

Education and union formation among children of immigrants in Sweden

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1. Introduction

Social researchers agree that demographic behavior of immigrants and other minorities is an important indicator of social integration in the host societies (Kalmijn, 1998; Kulu and González-Ferrer, 2014). The goal of this paper is to analyze the impact of education on the patterns of union formation among children of immigrants (second generation immigrants) in Sweden. Whereas older second generation immigrants are mostly children of Nordic immigrants, the composition of second generation in younger cohorts is more complex. The main contribution of this study to the literature on intermarriage is that it aims to analyze the union formation by simultaneously looking at the partner's origin and living arrangement (marriage and cohabitation with common children, henceforth simply referred to as cohabitation). This approach is motivated by the view that prevailing attitudes and socio-demographic behavior with respect to different social domains can be different within the same immigrant group (Lesthaeghe and Surkyn, 1995).

The previous literature suggests that, in general, education is more positively associated with marriage than with cohabitation (Thomson and Bernhardt, 2010). The most common interpretation of this association is that marriage, as a more committed type of union, requires more transitional underpinnings, such as completed education (Kravdal, 1999). A positive association between education and marriage has also been found in Sweden, a country widely regarded as a stronghold of cohabitation (see Duvander, 1999 or Holland, 2013). As far as the origin of the partner is concerned, one of the most common findings in the research on intermarriage is that more educated immigrants of the first and second generation are more likely to form a union with a native (among others, Van Tubergen and Maas, 2007; Dribe and Lundh, 2008). There are at least three causal mechanisms behind this relationship. First, more educated members of minority

groups are more attractive in the native marriage market. This perspective is related to the large literature on status exchange hypothesis. Second, more educated members of minority groups are more exposed to meeting settings in which it is easier to meet members of other social groups. Third, it has been hypothesized that highly educated members of immigrant and other minority communities show a lower than average level of attachment to their ethnic group and, as a consequence, lower than average preference for endogamy. This study departs from the assumption that the mechanisms determining living arrangement will work simultaneously with those determining the origin of the partner. These considerations set the stage for the two principal hypotheses:

H1: Education will be most positively associated with marriage with a native.

H2: Education will be least positively (most negatively) associated with cohabitation with co-ethnic

2. Data and methodology

Data are drawn from the Swedish register data (STAR collection) and cover the period from 1990 until 2012. The main analysis includes Swedish-born individuals with two foreign-born parents originating from the same country. Individuals enter the study at the age of 18 and are followed until the union formation, emigration, death or until the year 2012, whichever event occurs first. Each individual is at the risk of six competing events: 1) cohabitation with native, 2) cohabitation with co-ethnic, 3) cohabitation with a person of different immigrant background (other type of cohabitation), 4) marriage with native, 5) marriage with co-ethnic, and 6) marriage with a person of different immigrant background (other type of marriage). Separate discrete-time multinomial logit analyses are performed for men and women.

Education level is categorized as follows: 1) primary education or less, 2) secondary education (reference category), 3) some post-secondary education, and 4) tertiary education. Apart from the educational level, the model also controls for age, educational enrollment, labor market attachment, disposable income, immigrant group (defined by the parental country of birth), and the size of immigrant group in the municipality of residence. Dependent variable refers to year $t+1$, whereas explanatory variables refer to year t . The only exception is the size of immigrant group, which refers to the year in

which the individual enters the study (in order to minimize the threat of reverse causality).

3. Main results

Descriptive findings indicate that there is a sizeable variation across immigrant groups in terms of their propensity for endogamy. Whereas only around 20% of Finnish and Polish second generation immigrants choose a co-ethnic partner when starting the first union, the corresponding share among Turkish second generation immigrants exceeds 70%. Cross-group differences are also pronounced when looking at the type of living arrangement when entering the first union. While more than 60% of Finnish and Chilean second generation immigrants enter childbearing non-marital cohabitation when starting the first union, this is the case with less than 20% of Iranian and Turkish second generation immigrants.

The results on the association between education and union formation are summarized in the table below, which shows relative risks for each of six events for university-educated second generation immigrants (reference group: second generation immigrants with secondary education):

	Cohabitation with native	Cohabitation with co-ethnic	Other type of cohabitation	Marriage with native	Marriage with co-ethnic	Other type of marriage
Men	0.87***	0.68***	0.84***	1.50***	1.07*	1.44***
Women	1.37***	0.98	1.26***	1.83***	1.08**	1.28***

*Note: * $p < 0.10$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$. Source: Swedish register data*

The impact of university education on the formation of marriage is positive for both men and women, and especially so when it comes to marriage with a native, as predicted by the main hypothesis. The impact of university education on cohabitation is also in line with the main hypothesis, although the patterns are more gendered. University education decreases chances of cohabitation among men, and the effect is strongest for cohabitation with a co-ethnic. On the other hand, highly educated women are more likely to start cohabitation with a native or a partner of different immigrant

background, while there is no effect of university education on cohabitation with a co-ethnic.

Other results are mainly along the line of the previous research on the patterns of intermarriage. A stronger presence of the co-ethnic immigrant group in the municipality of residence at the age of 18 increases the risk of starting an endogamous union, whereas it decreases the risk of a union with a native partner. The risk of a union with a native partner decreases with the level of cultural similarity between Sweden and parental country of birth. Whereas employment and income have a modest effect on the formation of cohabitation, they are positively associated with marriage, especially with marriage with a native partner.

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