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Academic mobility and Swedish scholarships: A study on alumni of the Swedish Institute's Visby Programme

Presentation at the national EMN Conference Sweden 2019
Attracting and Welcoming International Students

Background and Aim of the Study

- The Swedish Institute (founded in 1945 as an association, since 1998 an official national authority) is a central organisation for supporting internationalisation of higher education in Sweden.
- Besides information on studies in Sweden the Swedish Institute administrates government scholarship programmes, whereof the Visby programme is one of the largest and most important
- No systematic research conducted on these kinds of programmes in Sweden
- *The aim was to study the programme and its alumni to explore the scholarship holders' characteristics, their migration patterns, contacts with Sweden and experiences and perceptions of the programme.*
- The study was financed by The Migration Studies Delegation (Delmi) and the Swedish Institute

The Visby Programme

- Initiated in 1997 and part of the Baltic Sea Billion 1
- A combination of economic, security and international aid related aims and objectives for the programme (*Prop. 1995/96:222, 5.2*)
- Thus different logics and part of different political fields:
 - Internationalisation of higher education and academic migration
 - Public diplomacy (security)
 - Foreign aid
 - Trade and business
- Shift from trade and business towards security related issues

Theoretical Model

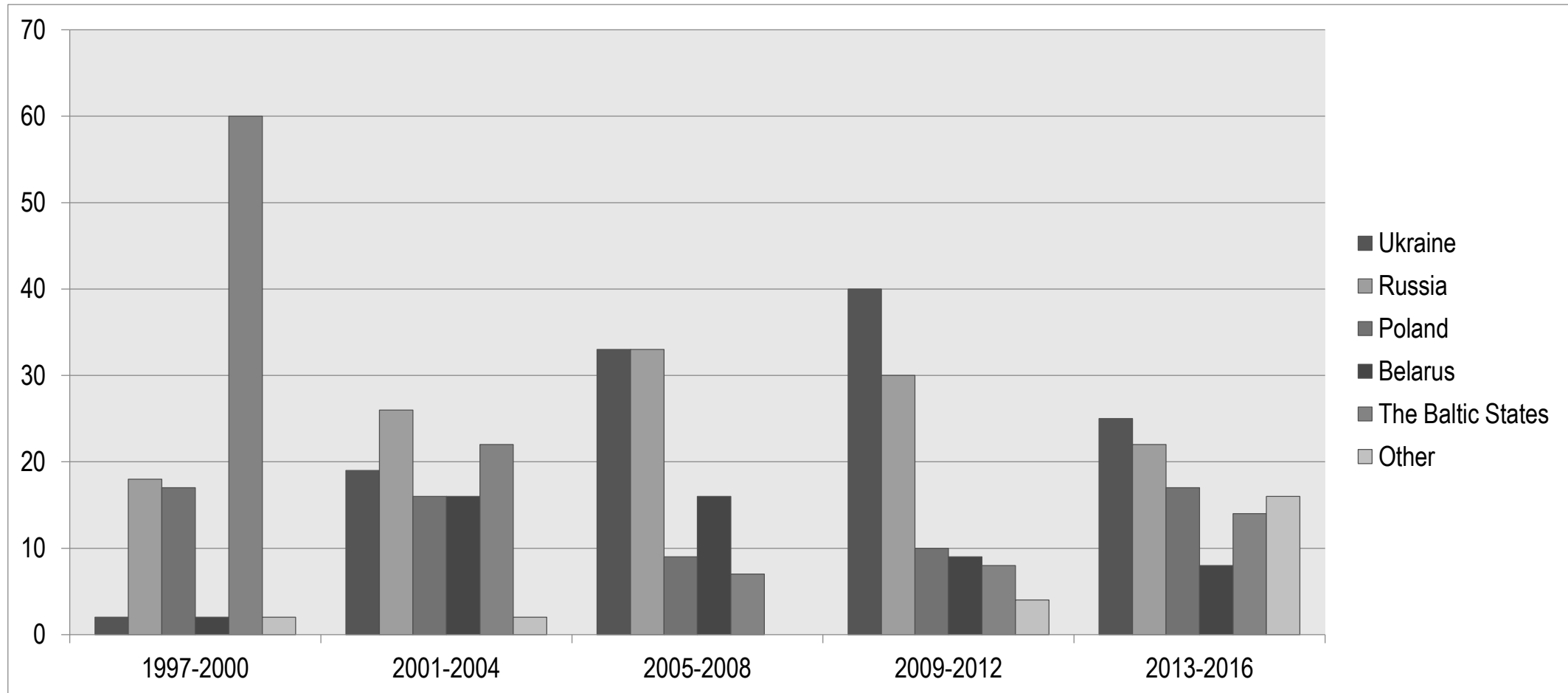
- Demand (global)
- Intermediate organisation (financier, gate keeper, information)
- Supply (West dominated)

- Assets:
- Educational, linguistic, cultural and economic capital

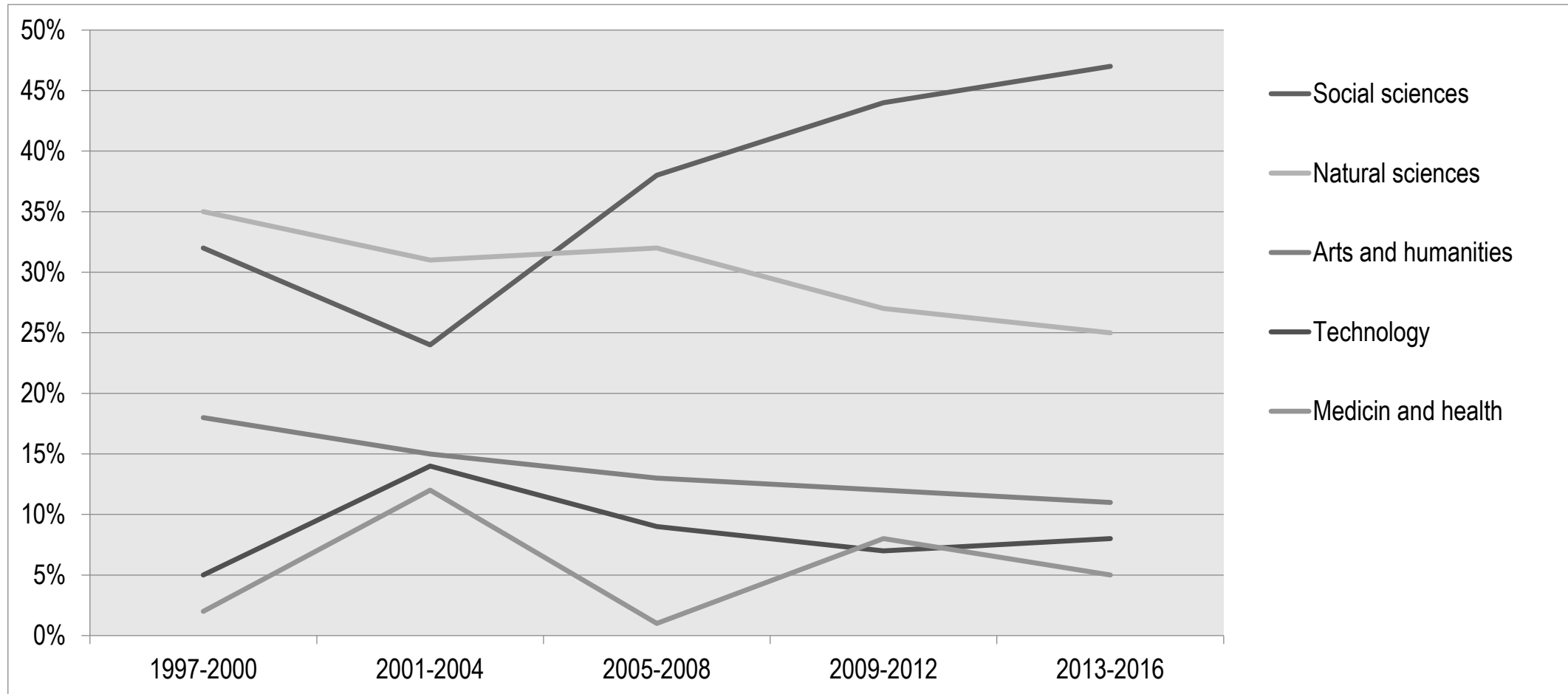
Method and Data

- Policy documents, commissions, reports,
- Survey
 - Responded by 482 persons (alumni of the Visby programme)
 - 31 % response rate
 - Limitations: Over positive, positive bias, less accurate for earlier cohorts
- Descriptive statistics
- Open questions

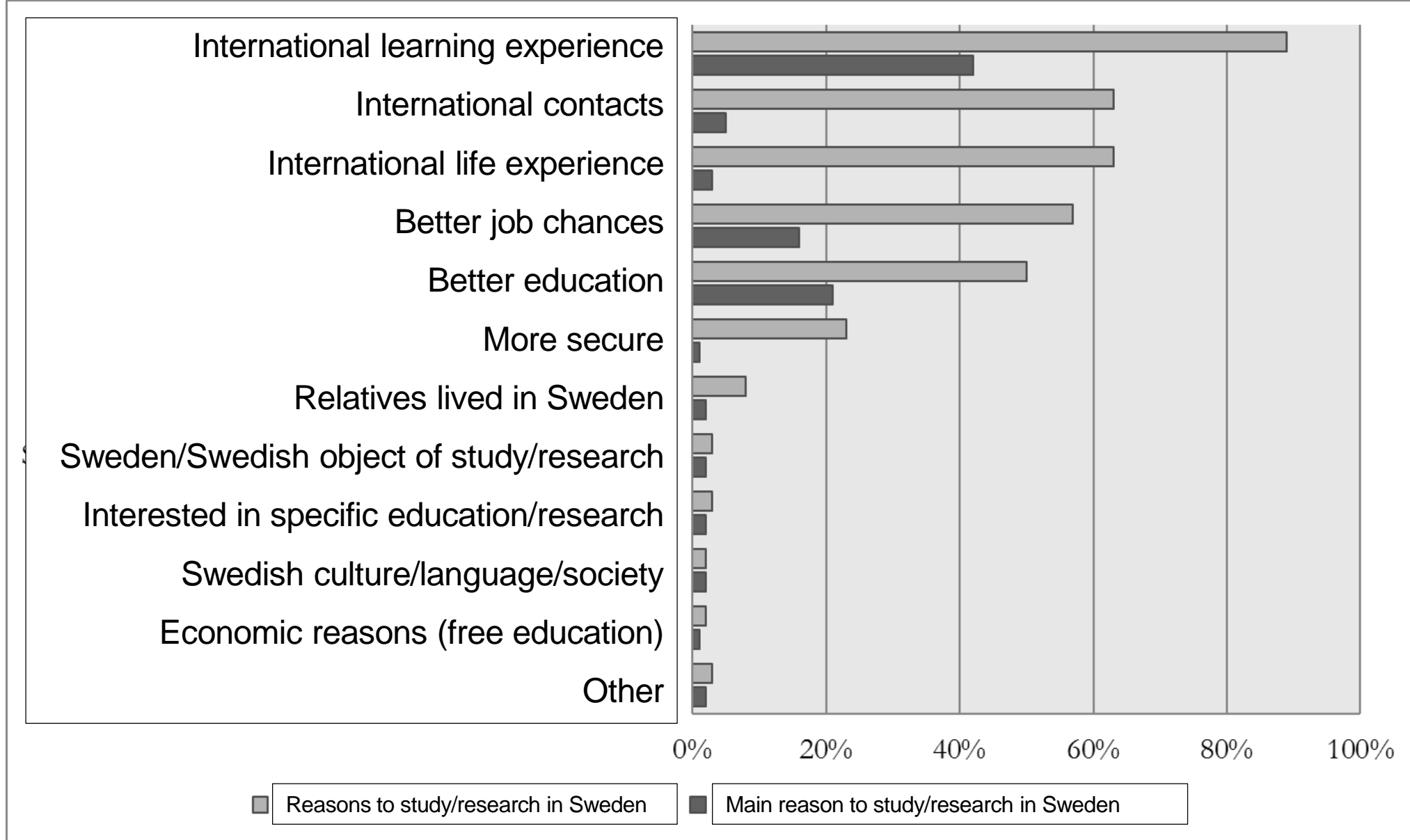
National Origin



Field of Study



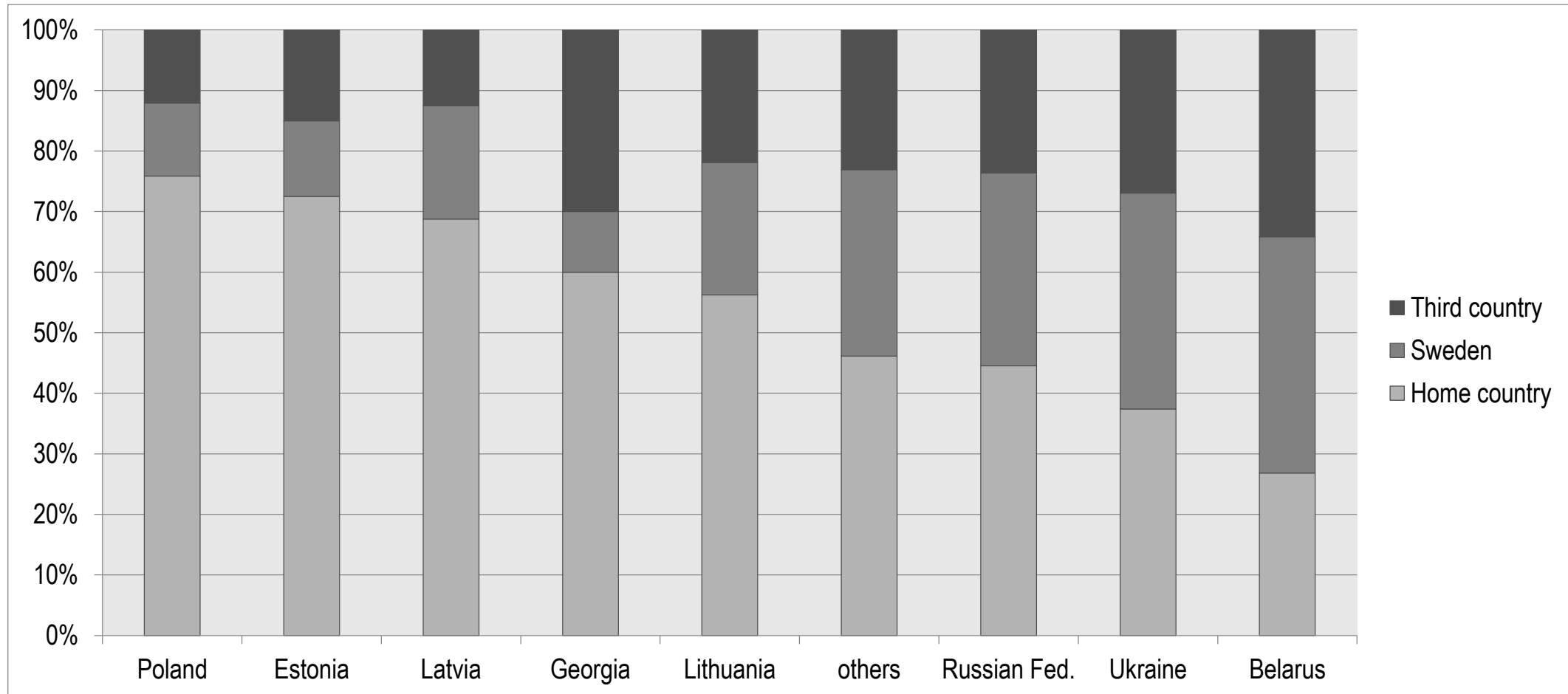
Reasons to study or research in Sweden



Three Trajectories

- 50 per cent returned to home country
 - 27 per cent are in Sweden
 - 23 per cent have continued to third country
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- A process of circular migration
 - Swedish educational capital seem to function as a bridge or entrance to an international labour market

Three Trajectories per Country



Three Trajectories: Countries

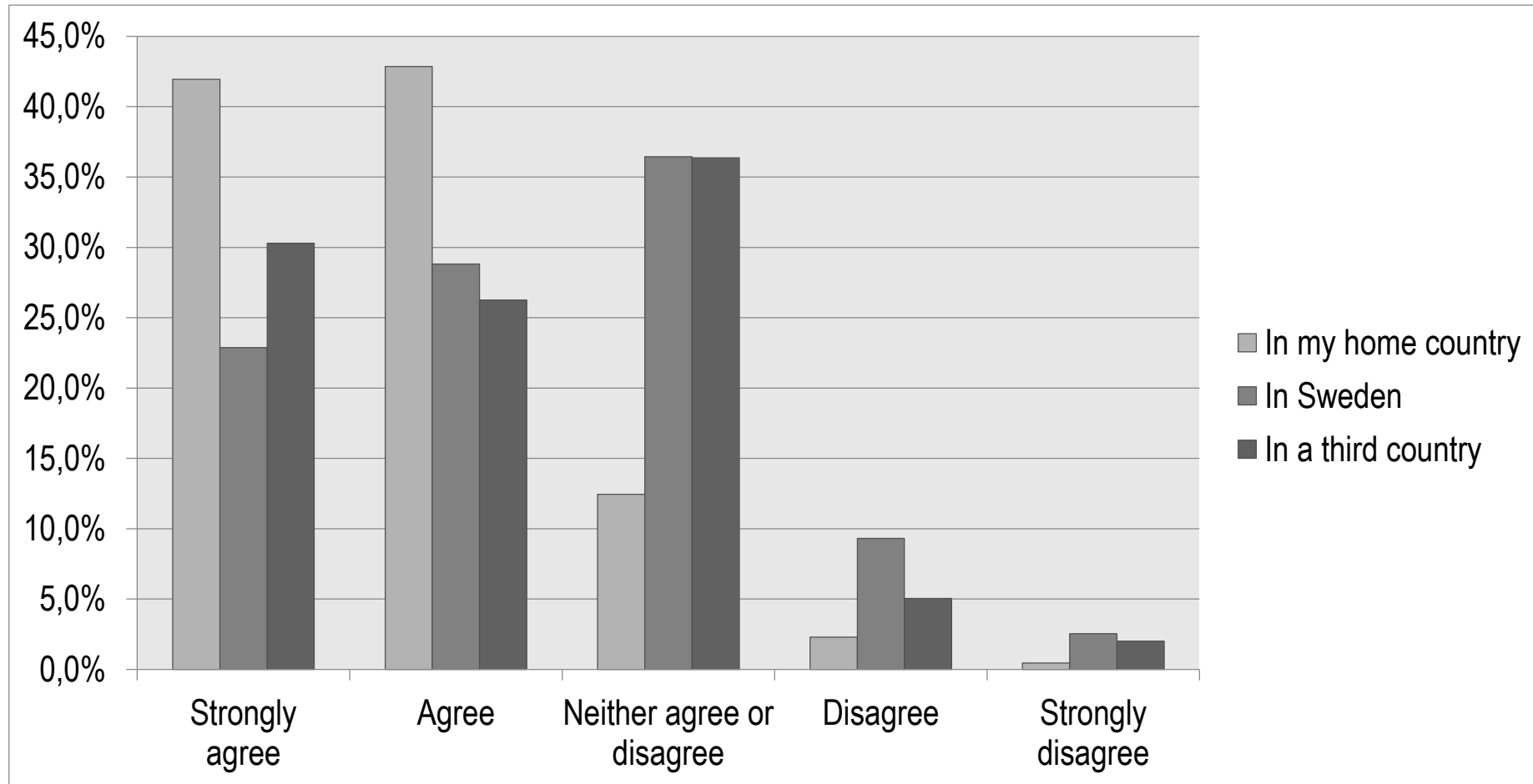
Country Presently Living in, other than Sweden and Country of Origin

Country	(n)
USA	12
Germany	11
Denmark	8
UK	7
Switzerland	6
France	5
Czech Republic	4
Italy	4
Norway	4
Belgium	3

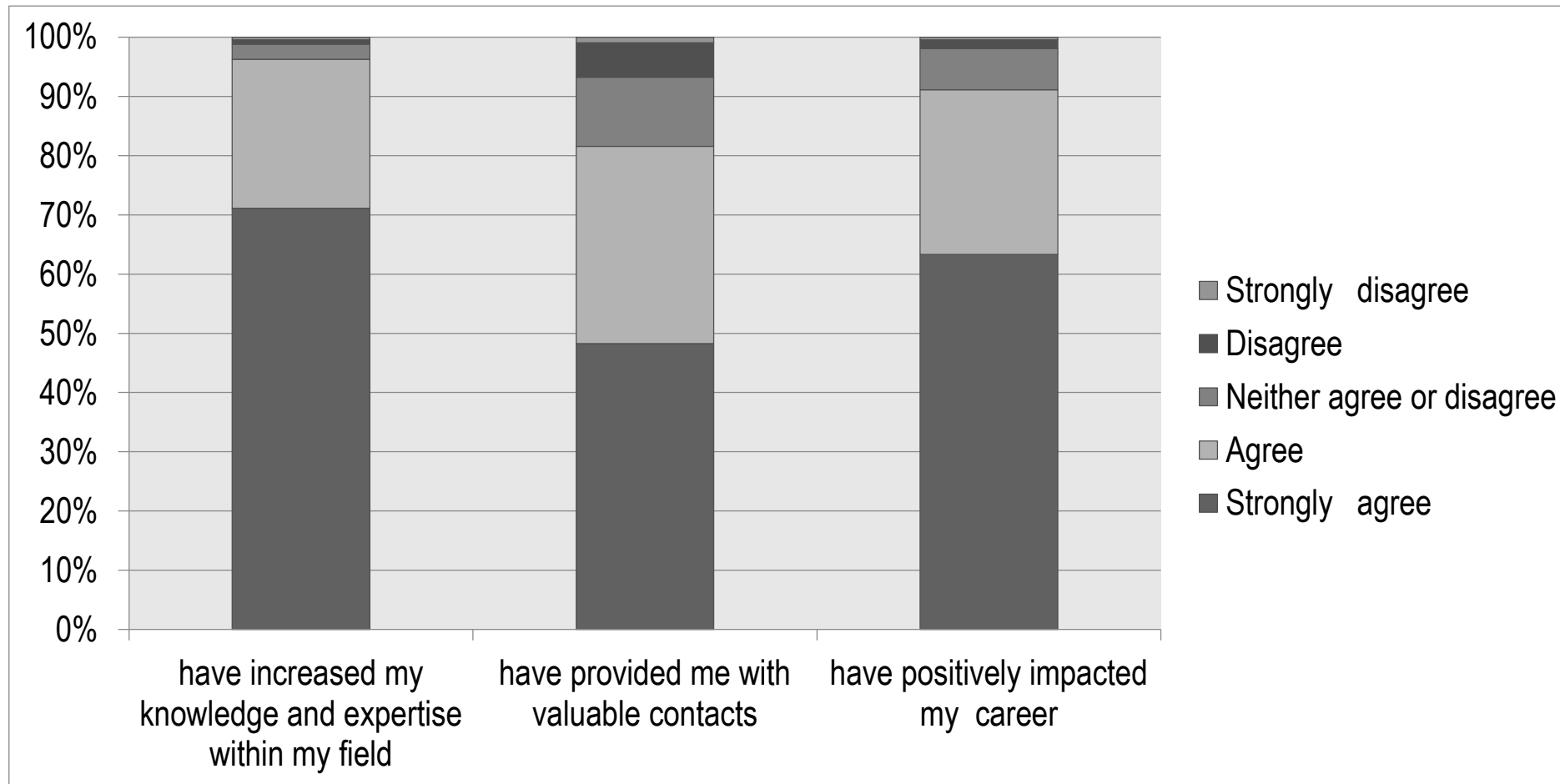
Country to have lived in other than Sweden and Current Country

Country	(n)
Home country	65
USA	13
Netherlands	10
Belgium	9
Germany	9
UK	8
Denmark	7
France	6
Austria	5
Finland	5
Norway	5
Russia	5

Scholarship period has given me tools to enhance development in my country of origin



Perceived value of the scholarship period



Summing up

- The Visby programme in the intersection of internationalisation of higher education, public diplomacy, foreign aid (and business)
- The Swedish institute functions as intermediary, between the supply and the demand
- Less of a market logic, more of political logic
- More focus on social sciences, less on natural sciences
- Three trajectories, very different interpretations
- Overall satisfaction with the programme