PATTERNS AND MOTIVES BEHIND ONWARD, RETURN AND CIRCULAR MIGRATION AMONG FORCED MIGRANTS

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Rationale and aim of the study

Contemporary international migration trends show an increase in the absolute numbers of migrants and a substantial differentiation in international migration trajectories. Today, more countries are affected by migration flows and increasing flows are dominated by forced migration. Additionally, there are increasing forms of temporary migration, circular migration and sequential migration including several destinations (Castles et al. 2013). These are trends also observed in Sweden, a country that during the latest 15 years not only has experienced an increase in immigration flows but also emigration out from Sweden, especially among foreign born (SCB 2015). While migration flows were characterized by labor migrants from the 1960s to the mid 1970s, more recent migration to Sweden has been dominated by refugees and family reunions. The Swedish social democratic welfare state has been famous for its inclusive immigration policies including also other citizens in a system of universal rights for its registered residents (Sainsbury 2006; Schierup et. al 2006). However, economic and political changes from the early 1990s have been marked by cutbacks within public welfare, higher unemployment rates and the rise of national populist movements (Sainsbury 2006; Schierup et. al. 2006; Pred 1997). Recent years have been marked by rapid political change and in late 2015, the Swedish government decided to restrict the immigration of asylum seekers to a minimum of what is still legitimate according international law.

Today's situation of immigration to Europe and the policy responses among destination states points to a growing need of knowledge on how and why dynamic international migration flows come about, especially among forced migrants. This is important because of several reasons, not least stressed by existing literature on international migration trajectories suggesting that sequential migration will continue to increase (Castles et al. 2013). First, return migration and circular migration are especially important as they have been acknowledged as important parts of development processes for many sending nations (Di Bartolomeo et al. 2015; Schneider & Parusel 2015; SOU 2011:28; Vertovec 2009). Second, previous studies on sequential migrants and onward migrants in particular, show how these are typically characterized by high educational levels, often in combination with low employment and income levels (Edin et. al. 2000; Haandrikman & Hassanen 2014; Kelly

2013; Nekby 2006; Takenaka 2007). This selectivity of migrants is thus important not only because it influences the measurement of integration in receiving societies (Edin et al. 2000). It should also be of concern to policymakers now balancing between increasing immigration restrictions and attracting highly skilled migrants in order to meet the demands of ageing and shrinking populations. Third, knowledge on the emigration patterns among migrants in general, and force migrants in particular, is important as the directions and flows of higher parity migrations might take forms that policymakers have not intended or even foreseen (Liempt 2011).

There are several reasons for assuming that subsequent international mobility patterns of forced migrants differ from other migration forms and that they are more likely to move, as they may have ended up in a country to find safety but where they have no other possibilities to find employment or reunite with other family members (Kelly 2013; Van Liempt 2011; Takenaka 2007). A study among Iranian refugees in Sweden for example shows how onward migration may be related to processes of overcoming feelings of displacement and to reinforce personal agency (Kelly 2013).

With regards to recent developments and what is referred to as "refugee crisis" knowledge on the emigration patterns among forced migrants is thereby of emergent importance for enhanced policy making shaping future populations. Although studies on subsequent migration have created important new insights, both among forced migrants and between different forms of emigration patterns (see for example Haandrikman & Hassanen 2014 and Kelly 2013 for studies on African and Iranian refugees in Sweden and Nekby 2006 for a comparison between onward and return migration), there is today a lack of knowledge on the recent and different emigration patterns among forced migrants.

The present study intends to fill this gap on the different emigration patterns among forced migrants, by using longitudinal register data from Sweden. The overall aim is to analyse the extent and determinants of international migration trajectories among involuntary immigrants to Sweden. First, I will map recent patterns of onward, return and circular migration patterns to and from Sweden for the period 1990-2013 and identify the extent and nature of main migrant trajectories. Second, I will analyse who are the ones most probable to emigrate and how migrants engaging in these different migration flows are different from each other. Besides individual characteristics (such as sex, age, citizenship, civil status, family structures, country of birth, educational outcomes or labor market attachment) I will look at the

importance of the individual's social environment, personal networks and residential area. More specifically, the paper will address the following questions: Which international migration trajectories can be discerned among persons migrating as refugees to Sweden? What are the personal characteristics of persons likely to become such migrants? And how are the different trajectories associated with socio-economic integration in Sweden?

Data, measures and method

In order to answer these questions I use a full-population register data set with the specific purpose of use within studies on geographical trajectories and contexts, called GEOSTAR. The data set contains information on the whole registered population for the period 1990-2013, their immigration and emigration events and destinations, reason for migration, employment careers, use of social benefits etc.

Through longitudinal quantitative analysis I map the different patterns of emigration among first generation refugees aged 16 years and older. With the use of event history analysis I examine the determinants behind the events of return, onward and circular migration. All persons with a registered emigration event within any of the examined years are followed back in time to cover a full migration history of their moves to and from Sweden. Return migration is defined as the migration of a former refugee to the country of origin, measured as the country of birth. Onward migration is defined as the movement of a former refugee migrant from Sweden to another country. Circular migration is then defined as a refugee that has migrated from Sweden (to any other country) and then migrated back to Sweden for the second time. By analyzing the risk of experiencing these competing and repeating events, individual and contextual factors will be analyzed.

One important data restriction is that many emigration events remain unreported. This must be taken into consideration in the analysis and may be captured even though their exact timing is uncertain.

By examining recent emigration trends among forced migrants in Sweden, this study will contribute to the knowledge of both extent and reasons behind increasingly dynamic migration patterns among involuntary migrants. It will thus provide important knowledge to policy makers as well as provide a solid background to future studies within the field.

Preliminary results

Results will be available in time for the EPC conference.

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