

Lunds universitet  
Sociologiska institutionen

NEWCOMERS IN MALMÖ:  
PEOPLE WITH GLOBALIZED EXPERIENCES AND  
THEIR EXPECTATIONS OF THE LOCAL LABOR MARKET

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Uppsats Soc 344, 41-60 p  
Vårterminen 2006  
Handledare: Anders Järnegren

## ABSTRACT

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This study investigates a group of *globalized foreign-born people among the new residents in Malmö* who came to Sweden mainly in 2005. The life situation of this group of immigrants is not as well studied as the integration problems of refugees. Since the social and labor migration is increasing in Europe and in the whole world it is worth to study the lives of the globalized people in different aspects.

The *purpose* of the study is to define how the foreign-born newcomers try to establish themselves on the Swedish labor market in Malmö. The empirical analysis is based on the interviews with the nine students at Folkuniversitetet, where the newcomers study the Introduction Program offered by Malmö City. The investigation is explorative and basically examines the working experiences and the career expectations of the specific group of the residents in Sweden.

The results of the investigation show that most of the respondents have international background, good qualifications and the previous working experience corresponding to the high-skilled labor. Most of them want to continue their careers in Sweden and realize the necessity of getting additional qualifications in order to adjust their profiles to the local needs. Almost all of the respondents have similar attitudes towards work in spite of the different countries of origin. Thanks to their flexible personalities and globalized experiences some of the newcomers have found their way to the modern labor market.

Nyckelord: people with globalized biographies, work experience, career expectations, labor market

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Globalization processes increased the social and labor mobility in the world. People move across the borders and settle in different countries on account of different reasons. The lives of migrants are influenced by the social structures of the country they come to, which in its turn undergoes changes caused by globalization. This interaction and interchange draws attention of many sociologists today.

### 1.1. The subject of study

A growing number of modern people have globalized biographies and identities. They usually can choose whether they will move and settle in another country or not. I decided to investigate a group of such *globalized foreign-born people among the new residents in Malmö* who came to Sweden mainly in 2005. I found these newcomers at Folkuniversitetet, where they study the Introduction Program offered by Malmö City. Some of them can be called as love immigrants, some of them have come to Sweden because of their beliefs and hopes. Nevertheless, whatever their connection to this country may be, they were not forced to move by circumstances as it is in the case of refugees. It was rather a matter of their choice.

The life situation of this group of immigrants is not as well studied as the integration problems of refugees. Since the social and labor migration is increasing in Europe and in the whole world it is worth to study the lives of the globalized people in different aspects. Defining these people as globalized, I follow the common public view on this group of migrants. In fact, I have not found any better notion describing such people, when I searched in different databases.

### 1.2. The purpose and the questions

Establishing in another country involves interaction with different social structures. In the case of my study I will investigate the relation of the new residents to the labor market. Thus, the *purpose* of the study is to define how the globalized foreign-born citizens try to establish themselves on the Swedish labor market in Malmö. In order to achieve this purpose I will try to find the answers to the following *questions*:

- what previous working experiences do the newcomers have
- what are their attitudes towards work and how these attitudes are influenced by the globalization processes
- what are their career expectations in Sweden.

Thus, I will basically try to examine the working experiences and the career expectations of a group of people, which has not been given much study before. Therefore, my study will be more of explorative nature. My anticipation is that these globalized people come to Sweden with experiences and expectations of high-skilled employees. Most of them have traveled and worked in different countries. They hope to find a stimulating and challenging job in Sweden as well, which would help them to integrate into the new society. Meeting the reality of the labor market in Sweden they adjust their attitudes to it. Some of them even reflect on taking a less attractive job as a temporary source of income. Further I will investigate if this anticipation tends to be true and can be proved by the empirical data.

### 1.3. The structure of study

The study is based on the theoretical research and the empirical investigation made through the interviews with nine students of Folkuniversitetet, where they study the Introduction Program offered by Malmö City to the new residents. The results of the study are presented as following: the theoretical perspectives and key concepts are outlined in the second chapter of the paper. The method of research is discussed in the third chapter. The fourth chapter contains the presentation and analysis of the empirical data. Finally, the general conclusions are outlined in the fifth chapter.

## 2. THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

The issues of work and labor arrangements in the recent decades have been investigated in a number of sociological studies. As relevant for my empirical study I can mention first of all the fundamental works by Manuel Castells and Ulrich Beck.

Manuel Castells offers a structural perspective on work in the network society, describing how the labor arrangements and work organization have been changed as the result of the new technologies.

The effects of globalization process on work and labor are investigated in the works of Ulrich Beck, where he emphasizes the individual perspective on work in the “risk society”.

As far as the people’s attitudes towards work are concerned, it is worth to mention the doctoral dissertations of Tomas Berglund and Christer Theanderson from Göteborg University. The former investigated the attitudes toward work in Western Europe and the United States, studying the structural and cultural factors which are important for how individuals regard work. The latter concentrates on how common the attitude towards work as merely a source of income is in Sweden.

These theoretical perspectives are presented further in this chapter. Here I will also describe the general requirements of the contemporary labor market globally and locally, based on the other sociological research and documents.

### 2.1. Work: structural perspective

Manuel Castells in his recent works prefers to call the new society evolving in the recent twenty years as the network society (Castells 2000, p.10). He names the following features characteristic to this society:

- a new economy, which is informational, global and networked
- a culture of ‘real virtuality’ shaped by the electronic hypertext
- information networks as the predominant organizational form of business, social and individual life
- disappearing social classes
- diminishing role of nation-states

Summarizing the features determining work and employment in this new society according to Castells (Castells 2000, 2002) the following can be mentioned:

### *Economical changes*

1. Productivity and competitiveness are determined by the ability of generating knowledge and processing/ managing **information**. The new technological systems make these processes more advanced (Castells 2000, p.17; Castells 2002, p.152).
2. Financial markets, international trade of goods and services, advanced business services, multinational production firms and their networks, communication media and science and technology have become **global**. Highly skilled speciality labor have work on a global basis as well. This highly skilled labor refers to technologists, scientists, top-managers as well as artists, sportsmen and organized criminals. The labor without special skills is effected by globalization, but remains local (Castells 2000, p.10, 12; Castells 2002, pp.153-155).
3. The new form of economic organization is a **network enterprise**. The unit of production process is no longer the firm, but the **business project** (Castells 2000, p.11).

### *Social changes*

1. Crisis of patriarchy reconfigures the life-sharing forms of family and personal lives. Interpersonal relationships shift from nuclei to networks. Families are transformed into partnerships which are nodes of **networks** (Castells 2000, p.20).
2. Individuals have to **reprogramme** their own personalities throughout the life in order to adjust to different networks. The process of socialization becomes **individualized** and made out of composite models (Castells 2000, p.21).

The *organization structure* of work has also been significantly changed. Castells describes the new pattern of economic organization, the network enterprise (Castells 2000, p.11). This enterprise is internally de-centralized and includes small and medium businesses, which form the networks and connect among themselves on specific business projects. As soon as the project is finished they switch to another network. The structure of such network enterprise is exemplified in the book of Castells and Himanen on the Finnish model of the information society and the welfare state (Castells& Himanen 2002). The organizational structure of Nokia is presented there as a typical network enterprise, where the corporation units of developing and production are not outsourced but built on the partnership and informational cooperation with subcontractors.

## 2.2. Work: individual perspective

Unlike Castells, who concentrates mainly on the global issues of work and employment, Ulrich Beck emphasizes the globalization effects on the individual lives and careers. He says that people's biographies are becoming *reflexive* because people "can or even must choose between

different lifestyles, subcultures, social ties and identities” since they have been removed from “the traditional commitments and support relationships” of the class, the family, the profession and the firm (Beck 1992, p.131).

The change of social identity is also described as *inner mobility* in Beck’s another book on globalization and place polygamy (Beck 2000). He describes the inner mobility as “having to ‘find one’s place’ between different places each with their special social demands” and says that it has become the second nature of people in the contemporary society (Beck 2000, p.73). This reasoning is very similar to what Castells describes as the constant network changing of personality (Castells 2000, p.21).

Describing the *individualization* process in working life Beck speaks about the “flexibilization of working hours and the decentralization of the work site (of which electronic home work is an extreme case)” (Beck 1992, p.129). The risks for the consequences of the decisions, which people make, increase. To summarize Beck’s reflections, he describes a great responsibility which every individual has for his/her life and career in the modern world, where the regulations of class and society are becoming diffuse and uncertain. In general, Beck is rather pessimistic about the future of the labor market, predicting the end of the labor era (Beck 2000, pp.30-64). Indeed, the nation states have less power to influence the economy and less recourses to guarantee the full-time employment with all social benefits.

### 2.3. Contemporary labor market

Taking up the issues of the labor market I will first of all describe the global tendencies and then turn to the situation in Europe in particular.

Based mainly on Castells reasoning (Castells 2000, 2002) I can outline the following characteristics of the contemporary labor market:

1. Employment patterns are becoming more **flexible**: part-time work, temporary work, self-employment, work by contract, informal or semi-formal labor arrangements (Castells 2000, p.11).
2. Mass incorporation of women to paid labor caused **feminization** of labor. A woman with her capability to cope with multiple roles fits very well in the network models of labor arrangements. The ‘flexible woman’ is gradually replacing the ‘organization man’ (Castells 2000, p.12).
3. The network relationships of production and consumption cause the **individualization** of labor in terms of capital and special qualifications (Castells 2000, p.18).
4. Labor market is becoming more **polarized**. There is labor included into the network of production and **switched-off labor** which ultimately becomes non-labor. Within the **networked**



**labor** there are different bargaining positions depending on the informational capacity and contribution to the network. This positioning leads to further division into *self-programmable* labor and *generic* labor (Castells 2000, p.18). Self-programmable labor ‘plays the game’, takes active part in the competition, invests, influences the goals of the network. The strategy of generic labor is survival.

The situation on the European market is characterized in the *Green and White papers* concerning the employment matters issued by the European Commission. They describe the economical and social changes similar to those analyzed by sociologists. For instance, the *White Paper on Growth, Competitiveness, Employment* (1993) describes the economical changes in geopolitical, demographic, technological and financial terms stressing globalization of the market and decentralization of the economical processes. It says that “the economy is becoming increasingly knowledge-based, manufacturing activities are being farmed out, services are taking the lion's share, and the possession and transmission of information is becoming crucial to success.” It is also stated that small and medium enterprises are models of operational flexibility and that “hierarchical and linear systems are gradually giving way to interactive organizations”.

The social changes described in the *White Paper on Growth, Competitiveness, Employment* (1993) are similar to those named in the theoretical sociology works: “the progressive decline in the importance of traditional households (husband, wife and children) as the main economic and social unit in society”, “the increasing participation of women in the labour market”, “a shift in consumer and political preferences away from the public provision of goods and services towards more private provision has brought a reduction in public sector activities”.

The European commission gives much consideration to the problem of unemployment. Unlike Castells, EU politicians assume that one of the major reasons of unemployment is the technical progress. They also see the sources of new jobs mostly in the service sector in a new ‘social economy’, which according to Castells, basically is the strategy of survival.

The situation is described even more sharply in the economic research. Thus, Klaus F. Zimmermann analyzes the European labor market as following: “Institutional constraints on the labor markets, high unemployment among the low-skilled and excess demand for the skilled workers describe the predominant situation in the European Union, currently and in the longer-term future” (Zimmermann 2005, p.430). Further he suggests a rather radical point of view, stating that an economically motivated immigration policy can generate welfare improvements in Europe: “A selective immigration policy that tends to avoid unskilled migrants and attracts skilled foreign workers will, therefore, be a safe strategy to foster growth, increase demand for unskilled native workers, and be beneficial” (Zimmermann 2005, p.430).

As far as the Swedish labor market is concerned, it has been investigated that technological and organizational changes enforced the process of labor exclusion more than in other economies in Europe (Bäcklund 2003). Referring to the European research, Ann-Katrin Bäcklund describes the changes in the design of jobs “towards increased complexity, higher skill levels and greater use of teamwork, delegation of responsibility and improved communication” (Bäcklund 2003, p.43). She points out that the existing jobs in Sweden require up-skilling and capability to cope with additional administrative, economic and communicative work tasks (Bäcklund 2003, p.43).

#### 2.4. Required skills and qualifications

Since the nature of work and the situation on the contemporary labor market have changed I will now try to determine what skills and qualifications are relevant for the present day. The market is rather polarized and it is difficult to outline the common requirements. Still, I will start again with the global characteristics and proceed to the European ones.

On the global level of the high-skilled labor work seems to become less routinized and determined by subordination. The modern employees have to be more independent and self-managed. In the ideal case the tasks are not delegated to them from the management but defined in the common decision-making.

The same reasoning is found in Castells characteristics of self-programmable labor, which basically give the idea of the new elite (Castells 2000, p.12). The following skills are important in this case:

- to be an expert in the highly specialized work
- to identify the new professional requirements and to go through necessary training programs
- to think strategically having in view the network in whole and separate nodes in particular
- to adapt the new tasks, new processes and new sources of information
- to take responsibility for organizing one's own work and for the results of work
- not to be nationally bound.

Those who will have special skills and qualifications to cope with the new kind of work will have well-paid and stimulating jobs integrated into the global structures. Such labor will constantly develop their careers and shift from one network to another. Their major working activities would be to consult, to inform, to research, to develop, to organize, to build networks, to investigate and to entertain.

Those who will not be able to have such jobs will remain in their local areas and occasionally get some season work or temporary jobs in the service sector. Their lives will be determined by

the situation in the place where they live and their main strategy will be survival. This is how the qualification and competence will determine the employment in future according to Castells.

The European perspective is revealed in the *White Paper on Education and Training* (1995) issued by the European Commission. It states that except for the professional skills workers in EU now have to possess the knowledge of several languages, technical knowledge (IT-skills) and social knowledge (skills to cooperate, work in team, be creative and flexible).

However, as far as the low-skilled labor is concerned, it is interesting to note that the European requirements do not differ significantly from those applied to the staff with higher level skills and education. A study of the Swedish labor market in the manufacturing industry, cleaning, retail, transport and care sectors (e.g. low or semi-skilled professions) reported in Bäcklund 2003, indicated the following tendencies in the past three decades:

- Unqualified work tasks are rationalized at a rapid pace, and abstract operations and formal education are required to perform an increasing number of tasks.
- Service work is professionalized.
- Hierarchies and tight control are replaced by self-managed work routines.
- As a result of the above changes, communicative skills are increasingly important feature of most jobs (Bäcklund 2003, p.44).

Bäcklund also denotes that “the demand for more theoretical or abstract knowledge is visible in all branches and skill levels” and that “formal education is required in order to get even what considered low-skill jobs” (Bäcklund 2003, p.44).

As we see, even if the global market is becoming polarized, the requirements to low and high-skilled labor become equally high in terms of technologies and communication, especially in Sweden.

## 2.5. Attitudes towards work

It is not only the labor market which has been influenced by many transformations in the recent years, but people’s attitudes and expectations towards work as well. The shift in values is more obvious in the welfare countries of Europe and America. An interesting study on attitudes towards work in the western Europe and the United States has been done at Göteborg University in Sweden and presented in the doctoral dissertation of Tomas Berglund (Berglund 2001). He identifies four attitude patterns towards work: altruistic, materialistic, instrumental and individualistic (Berglund 2001, pp.79-97). Attitudes towards work are defined as evaluative judgments of what is important about a job. An altruistic attitude emphasizes the social value of work. A materialistic attitude values career opportunities and high salary. An instrumental

attitude approaches work primarily as a means of sustenance. The fourth attitude pattern, an individualistic one, values independence in work. Berglund says that these attitude patterns are established with varying strength in different countries and reports the results in relation to different variables (Berglund 2001, pp.276-277).

Another study, carried out at Göteborg University as well, examines the factors determining the choice of employment. The results are presented in the doctoral dissertation of Christer Theandersson, where the central issue is whether people have an instrumental attitude towards work, i.e. if work is regarded mainly as a source of income (Theandersson 2000). The results indicate that the instrumental attitude is most common among “unqualified, older and less well-educated male workers within the industrial sector” (Theandersson 2000, p.154).

Both dissertations give very valuable accounts of previous research and theoretical works on the issue of attitudes and working values (Berglund 2001, pp.55-78; Theandersson 2000, pp.19-38).

Considerably much attention is given recently to the investigations of the attitudes of younger generations towards work. Concerns have been raised of a growing polarization in work attitudes between older and younger workers. This is not the issue which I will go in depth for in this paper, but it is worth to note here that the younger generations are more tolerate to the lack of jobs and the worse job security. For instance, Jeannette Taylor denotes the international trend in changing work expectations, analyzing the views on organizations, work and rewards among the young people in Australia: “these young workers enter the labor force with a frame of reference that does not include job security, pensions, or a traditional career model” (Taylor 2005, p.1922).

Summarizing theoretical perspectives, I can mention again that the nature of work and people’s attitudes to it have changed in the recent decades. The labor market offers rather good opportunities to the high-skilled and very specialized workers. Another opportunity is service jobs, which still require qualification and additional skills. The reality of these assumptions will be exemplified in the empirical investigation of this study.

### 3. METHOD

The relevant data about someone's experiences and attitudes can be obtained through qualitative interviews. Such interviews usually are not structured but centered around the specific themes. I focused my interviews on what working experiences my respondents had before they moved to Sweden and what career opportunities they see now. I will further describe the methodological perspectives on the form of the interview which I used in my study and how it was put in practice.

#### 3.1. Methodological perspective

Much has been said about the weak sides of the qualitative research. It is typically mentioned that the qualitative interview is not objective, valid, scientific and representative. Among the advantages of this method the researchers usually mention the possibility to go in depth for the investigated questions and to approach the collected data from another perspective.

The critique seems to be rooted in the different approaches to knowledge, e.g. it is based on epistemological preferences. Some researchers assume that the methods of collecting data should provide the objective report of reality. The others consider that all individuals have their own understanding of the world. These researchers focus on interpretations of the reality and do not strive after seeking the "truth". The first approach to the nature of knowledge is typical for the positivists, whose aim is to obtain valid and reliable data about the world (Silverman 1993, pp. 91-94). The second approach refers to the postmodern thinking and presupposes the relativity of data (Kvale 1997, p. 261).

If one's interests lie in researching the experiences and specific phenomena in people's lives, qualitative methods seem to be more than reasonable. They allow to make the analysis on a deeper level. The facts and data obtained in the qualitative interviews can not be easily collected through the other forms of research on condition that the interview is based on the close and continuous interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee.

The qualitative interview is usually focused on individual experiences of the respondents, which is often criticized due to the limited possibility to generalize the results (Bryman 2002, pp. 303-304). But as far as qualitative research is concerned, this focus on a certain perspective is very advantageous.

There is one more reason why I decided to use the qualitative interview for collecting the empirical data. Since I have chosen to study the experiences of a group of people, which is rather new and undefined in its character, my study is *explorative* by nature. An explorative research is

almost always done with the help of qualitative methods (Rosengren&Arvidson 2002, pp. 62, 214).

The qualitative interviews can be unstructured or semi-structured (Bryman 2002, pp. 301-312). Since my interest is to study working experiences and career expectations, I chose the form of semi-structured interview, which allows to concentrate on the certain themes and go in depth for the certain answers in the dialog between the interviewer and the interviewee (May 2001, p. 150).

The semi-structured interview is also advantageous when one wants to compare the personal experiences of the interviewees. ”Den här typen av intervjuer gör det möjligt för de tillfrågade att besvara frågorna i egna termer /.../ samtidigt som denna intervjuform är mer strukturerad än fokuserade intervjuer för att kunna skapa jämförbarhet” (May 2001, p.151).

### 3.2. Method in practice

The people, whom I chose to interview, study an Introduction Program at Folkuniversitetet in Malmö. There are about 400 students taking this program at present. Malmö city offers a possibility to study this program to the new residents who came to Sweden not earlier than 2004 and have previous university or college education. The Introduction Program is aimed to give the basic knowledge of Swedish leading to sfi-prov and to give orientation for the further studies or work.

I asked one of the coaches at Folkuniversitetet to help me to choose people from different countries of origin and to introduce me to them in order to make the appointments for the interviews. The choice therefore was strategic, but still rather random. Out of twelve chosen students nine agreed to be interviewed.

In order to have an efficient semi-structured interview I prepared an interview guide, where I included the basic themes and questions to be discussed (App.1). The questions were formulated in a way which provided the possibility for alternative thoughts and ideas to appear (Bryman 2002, p. 304-308). In other words, I let the interviewees speak freely with their own terms and words about the things which they assume to be important. At the same time I had the interview guide in mind and tried to remain within the theme and collect relevant information. I told the interviewees what the purpose of the study was and asked the open questions, so that they could decide for themselves what was relevant for the theme.

In order to develop the theme and to follow up the told story I sometimes asked additional questions not included in the interview guide (Kvale 1997, p.123-126). I analyzed the themes during the interview and later after it, and I noted the new themes which appeared in the stories.

In this way I pursued my study to be really qualitative and not programmed by my preliminary assumptions.

Each interview took about one hour and was done individually in the premises of Folkuniversitetet. The interviews were recorded and the transcripts were made later for analysis.

### 3.3. Validity

The validity of qualitative data is often disputed. Since it depends on “what elements the researcher chooses to see as relevant for a description or exploration /.../, on a way of seeing the social world, and on particular form of explanatory logic” (Mason 1995, p.6), I am well aware of the fact that the analysis presented here bears my personal views and ideas.

Likewise, the responses of my interviewees can not be seen as objective and neutral, since they represent their personal views of reality. Nevertheless, as David Silverman puts it, “we need not hear interview responses simply as true or false *reports* on reality. Instead, we can treat such responses as *displays* of perspectives and moral forms” (Silverman 1993, p.107).

Thus, the data obtained in my interviews is highly valid in relation to the search for nuances, differences and contradictions on the contrary to the search for the truth.

### 3.4. Ethics

The researcher’s ethically correct behavior is crucial for the good personal interview. The interviewee should have the evidence that he/she is respected and “is not just a respondent in the research, and not just the anonymous author of a life story” (Kaźmierska 2004, p.181). The researcher can not be a passive listener either. There usually appears a certain interaction between the interviewer and the respondent during the qualitative collecting of data. ”En intervjuundersökning är ett moraliskt företag: det personliga samspelet i intervjun inverkar på den intervjuade, och den kunskap som frambringas genom intervjun inverkar på vår förståelse av människans situation” (Kvale 1997, p.104).

Interviewing and reporting the interview I tried to leave out anything which could influence my respondents negatively because of what they said and revealed. I also made known for them that they could remain anonymous.

## 4. EMPIRICAL DATA AND ANALYSIS

As it was stated in the introduction, the purpose of this study is to define how the globalized foreign-born citizens try to establish themselves on the Swedish labor market. I should admit that it is rather difficult to define what the globalized people are. The search in the Elin-database, for instance, did not give any valuable matches on this combination of words. However, since the notion of globalization is commonly accepted and everybody more or less knows what it indicates, I believe the expression 'globalized people' can be quite general and understandable.

According to my analysis these people have some characteristics of self-programmable labor in terms of Castells (unit 2.3. in this paper) or can be described with Beck's characteristics of inner mobility and place polygamy (unit 2.2. in this paper). Still, they are neither of it in its pure form. I suppose their biographies can explain why I call them globalized. Hereafter follows a short presentation of my respondents with their names being changed.

### 4.1. Presentation of the respondents

**Maria**, 21 years old, born in Czech Republic (Czechoslovakia). Elite figure-skater as junior. Lived and trained in Russia, Sweden, USA. Traveled all around the world during her competition career. At the age of sixteen moved with her family to South Africa. Trained children in figure skating there and studied at school. Returned to Czech Republic and studied at Prague Business school, stopped studying after three years. In October 2005 moved to Malmö, where her Danish boy-friend has an apartment. Works at a part-time basis for two of the skating clubs in Malmö. Learns Swedish and wants further to study sport psychology. Plans to develop her career with the sport clubs in Sweden.

**Miniko**, 26 years old, born in Japan. When she was fifteen, her parents sent her to study at High school in Richmond, Virginia, USA. At the age of eighteen she returned home and studied computer design at university in Tokyo. After she graduated she worked as a web-designer at several companies in Tokyo. Her last employment was at an international company, where she met her Swedish boy-friend. They moved to Sweden in May 2005. She expects to find a similar job at an international company in Sweden.

**Terry**, 30 years old, born in the USA, South Carolina. Studied at a music college in Ohio. Traveled around the USA and worked mostly as a free-lance for different performance art companies in America. In 2003 decided to travel for a year in Europe, met his present girl-friend in Sweden and finally settled here in June 2005. He does not want to have a traditional work and hopes to continue his musician career and get a part-time or project employment in Sweden.



**Tian**, 28 years old, born in Vietnam. Graduated from the homeland university with a degree of Master of Business Administration. Worked first as an auditor for different Vietnamese companies for one year. Apparently, she did not like this job and got another job at school. She worked as a chemistry teacher from 2000 to 2004. When her brother, who had moved to Sweden previously, suggested her to come and settle here, she thought it would help her to make a better career in Europe and moved to Sweden in the late spring 2005. Although she liked her job as a teacher in Vietnam, she wants to work here with financial auditing and banking. Now she is in the process of learning Swedish and validating her diplomas.

**Anna**, 34 years old, born in Poland. Moved as a child with her family to Hungary and lived there until she was 14. The family returned to Poland in 1985. She studied at the Law Faculty of Warsaw university and spent a year as an exchange student in Holland. Worked in Warsaw as a legal consultant for the international companies who had contractors in Poland. She got married to a Swedish citizen in 2002. When they discovered that their three-year old son has diabetes, they decided to move to Sweden. She is well aware that her son requires a lot of time and help and does not think to continue her career in Sweden. She says that it will be very difficult to get authorization and validate her diplomas and it will take at least four years of intensive studies to get the needed competence here. She wants to find a more simple job, which will allow her to stay most of the time with her son.

**Christopher**, 31 years old, born in Austria. Studied Human Rights at a college in Linz and worked at the same time as a social worker in a non-profit organization. Described himself as a hippy-guy who wanted to travel around the world, which he did until he was 28. He survives in Sweden thanks to a music band where he plays guitar. He learns Swedish and wants to work with some kind of NGO here. He also wants to complete his education in Sweden in relation to social work.

**Virginia**, 22 years old, born in California, USA. Her parents divorced in her early age and she lived partly at her mother's home and partly at her father's place in different ends of California, traveling back and forth during her school years. She graduated from the Berkley high school. Entered St. Francisco State University in 2003 and studied marine biology and graphic design. Worked at the same time as receptionist at a spa resort. She did not complete her studies because she wanted to move to Sweden with her sambo, which she did in the October, 2004. She is about to complete the introduction program and does not want to study further but to work a while, until she understands what she wants to do. It has been though extremely difficult for her to find a job in Sweden, so she still does not know what her future will look like.

**Lina**, 25 years old, born in Estonia. Studied first at the Ballet Academy in Tallinn, then graduated from the Pedagogical University with the diploma of choreographer. Toured around

Europe during the summer seasons of 1998-2000 with a dance company. In 2001 she worked as a dancer in one of the European musical performances in Tallinn. Then she was a project manager for the city program aimed to improve children's development through dance. She also had an extra job in a show on Silja-line boats where she met her Swedish boy-friend. Lina moved to Sweden in August, 2005. She wants to study a program for physiotherapists in Lund and work with children when she gets her new qualification. She hopes she can use her previous experience here to.

**Simon**, 37 years old, born in France. Learned foreign languages with great enthusiasm at school. Participated in several exchange programs with German schools and studied partly in France and partly in Germany during the school, lycee and university years. He met his Irish girl-friend in Germany. They lived together for the next six years in France, Germany, Ireland and England depending on where they got an interesting occupation. First Simon worked as a French teacher in Ireland for three years. Later, when they moved to London, he changed to the IT-branch where he made a successful career. In England Simon also met his new girl-friend who was Swedish. They lived together in London for about seven years and moved to Sweden in August 2005, when their son was born. Simon has successfully completed SFI-program and starts to work for an international hardware company in Sweden in June 2006.

As it follows from the presentation most of my respondents have globalized experiences of living and sometimes working in several countries, maintaining social and economic links across the borders. Place polygamy, as Beck describes it, is a natural part of their lives when the places of their origin become connected to the places of their studying or working. An explicit example of this phenomenon is Simon's life in France and Germany during the years of studies. The other respondents also have experience of short or long periods of living in foreign countries because of family move, studies or interesting occupation. They have transcultural competencies and, perhaps, multilocal identities.

The interviews also confirmed that the people have become more reflexive and aware of their life-styles, social ties and identities, as indicated in unit 2.2. of this paper. All of my respondents have very individual experiences. It is difficult to describe them in terms of class or profession characteristics.

#### 4.2. Work experience

All the respondents had some kind of work experience before they came to Sweden. It could be a profound experience, such as in the case of Simon, or a small experience of service work as

in the case of Virginia. Simon changed his career for eight years ago, leaving the classroom for the IT-corporation:

**Simon:** We moved to England and I found a job as a French teacher very quickly... but I disliked it as it was extremely difficult, I was facing daily racism from pupils and I decided to stop teaching after one term. I was always interested in computers, and I applied for a job with an IT company. I got the job because I was able to speak German and I worked for the German and Austrian markets for five months and then for the French market. During that time, I met my current Swedish girlfriend. I quickly found a much better job in another IT company in central London: the co. was just fantastic, the money was good and the people were great too. There was almost no foreigner within this co., this was very different from my previous job where the majority were from all around Europe. I stayed with this co. for seven years until I moved to Sweden. They employed me first because I was talking French and German but I never really used my language skills there... I went a couple of times to see customers in France but the majority of my job was done with American customers so I spoke English all the time.

In a surprisingly short time Simon became proficient in the software programs for the financial analysis and accounting. Soon he started to consult the customers all over the world. I think it is his global experience of communicating with different people and optimistic attitude to the requirements of the new profession that helped him in his career:

**Simon:** I started first as a Software Support Consultant but after eight months I took the position of Support Account Manager. I was dealing with the biggest and most prestigious customers of this company. From 2002 until 2005 I was a Senior Financial Analyst for the accountancy software developed by this co. It was a great job as I was dealing with very interesting issues. I had to deal with offices all around the world - Shanghai, Tokyo, Sydney, Miami... I made some true friends during doing this job, and I miss them a lot.

Virginia worked at the same time as she studied in St. Francisco:

**Virginia:** I worked as a part-time receptionist at "The Claremont Resort and Spa". I enjoyed working there since it was a fast-paced environment, had great relationships with my co-workers and met celebrities and clients all over the world. Most of my responsibilities revolved catering to the needs of our VIP-clients and guests [laughs]. I answered phones, made appointments for our guests at Spa and fitness trainers, organized functions in our ballrooms, restaurants, bars and even filled in for other positions as a spa-receptionist or hotel greeter. My job even took me outside of the workplace. Since it was required for me to be knowledgeable about the Bay area, I made appointments for our guests at the finest restaurants, reserved tickets for various concerts and operas and even was requested to act as a tour-guide. It was a lot to deal with...

The evaluations of work experience were quite different among the respondents:

**Terry:** I love my job. I love music. And it keeps me on my toes... I did quite well financially home in America. I got good contracts and support from the performance companies. And I'm doing quite well in Europe too. Business is not that fat, but people are great.

**Tian:** I didn't really like my first job, because it was a little company and I didn't have much experience of being an auditor. I had many chances to get contacts with important people through my job, but I didn't talk well enough with them, so I didn't get better jobs. One of my relatives was a superintendent at school, he suggested me to get a job as a chemistry teacher [smiles]. Yes, after all my studies in Economics I became a chemistry teacher and I really liked it.

The interviews indicated that most of my respondents have values similar to those of high-skilled globalized employees. They are ready to change and adjust themselves to the realities of the new market. They are eager to learn and to go through necessary training programs in order to be included into the relevant networks.

However, I can not define these people as the new self-programmable labor elite, described in unit 2.4. of this paper (p.10). They definitely meet all the requirements of the contemporary labor market with their qualifications and social skills, but their priorities are not determined by the business rewards only. Otherwise, they would choose the countries with the networks where they have the best possibilities to find well-paid jobs integrated into the global structures, since the elite always strives after the best position. As the words of Terry (above) or Simon (below) indicate, it was not the case when they decided to move:

**Simon:** We made this decision when my son was born... Money was not really an issue for us at that time as we had both good jobs, but the idea that our son will grow up with values totally different from us was not something we wanted. I knew that I could live anywhere. Sweden was attractive, as the society here is very child oriented, the environment is very important for Swedish people, society is fairer than in the UK or France...

Choosing to come to Sweden is not related to work in my case. My sambo has a good job here and for us it is more a way of life than anything else. We think that Sweden is a better and safer country to have and raise children.

The issue of preferences in case of work is discussed further.

### 4.3. Work preferences

Most of the respondents have rather high ambitions concerning the working conditions. They want to have high quality work tasks and to participate in decision-making. They also want to manage their work themselves and to be independent.

**Christopher:** I don't like to work with one subject or theme. I want variation... new experiences all the time. I don't dream about getting rich, so I don't want to work in an office or for somebody. I want to be my own boss.

**Anna:** I would like to have a flexible job, so that I could sometimes stay and work at home... to start and finish, when I want. I also want to be independent.

**Miniko:** I like to work in a team, when everybody contributes with his best talents. For example, I suggest how to write a good headline, and you are good at graphics and another person has an eye for colors. We create together, try different combinations, mix and make jokes... It is exciting to work with a team, when it is professional.

Most of my respondents have an individualistic attitude to work, which is “distinguished by the use of working life as an arena for the individual’s striving to fulfill personal ambitions and objectives” (Berglund 2001, p.295). According to this approach work is judged in terms of how satisfying and developmental it is. I must, however, emphasize that many of my respondents want “to have job which helps people”. I was impressed by how they stressed this factor and obviously it must be very important to them. We might consider that by helping others they would feel more useful in the new country, and thus satisfy their ambitions. But we can equally assume that it is their primary wish, and in this case their attitude towards work would be rather of an altruistic kind, measured by how important it is to have a job which allows to help people (see unit 2.5.of this paper).

Three of the respondents, Simon, Christopher and Terry, have an approach to work, which can be related to hacker ethic according to Castells&Himanen: “hackers in the world’s true sense want to do something that they feel passionate about and in which they can realize themselves creatively, and this is their primary motivation and not the maximization of money” (Castells&Himanen 2002, pp.160-161).

Studying the working preferences of my respondents I understand that they generally have common values in spite of what countries they come from. I could describe their views as globalized, since they all typically hope for a job, which

- develops and stimulates (high-skilled)

- gives independency and satisfaction (self-managed)
- gives the ability to socialize with people (included into the networks).

One may think that such attitudes would help them to adjust very quickly to the requirements of a high-skilled occupation, which becomes more and more globalized. However, an interesting observation has been made by Ann-Katrin Bäcklund in her study of systemic barriers for immigrants on the Swedish labor market. She describes how the organizational hierarchies have been changed during the recent decades and the role of teamwork and self-management has increased. Due to these changes personal characteristics of the employees have become very important. Since it is easier to judge the qualities of a person who belongs to the same culture, choosing a person who will fit into the team creates “the paradox that organizations are becoming more homogeneous – Swedes in ‘Swedish’ work places and immigrants in their ‘ethnic’ workplaces – in a period when the economy is becoming more international” (Bäcklund 2003, p.49). I leave this observation open for discussion, since I can not go in depth with reasoning about it within the frameworks of this paper.

As far as work preferences are concerned, I assume they witness about the ideal understanding of work and tell about what people want to have, not what they can have. One’s preferences do not always correspond to the reality. In order to find out how my respondents find their way to the Swedish labor market, which is the purpose of this study, I investigated also their career expectations, which give a more realistic picture than work preferences.

#### 4.4. Career expectations

The answers concerning this issue were quite different. I can say, though, that Europeans were generally more realistic about their opportunities in Sweden than citizens of the other parts of the world. Having moved to Sweden many of them found out that the career opportunities in this country are much determined by formalities and that the employment requirements are rather different. Still, they remain optimistic and adjust to the reality of labor market quite easily.

**Simon:** My work experience in the UK is very specific and sadly the program, accountancy software, I worked with for seven years is not used here as it was never translated in Swedish. I would have loved to work with the same software here. I even tried to work remotely for the company in the UK but it didn’t work out. So I understood from the beginning that it will be hard for me to do something similar here. I think that my experience with IT and customers can interest some companies here in Sweden or in Copenhagen. This company needs to be very international, where I can use the knowledge of dealing with various people.

I am optimistic about finding something here... After only two months, I started working for a Swedish internet company: a small and crap job dealing with their French customers. But well, it is a beginning.

I do not expect that it will be easy... I think that it will be hard to find something I really like and where I will be able to develop myself but I did well in the past in other countries, so why not here?

**Lina:** I knew that dance and shows are not so popular in Sweden, so I did not expect that I would find a choreographer job easily, even if I would apply to work with children. So I thought: I move to another country... why not to change the career and learn to work with something more appreciated here... And I think I found a good solution becoming a physiotherapist, because I want to help people and I want to work with body, movement, dance...

Some of the newcomers had too high expectations, but still managed to cope with the reality:

**Maria:** I thought it would be easier to get a service job. I am not very proud, I can work with anything. So two weeks after I came to Sweden, I call home, upset, and say I still do not have job. My friends laugh at me and say: Hey, you've been there only for fourteen days! [laughs] ... I did not realize how difficult it was to find a job in Sweden. You have to speak perfect Swedish and have qualifications even you go to clean SAS aircraft with no people on board... Anyway, when I got a couch job after one month and a half my boy-friend was very surprised. I didn't expect I'll be able to start coaching in figure skating in Sweden. Nobody is interested in this sport here. And this is exactly the job I got! And there is another club who contacted me... So I am very glad I can work here with what I love to do.

Unfortunately, there are also some newcomers who have been heavily disillusioned:

**Virginia:** Since I moved to Sweden, my confidence in finding a job has decreased. Before I arrived, I was under the assumption that I could find a part-time job working in a hotel, with children at a daycare center, or even pursue a career in retail. But I have been searching for the last seventeen months without any luck. As the weeks drag on, I become even more frustrated. I couldn't even understand why the process was even this hard. It seems as though my whole personality has changed since I've been here. My self-confidence level now is the lowest it has ever been.

Many of my respondents, including those with a relatively broad working experience, have rather ideal expectations of employment in a foreign country. But I could also observe how their perspectives on work were modified and changed. They came to Sweden with their best hopes and globalized beliefs, expecting to get jobs where they would be appreciated for their qualifications. They expected to get contacts with the colleagues and become equal in the society or, at least, positively alien. Most of them were ready to take responsibility for personal development and adjustment, to change jobs and tasks if it would be necessary. In other words, they represented the optimistic foreign labor believing in good career opportunities in Sweden. However, the realities of the labor market and systemic formalities in Sweden made them to

correct their globalized views. That is why they have a double perspective on work now – it is both globalized and locally bound.

Some of the respondents have already got an employment on a part-time basis. They do not consider this type of employment as normal, but they are very positive about their jobs, though they do not get all the benefits of being employed. Another part of them have realized the difficulties of finding a job in Sweden. Still, remaining very positive and ambitious, they changed their attitudes to less qualified jobs and consider taking them as a source of income and a means of socializing. However, they do hope that it will be a temporary solution while they improve their language skills and validate qualifications. Two of them even have vision of how they can develop the job of a shop assistant or baby-sitter into a bigger career. And finally, one of the respondents has recently signed a beneficial contract with an international company in Sweden, which means a full-time employment.

All of them understand that they will have to go through additional training programs in order to fulfill the formal requirements of the Swedish labor market. Even if they would like to take a low or semi-skilled job, they know that they will need to cope with additional communicative and administrative requirements, as it was described in unit 2.4. of this paper. The question of how much the global experience is relevant on the local market, which is becoming rapidly globalized itself but tries to remain stable and nationally defined, is another issue I do not go in depth for and leave open for discussion due to the limits of this paper.



## 5. CONCLUSIONS

The general tendency in the world today is that the local markets become more globalized and the labor mobility increase. People's attitudes and preferences towards work change. The career opportunities are becoming more interesting, but not equal for all labor.

Investigating how the foreign-born citizens try to establish themselves on the Swedish labor market, which was the purpose of this study, I interviewed a specific group of newcomers in Malmö. Considering how little time they have lived in the country – less than a year in most cases – they have done much in finding their way to employment in Sweden. First of all, they have succeeded in language studies at Folkuniversitetet, where I met them. Language proficiency is very important in the modern world. It is also of great significance for social and communicative tasks at any working place in Sweden.

The interviews with nine respondents gave me some information to be able to answer the questions, which were defined in the Introduction to this paper. Most of these people have good qualifications and the previous working experience corresponding to the high-skilled labor. Almost all of them want to continue their careers in Sweden and realize the necessity of getting additional qualifications in order to adjust their profiles to the local needs. Hopefully, after a certain period of studying and confirming their qualifications they will get the relevant employment.

Interviewing my respondents I have found out that almost all of them have international backgrounds and lived in other countries due to different reasons. Considering their biographies I decided to call them globalized people.

Their qualifications belong to the professions, which according to Castells are very promising in future. The most obvious examples are an IT-specialist and an elite figure-skater. Not surprisingly they had most international experience and have already found employment in Sweden. However, I can hardly refer to them as to the new self-programmable elite in terms of Castells, mainly because of their priorities and attitudes towards work. Looking more closely at their careers, we see that the IT-specialist has his major education in humanities, and the elite sportswoman is ready to take low-skilled jobs. The self-programmable elite, on the contrary, would be very conscious of the career development and would strive after the best opportunities available in the global networks. In the case of the newcomers, it is rather their flexible personalities that helped them to find the best way to the modern labor market.

Almost all of the respondents have similar attitudes towards work in spite of the different countries of origin. They wanted to have high quality working tasks, to manage their work themselves and to be independent. But they were also ready to change and adjust themselves to

the realities of the new market. They were eager to learn and to go through necessary training programs in order to be included into the relevant networks.

As far as their career expectations are concerned, almost all of them know how they will develop and what they need to learn in order to succeed with the careers in Malmö. Meanwhile they are ready to take less-qualified jobs in order to have working experience and a source of income. Some of them already have part-time jobs and practice in Swedish companies and organizations.

I hope that my explorative study of the new residents in Malmö will draw attention to a new social group in Sweden, which obviously is going to grow due to the European integration and globalization processes. Some additional questions arose beyond the frameworks of this study.

The first of them is concerned with the work organization in Sweden, where the team-work is traditionally very strong. Since the people with globalized working experience have almost all necessary characteristics to fit in the modern Swedish work group, except for knowledge of how to act and think 'Swedish', I assume it to be interesting to study the specifics of a Swedish mindset of team-working with its typically uncertain hierarchical positions as well as to study the specifics of social competence at a working place in Sweden. It would help to define what the high-skilled newcomers lack in order to assimilate in a Swedish organization.

The second question was more of a theoretic character. It was concerned with interaction between global experiences and nationally defined social structures, which in its turn are influenced by globalization, and how this interaction determines people's careers and biographies.

Both of the questions require separate and more extensive studies than the one presented in this paper.

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## APPENDICES

### **Appendix 1**

#### INTERVIEW GUIDE

##### *1. Background questions*

Name, age, education/profession

The country of origin.

The countries where you have lived. Why (studies, work, family) and how long?

##### *2. Working experience*

Professional competence

What kind of employment did you have?

Working tasks

##### *3. Working preferences*

Priorities when looking for job

Work and individual interests

Work and career

##### *4. Career expectations in Sweden*

Experience of searching the job

Qualifications you have and you need to have

Change of career?