



## SCIENTIFIC FINAL REPORT

### Two- and three-year projects and postdoctoral projects

Registration number, Östersjöstiftelsen: S2-20-0026

Project manager: Jani Turunen

Project title: Leavers and stayers - Migrant and non-migrant life trajectories in Sweden and Finland

#### **1. The three most important results of the project and what conclusions can be drawn from them**

Usually the findings from ongoing research are the most exciting ones for the researchers. The present project is no exception. Our ongoing study (by Xia, Turunen, Saarela and Aradhya) about the economic returns to return migration is very interesting. Here we study the labor market outcomes of people who emigrated from Finland and returned. One of the main ideas of the whole project was to find a better comparison group for studying migration outcomes than the majority population and our solution was family fixed effects where migrants are compared to their own siblings rather than to the whole population in either the host country or the country of origin. In this way we can decrease unobserved heterogeneity that may produce some of the findings in the previous literature. This basically means that migrants are different compared to the majority population and if we fix the effects of family background we can reduce much of this. The findings, that we are currently writing up, clearly show that return migrants are worse off on the labor market when returning home compared to their non-migrant siblings. Regardless of how we model this the results consistently show the same pattern. We interpret this as an example of the importance of maintaining and building networks on the local labor market, a process that is disrupted by migration. The same method of sibling fixed effects was also used in the study by Saarela and Turunen (2024) on migration propensities.

The second result I want to highlight is from the study by Weber and Saarela (2023) that explored migration and integration dynamics using Finnish-Swedish linked register data, analyzing migration motives, income, and family trajectories over a 15 year period. The results highlighted significant heterogeneity among Finnish migrants, especially across groups like labor, student, and tied migrants. Labor migrants initially earned more than others but saw reduced income disparities over time. Student migrants exhibited steep income growth due to local qualifications and delayed family formation, reflecting youth



mobility cultures. Return migration risks were linked to initial motives and destination outcomes; labor and student migrants were more likely to return than tied migrants, while higher income and family formation reduced return risks. Seasonal and circular migration patterns mirrored these dynamics, with student migrants showing the highest propensity for re-immigration, attributed to skills and networks gained abroad. Despite limitations in capturing nuanced motives and social contacts, the study provides valuable insights for integration policies, emphasizing the need to account for diversity within migrant populations and incorporate data from both origin and destination contexts. These findings contribute to broader understandings of intra-European migration dynamics.

Thirdly the study by Aradhya, Grotti and Härkönen (2023) investigated unemployment persistence among second-generation immigrants in Sweden. Using population register data for individuals born in 1977–1981, the study examines differences between ancestral Swedes, children of Finnish immigrants and 9 other second-generation immigrant groups. For second-generation Finns, unemployment rates are notably higher than those with Swedish-born parents. Moreover, unemployment episodes tend to persist more frequently among second generation Finns as well as other children of immigrants. The causal relationship between past and current unemployment does however seem to operate at similar levels for both groups. This suggests that the mechanisms linking unemployment over time, such as human capital deterioration and negative signaling to employers, function in a comparable manner. However, the higher baseline unemployment rates among second-generation Finns amplify the absolute effects of unemployment persistence. In practical terms, past unemployment increases their likelihood of being unemployed again by a larger margin compared to Swedes, exacerbating their disadvantage in the labor market. These findings underscore the structural challenges faced by second-generation Finns in achieving stable employment and highlight the importance of targeted policy measures to mitigate these inequalities and promote labor market integration. The results for second generation immigrants from other Central and Eastern European countries were largely similar to the Finns.

## **2. The project's contribution to the international research frontline**

All of the findings presented above are to be considered as contribution to the international research frontline. The studies are novel, have been published in international scholarly journals and presented at international academic conferences where they have gained



considerable interest and attention. One of the main contributions was probably our ability to compare migrants to their non-migrant siblings which improves our understanding of the outcomes of migration. If we want to highlight one contribution to the international research frontline that is not research finding per se we could lift the possibility to link administrative register data across countries. The possibilities with such data infrastructure was for example discussed by Weber at the IUSSP webinar on longitudinal migration infrastructures in July, 2024.

### **3. The contribution of the research to the knowledge of the Baltic Sea Region and Eastern Europe**

All the results of the project are regarding migrants from Finland so they are directly relevant for this particular part of the Baltic Sea Region. If we however lift our view from the country specifics we can interpret the finding for the greater region. Many of the countries in the Baltic Sea Region are characterized by high levels of labor migration, especially for the countries that have entered the European Union and it's shared labor market. The case of the migration between Finland and Sweden serves as an excellent example of a free movement context and provides us with deeper understanding of migration and integration dynamics within context where (labor) migration is free. The results will help us understand the migration from Finland (and back) but helps us shed light on other similar migration contexts like the EU. Some of the articles published within the project also explicitly study immigrants from other Baltic and CEE countries like the one by Aradhya and colleagues (2023) cited above.

### **4. New research questions that the project has led to**

The project has lead to a number of new research questions. We have already been able to address some of them during the present project. Examples of such questions are Webers studies on both nest-leaving behavior and social capital as a resource in the school-to-work transition among children of immigrants as well as Saarela's and Turunen's study on sibling order effects on the migration propensity. Yet another new research question that we were able to address was Aradhya's study on covid hospitalization that surprisingly showed higher risk of hospitalization for second generation Finnish immigrants compared to the majority population. These are just examples of some of the ideas that have come up during the project. The main "new" research question that still remains is how to best utilize data from administrative registers for studying migration processes and migration



outcomes. The present project has shown that the Finland-Sweden(-Finland) migration flow serves as an excellent example for deepened understanding of migration dynamics. The fact that both countries have high quality register data available for research with possibilities to link the data and follow individuals and families across borders provides excellent possibilities for migration research. Project members are currently planning at least two new research projects on ideas stemming from the present project, one for the Baltic Sea Foundation and one for ERC.

### **5. Dissemination of the results of the project within and outside the research community**

The dissemination of the project's results have so far mostly been through publications and presentations at academic conferences. All project members have attended several conferences, both large and small, during the project period (see 5 most important below). Results have also been presented at smaller academic meetings and workshops. Furthermore we have presented results outside the research community. Siddartha Aradhya for example presented some of the project findings at a meeting in the Swedish parliament.

**Publications** (all publications are OA, project members names in bold)

#### **Articles in peer-reviewed journals**

**Aradhya, S.**, Grotti, R. & Härkönen J. (2023) Heterogeneous dynamics of unemployment - A comparison between second generation immigrants and native Swedes. *European Sociological Review* 39(3):433-448.

<https://academic.oup.com/esr/article/39/3/433/6967085?login=true>

**Aradhya, S.**, Katikireddi, V. Juárez, S. (2022) Immigrant ancestry and birthweight across two generations born in Sweden: an intergenerational cohort study. *BMJ Global Health* 7(4):e007341

<https://gh.bmj.com/content/7/4/e007341>

Bjuggren Andersson, A., & **Weber, R.** 2024. Navigating bias? An assessment of access, use, and returns to social capital in the school-to-work transition of the descendants of



immigrants. *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility*, 94(2024): 100919.  
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0276562424000325>

Juárez S., Cederström, A. **Aradhya**, S. & Rostila, M. (2023). Differences in Hospitalizations associated with severe COVID-19 disease among foreign and Swedish-born. *European Journal of Public Health* 33(3): 522 -527  
<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10234654/>

**Saarela**, J. & **Turunen**, J. (2024) Born to move? Birth order and emigration. *Social Science Research* Volume 122  
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0049089X24000747>

**Weber**, R. & **Saarela**, J. (2023). Who Migrates and Who Returns in a Context of Free Mobility? An Analysis of the Reason for Migration, Income and Family Trajectories. *European Journal of Population* 39:17  
<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10680-023-09667-2>

**Weber**, R., & Vogiazides, L. (2023). Heterogeneity or consistency across life domains? An analysis of disparities between second-generation migrants and the Swedish majority population. *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility* 83  
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0276562422000713?via%3Dihub>

**Editor reviewed working papers** (submitted to journals and currently under review)

Kim, W., Grotti, R. & **Aradhya**, S. (2024). *Is overqualification a stepping stone for career progression among children of immigrants?* Stockholm Research Reports in Demography 2024:17  
[https://su.figshare.com/articles/preprint/Is\\_overqualification\\_a\\_stepping\\_stone\\_for\\_career\\_progression\\_among\\_children\\_of\\_immigrants\\_/25428034?file=45110185](https://su.figshare.com/articles/preprint/Is_overqualification_a_stepping_stone_for_career_progression_among_children_of_immigrants_/25428034?file=45110185)

**Weber**, R. & **Saarela**, J. (2023). Cultural Proximity and Migration: Evidence from Multigenerational Population Registers on Mother Tongue. Stockholm Research reports in Demography 2023:25.  
[https://su.figshare.com/articles/preprint/Cultural\\_proximity\\_and\\_migration\\_Evidence\\_from\\_multigenerational\\_population\\_registers\\_on\\_mother\\_tongue/24118659?file=42312876](https://su.figshare.com/articles/preprint/Cultural_proximity_and_migration_Evidence_from_multigenerational_population_registers_on_mother_tongue/24118659?file=42312876)

Grotti, R., **Aradhya**, S. and Härkönen, J. (2023). Hiring or firing? The dynamics of unemployment inequality among the children of immigrants. Stockholm Research Reports in Demography 2023:2  
[https://su.figshare.com/articles/preprint/Hiring\\_or\\_firing\\_The\\_dynamics\\_of\\_unemployment\\_inequality\\_among\\_the\\_children\\_of\\_immigrants/21915228?file=38875731](https://su.figshare.com/articles/preprint/Hiring_or_firing_The_dynamics_of_unemployment_inequality_among_the_children_of_immigrants/21915228?file=38875731)

**Papers under preparation**

**Weber**, R. School Context and Nest-leaving: Differences across the Children of Refugees, Non-Refugee Migrants and the Majority.



**Weber, R.** From Segregation to the Mainstream: Childhood Neighborhoods of Immigrants and their Descendants in France and Sweden.

**Xia, W., Aradhya, S., Saarela, J. & Turunen, J.** The Returns to Returning: Economic Returns to Remigration to Finland With Sibling Comparison Design.

**Conferences** (5 most important)

Saarela, J. & Turunen, J. (2024). *Born to Move? Birth Order and Emigration. The 2024 Annual Meeting of the Population Association of America.* Columbus, Ohio. April 19.

Weber, R. (2024). *The benefits and limitations of linked Finnish and Swedish register data.* IUSSP webinar on longitudinal migration infrastructures. Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. Barcelona, Spain. 7 March.

Xia, W., Aradhya, S., Saarela, J. & Turunen, J. (2023). *The Returns to Returning: Economic Returns to Remigration to Finland With Sibling Comparison Design. The 2023 Annual Meeting of the Population Association of America.* New Orleans, Louisiana. April 13.

Saarela, J. & Turunen, J. (2024). *Born to Move? Birth Order and Emigration.* The 3rd International Forum on Migration Statistics. Santiago de Chile. January 25.

Weber, R. (2023). *Cultural Proximity and migration: Evidence from Finnish multigenerational population-registers on mother tongue.* European Society for Population Economics (ESPE) Annual Conference. Belgrade, Serbia., June 17.