

## Emigration among family migrants in Sweden

Previous studies of Statistics Sweden (2011, 2015) have shown that emigration varies depending on the reason for immigration. Migrants born in a country outside the Nordic and EU countries who immigrated due to labor are the most prone group to leave the country. Emigration of this group is mostly affected by the labor market situation and the economic cycle. Labor migrants and students born in a country outside the EU and the Nordic countries usually have temporary residence permits which often mean that they need to leave the country after a certain period of time. Citizens of the European Union and the Nordic countries do not need to register their reason for migration to Sweden. This means that there is often no information in Statistics Sweden's registers whether it was for work, studies, family ties or other reasons. This makes it difficult to determine what the causes are behind the emigration.

Asylum immigrants have escaped from persecution and conflicts have generally a low propensity to emigrate compared to the other groups. Those who have immigrated due to family ties have a clear family related reason to settle in Sweden. Most of the people who migrate to Sweden due to family ties are generally unemployed when they immigrate. This might imply that the migration was not of economic reasons but to live with their partner or family and a possible emigration does not then need to be because of reasons related to socioeconomic factors (Bijwaard & van Doeselaar, 2014). Family migrants often migrate to live with their partner or family and if there is a change in family situation, it could perhaps influence the decision to emigrate or not. For this reason, this study aims to investigate if there is a relationship between family situation (in a relationship or if there has been a union dissolution in Sweden) and emigration for those who have migrated to Sweden due to family ties and to see whether there are any differences in emigration behavior depending on region of birth. Information about the partner's reason for residence permit or country of birth is also included. Information about family migrant's propensity to emigrate will be used in Statistics Sweden's projections of household composition.

Other studies on family migrants family situation and emigration often points out that separations is a dominant factor for an increased propensity to return to the area of origin (Zhao, 2002). Also Bijward and van Doeselaar (2012) argue that a divorce often is a trigger for emigration among family migrants. Another important factor when it comes to emigration of foreign born is the partner's country of birth. Those whose partners are born in the host country are usually less prone to emigrate (Bijwaard & Wang, 2014).

### Data and method

I use Swedish administrative registers and these registers cover vital statistics of the entire population including information about reason for residence permits. This study focuses on persons aged 18 years or older and is born in a country outside of the Nordic countries and the European Union. Furthermore, they should have immigrated during 1998 and 2007 due to family ties and were in a union at immigration. Being in a union is defined as either being married or being in a co-residential relationship with joint children. Survival analysis is used for determining the risk of emigration depending on a set of demographic and socioeconomic variables. Focus is on whether the immigrant is in a union or if there has been a union dissolution in Sweden and also on the partner's reason for residence permit/country of birth.

### Multivariate results

The main focus of this study is to examine how family status affects the propensity to emigrate for family migrants born in four different region of births; Europe outside of EU and countries with high, medium or low HDI<sup>1</sup>. To do so, a number of demographic and socioeconomic variables have been added to the multivariate model and the results are presented in table A. For most of the studied groups, the propensity to emigrate decreases the older the family migrant were at immigration. Compared to if the immigrant's

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<sup>1</sup> UN Human Development Index





**Table A cont.**

Year of immigration	1998 (ref.)	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00					
1999	1,29	*	1,35	**	1,02	0,93	1,02	1,11	1,20	0,76						
2000	1,32	**	1,38	*	1,09	*	1,35	***	1,19	**	1,48	**	1,79	0,78	***	
2001	0,73	**	0,90		0,79	***	0,82	*	0,70	***	0,92		1,16	***	0,50	
2002	2,07	***	2,10	***	1,29	***	1,00		1,51	***	2,33	***	1,47		0,94	**
2003	1,68	***	2,80	***	1,12		1,55	***	1,68	***	2,23	***	1,66		1,02	***
2004	2,44	***	3,00	***	1,14	**	1,34	***	1,93	***	2,50	***	1,76	***	1,36	***
2005	2,94	***	2,90	***	1,10		1,40	***	2,17	***	2,26	***	2,01	***	1,52	***
2006	2,30	***	3,04	***	1,04		1,25	**	2,09	***	2,10	***	2,89	***	1,60	***
2007	2,55	***	4,25	***	1,35	***	1,62	***	2,08	***	2,26	***	3,18	***	2,21	***

\*p<0,1, \*\*p<0,05, \*\*\* p<0,01

The model also included information whether the migrant is partnered or if there has been a union dissolution in Sweden. Information about the partner's country of birth or reason for residence permit is also included. For women and men born in a country outside of the European Union, the relative risk to emigrate for those whose partner immigrated as a refugee or for other reasons is lower compared to if the partner is born in Sweden. Being divorced or separated means an increased risk to emigrate. Similar patterns could be seen for those who are born in a country with high and medium HDI except that those with a partner that immigrated due to other reasons are more prone to migrate compared to those who have a Swedish born partner. Family migrants born in countries with low HDI that have reunited with their partner that has refugee status are less prone to emigrate compared to if their partner is Swedish born. Women in this group that have experienced a union dissolution during their stay in Sweden have an increased risk to emigrate.

**Table B. Relative risk for return migration for women and men by region of birth and partners country of birth/reason for residence permit**

	Europe outside EU		High HDI		Medium HDI		Low HDI									
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men								
Swedish born partner (ref.)	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00								
Partner, other	0,60	***	0,61	***	1,56	***	1,54	***	1,04	1,56	***	1,20	1,28			
Partner, refugee	0,44	***	0,40	***	0,67	***	0,53	***	0,51	***	0,50	***	0,72	***	0,79	**
Union dissolution in Sweden	1,50	***	1,16	*	3,02	***	1,58	***	2,68	***	1,42	***	1,79	***	1,06	

Standardized for age at immigration, children, educational level, employment, citizen, year of entry

\*p<0,1, \*\*p<0,05, \*\*\* p<0,01

## Discussion

Family migrants constitute a large proportion of the inflow of immigrants to Sweden. The pattern of emigration of this group is useful information in the work with projections on household composition in Sweden. In line with many studies made on emigration in the Nordic countries (Jensen & Pedersen, 2007; Edin et al., 2000), migrants that are not attached to the labour market have an increased risk to emigrate. Migrants with higher education are more prone to emigrate and are in line with what education usually shows for all types of long distance migrations. Having children is often seen as a factor that constrains migration although in this study, but family migrants that have at least one foreign born child are more prone to migrate compared to those who have at least one Swedish-born child. This could be interpreted as having a Swedish-born child means that the parent wants to stay on in Sweden.

Having a native partner prolongs the duration of stay and constrains the propensity to emigrate. Having a Swedish-born partner could make the migration to be seen as permanent rather than temporary. It could also help the migrant to be able to better integrate economically and have help to establish themselves at

the labour market. Refugees often have a low propensity to leave the host country and therefore the same could be seen for their partners that have come to live with them in Sweden. Those whose partner immigrated due to other reasons are consist of labour migrants or migrants born in a Nordic or EU member state which often mean that they are a relative mobile group and an elevated risk to emigrate could be expected for their family that follow them to Sweden. Having experienced a union dissolution in Sweden means that the migrants are more prone to emigrate, something that also could be found in other studies (Bijwaard & van Doeselaar, 2014). Since the family migrant moved to Sweden to join their partner, there might be less that keeps the migrant in the country after a dissolution and they may return to their home country. Migrants from more developed countries that have experienced a union dissolution in Sweden could be expected to have a lower propensity to emigrate due to that they may have a greater chance to integrate into the Swedish, but that is nothing that could be seen when comparing the group with those family migrants who joined their native-born partner in Sweden.

Further work would be to include information about reason for residence permit for those who experienced a union dissolution in Sweden. It could also be interesting to expand the groups with whether there are children or not in the family.

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