

Introduction

The second wave of emigration from Latvia to Sweden began with the time that followed the restoration of independence of Latvia in 1991 and continues to this day. This emigration is not caused solely by decisions of certain individuals, but it falls into more significant processes of the economic instability in Latvia and the mobility fostered by globalization.

Objectives. Methods.

Objectives

The objective of the study – to research reasons of emigration and to analyze how the integration into the new home country takes place, based on a person's sense of belonging, and loyalty to the country of the origin and the host country.

Methods

Qualitative study methodology – biographical approach. Data obtaining method is collection of life stories with individuals emigrating from Latvia to Sweden after the restoration of Independence in 1991.

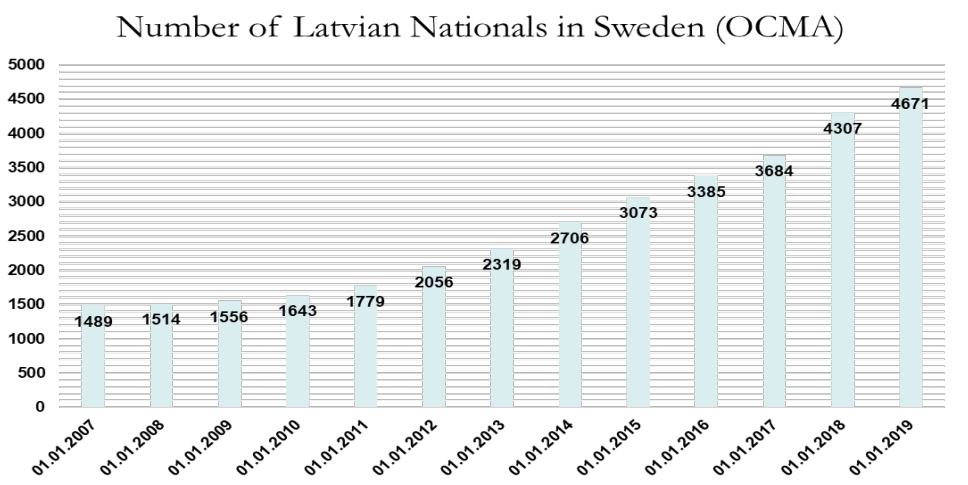
Narrative and thematic analysis of life stories as theoretical approach is used for sociological study. This information reveals the motivation to go, the adaptation strategies in the new state.

This study is based on life story interviews collected in the Latvian National Oral History (NOH) collection. The Latvian National Oral History (NOH) collection consists of over 4,600 interviews, among them are 25 life story interviews with expatriates emigrating to Sweden after after the restoration of independence in 1991.

Many of these interviews have been recorded in 2018, within the Nordplus Programme “From past to present: Migration and Integration through the Life Story network”, No. NPAD-2017-10188 (08/2017-08/2020)).

At the same time, photo documentation was also performed.

Data of the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs (OCMA).



(OCMA, Feb.2019.).

Quotations from life story interviews (NMV is the interview number in NOH collection):

“That true sense of belonging I can get only in my Latvian community. Together with girls playing “kokle” [a Latvian national musical instrument similar to the kannel/ kanteli; zither], along with a choir. It’s not something about the state, and it’s not even about the land, it’s something about my roots; to where I am from. That is a part of my identity.” [NMV-4575]



Photo: Petra Inna Innīberga (2018)



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Results

More than twenty biographical interviews with the second wave emigrants are collected during some expeditions in Sweden.

Conclusions

The study identify the main reasons why Latvia people choose to make their homes in Sweden:

- improvement of living standards;
- difficulties to live with the prejudices in Latvian society;
- better education standarts;
- opportunities to receive necessary health services;
- personal reasons, love and family, relationship, etc.

The study reveals the motivation to go, the adaptation strategies in the new state.

The “new wave of emigration” is still ongoing process and should continue to be explored. Researchers have an opportunity to capture processes in action by return to the informants to identify changes have taken place.

Life story approach gives the voice to the person, offers an opportunity to express their interpretation of individual events.

The data from the quantitative survey (2014) within the research project "The emigrant communities of Latvia: national identity, transnational relations and diaspora policy" (at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, University of Latvia. (Nr. 2013/0055/1DP/1.1.1.2.0/13/APIA/VIAA/040) (LU FSI)) are used to extend the cognition of the research problem and show the answers of respondents living in Sweden (%) to the question *How much do you feel sense of belonging to:*

Your family, kin	73.3
Latvia population	21.0
Persons from Latvia abroad	15.7
Inhabitants of the host country (Sweden)	17.1

Quotations from life story interviews (NMV is the interview number in NOH collection):

“It seems to me that I have two homes. When you are here, and you talk about home, you talk about Latvia. When you go to Latvia, and you talk about home, it’s about Sweden. I have a family here, but at the same time, everyone, – brother, grandmothers, all are there. Anyway, I am rich, I have two homes.” [NMV-3702]

“What bonds you with Latvia? - Family, just family, because our home is here. Our belongings are here, and our pets are here. From our travels, we are returning there. Although Sweden may not be our home either, this place [where we are living now] is our home. - Why? - I do not feel like at home here, but at the same time, neither do I feel at home in Latvia. My home is at my job. I am focusing on my job.” [NMV-4570]

“Latvia does not accept the otherness – whether you have a different sexual orientation or if you have a different skin colour. It takes three generations for the attitude to the other to change.” [NMV-4568]

“It is not because of good life that I live here. At home, there was alcohol, swear-words, hard work, poverty. That was all mine a country village in Latvia]. Do I want to go back, is it about the quality of life for me? No! Then I choose distance from my loved ones, from my family.” [NMV-4569]

“Why did you think it was crucial for the children to speak Latvian? - It seemed important to me, because Latvian is my native tongue. My language is the one in which I can express everything. I can sing, I can cry in it, because we not only speak, but we also cry in our language. ././ The Latvian language is my automatic language, in which I want to speak with my children. I could not imagine speaking with my children in English. To speak in a language in which I cannot talk properly, say something incorrectly, and be misunderstood. The Latvian language, is a beautiful language. If we ever go to Latvia, I want them [my children] to speak the Latvian language, and to talk and understand it. It’s just positive; it seemed to me. And I have both grans and other relatives [in Latvia].” [NMV-4568]