

## HUMAN CAPITAL: 'TO LEAVE IMPOSSIBLE TO STAY'

### MIGRATION AND MIGRATION INTENTIONS OF THE BELARUSIANS IN TERMS OF SOCIOLOGY

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#### Summary

This study is a continuation of BISS's research program 'Human Capital as a Source of Competitiveness and Modernization' and is based on the findings of a nationwide opinion poll (conducted in December 2012-January 2013) that was commissioned by the Belarusian Institute for Strategic Studies. Based on the data of this poll (it should be specified that the topic of migration was secondary in the questionnaire), as well as available data of alternative public opinion polls focusing on migration, BISS has drawn the following conclusions:

- 1)** The findings of the public opinion poll do not confirm the assumption that most of the Belarusians wish to emigrate. Of the total number of the respondents, 35.6% tend to show certain migration intentions (permanent emigration, temporary labor or educational migration), which is comparable to the results obtained in 2006 (30.2%). To compare: in 1998, 44.8% of the population declared their intention to leave the country for various purposes. The figure implies that the so-called passive migration—i.e. the wish to emigrate is expressed, but specific actions may have not yet been taken for this—is quite a widely spread phenomenon.
- 2)** Some 15.1% of the population expressed the wish to leave the country permanently at the end of 2012, which roughly corresponds to the figures obtained as a result of previous polls in 1998, 2006 and 2009 (13.5%, 13.5% and 18.8%, respectively). Therefore, the intention to leave the country for good showed an upward trend during the meltdown of 2011; however, in late 2012, the figure returned to what can be referred to as the pre-crisis level. Belarus belongs to the group of countries, in which a comparatively small proportion of the population wishes to leave permanently (15.1%), alongside Russia (20% in 2012)<sup>1</sup>, Ukraine (15% in 2010)<sup>2</sup> and Poland (11% in 2010). Migration intentions are much more pronounced in such countries as the UK (33%), Romania (31%), Malta (26%), and Lithuania (23%)<sup>3</sup>. The gap may be attributed to the higher level of mobility of European Union citizens.
- 3)** Compared with 2009, the share of those who referred to pride in their native country when giving reasons for the absence of migration intention fell quite markedly (to 10.4% from 15.5%). The number of people who believe that they would have a better life in Belarus than abroad also fell (to 37.7% from 46.7%).

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1 A 2012 study by Levada-Center. <http://polit.ru/news/2012/06/08/immigrants/>

2 A 2010 study by Gallup, Inc. <http://fakty.ua/15250-15-procentov-grazhdan-ukrainy-hotyat-navsegda-pokinut-rodinu>

3 Data on the UK, Romania, Malta, Poland and Lithuania, respectively <http://sas-origin.onstreammedia.com/origin/gallupinc/GallupSpaces/Production/Cms/POLL/-8dcr0wkgek0we54q-17tg.gif>

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- 4) The portrait of a typical Belarusian with a continuous work experience abroad is this: a divorced male aged between 30 and 44, with secondary or secondary specialized education, a resident of Minsk or a city with population from 50,000 to 100,000 in Mahiloŭ or Viciebsk Regions. The group of those wishing to leave the country permanently includes an unproportionally large share of people with higher education (specialists with economic education prevail) and a high social status. This suggests that in case their migration intentions turn into real actions, Belarus will lose substantial human capital.
  - 5) Most of the potential migrants, for whom the main motive for migration is the possibility to improve their financial conditions, are ready to stay in the country if their monthly income reaches Br10 million (65.3% of those mentioning financial motives for potential emigration, or 52.5% of all potential emigrants). This amount (approximately EUR1,000) is way above the conventional amount stipulated in the social contract, at USD500.
  - 6) The Belarusians willing to emigrate tend to have more liberal views and it is quite likely that they support integration with the European Union rather than with Russia. There are three times as many supporters of integration with the EU among those wishing to emigrate permanently as there are among those who show no intention to leave the country for any purpose.
  - 7) Belarusians with work experience abroad earn more in Belarus, have more liberal views and rely on themselves when it comes to welfare and employment twice as much as those who have no work experience abroad. However, they still expect the state to provide medical assistance and education.

## Introduction. Objectives and methodology of the research

'Human Capital. Migration and migration intentions in terms of sociology' is a new study in the BISS's research program 'Human Capital as a Source of Competitiveness and Modernization'. The study builds on the findings of the nationwide public opinion poll (December 2012)<sup>4</sup>, commissioned by BISS. It should be noted that the nationwide opinion poll was mostly geared towards the continuation of the studies of 'social contracts in Belarus', human capital and geopolitical preferences of the Belarusians. At the same time, as a result of the poll we obtained some data on the migration preferences of the Belarusians, which, along with some earlier studies, underlie this research study. Notwithstanding the objective limitations mentioned above (inability to pay too much attention to migration in the questionnaire), BISS draws some conclusions and present them in the form of this polemic study.

This research has two objectives:

- It analyzes the parameters of migration intentions in Belarusian society.

To address this objective, BISS identifies the following population categories:

- *those intending to emigrate permanently;*
- *those intending to migrate only temporarily for work;*
- *those intending to migrate only temporarily for education;*
- *those with no intention to emigrate.*

The research determines the parameters of the identified groups based on social and demographic characteristics, attitude to the state (reliance on the state/self-reliance), economic values and geopolitical preferences.

- Draws the social portrait of labor migrants based on the findings of a poll of the citizens with a track record of labor migration.

To address this objective, we completed a *comparative description of two population groups aged under 40* (i.e., those who probably have work experience during the period of independence of Belarus rather than back in the Soviet times). The first group had labor migration experience ('continuous, not seasonal employment abroad'), and the second one did not.

Furthermore, we monitor the change in the spread of the Belarusians' migration intentions based on the findings of some previous nationwide polls, which comprised questions about migration plans of the population, namely

- Polls conducted in 1998 and 2006 by the Center for Sociological and Political Studies of BSU<sup>5</sup>;
- Poll commissioned by BISS in 2009 as part of the research of social contracts;
- Republican sociological survey of 2010 under the aegis of the Sociology Institute of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus.

Although some of the questions were formulated differently in each of the polls, and the findings differed as well<sup>6</sup>, we believe that the obtained data can be synthesized and used for 'secondary' analysis, albeit with certain reservations.

We should also mention methodology limitations: unfortunately, the 2009 and 2012 polls lack the questions that allow measuring the spread of the active form of migration intentions, as well as the

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4 The stratified quota sample of 1,352 respondents is representative of the population of Belarus. The poll was conducted by SATIO group of companies.

5 Findings of the polls are presented in the PhD thesis in sociology 'Migration intentions of the population of the Republic of Belarus: sociological analysis' by V. Zhakevich.

6 Based on findings of the polls conducted by the Independent Institute of Socio-Economic & Political Studies (IISEPS), for instance, in 2012, many independent media publish the information that almost half of the Belarusians are willing to leave the country permanently.

preferable country of emigration. Meanwhile, the publication of the results of the 2010 poll<sup>7</sup> lacks comprehensive data on the size of the passive form of migration intentions.

When analyzing migration intentions, we need to discriminate between the declarative intention to emigrate (*this form is conventionally named passive*) and the migration intention that is backed by specific actions (*active form of migration intention*). The latter comprises, among others, learning a foreign language, collection of information about a specific country, visits to agencies that provide international migration services.

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7 M.I. Arciuchin, S.A. Puškievič. Potential of foreign migration of the population of Belarus: a sociological analysis // Reports of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, 2011, Volume 55, No.3, p. 115-118.

## 1. Migration intentions: make money and get back.

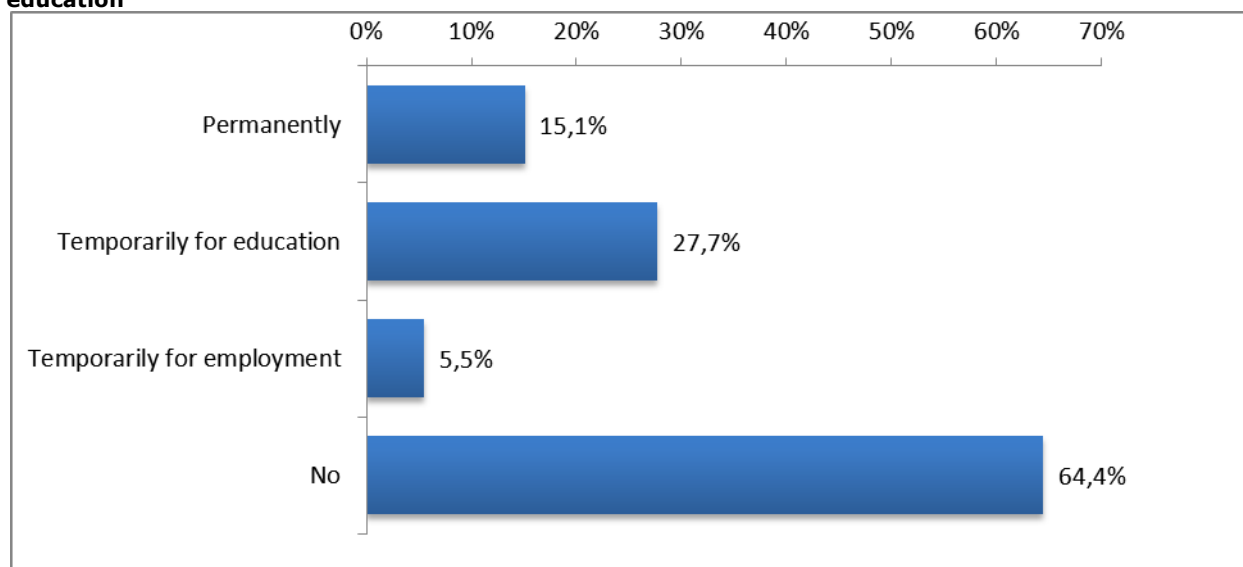
If we compare passive<sup>8</sup> migration intentions measured in 2006, 2009 and 2012, we will see that there was no major increase in intentions to leave Belarus permanently. An estimated 13.5%, 13.5% and 15.1% of the population showed intention to emigrate permanently in 2006, 2009 and 2012, respectively. At the same time, according to the findings of the 1998 poll, 43.5% of the Belarusians expressed their wish to emigrate temporarily to seek jobs—the figure markedly exceeds the numbers of those willing to leave the country to work abroad obtained in 2006, 2009 and 2012.

The wish to emigrate temporarily or permanently was expressed by 44.8%, 30.2% and 35.6% of the population in 1998, 2006 and 2012, respectively. The 2009 poll commissioned by BISS included questions about the intention to leave the country, although the possible answers to the question 'Would you like to leave the country?' did not differentiate between the wish to leave permanently and temporarily. As a result, first, the spread of the intention to emigrate temporarily for work or education remains unknown. Second, it is possible that while giving an affirmative answer to this question in 2009, some of the respondents had temporary emigration in mind. In this case, this factor alone can account for the fact that the number of those wishing to leave the country for good in 2009 (18.8%) exceeds that in 2012 (15.1%).

Unfortunately, the absence of questions to gauge the spread of the active form of migration intentions in the polls conducted in 2009 and 2012 does not allow us to compare the active forms of migration intentions with the data obtained in 1998, 2006 and 2010.

The overall spread of passive migration intentions for the purpose of temporary employment or education in 2012 remained roughly the same as in 2009 (33.2% and 32%, respectively). However, intentions to migrate for educational purposes have been growing weaker, whereas the willingness to migrate to have a job abroad has become stronger. The divergence can be attributed to the specific nature of the questionnaire in 2012. In 2012, when answering the question about the purposes of temporary migration, some citizens might have referred to educational emigration when they chose the answer 'this will enable me to upgrade qualification/facilitate career growth' (besides the answer 'this will enable me to have a good education').

**Chart 1.**  
**Passive forms of migration intentions to leave the country permanently, for temporary employment and education<sup>9</sup>**

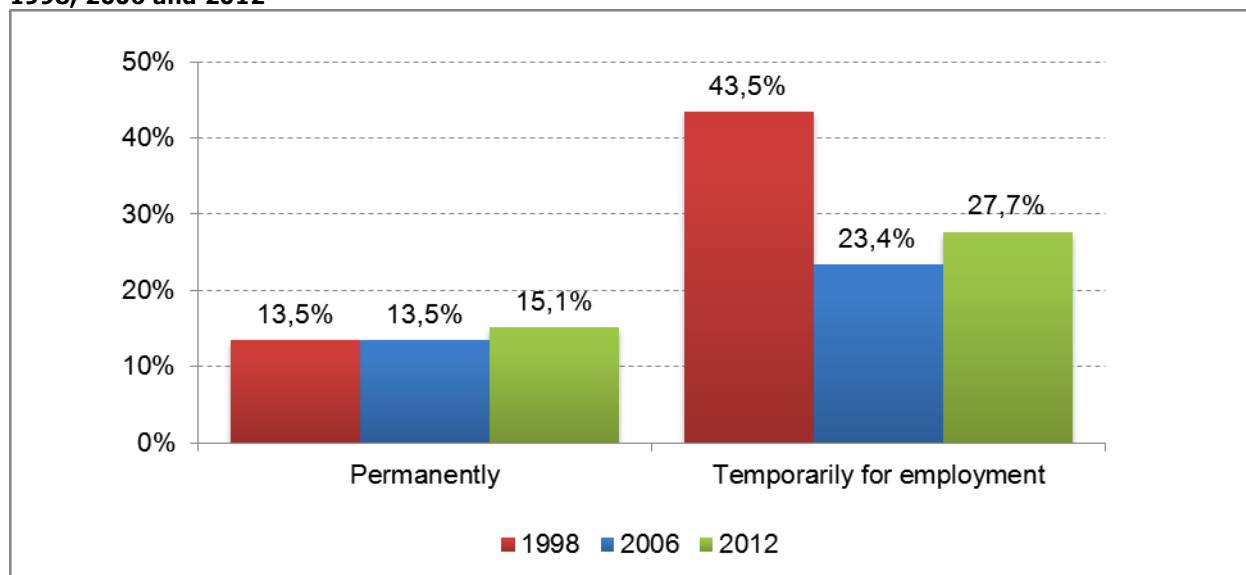


<sup>8</sup> It should be noted, however, that there are many reasons why migration intentions never turn into actions. An expressed migration intention is more often realized in the case of internal migration than that external (Gardner, De Jong, Arnold and Carino 1986). However, subsequent polls showed that expressed migration intentions largely correlated with the real results (see De Jong 2000).

<sup>9</sup> The total number of the respondents expressing this or that form of migration intentions (permanent, temporary employment, education) does not correspond to the share of the population that is unwilling to leave the country for any reason, because the category of the population with the employment and educational forms of migration intentions somewhat overlap with the category of the population that expressed the wish to leave the country permanently.

Chart 2.

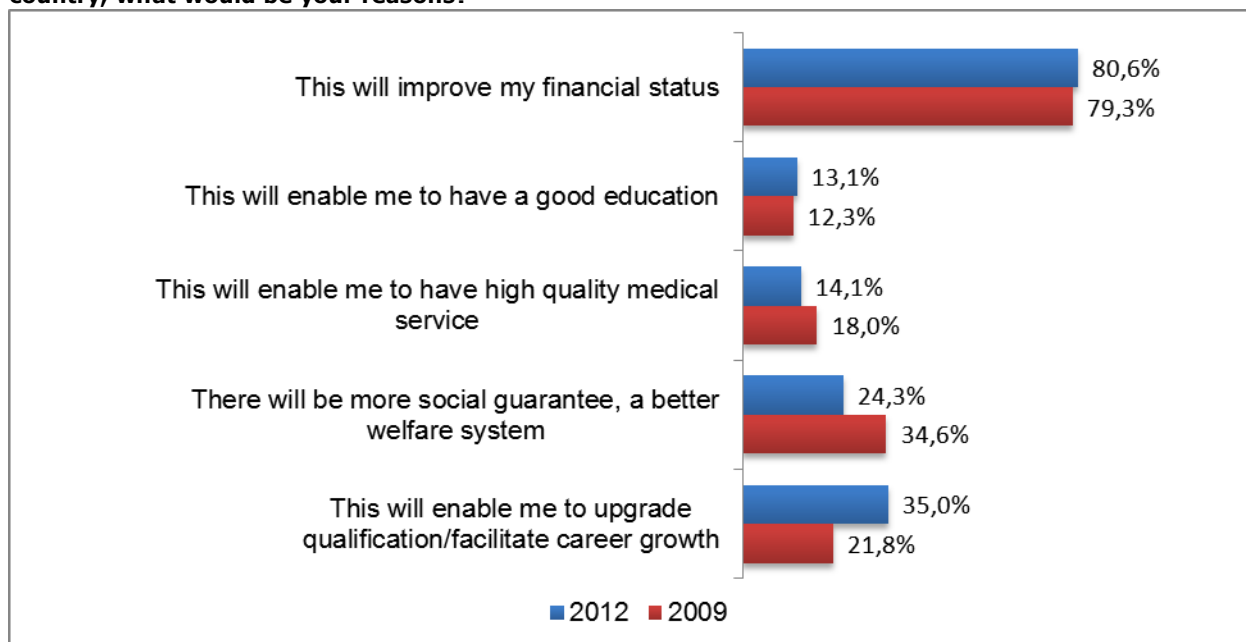
Passive forms of migration intentions to leave the country permanently and for temporary employment, 1998, 2006 and 2012



The distribution of migration motivations and constraining factors in the findings of the 2009 and 2012 polls is virtually identical. Improvements in the financial status prevailed as a motive for emigration (79.3% in 2009 and 80.6% in 2012). Increased social guarantees and social welfare remain an important motivation, although the number of those who mentioned it in 2012 fell almost by a third from the figure obtained in 2009 (24.3% and 34.6%, respectively). However, more respondents mentioned the possibility to upgrade their skills and facilitate career advancement (21.8% in 2009 and 35% in 2012). Apparently, those wishing to leave the country have become more self-reliant in the last few years.

Chart 3.

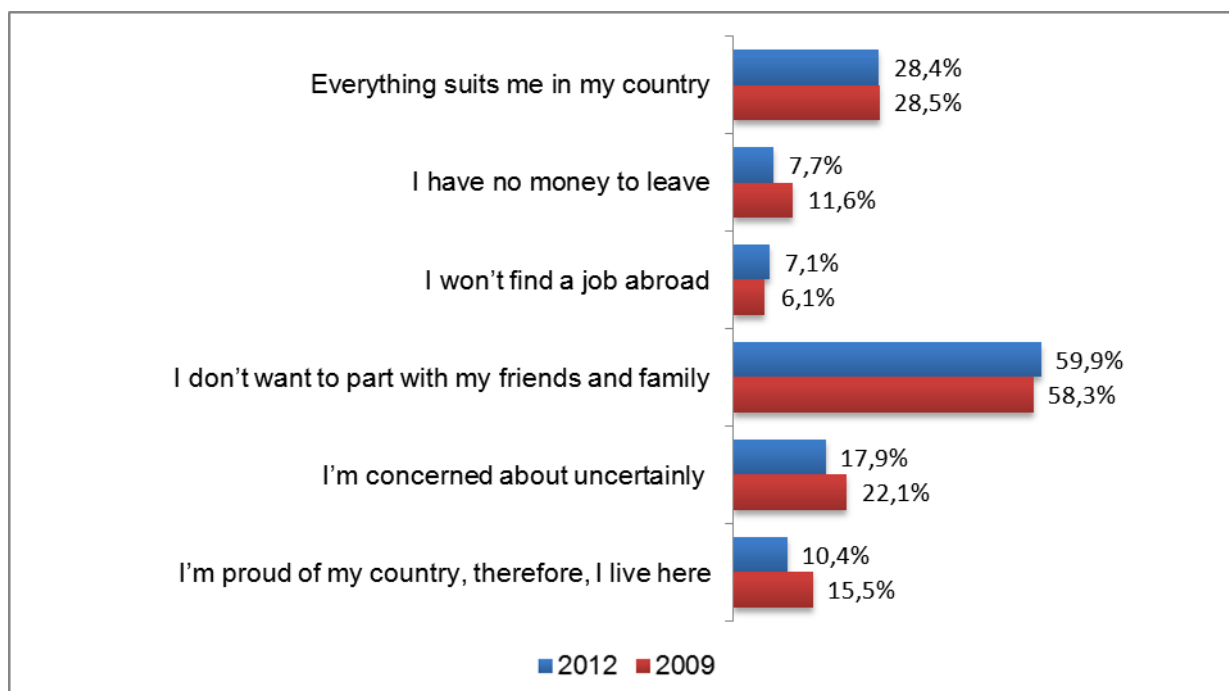
Main motivations for leaving the country permanently, 2009 and 2012. Question: 'If you would like to leave the country, what would be your reasons?'



According to the findings of the 2009 and 2012 polls, the reasons behind the unwillingness to leave the country remain the same—the reluctance to part with friends and family (58.3% and 59.9% of the respondents who are unwilling to emigrate) and uncertainty arising from migration (22.1% and 17.9%, respectively). The number of the respondents who explained their unwillingness to leave saying 'everything suits me in my country' remained almost the same (28.5% and 28.4%, respectively). The share of those referring to the pride in their country when accounting for their unwillingness to migrate fell quite significantly (to 10.4% from 15.5%).

Chart 4.

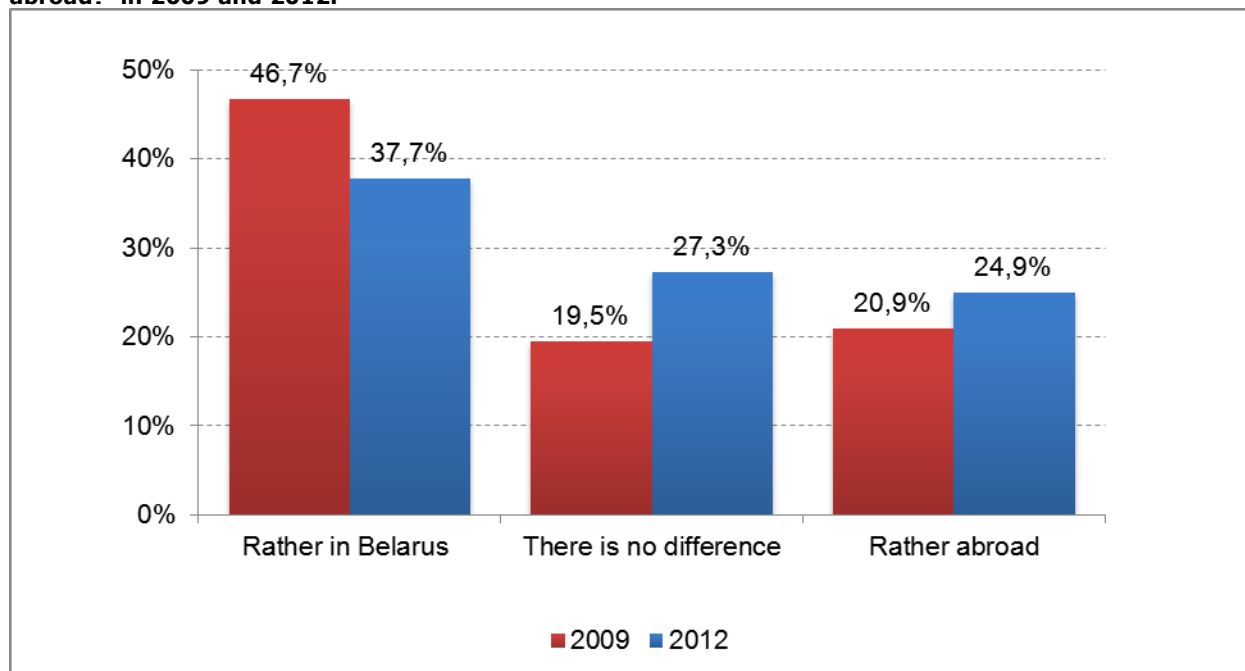
Main reasons behind the unwillingness to leave the country in 2009 and 2012. Question: 'If you are unwilling to migrate, what are your reasons?'



Compared to 2009, the number of respondents who believe that such people as themselves have a better life in Belarus than abroad fell (to 37.7% from 46.7%). At the same time, the redistribution was to a large extent because of the expansion in the category of the population who believes that there is no difference between living standards in Belarus and abroad (to 27.3% from 19.5%) rather than the increased number of those who think that life is better abroad (to 24.9% from 20.9%).

Chart 5.

Answers to the question 'In your opinion, where do such people as you have a better life—in Belarus or abroad?' in 2009 and 2012.



Nevertheless, based on the findings of the poll conducted in 2012, a considerable part of the population (65% responded that life is better 'rather in Belarus,' or 'there is no difference') does not think that people with their skills and social status have a better life abroad, despite the fact that, according to a December 2012 poll by the IISEPS, only 33.5% of the respondents said that

'the state of affairs in our country is developing in the right direction,' and only 23% of the respondents said that the socioeconomic status of Belarus would improve in years to come<sup>10</sup>.

There are two reasons for this, or these two reasons can be combined. First, a significant part of the population is short of information about the developments in Belarus and abroad. The older the category of the respondents and the lower the level of their education, the more seldom they believe that life is better abroad. Despite a quite high Internet penetration rate, the authorities appear to succeed in keeping the impression that the social and economic situation in Belarus is comparable to that foreign, or at least not worse. Second, most of the respondents seem to believe it unrealistic to compare their own living standard ambition to that 'in western countries' and therefore tend to associate the 'abroad' with the post-USSR area, i.e. they essentially compare their ideas of living standards with the two neighboring countries of the former Soviet Union—Ukraine and Russia. This way or another, the data indicate a certain paradox: the low level of trust in the authorities amid moderate discontent with authorities (according to a December 2012 public opinion poll by the IISEPS, the approval rating of the president was at 39.1%, and of the government, at 35%<sup>11</sup>).

Nevertheless, people tend to give specific answers to the question which income levels are required for them to give up the idea of migration, posed to those who named improvements in the financial status as the main migration motivation (only 0.6% of the respondents were undecided). They mostly mention BLR 8 mln. (15.8%), BLR 10 mln. (24%), or more than BLR 12 mln (21.5%). The median is around BLR 10 million. One can say that once this income level is achieved (naturally, if the level of expenditures does not grow), 65.3% of the potential emigrants, who mentioned this factor (there are 80.6% of them in the total number of those with migration intentions) will be ready to stay in the country.

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10 For further details, see: Trends are frozen: outlook for the development of public opinion in 2013. BISS's Polling Memo, [http://belinstitute.eu/images/doc-pdf/BISS\\_PM05\\_2013ru.pdf](http://belinstitute.eu/images/doc-pdf/BISS_PM05_2013ru.pdf)

11 Ibid.



## 2. Whom we might lose

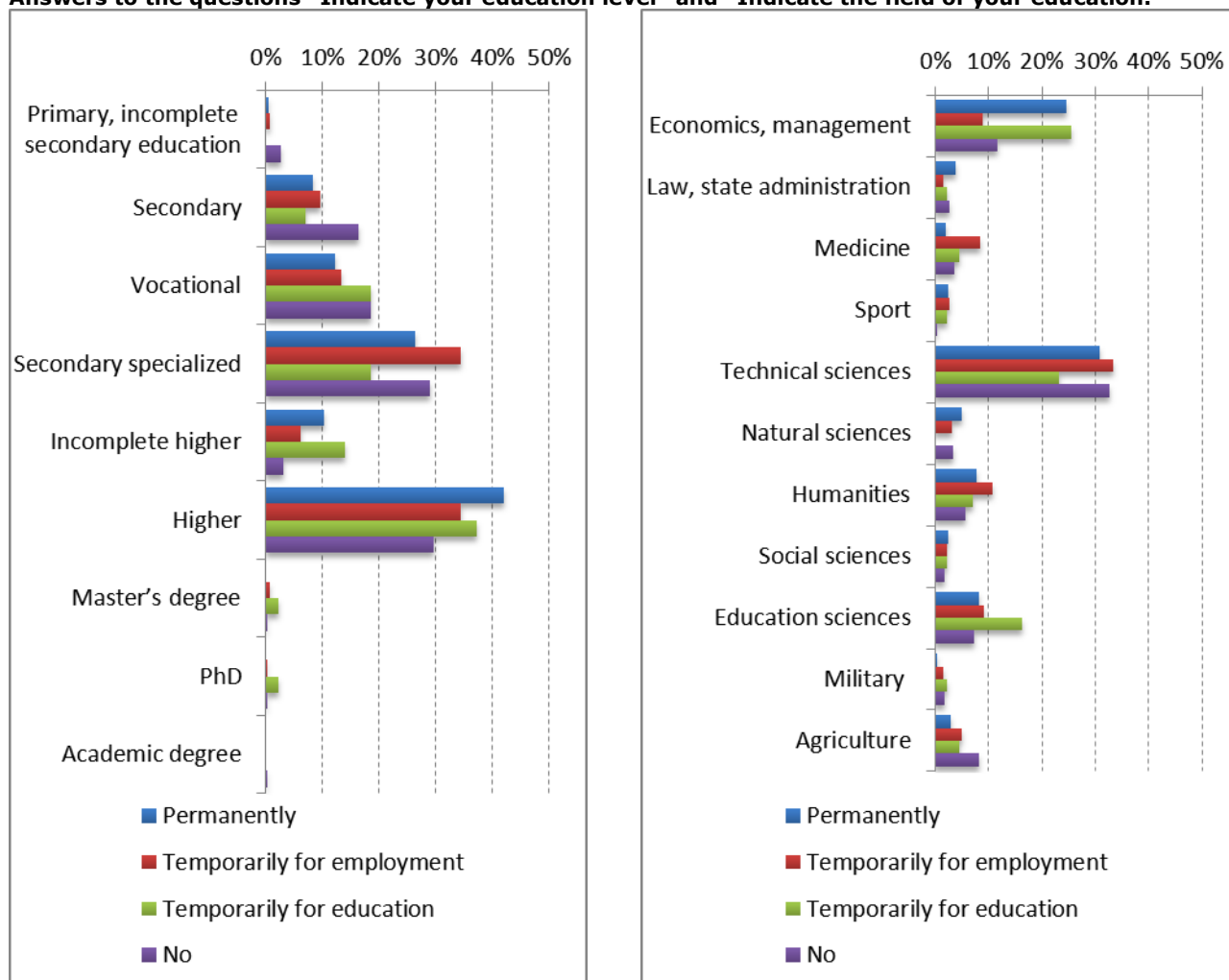
The social portrait of potential migrants is of special interest, because whenever migration intentions turn into a reality, the quality of human capital in Belarus is affected. This is why of particular interest are the skills, education and incomes of the groups in question. Furthermore, emigration is an important strategy to exit a complicated situation, which may emerge as a result of *a new crisis, deeper integration projects (for instance, a significant attractiveness of the Russian labor market starting from 2015)* or in case of liberal reforms. In this case, international migration intentions may show a sharp increase and transform from the passive into the active form at a much faster rate. Migration will therefore become an even more sensitive issue for the Belarusian economy, and when studying the portrait of potential migrants, **we are enabled to evaluate potential risks.**

It follows from the results of the poll that migration intentions among males and females are roughly equal. However, the categories of the population willing to leave permanently and opting for temporary emigration are markedly different.

In the group of those showing the intention to leave the country, the shares of people with economic education (24.5% of the group and 13.5% of the total population), higher education (42.2%) and active Internet users (65.5% of the group and 36% of the total population) prevail. The latter can be attributed to the age variable—migration intentions dominate in the age group of 18-29, which comprises most active Internet users. Whereas the age group of 18-29 accounts for 24.3% of the total population, only 13.7% of young people are unwilling to leave the country for any purpose (permanently, temporary employment, education).

**Chart 6.**

**Answers to the questions "Indicate your education level" and "Indicate the field of your education."**

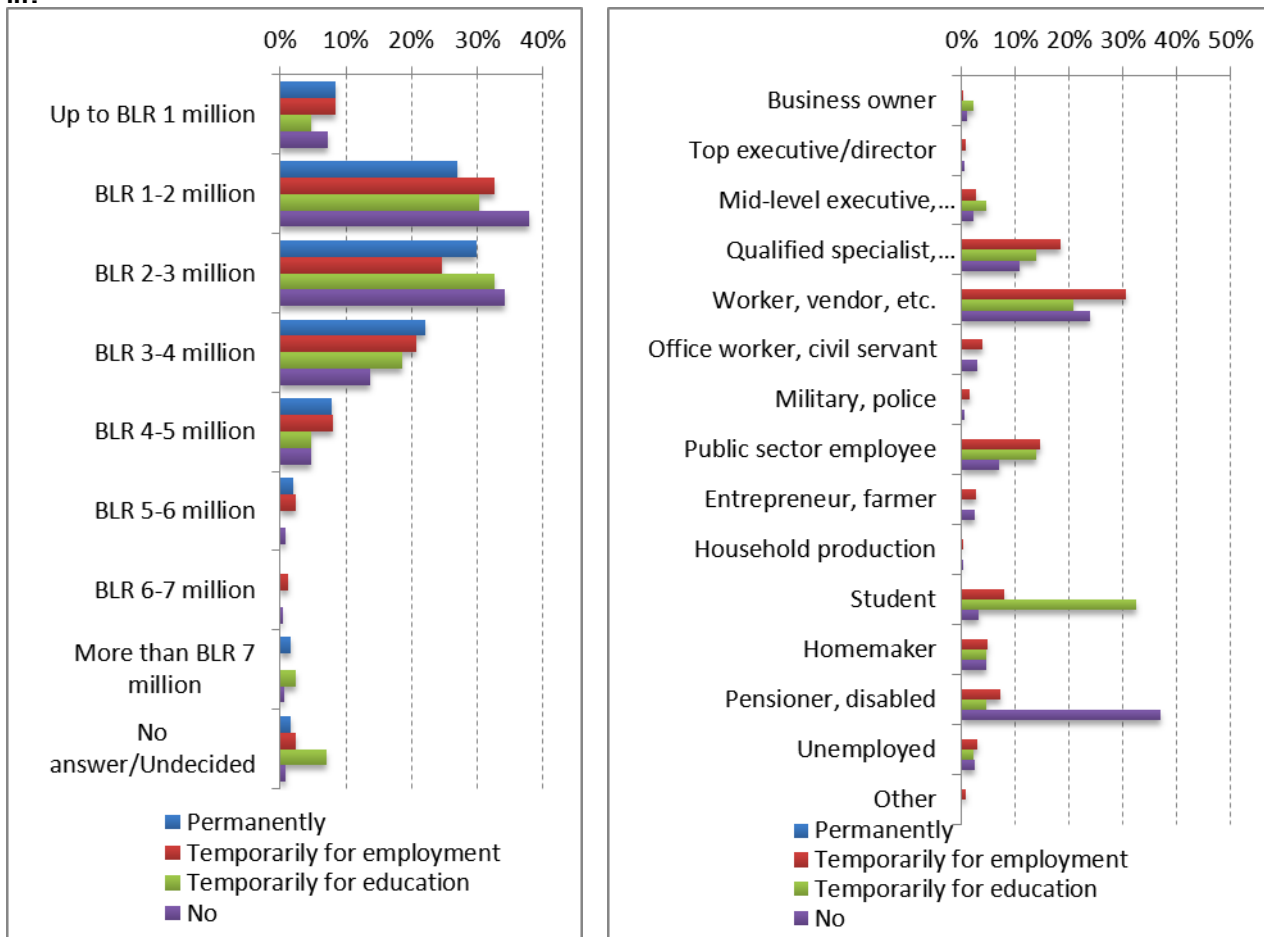


Given that the groups of citizens with economic education and high social status (business, executive position, civil servant) form large proportions of the category of those showing intention to leave the country forever, we observe an alarming trend. If representatives of these groups realize their emigration intentions, the country will lose citizens with a higher quality education and higher social status.

In other words, it is the category with a supposedly high level of knowledge about the objective situation in the economy and fundamentals of the political system in the country that demonstrate the lack of trust in the economic system of the country in the long term (which is obvious from the intention to leave the country permanently rather than temporarily), or lack of trust in the ability of the authorities to introduce reforms. This looks like a sort of reflection of the degree of trust by the progressive members of society in Belarus’s economic progress. **The wide spread of migration intentions to emigrate permanently among citizens with a high level of education and practical experience appears to seriously threaten the future of the country, because such people possess especially valuable human capital that could help facilitate future modernization of Belarus.**

The poll also revealed the unproportionally high share of citizens with incomes of BLR 3-4 mln. per family member in the group of respondents willing to leave Belarus permanently (22.1% in the group and 16.5% in the total population). In the meantime, the relatively high-income group of citizens with incomes ranging from BLR 4 million and BLR 7 million per family member prefer temporary emigration (11.4% of the relevant group and 7.4% of the total population). Possibly, the category of workers with incomes of BLR 3-4 million includes those who believe the situation with compensations to be unfair. Therefore, the dream of an average monthly wage of USD500 must have suffered from inflation. Because of the peculiarities of the official economic policy, the Belarusian labor market fails to substantially differentiate wages depending on the qualifications and skills of workers. This stimulates emigration of highly-qualified workers from Belarus.

**Chart 7.**  
**Answers to the question 'Indicate the level of incomes per family member' and 'What line of business are you in?'**



Citizens of larger cities (more than 100,000 population, but not region centers) show a more pronounced intention to emigrate permanently, while intentions to leave temporarily for employment or education prevail among Minsk residents. It is probable that region centers provide better opportunities for employment than smaller towns, while in rural areas, migration intentions are traditionally less spread.

Finally, the wish to leave temporarily prevails among blue-collar workers (worker, vendor, public sector employee). The share of people with education in the humanities and arts is quite high in the group of people with this sort of migration intentions (10% of the group and 7% in total population). When it comes to those wishing to emigrate for education, the share of people educated in economics, management and education science prevails in this group.

### 3. Correlation between migration intentions and socioeconomic and geopolitical preferences.

#### To rely on yourself, but make use of the state.

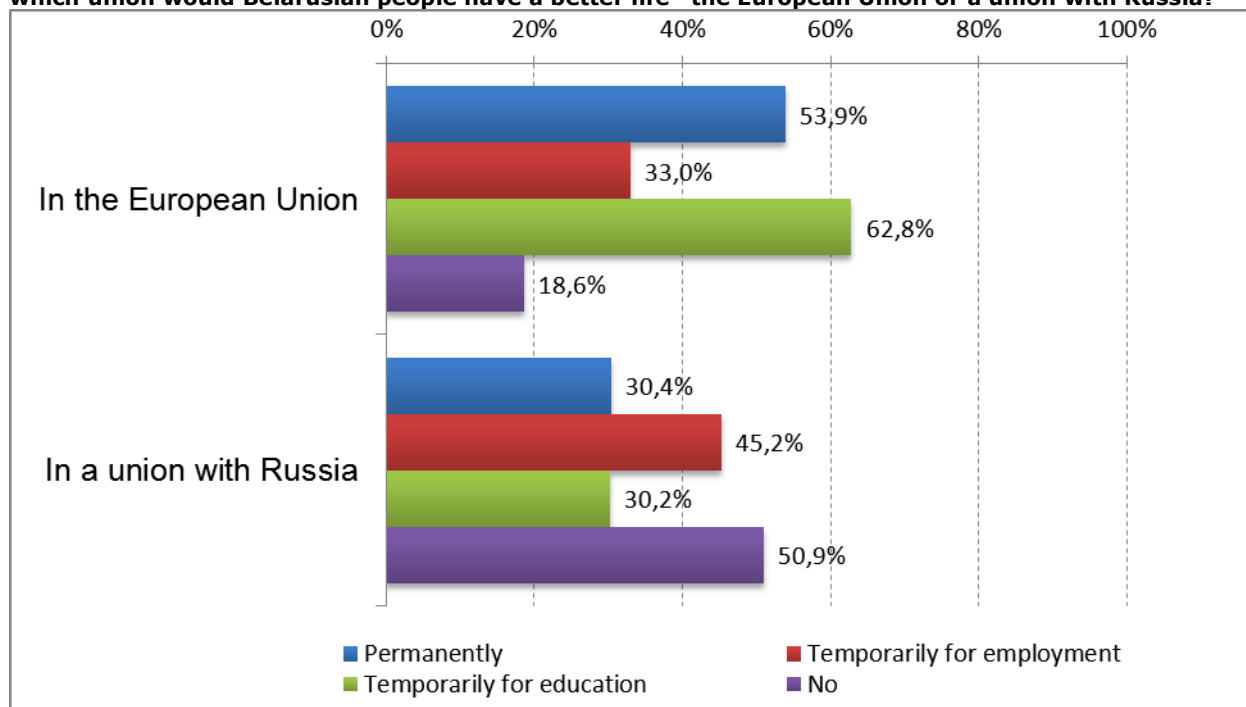
The findings of the poll indicate that the population group with migration intentions has more liberal economic views and is more inclined to adapt to the conditions of the competitive labor market. At the same time, migration intentions are not spread among those who rely on the state. The poll showed that the population with a high propensity for emigration clearly prefers higher compensations to stable employment, is dissatisfied with free mediocre medical assistance, discontent with mandatory job assignments for university graduates, prefers working for a privately-owned business than for a state-run enterprise, and is more tolerant towards privatization of Belarusian enterprises by foreign capital.

The category willing to emigrate permanently has a much smaller share of those who describe their employment prospects as 'good' compared with other categories (three times smaller). At the same time, those intending to leave the country temporarily for job or education spoke about 'good' employment prospects just slightly less frequently than those who have no plans to leave the country for any reason.

Also noteworthy is the obvious difference in the geopolitical preferences of various categories of the population depending on their international migration intentions. The group of those willing to emigrate permanently and for education has a larger share of supporters of Belarus's integration with the European Union than the average for Belarus's population, and this share is much larger compared with the category that is unwilling to emigrate (53.9%, 28.1% and 18.6%, respectively). However, those with no plans to emigrate for any reason are much more likely to support Belarus's integration with Russia than any other category.

**Chart 8.**

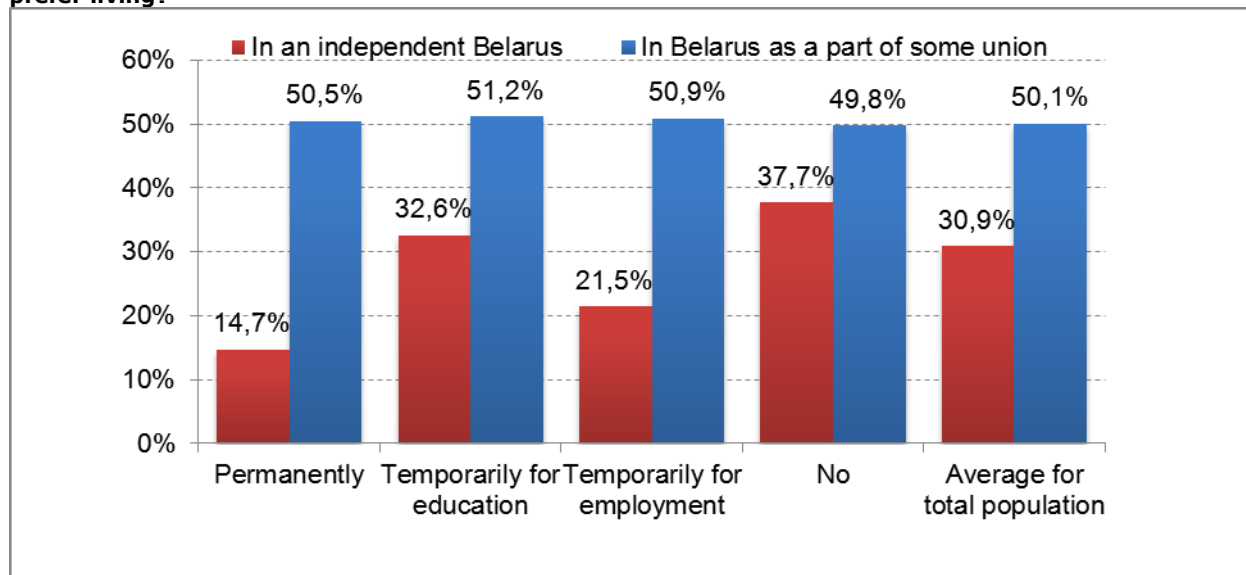
**Geopolitical views of population categories with various migration intentions. Question: 'In your opinion, in which union would Belarusian people have a better life—the European Union or a union with Russia?'**<sup>12</sup>



<sup>12</sup> The conventional category of those advocating pro-European integration includes those who answered either 'Definitely in the European Union' or 'Rather in the European Union.' The answers indicating conventional pro-Russian attitudes include 'Definitely in a union with Russia' and 'Rather in a union with Russia.' Note: the categories of the population showing intention to leave Belarus temporarily for employment or education to some extent overlap with the category willing to leave permanently, i.e. some people answered that they were eager to either leave permanently or temporarily for employment/education.

At the same time, the category with no migration intentions has more conspicuous anti-integration intentions compared to the rest of the categories. In this group, 37.7% of the respondents would prefer living in an 'independent Belarus'<sup>13</sup>, whereas the share of the respondents who chose the same answer in the category willing to emigrate permanently is markedly smaller, at 14.7%.

**Chart 9.**  
Geopolitical views of population categories with various migration intentions. Question: 'Where would you prefer living?'<sup>14</sup>



It is a somewhat contradictory trend that the positive attitude to the creation of the Eurasian Union is almost equally spread in various categories of the population according to their migration intentions. This could be attributed to the lack of knowledge about the essence of the Eurasian Union, as well as the perception of the phrase about a union with Russia not from the point of view of integration blocs, such as the Common Economic Area, but rather a much deeper union.

13 Answer to the question 'You would prefer living ...' with possible answers 'In the European Union,' 'In a union with Russia,' 'In a union with Russia and the EU simultaneously,' 'In independent Belarus,' 'Undecided.'

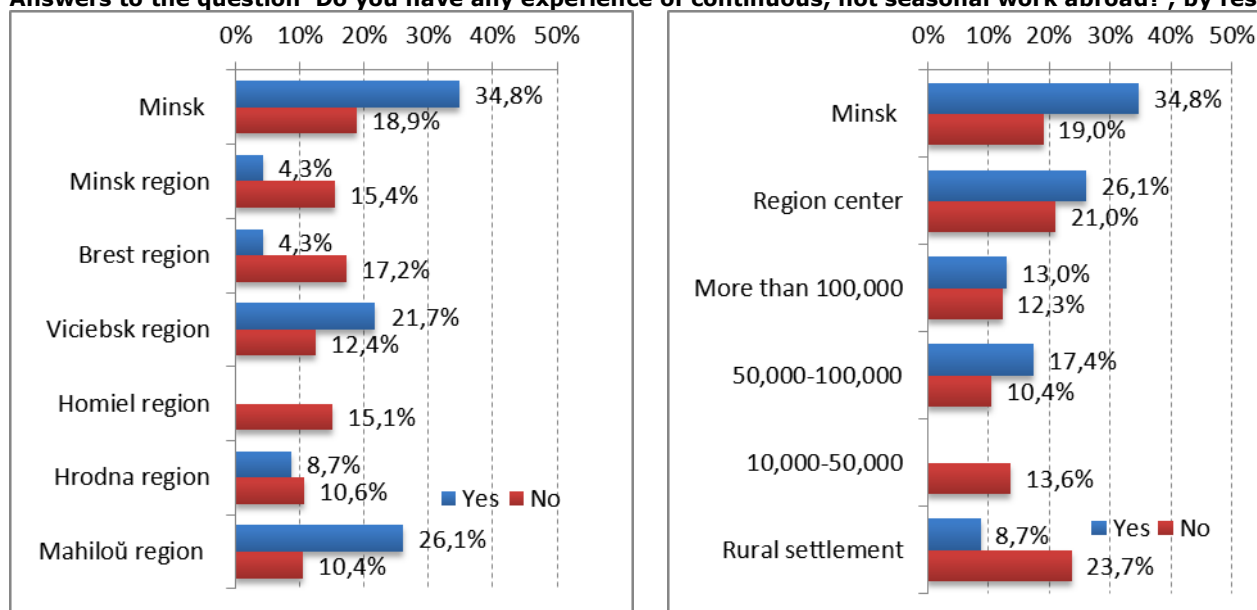
14 Note: the categories of the population showing intention to leave Belarus temporarily for employment or education to some extent overlap with the category willing to leave permanently, i.e. some people answered that they were eager to either leave permanently or temporarily for employment/education.

#### 4. The social portrait of a Belarusian labor migrant.

From the geographic perspective, it is noteworthy that continuous work experience abroad was more frequently reported by residents of the city of Minsk, Mahiloŭ and Viciebsk regions, whereas residents of Minsk and Brest regions have the least work experience in a foreign country. This should be attributed to the fact that Mahiloŭ and Viciebsk regions are closer to Russia than the other regions of Belarus, and labor migration to Russia is facilitated by many factors, including ease of travel, absence of a language barrier and equality with the Russians in the local labor market. The geographic proximity of the adjacent regions tips the scale in favor of labor migration to Russia. Furthermore, the economic status of the two regions must be an additional factor. Viciebsk region has one of the lowest levels of wages in the country, and in Mahiloŭ region, there are no cities with more than 100,000 population and relatively developed industrial enterprises besides Babrujsk.

**Chart 10.**

**Answers to the question 'Do you have any experience of continuous, not seasonal work abroad?', by residence**

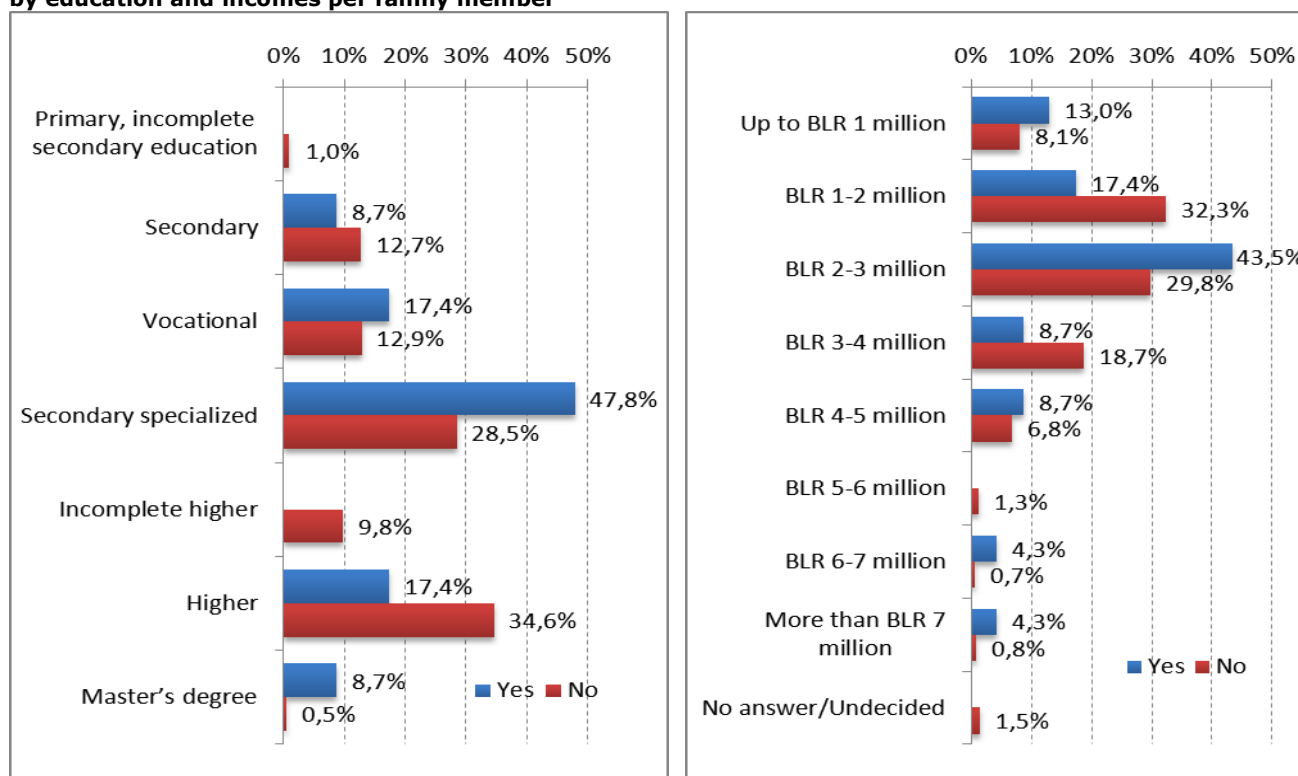


Labor migrants are unproportionally more frequently residents of the capital city and cities with between 50,000 and 100,000 population, whereas the share of migrants among residents of rural areas is unproportionally smaller. There are twice as many males with foreign work experience than there are females. There are more people with work experience abroad in the age group 30-44 than in the age group 18-29. The share of divorced citizens is unproportionally higher among labor migrants than their share in total population. Possibly, labor migration contributes to dissolution of marriages. On the other hand, it may be easier for divorcees to become labor migrants.

Those with vocational education and secondary specialized education (17.4% and 47.8%, respectively) prevail among those with continuous work experience abroad (17.4% of them have higher education, which compares to 34% for total population). This confirms the results of earlier studies, which showed that labor migrants to Russia as a principal receiving country have a **lower level of education than Belarusian population, in average.**

Chart 11.

Answers to the question 'Do you have any experience of continuous, not seasonal work abroad?', by education and incomes per family member



It is noteworthy that people with incomes less than BLR 2 million per family member were less likely to have labor migration experience. At the same time, citizens with incomes between BLR 2 million and BLR 3 million are more likely to have labor migration experience. Apparently, it is a result of the peculiarity that we mentioned above, when residents of rural areas with lower wages are less mobile, whereas the most frequent labor migrants are residents of cities and towns with population between 50,000 and 100,000 with wages that secure incomes of BLR 2-3 million per family member.

Another unproportionally high share of people with experience of foreign employment is the group of Belarusians with the average monthly income per family member of BLR 6 million and more. This suggests a positive impact of work experience abroad on the quality of human capital—this group accounts for only 1.8% of total population, however, they account for 8.6% of those with experience of being employed abroad.

Those with work experience abroad rely more on themselves than they do on the state, as far as welfare (43.1%) and employment (41.2%) are concerned. At the same time, they have the same attitude to social security (education, healthcare) as population at large, i.e. they rely on the state. Those with work experience abroad have more liberal views on employment, job assignments for university graduates and business ownership types, but, just as population at large, they are divided into two groups—those preferring higher wages and those who opt for stable guaranteed jobs.

People with labor migration experience have more explicit liberal views. However, the findings of the poll make it hard to determine whether these views were a result of labor migration or it is the other way round, and people with liberal views tend to emigrate more often. As we have already ascertained, citizens with international migration intentions tend to have more liberal views. At the same time, there is a distinctive regional prevalence in the origin of labor migrants who returned to Belarus. This may indicate an important role of objective factors and suggests that liberal ideas became a result of labor migration, which, for its part, was caused by objective reasons. The push factors of emigration, which determine this regional distinction, as well as the nature of liberal attitudes may become the subject matters of further research focusing on labor migrants and people with relevant experience.

## Conclusion

There were marginal changes in dynamics of intentions of the Belarusians to establish their permanent residence in a new country. Proportion of the population that expresses intention to leave Belarus permanently reached the pre-crisis level (however, these intentions might have been modified during the crisis year of 2011). Improving financial conditions remains the prevalent motive for emigration.

The portrait of a typical Belarusian with a continuous work experience abroad is as follows: a divorced male aged between 30 and 44, with secondary or secondary specialized education, a resident of a city with population from 50,000 to 100,000 in Mahiloŭ or Viciebsk Regions, or the city of Minsk.

Belarusians with work experience abroad tend to earn more in Belarus, have more liberal views and rely on themselves when it comes to welfare and employment twice as much as those who have no work experience abroad. However, they still expect the state to provide state-funded medical assistance and education. Therefore, we observe an interesting paradox of seeking most benefits—to have selective skills adequate to the market system and enjoy non-market benefits offered by the state. In other words, what we deal with is a special rationality model—to earn money in a market system in order to return to a socially-oriented model and enjoy the advantages of a cheaper life and therefore wish no changes.

Meanwhile, we can only speak about a correlation, without identifying the direction of the cause-and-effect relation between the variables—we do not claim that it is their work experience abroad that makes Belarusians adopt more liberal views, for it could be the other way round, and it is their liberal views that make their foreign work experience more likely.

Also noteworthy is the obvious divergence in the geopolitical preferences of various categories of the population depending on their international migration intentions. The group of those willing to emigrate permanently and for education has a larger share of supporters of Belarus's integration into the European Union than the average for population, and this share is much larger compared with the category that is unwilling to emigrate (53.9%, 28.1% and 18.6%, respectively). However, those with no plans to emigrate for any reason are much more likely to support Belarus's integration with Russia than any other category.

Most of the potential emigrants, i.e. those willing to leave Belarus permanently, are well-educated people (quite likely with education in economics), with a high social status and are active Internet users. This data indicates the general distrust in the current political system of those who are capable of making competent judgments about its outlook, and suggests that if migration intentions turn into actions, Belarus will lose emigrants with a high level of human capital.



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