned emigrant survey has several important methodological advantages. Thanks to a large sample, we avoid the limitations of a small size of the sub-group of immigrants typical for general surveys (ESS, SILC, etc). Due to the unique research design, we have a considerable number of migrants from one country in many different countries, thus limiting the effect of culture, and allowing to focus on what interests us most. In general surveys sometimes people who are unable to communicate in the survey language are not interviewed, excluding a significant proportion of migrants. This is not the case for our survey – questionnaire was offered in Latvian, Russian and English, and there are extremely few Latvian emigrants not being able to speak any of these languages. Harmonization of translations, methods, and weighting is often problematic in major surveys. In our case, the data collection and weighting are centrally coordinated, the questionnaire is mainly completed in Latvian, and careful procedures are applied in translating the Russian and English versions. The fact that Latvia has one of the most mobile populations in Europe ensures that different groups of society are represented among the migrants.

Results

Considering that identity and attachment to the local community depend on the time one has spent in the country, we must note that there

have been several waves of emigration from Latvia (Figure 1). A small proportion of Latvian diaspora are those who emigrated before Latvia regained independence from the Soviet Union in 1991 – mostly during 1940-50s, fearing Stalin’s repressions. Since then, several waves of emigration can be distinguished: 1) those who emigrated before Latvia joined the European Union; 2) those who emigrated after the country joined the European Union, but before the crisis begun (2004-2008); 3) Those who emigrated during the crisis (2008-2010), and 4) Those who emigrated afterwards (2011 or later). Overall, about 80% of Latvian emigrants have left the country in the last 10 years, and about a half – in the last 5 years (Figure 1).

We begin our analysis by exploring how embedded the Latvian migrants are in their new communities socially, i.e., whether they build networks with the local inhabitants or stick to their own ethnic or national group.

Figure 1. The year of leaving the country

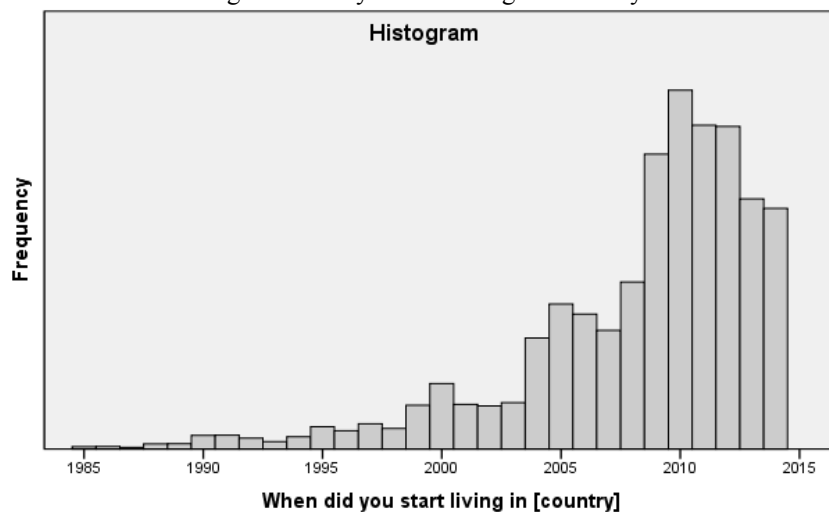
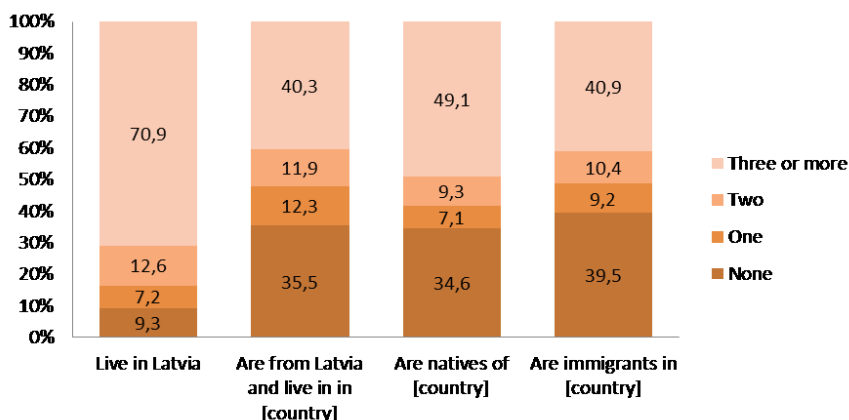


Figure 2 shows that Latvian emigrants still have most of their friends in Latvia. It means that friendship ties among Latvians are strong, and they are retained even after the person moves to live in another country. If we look at those who emigrated since 2009, more than 70% have three or more friends in Latvia, but the number does not significantly decrease even if we look at those who emigrated earlier (Table 1). 8% of respondents noted that they moved abroad together with friends, whereas for 23% a friend or friends were already there, when they moved abroad. The more widespread the immigration becomes, the easier it is for the others to move as well, considering that there is already someone who can help with housing, advice, etc.

Figure 21. Friendship networks of Latvian emigrants



It is common to meet socially and befriend other people from Latvia and other immigrants (usually from Eastern Europe) in the host country. Many of them work together, and sharing a common background and similar problems facilitates forming friendships. Interestingly, friendship bonds with Latvians abroad are formed similarly often, as with other immigrants, thus, no preference is given to people of one's own nationality. In the first few years, such friendships are seldom, but after that only about one third of the new Latvian diaspora (i.e., those who emigrated since 1991) have no friends abroad who are also emigrants from Latvia or from another country. It shows that emigrants tend to stick together and support each other. 9% actually live together with their friends or acquaintances from Latvia, and 8% - with some other friends of theirs. Friendships are often formed and maintained with the help of Latvian diaspora groups Online (about 25% are members of such groups) or Latvian diaspora organisations (11% are members of such organisations).

However, the data also shows that about 2/3 of Latvian emigrants have friends who are natives of their host country (Figure 2). Moreover, about a half (49%) of them have three or more such friends, which demonstrates a strong integration into the local society. The number of local friends steadily increases with time (Table 2), however, even among those who have just recently arrived (2012 or later) more than half have a friend who is a local in the country.

As regards to family networks, majority (81%) of emigrants still have some family members in Latvia. About a half mother and/or father lives in Latvia, about 15% have their spouse or boyfriend/girlfriend in Latvia, but most importantly, 7% have left their younger-than-school age children in Latvia, 8% - school age children, and 11% - adult children.⁹¹ Visiting

⁹¹ Table available on request from authors.

relatives in Latvia is often not that easy and, if the emigrant lives further from home, it might be expensive too. Hence, only 15% of Latvian emigrants visit their family and friends in Latvia at least 2-3 times a year, but 28% do it every 6 months. Nevertheless, migrants take advantage of the opportunities provided by technologies: 31% communicate with their friends or family in Latvia every day or almost every day, 40% - at least once a week, and 21% - one to three times a month. Less than 10% of Latvian emigrants do not communicate with their friends or family in Latvia at least once a month.

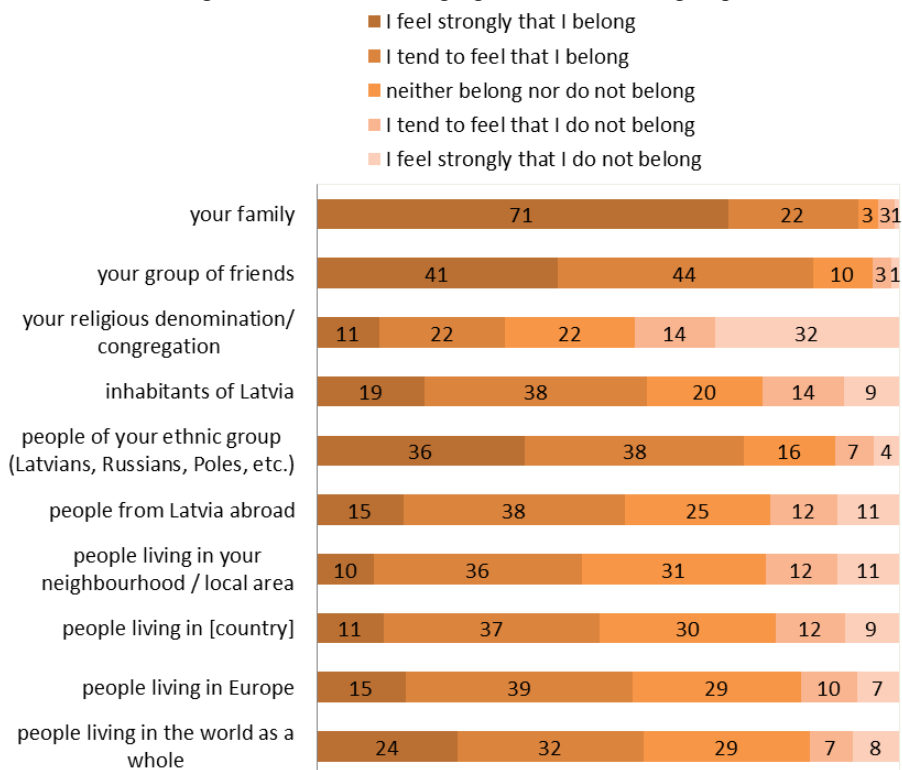
Table 1. Friendship networks depending on the year of arrival

		Up to 1990	1990- 2003	2004- 2008	2009- 2011	2012 or later
Live in Latvia	None	22,7	10,2	10,5	6,6	5,3
	One	7,4	8,4	9,4	8,4	3,7
	Two	9,9	12,8	14,3	13,1	11,7
	Three or more	60,0	68,6	65,8	71,9	79,3
Are from Latvia and live in in [country]	None	41,0	37,9	28,4	32,5	41,1
	One	8,6	9,9	13,9	12,7	13,6
	Two	7,2	11,1	11,5	13,1	13,0
	Three or more	43,3	41,1	46,2	41,7	32,4
Are natives of [country]	None	20,7	24,7	30,3	36,7	46,4
	One	1,4	4,7	8,5	8,3	8,1
	Two	5,4	5,6	8,9	10,6	11,6
	Three or more	72,5	65,0	52,3	44,4	33,9
Are immigrants in [country]	None	52,7	32,4	34,4	36,8	44,5
	One	6,3	7,7	9,1	9,5	11,1
	Two	10,6	7,6	9,8	11,6	10,2
	Three or more	30,4	52,3	46,7	42,1	34,2

Answering the question about identifying with various social groups, 71% of Latvian emigrants note that they feel very close to their family, and 41% feel very close to their friends (Figure 2). Overall, one can conclude that family and friends are the primary group that Latvian emigrants feel closest to.

Latvia is a very ethnically diverse country: Latvians compose only about 62% of the population, while 27% consider themselves Russian, and 11% belong to other ethnic minorities. Ethnic tensions from time to time escalate between the two main groups, related to differences in the perception of history, and different media discourse. As a result, emigrants too feel closer to their own ethnic group (Latvians, Russians, etc.) rather than ‘inhabitants of Latvia’ as a nation state. It shows that besides family and friends, the main domain of identity among Latvian emigrants is their ethnic group.

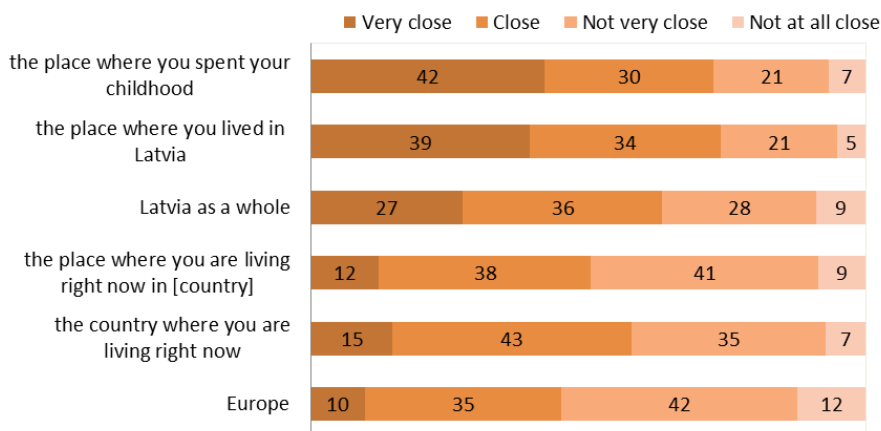
Figure 2. Sense of belonging to various social groups



Overall, 19% feel strongly, and 38% tend to feel that they belong to inhabitants of Latvia, yet every fourth emigrant does not see herself as belonging to the inhabitants of Latvia. It illustrates that some emigrants are disgruntled and disappointed with their countryman, and are trying to distance themselves from them. The sense of belonging to their current country of residence is just slightly weaker than the sense of belonging to the inhabitants of Latvia: 11% feel strongly, and 37% tend to feel that they belong to people living in their home country. Only 21% feel like they do not belong to the people living in their current country of residence. Interestingly, among emigrants the sense of belonging to all people of Europe or, even more so, people living in the world as a whole, slightly surpasses the sense of belonging to people in Latvia or their current place of residence. As the data suggests, the correlation between the sense of belonging to the global domains (Europe and the world) is positively correlated to belonging to the country of residence (correlation coefficient 0,3). On the other hand, correlation between the sense of belonging to Latvia and the new host country is extremely small (-0,06), which means that there is no ‘competition’ between these identities – they can co-exist.

The survey also asked emigrants to evaluate how close they feel to different geographic places, including their home country Latvia, and their current country of residence. In answers to these questions one can notice a certain nostalgia, as the place emigrants feel closest to is the place (city, town or village) where they spent their childhood and/or where they lived before moving abroad. Thus, local identities dominate over national identities, at least in the case of the country or origin. Overall, 27% of emigrants feel very close to Latvia as a whole, and 36% feel close to this country (Figure 3). At the same time, 37% say that they feel not very close or not close at all to their country or origin. In comparison, just slightly more, 42% of emigrants do not feel close to the country where they are currently living; 43% feel close to this country and 15% feel very close to it.

Figure 3. How close the emigrants feel to different geographical places?

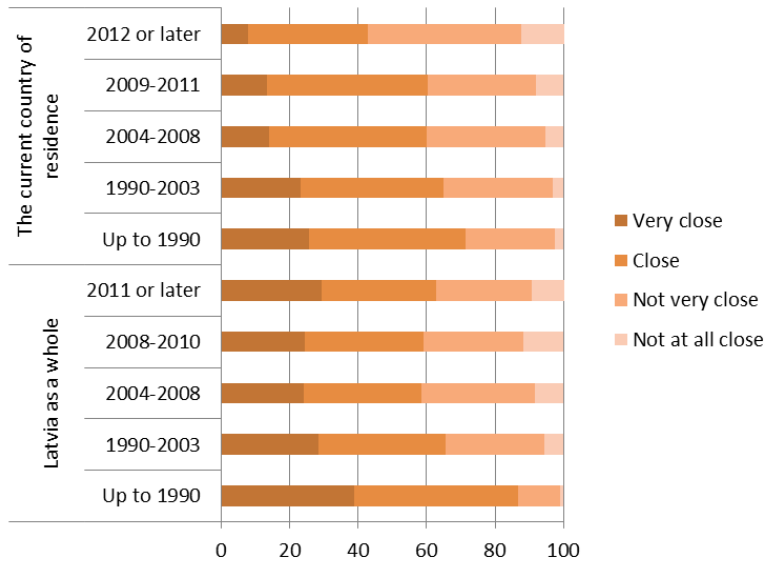


According to the data, attachment to the place where one spent the childhood and/or lived before leaving the country is something that does not change with time. Sometimes it can become even stronger, the longer the person lives abroad. Attachment to the current locality where the migrant lives requires a lot of time – only those who have lived abroad since 2003 or earlier start feeling attached to the place. Interestingly, those who left before Latvia joined the EU, feel comparatively less attached to Europe. As regards to country, attachment to the new host country increases gradually with time. However, attachment to home country, Latvia, does not decrease with time, but tends to remain rather stable (Figure 4). Moreover, those who left Latvia before 1991, ie, the ‘old diaspora’, feel closer to Latvia than those who emigrated later. The circumstances in which they left Latvia, are very different from those behind the more recent waves of emigration, resulting in more sentimental attitudes. The same conclusions can be made as regards to ‘people living in Latvia’.

Again, the analysis allows concluding that the fact that emigrants become more attached to their new host country does not mean that they will

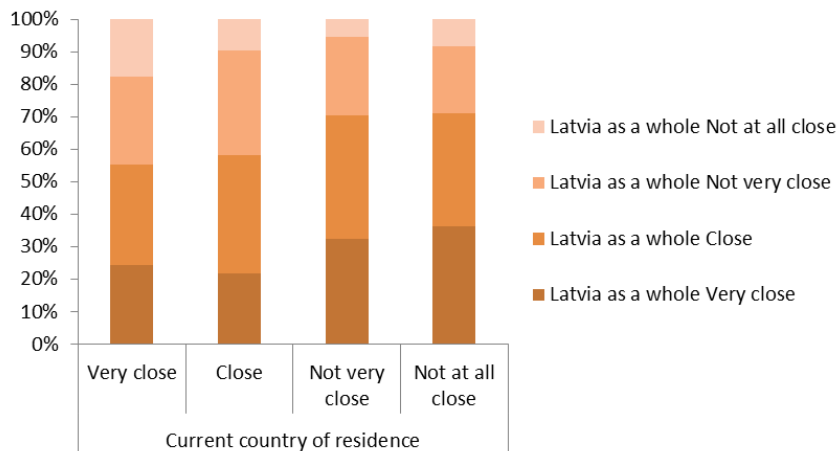
automatically lose attachment to their own country. The correlation is very weak, only -0.15. Still, some unlike in case of social groups, some visible, although small, differences can be observed (Figure 5). Those who feel very close to the current country of residence are also more likely to not feel any attachment to Latvia, whereas those who do not feel close to their current country of residence are more likely to feel close to Latvia.

Figure 4. How close the emigrants feel to different geographical places depending on the year of arrival



To answer which factors are responsible for more successful integration outcomes in terms of identity, we use multilevel regression analysis with 14 068 individuals nested within 118 countries. Unlike the ordinary multiple regression models, multilevel analysis accounts for the fact that the observations in the sample are not independent; individuals are nested within localities, thus, it provides correct standard errors and unbiased estimates of contextual effects, reducing the possibility of Type I error.

Figure 5. Attachment to Latvia depending on the attachment to current country of residence



We operationalize successful integration on the basis of a question on how strongly the emigrant feels he belongs to the people of the host country, and include a variety of potential individual level predictors such as age, gender, education etc. Since there are no strong theoretical arguments why the individual explanations of the sense of belonging to the host country's inhabitants should systematically vary across countries, we use random intercept models with fixed slopes

The estimates of covariance parameters (available on request) show that 20% of the variation in how strongly the person feels he belongs to the people in the current country of residence, can be found at the level of countries, whereas 80% are explained by differences between individuals. Including the individual level variables, allowed to decrease the individual level variation by 8%. Nevertheless, the likelihood ratio test (chi-square test of deviances) shows that the model is still significantly better than the empty or null model, thus, can be considered satisfactory.

By far the strongest predictor of identification with the host country's society is '*I feel a sense of belonging to the local community*'. It means that emigrants' identification with their new country of residence can primarily be increased by increasing their attachment to the community they reside in. People who 'know most people in their area' are more likely to feel a sense of belonging to their country's society in general.

. Identification with the local society is also associated with regularly, or at least sometimes, following the current news in the country. It means that media play an important role in the integration of migrants. An other extremely important factor are networks. Having friends who are natives in the country, is associated with much higher sense of belonging to the country's society (Sig.<0.001).

The relationship between attachment to the people living in the host country and attachment to one's own ethnic group and people living in the home country (Latvia) seems to be complicated. Whereas attachment to one's ethnic group is associated also with attachment to the inhabitants of the host country, the relationship with inhabitants of Latvia goes in the opposite direction (Sig.<0.1). This can be explain by psychological mechanisms: someone who is more 'outwardly' oriented and willing to identify with some group, might also be willing to identify with an other group

Table 2. Determinants of attachment to the host country's inhabitants

Parameter	Estimate	Sig.	Std. Error
Intercept	-2,981	***	,219
Lowest level of education	-,213	***	,038
Middle level of education	-,079	*	,035
Highest level of education	0 ^b		,000
The national capital city	,141	*	,061
Another major city	,029		,058
A small town	,034		,058
A village or a rural area	0 ^b		,000
1991-2003	,165	**	,053
2004-2008	,029		,040
2009-2011	,083	*	,035
2012 or later	0 ^b		,000
Working as a paid employee	,222	*	,108
An employer/entrepreneur	,065		,132
Self-employed / employed by your family business	,156		,121
Out of work and actively looking for a job	,213		,131
A student	,214	~	,118
On an internship, exchange programme, or professional training/development programme	,809	***	,185
On leave / out of work to take care of children or other family members	,092		,115
Retired / a pensioner	-,573	**	,195
Out of work for other reasons and not seeking employment	,451	**	,139
Voluntary work	0 ^b		,000
Household finds it easy to get by	,063	***	,013
Age	,002		,002
Gender (woman)	,085	**	,030
I like living in this area/neighbourhood	,004		,018
I feel a sense of belonging to the local community	,353	***	,016
People in this area/neighbourhood can be trusted	,004		,017
I know most people in this area/neighbourhood	,058	***	,012
Latvian	,066		,076
Russian	-,189	*	,075
Other	-,050	~	,088
Follows the current events in Latvia regularly	-,059		,083
Follows the current events in Latvia once in a while	,205	*	,083
Does not follows the current events in Latvia	0 ^b		,000
Follows the current events in [country] regularly	,536	***	,065
Follows the current events in [country] once in a while	,190	**	,064
Does not follows the current events in [country]	0 ^b		,000
Feels close to inhabitants of Latvia	-,023	~	,013
Feels close to people of own ethnic group	,056	***	,014
Number of friends who are natives of the country	,072	***	,011

***p<0.001, **p<0.01, *p<0.05, ~p<0.1, two-tailed tests.

Emigrants living in the capital city identify with the country's society significantly more than those living in villages or rural areas (Sig.<0.05).

Large cities are usually much more diverse both ethnically and culturally, which might help the migrants feel as if they belong. Rural areas, however, tend to be more closed to outsiders. It also matters how long the person has spent in the country. As we see from the model, the sense of belonging to the host society among those who just arrived in the country in 2012 or later is weaker than among those who arrived during the crisis, or a long time ago, before the EU accession.

An other aspect facilitating the sense of belonging is the financial situation of the household. Those who find it easy to get by, are much more likely to feel like they belong. Employment and education matter too, as identification with the host country's society is more common among those with higher education, who are employed, doing an internship or training, or economically inactive

Finally, as regards to standard demographic variables, women are more likely than men to feel like they belong in the host country's society, whereas age has no impact on it. Interestingly, Russians are least likely to identify with the host country.

Conclusion

In this paper we have demonstrated that Latvian emigrants tend to retain close friendship and family ties even after the person moves to live in another country. In addition, it is common to meet socially and befriend other immigrants from Latvia and other countries (usually from Eastern Europe), paying no attention to a person's nationality. This is facilitated by similar background and similar circumstances they often find themselves in, which facilitates the formation of friendship bonds.

Majority of emigrants still have some family members in Latvia too. Even if they cannot visit Latvia frequently, they regularly stay in touch with their friends and family via phone or Internet. 31% communicate with their friends or family in Latvia every day or almost every day, 40% - at least once a week.

However, the data also shows that about 2/3 of Latvian emigrants have friends who are natives of their host country, and about a half have three or more such friends, which demonstrates a strong integration into the local society. Moreover, the number of local friends steadily increases with time.

As regards to identity, the analysis shows that besides family and friends, Latvian emigrants feel the strongest sense of belonging to their ethnic group. The sense of belonging to their current country of residence is just slightly weaker than the sense of belonging to the inhabitants of Latvia. The fact that about a half of Latvian emigrants feel that they belong to the local society, demonstrates that Latvian emigrants have integrated in their

host country very well. Only 21% feel like they do not belong to the people living in their current country of residence. However, interestingly, among emigrants the sense of belonging to all people of Europe or, even more so, people living in the world slightly surpasses the sense of belonging to people in Latvia or their current place of residence. It shows that the emigrants develop a supra-national identity in addition to their local/national identities.

In terms of geographic places, emigrants feel very strongly about the place (city, town or village) where they spent their childhood and/or where they lived before moving abroad. As regards to countries, emigrants have almost as warm feelings towards their host country as towards their home country Latvia, even though they are rarely as strong. Overall, 42% of emigrants do not feel close to the country where they are currently living; 43% feel close to this country and 15% feel very close to it. While attachment to the host country tends to increase with time, attachment to one's home country seems to be a relatively stable disposition, ie, one of the core values that one learns in early life and that remains relatively stable throughout the lifetime.

The analysis of determinants of the sense of belonging to the host country's society reveals some very clear factors that facilitate the integration of migrants. First, emigrants' identification with their new country of residence can primarily be increased by increasing their attachment to, and embeddedness in the community they reside in. Related to that, having friends who are natives of the country, is also a very powerful tool of facilitating the sense of belonging among migrants. Getting familiar with the locals by participating in common social activities might be one of the most effective solutions to improving migrant integration.

The study also points to the importance of media in facilitating identification with the host country's society. This, however, means that it is important to improve the language skills of migrants, so that they can follow and (virtually) be a part of the events happening in the country.

Importantly, we find that attachment to one's ethnic group is associated also with attachment to the inhabitants of the host country. It means that at least in case of Latvian migrants, preserving one's national identity does not threaten successful integration. Attachment to people in one's home country, however, indicates a certain nostalgia which might hinder integration into the new country's community.

The social environment matters too. Emigrants living in the capital cities where the society is more diverse, feel a stronger sense of belonging to the country's society rather than those living in more 'closed' and tightly-knit villages or rural areas.

The attachment to the host society is also affected by the time and circumstances in which the migrant arrived. In case of Latvia, the strongest

sense of belonging to their new country of residence can be observed among those who left during the years of crisis (2009-2011) or before the EU accession in 2004, i.e., a long time ago. Overall, having a job and sufficient financial means is important for the migrants to feel like they belong in the country's society.

References

- Arzheimer, Kai. Contextual factors and the extreme right vote in Western Europe, 1980–2002. *American Journal of Political Science*, 53(2), 259-275, 2009.
- Bisley, Nick. *Rethinking globalization*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.
- Eriksons, Ēriks. *Identitāte: jaunība un krīze*. Rīga: Jumava, 1998.
- Etzinger Han. The rise and fall of multiculturalism: The case of the Netherlands, in *Toward Assimilation and Citizenship: Immigrants in Liberal Nation-States* Eds. Joppke C, Morawska E, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 59-86, 2003.
- Golder, Matt. Explaining variation in the success of extreme right parties in Western Europe. *Comparative Political Studies*, 36(4), 432-466, 2003.
- Hazans, Mihails. Potential Emigration of Latvian Labour Force after Joining the EU and its Impact on Latvian Labour Market, BICEPS working paper, pp. 1-56; 2003; accessed 12.10.2012.: <http://ssrn.com/abstract=739305>;
- Hazans, Mihails. *Kas šodien dzīvo Latvijā? Reālā demogrāfiskā situācija šķērsgrīzumā*. Publiskā prezentācija LU EVF, 12.09.2011.
- Heath, Anthony and Neli Demireva. Has multiculturalism failed in Britain? *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 37(1): 161-180, 2014.
- Huddleston, Thomas, Jan Niessen, and Dag Tjaden. *Using EU Indicators of Immigrant Integration*. Brussels: European Commission, 2013.
- Jackman, Robert, and Katrin Volpert. Conditions favouring parties of the extreme right in Western Europe. *British Journal of Political Science*, 26(04), 501-521, 1996
- Koroļeva, Ilze, and Inta Mieriņa. Youth identities and emigration plans: the Latvian case. Paper presented at the Mediterranean Interdisciplinary Forum on Social Sciences and Humanities, MIFS, 23-26 April, Beirut, Lebanon, 2014
- Krasnopjorovs, Oļegs. (2012) *Cik cilvēku Latviju pameta, un cik vēl pametīs?* 10.10.2012.: <http://www.makroekonomika.lv/cik-cilveku-latviju-pameta-un-cik-vel-pametis>
- Krišjāne, Zaiga. *Darbaspēka ģeogrāfiskā mobilitāte LR LM: Rīga 2007*. Accessed: 9.10.2012.

- Latvija. Pārskats par tautas attīstību, 2010/2011. Nacionālā identitāte, mobilitāte un rīcībspēja. Brigita Zepa, Evija Kļave (eds.). Rīga: LU SPPI, 2011.
- Lubbers, Marcel, Merove Gijsberts, and Peer Sheepers. Extreme Right-wing Voting in Western Europe, *European Journal of Political Research*, 41: 345–378, 2002.
- May, Vanessa. Self, Belonging and Social Change. *Sociology*, 45 (3), 363–378, 2011.
- Mieraņa, Inta. The Vicious Circle: Does Disappointment with Political Authorities Contribute to Political Passivity in Latvia. *European Societies*, 16(4), 615-637, 2014.
- OECD, *Coping with Emigration in Baltic and East European Countries*, OECD Publishing, 2013.
- Penninx, Rinus. Integration of migrants: economic, social, cultural and political dimensions. In: Macura, Miroslav, A.L. MacDonald, and W. Haug (eds) *The New Demographic Regime: Population Challenges and Policy Responses*. Geneva and New York: United Nations, 2005.
- Penninx, Rinus, and Judith Roosblad (eds.). *2000 Trade Unions, Immigration, and Immigrants in Europe, 1960-1993. A Comparative Study of the Attitudes and Actions of Trade Unions in Seven West European Countries*, New York: Berghahn Books.
- Rath, Jan, Rinus Penninx, Kees Groenendijk, and Astrid Meyer. *Western Europe and its Islam*. Leiden/Boston/Köln: Brill, 2001.
- Rydgren, Jens. Is extreme right-wing populism contagious? Explaining the emergence of a new party family. *European Journal of Political Research*, 44(3), 413-437, 2005.
- Yılmaz, Ferruh. Right-wing hegemony and immigration: How the populist far-right achieved hegemony through the immigration debate in Europe. *Current sociology*, 60(3), 368-381, 2012.
- Vermeulen, Hans, and Rinus Penninx. *Immigrant integration: the Dutch case*. Het Spinhuis, 2000.