Empowerment or entrapment? An exploratory analysis of the link between gender inequality and emigration in Central and Eastern Europe
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Introduction

In 2016 the United Nations General Assembly adopted the New York Declaration For Refugees and Migrants, which recognizes the specific vulnerabilities of women on the move (United Nations, 2016). By adopting this new resolution, the UN Member States are committed to consider needs, vulnerabilities and capacities of women, girls, boys and men in their migration policy and developmental aid. This new addition was a result of a global research project funded by the European Union (EU). Nearly half of all 244 million individuals who leave their country of origin are women, and they do so for many more different reasons than merely family reunification (UN Women Headquarters, 2021).

International organizations such as the EU, the UN and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) advocate for the protection and promotion of women migrant worker rights and the elimination of discrimination. These international efforts are commendable and important for the mainstreaming of gender inequality in different policy areas. Building upon this, there are endless angles for research regarding gender and migration. If gender shapes a person's experience as a migrant, it also shapes the experiences that preface migration. Research agrees that migration is never motivated by just one reason, but rather many different migration drivers working together (see Massey et al, 1993; Van Hear et al., 2017; ; Schewel & Fransen, 2018; Salamonska & Czeranowska, 2021). Literature shows that these different factors migration can affect men and women differently (Nawyn, 2010; Tyldum, 2015), since gender shapes a person's experience it can also shape their migration capabilities. Therefore, this thesis focusses on the gender inequality in the country of origin and the possible connection this holds with emigration. The analysis in this thesis will be exploratory and therefore look at several countries. Specifically, the twelve Central and Eastern European Countries that joined the EU in 2004 and 2007. This is an area not often the topic of gender migration research (Fodor & Glass, 2018; Fodor & Horn, 2015), which makes this thesis a relevant contribution to existing literature. Furthermore, the twelve countries have a similar historical context makes this group of countries a suitable unit of analysis. The research question that will drive this analysis is as follows:

To what extent is there a link between female emigration and gender inequality in Central and Eastern European countries?

To answer this question I will analyze these variables separately, before combining my findings. The first part of the analysis will focus on emigration data, specifically the

percentage of women in the total migrant stock for each country. Overall, there is a visible trend of declining female emigration. However, there are several countries who experienced big jumps in female mobility. The second part of the analysis will look at gender inequality. Here I will differentiate between objective gender inequality, which refers to the unbiased measurements that make up the Gender Inequality Index (GII) as published by the United Nations Development Project (UNDP). And subjective gender inequality, which is based on survey data that questions respondents about their experiences with gender inequality.

Finally, the analysis will compare all collected data, and look for patterns and connections to develop hypotheses for further research. Since this is exploratory research the purpose will not be the discovery of causal relations. The final hypotheses rely on four categories of different ways gender inequality could affect emigration. The four categories are as follows: (1) *emigration as empowerment*, (2) *emigration as emancipation*, (3) *non-emigration as choice* and (4) *non-emigration as lack of choice*. Relying on theoretical foundations, the results of this analysis illustrate that lower gender inequality could enhance migration capabilities and enhance female emigration, while in other areas equal opportunities could remove the need to migrate. This also works the other way around: high gender inequality can be a push factor for emigration or restrict the ability to migrate.

This thesis aims to contribute to the mainstreaming of gendered perspectives in migration literature, and attempts to develop relevant hypotheses that could drive future research. This thesis will first discuss the theoretical foundation for the research, followed by an overview of the relevant historical context for these cases. Thereafter the research design will further defend this case selection, along with an explanation regarding the operationalization of the variables and the relevant data selection. The analysis itself will consist of three parts: emigration, gender inequality and a final part to combine these findings and establish a typology.

Theoretical Framework

Feminist literature has found its way into migration research over the past three decades. A purpose of gendered migration research is to take a step further than adding the binary variable "gender" to a qualitive analysis, and generalizing results over all migrants afterwards. Hereby I don't mean to discredit the inclusion of this binary variable in quantative research, since it is also an important development and now standard practice for most research (European Commission, 2018). Gender is a structural aspect of society that plays a role in enabling and constraining mobility, it shapes capabilities and societal expectations (Bilecen et al., 2019; van Hear et al., 2017). This structural approach views gender as an ideology rather than merely a biological difference. It emphasizes that it is not an assumption that women are always worse off, rather the base of the argument is that gender affects your place in society. In my thesis I will differentiate between objective and subjective gender inequality. Here objective gender inequality refers to aspects that can be measured in numbers, such as labor force participation and segregation of education. I will base subjective gender inequality on survey data, here it is more about the amount if inequality people experience.

Aside from gender as an important societal aspect and lens for analysis, it is of course also a concept relevant to migration research. One thing most of this research agrees on is that migration is never motivated by just one reason, but rather many different circumstances working together (van Hear et al., 2017; Verwiebe et al., 2014). All these aspects that influence movement are called migration drivers. To further qualify gender (in)equality as a relevant migration driver, in this part of the literature I will elaborate on gendered research on already established migration drivers.

Firstly, I will discuss economic drivers. To claim that inequal economic opportunity leads to migration, would be a gross oversimplification. However, it is a factor that does have consequences. Theories such as the New Economics of Labour Migration argue that not only an individual's income is relevant, but rather their income compared to others (Czaika, 2013; Massey et al., 1993). This is called relative deprivation. An individual can experience relative deprivation, when comparing themselves to other members of their community or country. This is called vertical inequality. A counterpart of this is horizontal inequality: when a certain group in society experiences collective relative deprivation compared to other groups (Czaika, 2013). This distinction is often operationalized in case studies on migration patterns in

countries with multiple different ethnic groups. These studies show that collective relative deprivation leads to collective action, whereas individual relative deprivation would lead to migration (Czaika, 2013). Another aspect of identity along which people can identify is their gender, and in my thesis relative deprivation would be subjective gender inequality. In line with the aforementioned theories I would expect that in countries with higher subjective gender inequality the disadvantaged gender is less likely to migrate.

While influential, relative deprivation alone is not enough to explain migration patterns. And wanting to migrate does not automatically mean an individual has the opportunity to migrate. Therefore, secondly I will discuss migration capabilities, and that's where objective gender inequality comes in. Capabilities can, for example, be measured by looking at access to the labor market. Another factor that can positively influence migration capabilities is education (Czaika, 2013; Schewel & Fransen, 2018). Both are indicators in the measurement of the Gender Inequality Index. According to theory education can affect migration in two ways; it makes individuals aware of opportunities abroad and it provides tools to realise these opportunities. This is part of migration transition theory, which focusses on macro-level changes in aspirations and capabilities to explain the positive relation between development and emigration (de Haas et al., 2019). The United Nations (UN), the World Bank, and the EU all consider both access to education and labour market participation in their gender equality index calculations. It is a historically relevant indicator for gendered structuring in society source. Building upon this theoretical foundation I would expect that countries with a higher objective gender equality have a smaller gender migration gap.

In summary, feminist literature shows that economic motivations to migrate affect men differently than women (Nawyn, 2010; Tyldum, 2015). Which is why later on my analysis will consider objective gender inequality. Furthermore, familial context remains at the forefront of female migration research (Bylander, 2015; Tyldum, 2015; Francisco, 2019) and relative depravation can be a strong migration driver (Czaika, 2013). That supports the inclusion of subjective gender inequality in the analysis. Nonetheless a growing number of women move as independent labor migrants rather than in the context of family migration (de Haas et al., 2019). Developments like this underline the importance of women as subjects of research, especially in areas where they have been less visible (Kofman, 2000; Lutz, 2010). The next part of my theoretical framework will outline the relevant historical context fort my cases.

Historical context

Big changes in the political landscape of a country can greatly affect both migration patterns and gender equality rates. For the countries in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) there are two significant changes that each affect the topic of my thesis: the collapse of socialism and the enlargement of the European Union (EU). This will build the historical background for my research and underline why the CEE countries are an interesting territory to discuss.

Migration and Gender Inequality in socialist states

The collapse of the Soviet Union and communism in 1990, was followed by a transition to an open market system in the former socialist CEE countries was very impactful on both gender and migration. Literature shows that the early phases of this transition deepened gender inequality, due to privatization, Foreign Development Investments (FDI) and lower welfare spending (Fodor & Glass, 2018). Women held a relatively good position under socialism in the CEE countries, signified by greater access to education, more labour market experience and lower fertility rates. This made Eastern-Europe a less interesting market for international investors (Fodor & Glass, 2018). In former socialist territories in Latin-America and Asia FDI led to new opportunities in low-skilled job markets, because women are more easily exploited. This process is called feminization of labour (Fodor & Glass, 2018). This new 'advantage' becomes null and void in areas where women already hold jobs, therefore the new system for women merely meant a worse bargaining position.

Another change comes in welfare spending. Literature links this to a smaller gender poverty gap, as well as overall lower poverty rates in CEE countries after 1990 (Fodor & Horn, 2015). However, when a country focusses their welfare spending on family related benefits, this can create a disadvantage for women and single parents. The system assumes women to be dependent on their families, which negatively affects their labour market chances. And this type of welfare spending restricts access for single parents. The legacy of a communist regime does affect family structures and values in the countries, and also affects choices made in the allocation of welfare spending. One of the most visible being that welfare spending in general dropped with the fall of socialism in many Eastern European countries source. Moreover research shows a bigger gender poverty gap in CEE countries, than in other countries undergoing sped up economic growth under foreign development investments (Fodor & Horn, 2015). Therefore this history is relevant to the analysis in my thesis. For

many countries the collapse of socialism and transition to capitalism has meant economic growth in the long term, however there is no definite answer on the impact of economic growth on gender equality in a country. These two can be researched as separate developments (Lippmann & Senik, 2018).

Lastly, scholars expected the flow of East-West European migration to regain momentum after the fall of the Soviet Union and the Iron Curtain in 1989 (Engbersen & Snel, 2013; Fassmann & Munz, 1994). One quite large obstacle was now taken out of the way, and there was a significant labour demand in Western Europe (Verwiebe et al., 2014). However the Western European countries responded to the fall of the Iron Curtain with a tightening of their migration policies and a cordon sanitaire against the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and the Balkan states (Fassmann & Munz, 1994). A cordon sanitaire means that all cooperation with these states was banned, so they could function as a buffer between Russia and Western Europe. The next step in eradicating migratory barriers for some of these countries has been their accession to the European Union (EU).

Migration and Gender Inequality in EU member states

In line with that fact, the next important political development that influenced the countries in my thesis, is EU enlargement. Accession happened for Cyprus, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovenia, Slovakia and Czechia in 2004, this group of countries is also referred to as EU-10. The additional EU enlargement of 2007 consisted of Bulgaria and Romania. Together they can be called the EU-12. Joining the EU means joining its single labour market, which puts the CEE countries in a unique position when it comes to mobility and migration research. Access to this free movement did not happen overnight: for Czechia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Poland, Slovenia and Slovakia there was a seven year grace period that introduced access in three steps. This means they reached full access to free movement and the European Labour market in 2011 (European Commission, 2011). There is plenty of research to build upon in the case of this link and its consequences. This new market the countries now gained access to is often referred to as "Fortress Europe", in media and research (Geddes & Taylor, 2016; Marques, 2010). A term often applied to trade relations, is also very relevant for migration. It describes the liberalization of migration within the EU, while restricting access for outsiders (Marques, 2010). Other perks of accession are that previously irregular migration now becomes legal. This is a great outcome for many citizens, and leads to more differentiation in migration streams. Legal migration streams are

also easier for research since numbers are easier to come by. The abundance of migration flows within Europe makes for an interesting field, with endless possibilities of case studies. Since my thesis will be exploratory research I will focus on flows of emigration and the countries of origin, regardless of where they're going or how long they're staying.

Aside from access to the EU labour market, accession also has consequences for several policy areas. One of the developments for emigration is the institutional support for certain types of intra-European migration. For example, the Erasmus and Socrates programs are meant to encourage young Europeans to study a semester abroad(Salamońska & Czeranowska, 2021; Verwiebe et al., 2014). Or for young professionals it is the recognition of foreign qualifications and the EURES network of European employment offices (Salamońska & Czeranowska, 2021). Initiatives like this are meant to encourage cohesion in Europe and underline the labour market unity. The effect of this is visible in the growing number of high skilled and young people among intra-European migrants (Engbersen & Snel, 2013; Kofman, 2000; Verwiebe et al., 2014).

Another field of policy that the EU attempts to influence is that of gender equality. EU gender governance has been mostly economically oriented and motivated. As well as the use of the economic angle as justification for an organization such as the EU to have gender equality policy (Elomäki, 2015). While this approach has been met with criticism by feminist scholars, it is a viable political strategy. Efforts for gender equality in the EU are relevant for my thesis since it further establishes gender as an ever developing variable.

Research design

Case Selection

In my thesis I will focus on twelve countries. The ten countries that joined the EU in 2004: Cyprus, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovenia and Czech Republic. Additionally I am including the countries from the 2007 expansion: Bulgaria and Romania. These countries are a relevant case selection due to their unique access and lack of migratory restrictions as EU-members, which they gained access to around the same time. Their largely similar placement in Eastern-Europe as well as the history of communism makes for a group of countries with a similar background. Finally this is a group of countries not often discussed in gender literature, therefore I think I could make a relevant contribution to the existing research. (Fodor & Glass, 2018; Fodor & Horn, 2015).

Operationalization of core concepts and data selection

Before this analysis can go anywhere, it should be defined what it is about. At the forefront of course, I look at migratory patterns in my thesis. More specifically, emigration. I will be using data from the Eurostat and they define emigration as follows: "*the action by which a person, having previously been usually resident in the territory of a Member State, ceases to have his or her usual residence in that Member State for a period that is, or is expected to be, of at least 12 months*" (Eurostat, 2010). The twelve month threshold the Eurostat uses matches the definition of migrant for all countries included in my analysis. Eurostat obtains their numbers from national varieties of a population register. The provided numbers of migrants are counted per calendar year (1 january – 31 december). There is data available for every year from 2004 up to 2019 for every country except Romania, Malta, Bulgaria and Cyprus. 2004 is a logical starting point since this year the accession of the EU-10 happened. Due to the varying sizes of the countries that are part of the research using net numbers would skew the results. Therefore I have calculated the share of women as part of the total stock of emigrants, these percentages are the basis of my analysis. By compiling relative numbers it allows me to compare the different territories.

For objective gender inequality I rely on the Gender Inequality Index (GII) from the United Nations Development Project. This index is an improved version of the earlier measures for gender related statistics employed by the UNDP. The organization defines gender inequality as: and the GII is based on three dimensions: health, empowerment and

labor market. The UNDP has published a GII every five years from 1995 to 2010. After 2010 yearly data is available, this also illustrates the growing relevance of gender equality research.

Subjective gender inequality refers to the way people experience this inequality in their daily lives. This cannot be measured by factors such as the GII, and is not something that is included in their research. For this variable I will be utilizing survey data from the 2015 European Parliament Eurobarometer 'social demographic trendlines'. The EP requests such surveys periodically to view if European Citizens feel heard. For my thesis I will use the answers for QB2: In your opinion, are inequalities between women and men nowadays very widespread, fairly widespread, fairly rare or very rare in [your country]? The answers to this question can be divided up in 'widespread' and 'rare'. The survey also makes it possible to look at the different answers for men and women.

For all variables I rely on data combined and collected by other institutions, such as the European Institute for Statistical Analysis and the United Nations Development Project. There is a slight irregularity in the data I use, since the GII starts in 1995 and my emigration data starts in 2004. This coincides with the year the EU-10 joined the European Union, and therefore provides me with enough information. Since this is exploratory research and I will not attempt to discover causal relations this will not cause problems in my analysis.

Analysis method

In my research I will first explore emigration and gender inequality data separately. To structure my analysis countries will be grouped based on their average level of female emigration and their average GII. Both parts of my analysis will separate three categories. This will allow me to compare similar countries and hopefully detect trends that will prove relevant in the third part. For the subjective gender equality there will not be three categories, I will focus merely on countries that diverge from their objective gender equality.

In the third and final part of my analysis I will compare and cross reference the data for the different variables and attempt to establish a typology for the different patterns I hope to discover.

Analysis

Emigration

Before any connection between gender inequality and emigration can be explored, this research will take a look at the data on all variables.

As described in the methods above, for emigration I will rely on percentages based on Eurostat data. In figure 1 below I have compiled the average percentage of women as part of the total stock of emigrants between 2004 and 2019, to group certain countries and structure my analysis. Interesting at first glance are Slovakia, Cyprus and Romania. Their average surpasses the 50%, meaning that from these countries on average more women emigrate than men (see figure 1). On the other end of the graph the countries remain far below the 50%, and thus on average men make up a bigger part of the emigrant stock. Those countries are Slovenia, Malta, Hungary and Czechia (see figure 1). Bulgaria and Estonia have an average of exactly 50%. This leaves Latvia, Lithuania and Poland in the middle of the bar graph, close to 50%.

Figure 1: *average percentage of female emigrants* (Eurostat)
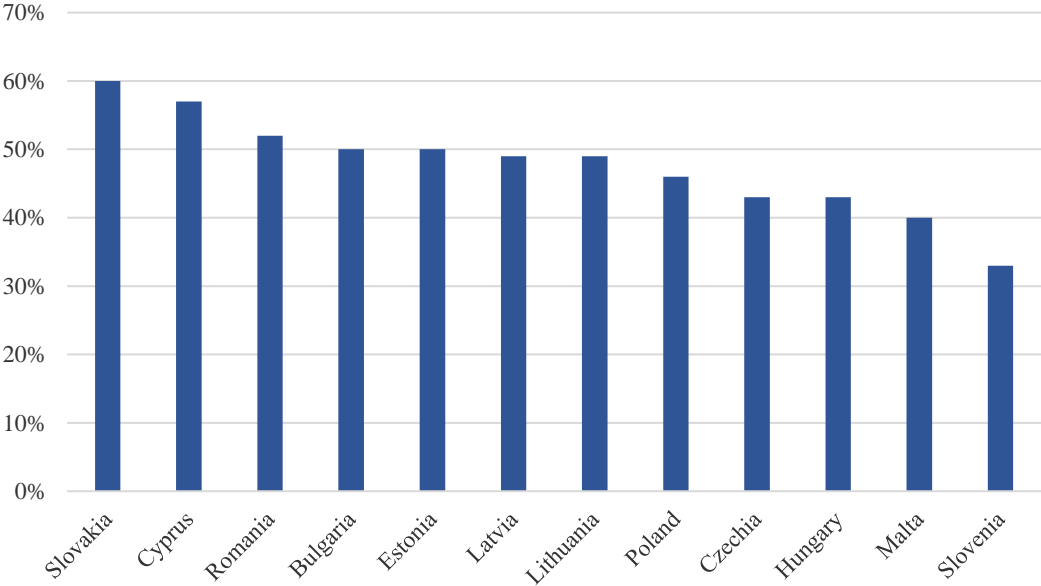
The average percentages in figure 1 cannot say anything precise fluctuation of emigration numbers over the years. To take a closer look at trends over time, I have compiled the data in three separate line graphs based on high, medium and low female emigration. Even though the country categorization is based on averages alone, it holds when looking at the data in the line graphs.

Category 1 will be the countries with high levels of female emigration (see figure 2). A small limitation for category 1 is the lack of data before 2008 and 2009 for Romania and Cyprus respectively.

Figure 2: *percentage of female emigrants for category 1* (Eurostat)
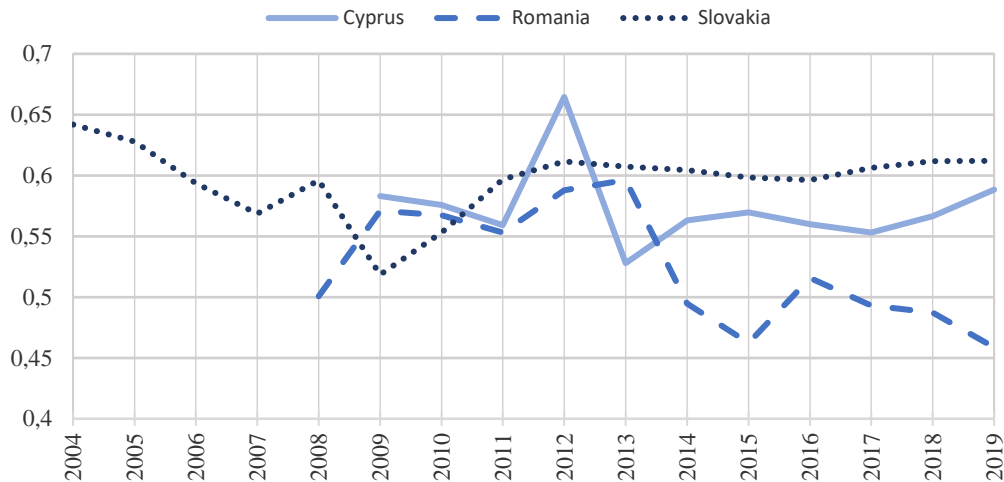
Slovakia has the highest average in migration for all the twelve countries, and is also at the top in this graph for most years. Romania is the only country of the three in this category where the emigration numbers dip below 50%, this happens first in 2013 and after a rise in 2016 the numbers have been declining again. Cyprus is one of the three countries across all categories that experienced a rise in female emigration since 2018, whereas all nine other countries document a decrease. The other two are Estonia and Bulgaria, which are part of the next category. Aside from this little thing they have in common, there aren't any other similarities in their emigration data that jump out to support this connection.

The countries assigned to category 2 can be found in figure 3, these countries are the ones with an average female emigration. A limitation in this category is the lack of data for Bulgaria before 2012, where all other countries have data available from 2004.

Figure 3: *percentage of female emigrants for catgory 2* (Eurostat)
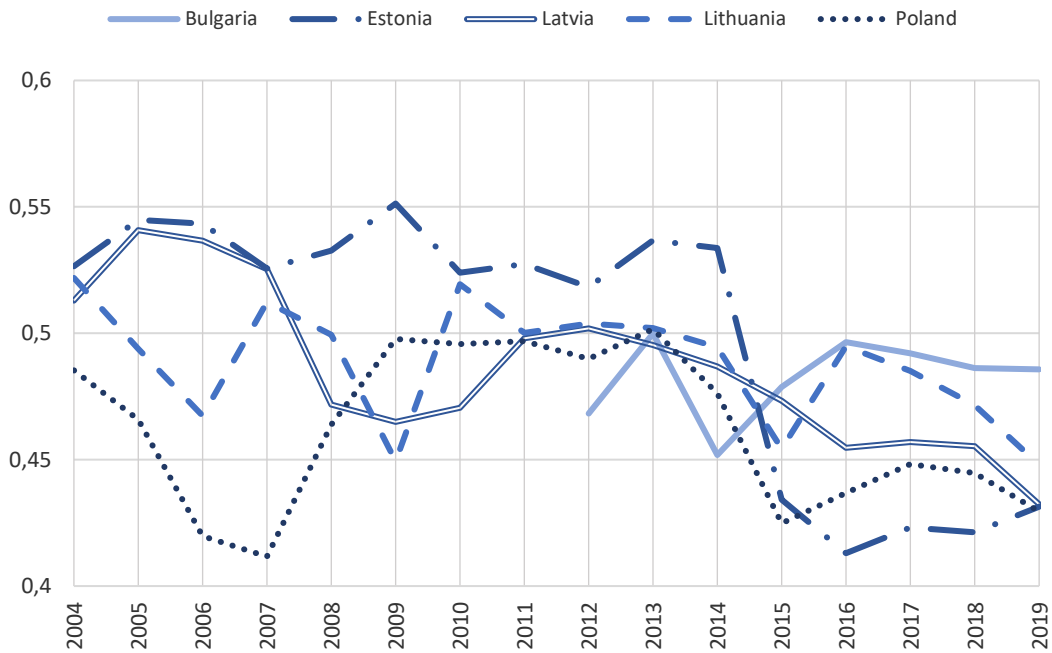
For the countries in figure 3 there is a noticeable trend of a declining amount of women in the yearly migrant stock, none surpass the 50% line after 2013. The data for Bulgaria is insufficient to make such claims, but for the other four countries their starting points are noticeably higher than their percentages in 2019. Estonia is a striking example of this development, since the drop seems to have happened all at once between 2014 and 2015.

Category 3 are the countries with consistently less women than men emigrating, these countries are visible in figure 4 and never surpass the 50% threshold. In this category the biggest change is occurring in Hungary from 2009 to 2011, when the share of women emigrating nearly doubled. The developments in the Czech Republic also jump out in this graph, where their share of women in the emigrant stock steadily grew from 30% up to 48% in 2018, the last year in the graph shows a drop. Contrary to the earlier two categories, the overall trend in category 3 is that, apart from the drop in the last years, there is still a consistent increase over time.

Figure 4: *percentage of female emigrants for category 3* (Eurostat)

<legend: - - - Czechia ····· Hungary —— Malta —·— Slovenia>
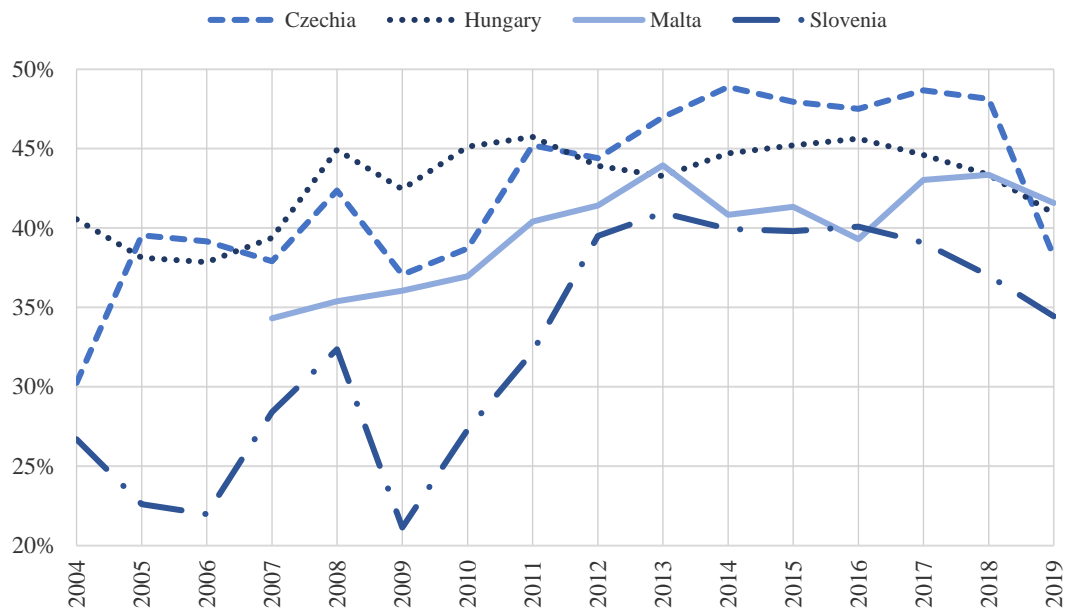
Across the categories there are some relevant general conclusions that could be made. First, all countries except Estonia, Bulgaria and Cyprus experienced a decline in the share of female emigrants in the last three years of the available data. Second, there was a time after 2011 where all countries crossed the 40% line. The countries with the highest rise in female emigration since 2004 are Czechia, Slovenia and Malta, however of those three still only Czechia came close to the 50%. The countries with the biggest decline in female emigration are Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. All three dropped from over 50% to below 45%. Lastly, countries with migration levels already below 50% never seem to surpass that line. To conclude, category 1 where female migration was high remained stable. With the exception of Romania. Category 2 experienced an overall decline, while in category 3 there was a rise overall. For all countries the lines go from wherever to between 40-45%, this is the level where the differences seem to mellow out. With the exception of Slovakia and Cyprus.
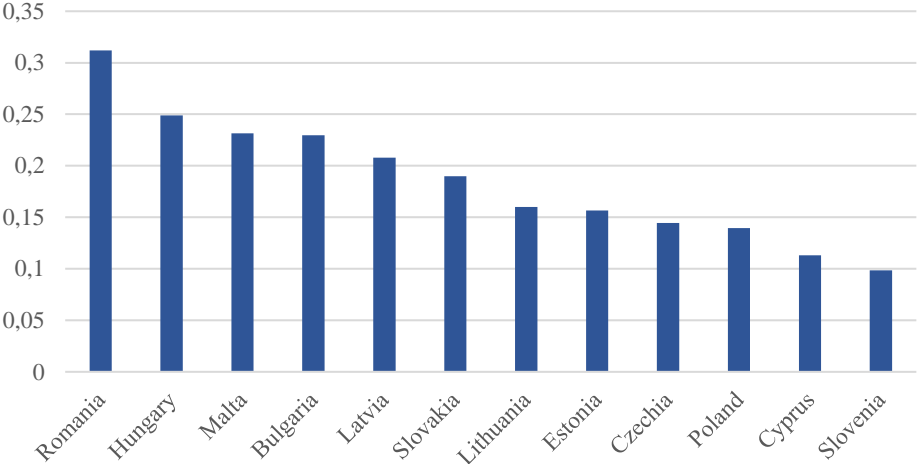

Gender Inequality

Objective Gender Inequality

Next to emigration, this thesis is about gender (in)equality. As described in the research design I will be using the UNDP GII. As with the emigration data, the cases can be grouped in three categories; high, medium and low.

I will use similar methods as with the emigration data, and therefore they will be grouped according to averages. I did not use all available data, since the 1995 index can be classified as somewhat of an outlier for most countries. While the huge steps made since the fall of communism are certainly commendable and interesting, this timeframe is beyond the scope of my thesis. To stick to the relevant data, the numbers in figure 5 below are based on all data post-2004. An important note for the graphs in this section, is that due to data availibily each graph will start with a five year jump, since there is no IIG between 2005 and 2010.

Figure 5: *average GII from 2005 till 2019* (UNDP)

Category 1 is dedicated to the four countries with the lowest levels of gender inequality (see figure 6). Slovenia is the least inequal of all CEE countries in my thesis, but also in comparison with the other EU members they are doing remarkably well as they are ranked 10th worldwide by the UNDP in their GII ranking. On top of this Slovenia shows the most positive development of all four countries in this category. The biggest step happened between 2010 and 2011. The high levels of improvement could indicate a conscious effort on gender equality policy.

Figure 6: *Gender Inequality Index for category 1* (UNDP)
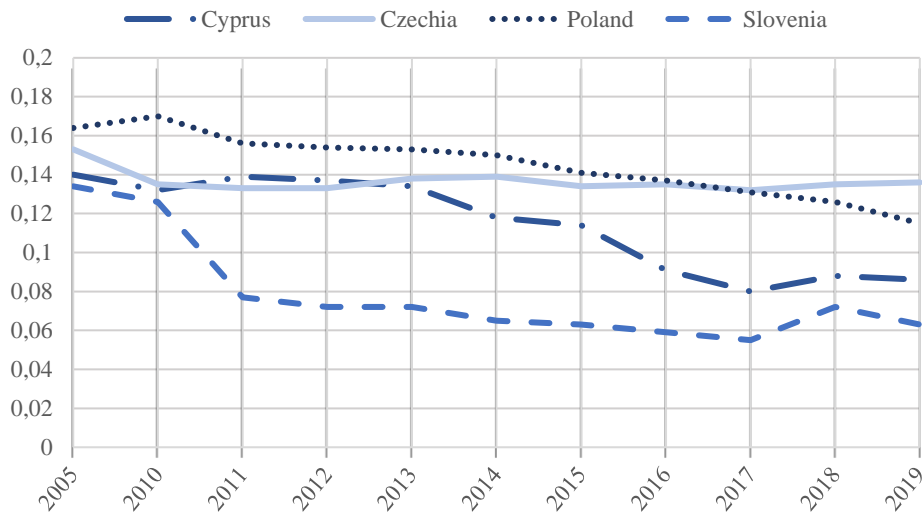
From 2013 on, the data for Cyprus also shows lessening gender inequality. Coincidently, there is a setback for both countries after 2017. Poland does not experience this setback and has a level of positive development similar to Cyprus. The turning point seems to be in 2010. It looks positive for both Cyprus and Poland in this graph, however they are in the lower quadrant when it comes to amount of improvement over all twelve countries. Czechia shows not only the least improvement in this category. Their positive development between 2005 to 2010 is higher than the total development in the ten years that follow. This could indicate that policy surrounding gender issues is much less of a priority, or they are simply satisfied with the current situation.

Figure 7: *Gender Inequality Index for category 2* (UNDP)
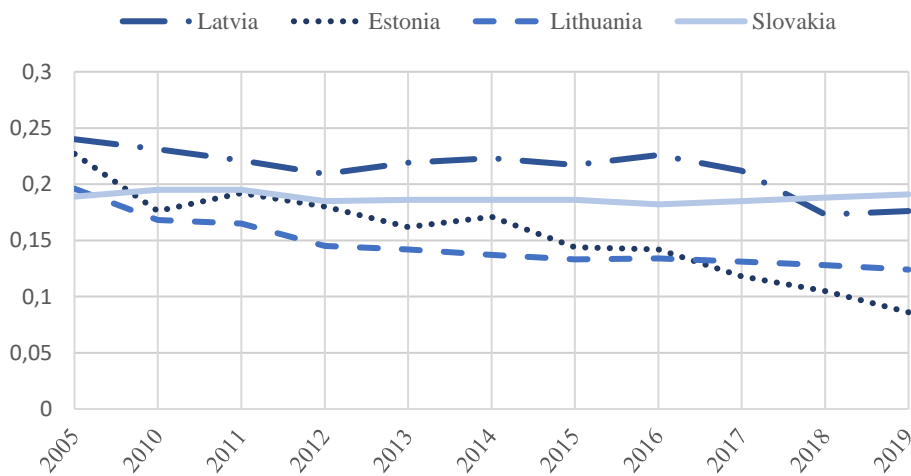
Category 2 encompasses the countries with a medium average score. While in category 1 all countries reach below 0,15 in 2019 (see figure 7) this is the case for only Estonia and Lithuania in this category. In fact, Estonia has the most positive development between 2005 and 2019 of all twelve. While Lithuania achieves a similar level of gender equality, the development seems to have stagnated after 2012. Latvia's development is quite different, since they are the only country with high levels of development where there are also consecutive years of setback between 2012 and 2016. They more than make up for it after the latter. Lastly category 2 holds Slovakia, for this country the changes are barely visible in the graph. The 2019 index is 0,002 lower than that of 2005.

Figure 9*: Gender Inequality Index for category 3* (UNDP)
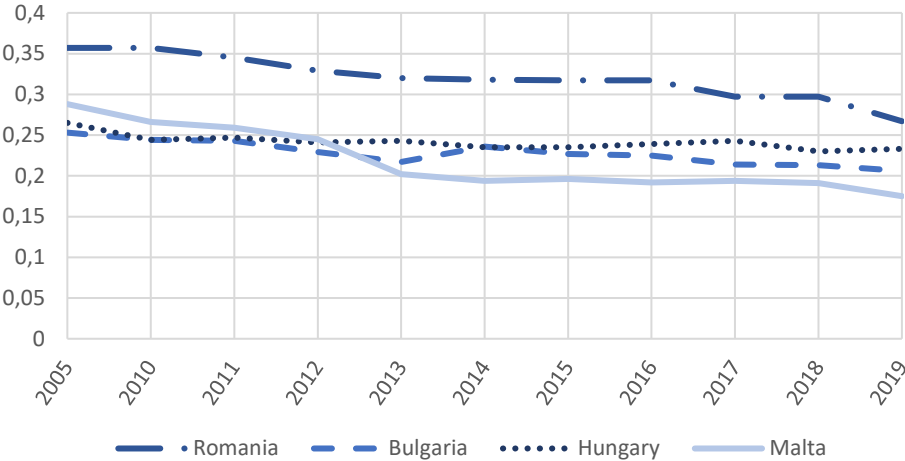
In category 3 there are no countries that reach below the 0,15 GII in 2019. At first glance this also seems to be the category with the least positive development. That definitely applies to Bulgaria and Hungary. Malta and Romania show similar levels of improvement to . Cyprus and Latvia. Despite all this improvement Romania is still the most gender inequal of all twelve in 2019. And the country also has the lowest GII rank of all European Union members. Malta, on the other hand, does not only come out on top of this category but also surpasses Slovakia and Latvia in category 2.

To summarize, the countries with the highest development showed up across all three categories. For example, there were already low inequality countries improving a lot such as Slovenia. However, Cyprus and Poland fit in category 1 as well, but they were among the countries with least improvement. Contrarily, Bulgaria showed even less development, and was in category 3. The countries that showed the most improvement were Estonia, Malta and

Romania. In spite of all this improvement Romania had the highest inequality throughout all the years. Malta and Estonia however did surpass the GII of several countries.

Subjective Gender Inequality

In this third part of the analysis I will look beyond measured objective gender inequality, such as labour force participation and educational segregation and look at how people experience gender inequality. As explained in the research design, for this question I will be using survey data from the Eurobarometer. When people answer 'widespread', they think there is a lot of gender inequality in their country. When they answer rare, they do not. The countries in figure 9 below are ranked by least widespread to most, therefore the respondents in the countries at the top consider their country the least inequal.

Figure 9: *results of 2015 European Parliament Eurobarometer* (EC)

Q: In your opinion, is gender inequality in your country fairly rare or widespread?
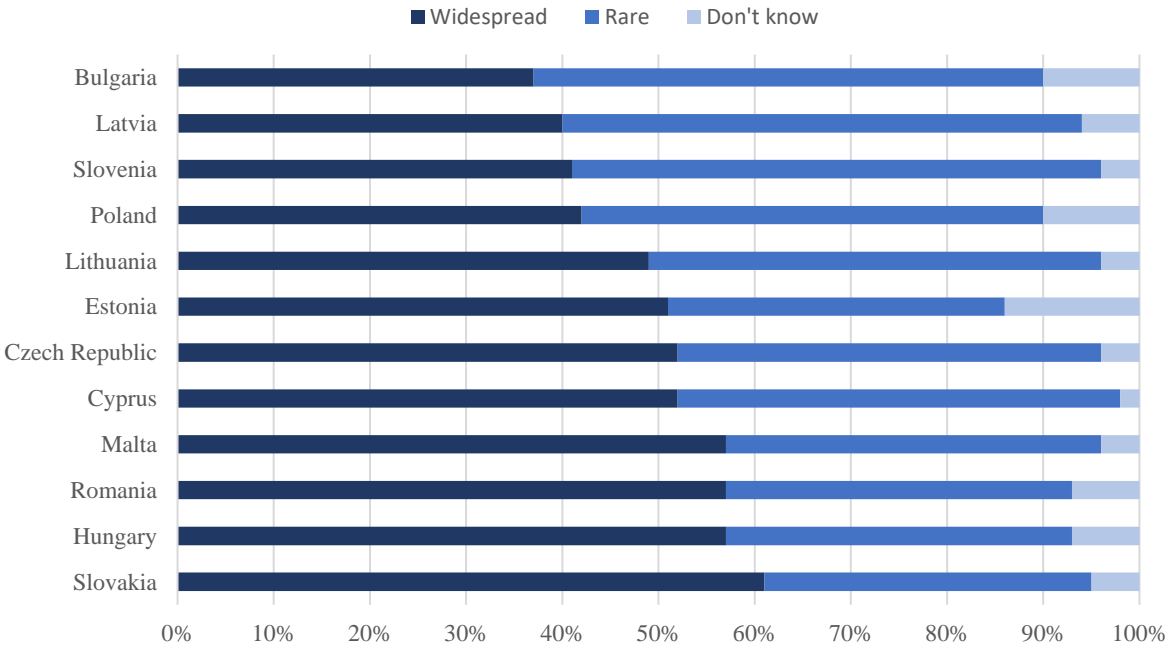
The graph below shows a very different ranking for some countries than the data in the objective gender inequality analysis earlier in this thesis (see figure 5). The survey was taken in 2015, therefore for most accurate analysis I compared this ranking to a GII ranking of 2015. For some countries such as Hungary, Romania, Malta, Estonia and Poland both the subjective and objective rankings line up quite perfectly. But others seem to end up at opposite ends of each ranking, these are Cyprus, Latvia, Bulgaria and Slovakia.

In the subjective gender inequality graph (see figure 9) Latvia and Bulgaria come out on top, as least inequality. However their GII ranking puts them near the bottom, as ninth and tenth most equal respectively. Latvians and Bulgarians surveyed thus think that their society is more gender equal than objective measurements suggest.

Slovakia comes in last in the subjective gender inequality graph (see figure 10), whilst they rank seventh most equal in the GII ranking. Cyprus is actually second least inequal in the GII for 2015, while their subjective gender inequality results put them in 8th place. It seems that here people are either much more unhappy with their relatively good situation, or much more aware of the inequality. Further research would be necessary to draw definite conclusions on this.

Zooming in to the data for these four countries specifically showcases another interesting pattern (see figure 10). Slovakia and Cyprus, two countries where the respondents ranked their country lower than their objective ranking there is a clearly visible disparity between what women answer and what men answer. For Bulgaria and Latvia this difference is present albeit much smaller. This could point to a higher awareness about gender inequality in Slovakia and Cyprus in general, than in Bulgaria and Latvia. An awareness that put them low on the ranking in figure 9.

Figure 10: *results of the 2015 European Parliament Eurobarometer, differentiated respondents between women and men* (EC)

Q: In your opinion, is gender inequality in your country fairly rare or widespread?

■ Widespread ■ Rare ■ Don't know
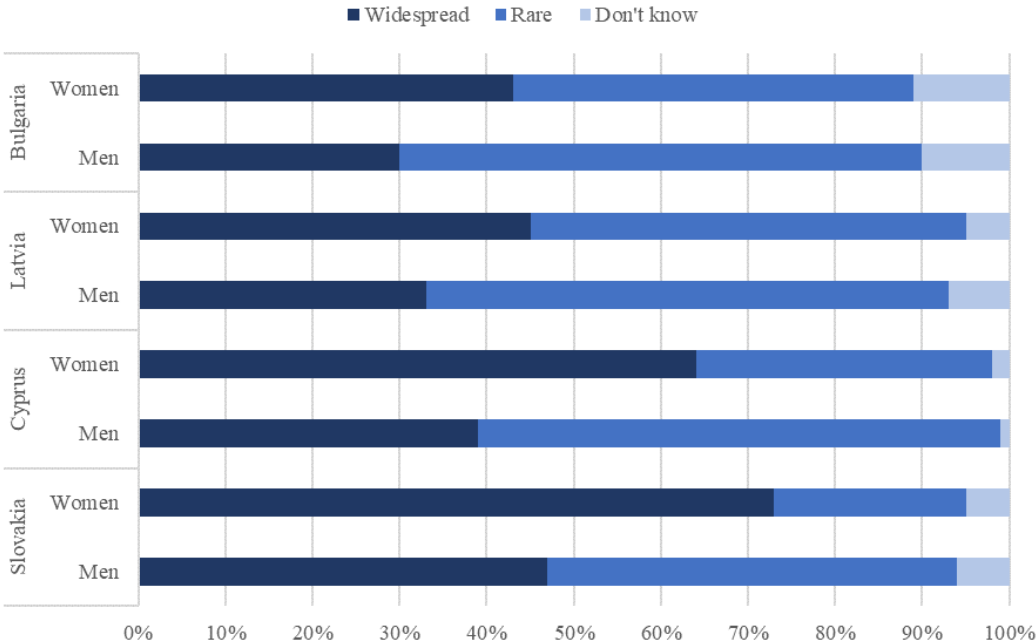
Typology

Now that I have analysed data on both variables independently, in this final part of the analysis I will combine the data and explore possible patterns. It should be noted that this is a simplified overview, for the sake of clarity. To explore patterns I have narrowed the analysis down to two points in time – 2010 and 2019 – and categorized female emigration and gender inequality in two groups, respectively.

Countries are separated in high and low female emigration, depending on whether the share of female emigration is more or less than 50%. The division for gender inequality is made at the average index number for 2019, which is 0,155. Since all countries experience gender equality development, I use the same threshold in both tables to capture this development. If both tables utilized the average GII for their own year each table would simply show a six/six division of the twelve cases. Despite slight differences the six best in 2010 are also the six best in 2019. Therefore countries with a GII below 0,155 will fall in the lower gender inequality category, and every country that surpasses 0,155 will fall into the higher gender inequality category.

Figure 11: *cross-referencing of UNDP GII and Emigration data from 2010*

	Higher female emigration	Lower female emigration
Lower gender inequality	Cyprus	Czechia, Slovenia
Higher gender inequality	Romania, Slovakia, Poland*, Estonia, Lithuania	Latvia, Hungary, Malta, Bulgaria**

* Poland's female emigration is exactly 50% in 2010.
** Data for Bulgaria starts in 2011, therefore that is what is used to include them in this graph.

Figure 12: *cross-referencing of UNDP GII and Emigration data from 2019*

	Higher female emigration	Lower female emigration
Lower gender inequality	Cyprus	Slovenia, *Lithuania*, Czechia, *Poland*, *Estonia*
Higher gender inequality	Slovakia	Malta, *Latvia*, Bulgaria, Hungary, *Romania*

The movement across the categories in these cross tabulations is mostly to the right and upwards. As became evident in the first two parts of this analysis is that on average all countries show trends of gender equality development, and a decline in female emigration. The countries that do both make a movement diagonally right in the table are Poland, Estonia, and Lithuania. In the emigration data all three fit in category two, medium female emigration. All three countries are top 5 most equal in the GII ranking in 2019. They also follow each other up in the in the subjective gender equality. The drop in female migration was most significant in 2013 for all three countries.

The other countries in this box in 2019 are Slovenia and Czechia. Data for both countries shows an increase in female emigrants starting in 2009, but they remain in category 3 for emigration. Unsurprisingly Slovenia and Czechia also fall into the same category within the gender equality data; category 1: most equal. Similar to Poland there is little positive development over the years in the area of gender development, but as mentioned they were better off in the beginning already. A final aspect these five countries have in common was that they were part of the seven year transitional period, as mentioned in the literature review, meaning they did not gain free access European Labour Market until 2011. While all five countries experienced an increase in emigration, they also definitely experienced a decline after 2013.

The similarities among these countries in the top-right box lead me to name this category "*non-emigration by choice*". Based on my analysis I would hypothesize that due to sufficient opportunity in the country of origin less women turn to migration. A typical case for this box would be Slovenia, since for nearly all the years it consistently showed high levels of equality and low levels of emigration.

Another country moving right over the cross tabulation is Romania, meaning that it followed the general trend of lower female migration but they did not improve gender equality as much as the other countries. In the first part of this analysis I did classify Romania as a country with high female migration, this shows in figure 11 as well. The sharp decline in female emigration started around 2013. Even though they did not reach the "higher gender equality" threshold in the table, there has been a lot of improvement in this policy area for Romania. It shows around the same levels of positive gender development as Lithuania and Estonia, and all three had sharply declining female emigration in 2013. This further supports my hypothesis that positive gender development and therefore more opportunity in the country of origin might lead to declining female emigration.

The bottom-right box Romania ends up in in 2019 also contains Malta, Latvia, Bulgaria and Hungary. Bulgaria and Hungary are both characterized by very little positive gender development, but both countries were evaluated as more equal than Malta and Latvia in 2005. So, while the latter two do have much higher levels of gender development there was more to catch up on. By 2019 Malta and Latvia score as more equal than Bulgaria and Hungary, the effect of this development on emigration might become visible in the next ten years. Both Hungary and Malta fit in category 3 (lowest) when it comes to female emigration, and there is a trend of increasing migration over the years. This could lead to the cautious hypothesis that gender inequality limits women's opportunities for emigration. Therefore this category would be called "*non-emigration by lack of choice*".

Cyprus is a specific case since it is alone in a category twice. It has both the highest gender equality and highest percentage of female emigrants, followed by Slovenia and Slovakia respectively. Whilst Slovakia and Cyprus have similar migration patterns their objective gender inequality is quite different. Cyprus has relatively high levels of gender equality and is also in the higher tiers when it comes to positive development. Slovakia is in the middle category with very little development. Similar to countries mentioned above Cyprus seems to make a conscious effort for gender equality, but here the result seems to be quite the opposite as the countries above. Therefore for Cyprus alone I would create a new category called "e*migration as empowerment*". Even though there is plenty of opportunity in the country of origin many women seem to look abroad for a better quality of life. This could be caused by the bigger amount of women in higher education, or the presence of low skilled jobs that these women seem to have outgrown.

Right below this Cyprus is Slovakia, left behind by many countries moving to the right of the table. Slovakia showcases continuing low gender equality and high female emigration, which I would classify as "migration as emancipation". If there are not enough opportunities or fair wages for women in the country of origin, many might try to find a better quality of life and work abroad.

Further differentiation between Slovakia and Cyprus can be made when subjective gender equality is also included in the analysis. In the table below (figure 13) I have made the same cross tabulation but now based on the subjective gender equality findings of my analysis. The categorization of countries for female emigration are the same based on 2015 and 2019 data. The 50% demarcation line is now also possible for the subjective gender equality categories, with countries classified as low of high subjective gender equality

depending on whether a majority of respondents said gender inequality is widespread or not. The result of this new analysis is first of all that Cyprus now in the same category as Slovakia, the "emigration as emancipation" box. Noticeable for Slovakia and Cyprus was that the disparity between men and women's perception of the gender equality was quite large. This could indicate that subjective gender equality motivates emigration, the need for women to find equality elsewhere.

Figure 13: *cross-referencing of subjective gender inequality and emigration data from 2015*

	Higher female emigration	Lower female emigration
Less subjective gender inequality		Slovenia, Lithuania, Poland, Latvia, Bulgaria
More subjective gender inequality	Slovakia, Cyprus	Malta, Hungary, Romania, Czechia, Estonia

Another change when considering subjective gender equality is that Bulgaria moves up to the "non-emigration as choice" box, this fits the earlier hypothesis that when women experience plenty of opportunity in the country of origin they do not want to move. Czechia and Estonia move in the opposite direction of Bulgaria, as over 50% of the respondents indicated that gender equality was widespread, however they are very close to 50% so it is possible that the simplification of the table reinforces this otherwise minor difference. All other countries end in the same box for objective and subjective gender equality.

Conclusion

In my thesis I explored both emigration data as well as data on gender inequality for Central and Eastern European countries to see if there was a possible connection between the two variables. My theoretical review highlighted the connection between development and emigration as an already established link in migration literature. Furthermore I relied on feminist contributions to the field of migration research, and the growing relevance of this angle in research. The purpose of my thesis was not to find any causal connections, or to develop new grand theories, but to explore patterns and developments in gender inequality and female emigration. This did lead to some interesting conclusions. By dividing the countries among three categories, both for emigration levels as well as for subjective and objective levels of gender inequality, I could analyze cases in a systematic way.

Regarding emigration, I found out first of all that most countries showed declining percentages of female emigration. Second, most countries experienced a rise in female emigration around 2011 when final restrictions in access to the EU labor market were lifted. Slovenia and Poland showed the largest rise in female emigration before 2011, while Romania and Estonia were the countries with the biggest drop in female emigration, this happened around 2013. Slovakia was the country with the highest average levels of female emigration, while Slovenia holds the title for lowest average emigration.

Regarding objective gender inequality, my analysis shows that were every country included in my analysis showed positive development, except Slovakia. Furthermore, the data showed differences in these levels of improvement. Remarkably, the countries with the highest inequality were not all the countries with the most positive development. All three categories held countries with very few development, and all three categories had countries that developed greatly. Finally, the growing availability of data surrounding gender seems to underline the relevance of this topic.

Regarding subjective gender equality, my main conclusion was that for most countries their subjective ranking lined up with the objective one. There were, of course exceptions. In Bulgaria and Latvia, the respondents were much more positive about the state of gender equality in the country than the objective evaluation by UNDP. Therein contrast, in Cyprus and Slovakia the UNDP evaluated gender equality much higher than the respondents of the survey did. Interestingly, in this latter group the disparities between men's and women's answers were much higher than those for the first two countries.

For the final part of my analysis I organized all previously collected data in cross tabulations, in an attempt to find patterns and connections and to develop hypotheses for further research. I developed four different categories. (1) "*Emigration as emancipation*" included countries with high levels of female emigration and low levels of equality. The hypothesis behind this pattern is that women leave their country of origin due to lack of opportunities and hope to find better quality of life elsewhere. (2) "*Emigration as empowerment*" includes countries with high levels of emigration as well as high levels of gender equality. An explanation for this could possibly be more women in higher education, and therefore more women moving abroad for higher skilled jobs or more education.

(3) "*Non-emigration as choice*" includes countries with higher levels of emigration and higher levels of gender equality. The possible explanation behind this could be that when there are enough opportunities in the country of origin, women do not experience the push to find this elsewhere. (4) "*Non-emigration as lack of choice*" included countries with low levels of female emigration as well as low levels of gender equality. The reasoning behind this category was that the inequality was a restricting factor, preventing women from migrating.

Due to the exploratory nature of my thesis these explanations – while of course rooted in theories provided in the literature review - remain hypotheses to be explored more in detail in further research. In particular, these patterns and categories developed could be subject for future case studies. Cyprus, Slovakia and Slovenia would be interesting to explore the link between gender and emigration. Furthermore, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Latvia and Slovakia could be interesting subjects of further research on the differences between subjective and objective gender equality. Lastly, for small N-studies it would be interesting to zoom into the different indicators that make up the Gender Inequality Index, to explore how differences among indicators might shape the role of gender equality in emigration. Above all I believe my analysis could underline the relevance of including gendered statistics in migration research.

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