



# Re-emigration of Foreign-Born Residents from Sweden: 1990-2015

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**Abstract:** This paper is an analysis of patterns and determinants of return and onward migration among foreign-born individuals residing in Sweden from 1990-2015. Who is emigrating, and where do they go? What are the determinants of return and onward migration? Increased diversity in international migration flows includes an increase in repeat migration. However, studies of re-emigration have often failed to appropriately distinguish emigration types and have traditionally been limited to economic analysis of labour migrants. Using high-quality register data from Sweden, this paper analyses re-emigration through the conditions upon first immigration and the evolving social and economic situations in the host country. Although return migration is found to be the main form of remigration type, onward migration is more prominent among specific migrant groups (e.g., forced migrants). Additionally, various determinants of return and onward migration stress the importance of treating them as distinct phenomena within the migration literature.

Keywords: emigration, return, onward, integration, foreign-born



## Introduction

International migration trends show not only an increase in absolute numbers of migrants and involved countries but also an increasing differentiation in migration trajectories, motives, and characteristics. Migrants are increasingly involved in various forms of repeat migration such as return, onward, or circular migration after the initial move (Castles et al., 2009; Jeffery & Murison, 2011). Increasing numbers of migrants are forced to move due to political or socioeconomic instability and/or conflict (Castles et al., 2009).

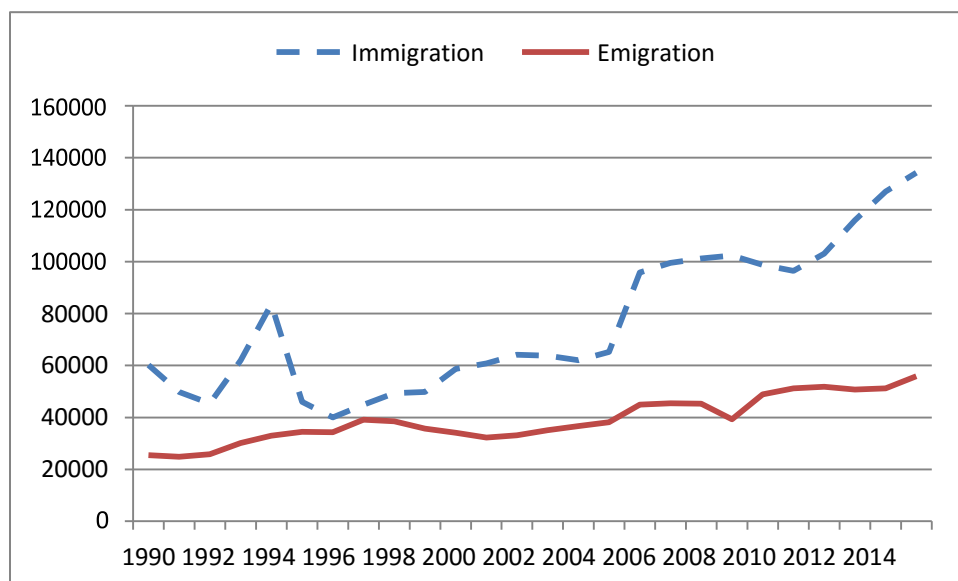
The differentiation of migration trajectories is likely to continue, meaning that the directions and flows of higher parity migrations might take forms that policymakers have not intended or even foreseen (van Liempt, 2011). Where politicians seek to attract highly skilled migrants to meet the demands of ageing and shrinking populations, the selectivity of re-migration is of great policy concern. The same selectivity also influences the measurement of integration in receiving societies (Edin et al., 2000).

Although the literature on the selectivity of migrants undergoing remigration is not new, it is still far from exhaustive. The main contributions within the field have analysed the economic aspects of return migration among labour migrants (Borjas & Bratsberg, 1996; Constant & Massey, 2002, 2003; Dustmann, 2003.) Less attention has been given to other migrant groups and determinants (i.e., forced and family migrants, as well as demographic and social aspects of eventual remigration). As the international migration flows become more heterogeneous, it becomes increasingly important to include other types of migrants in analysis, including forced and family migrants. This broadened view includes more holistic analyses of remigration determinants because remigration has been shown to be strongly related to the reasons for initial migration (Barbiano di Belgiojoso & Ortensi, 2013; Bhatt & Roberts, 2012; Bijwaard & Doeselaar, 2014; Dustmann, 2003). Over the last 15 years, Sweden has experienced a rapid increase in absolute emigration (Figure 1). This increase is especially due to the remigration of foreign-born people who in later years emigrate to a larger extent than Swedish-born people (Statistics Sweden, 2015a). The diverse immigrant population in Sweden allows us to analyse various migrant groups in relation to their countries of origin and forms of legal entry.

As repeat migration increases, the need to make meaningful distinctions between various remigration flows increases (Long & Oxfeld, 2004; United Nations, 2016). This need accentuates one of the main challenges in migration research, where appropriate definitions of migration in terms of time and space, in combination with data availability, have always

been nonnegligible challenges. For example, due to data restrictions, empirical studies of repeat migration often rely on migration intentions (Barbiano di Barbiano & Ortensi, 2013; Massey & Akresh, 2006). In cases where actual migration is considered, various forms of re-emigration are seldom distinguished (Duleep, 1994; Jensen & Pedersen, 2007).

*Figure 1.* Immigration and emigration in Sweden, 1990-2015. From “Flyttningar efter region, ålder och kön. År 1968-1996, 1997-2017. [Migrations by region, age and sex. Years 1968-1996, 1997-2017],” by Statistics Sweden. Copyright 2018. Retrieved from [http://www.statistikdatabasen.scb.se/pxweb/sv/ssd/START BE BE0101 BE0101J/?rxid=20ba3f58-1d7b-4bb6-8237-9fda2559b671](http://www.statistikdatabasen.scb.se/pxweb/sv/ssd/START%20BE%20BE0101J/?rxid=20ba3f58-1d7b-4bb6-8237-9fda2559b671)



## **Research Questions**

By mapping various re-emigration patterns, focusing on return and onward migration, and analysing these factors in relation to individual characteristics and socioeconomic integration in Sweden, this paper provides an empirical basis for this relatively new typology of repeat migration, which considers the destination type of remigration (i.e., whether migrants return or move on; Barbiano di Belgiojoso & Ortensi, 2013; Da Vanzo, 1983; Nekby, 2006). The paper includes various groups of migrants and analyses similarities and differences in patterns and determinants. The first aim of this paper is to map emigration from Sweden in relation to countries of destinations and origin, guided by the question, Who is emigrating from Sweden, and where do they go?

The access to information on countries of birth and countries of residence prior to Sweden and first destination after emigration from Sweden makes the correct specification of return and onward migration possible. Including diverse groups of migrants makes determination of whether the emigration patterns differ depending on origin and mode of legal entry possible.

The second research question is, What are the determinants of return and onward migration? Determinants of return and onward migration are analysed from the specific situation at the time of original immigration to Sweden and the evolving social and economic situations in Sweden over time.

## **Return and Onward Migration**

The study of return migration is an established part of the migration literature, at least among economic migrants. Two dominant lines of economic reasoning theorize the eventual return of labour migrants: neoclassical economic theory and new economics of labour migration. Both theories emphasize the initial migration goal related to selectivity in return migration. From a neoclassical economic viewpoint, return to the country of origin constitutes a failed attempt to permanently settle in the host country and a maximization of financial earnings. Subsequently, in cases where economic success does not reflect one's human capital, return is more likely. The initial selection in a first immigration is, according to this neoclassical economic approach, regarded as positive in terms of skills. On the other hand, return migration by those who failed to fulfil their initial goals is interpreted as negatively selected (Constant & Massey, 2002, 2003).

On the other hand, where return is seen as a part of the initial plan, such as within

theories of new economics of labour migration, return is instead expected to occur when migrants have saved enough financial resources and have thus fulfilled the goal of migration (Cassarino, 2004; Razum et al., 2005). Although the first immigration country selection was based on those not able to subsist in the home country, the choice to return is positively selected for those who succeeded in the host country.

Given these various economic assumptions, re-emigration has been described as an accentuation of the initial immigration country selection. It is expected that return migrants are either the “worst of the best” or the “best of the worst” in terms of education and skills (Borjas & Bratsberg, 1996; Rooth & Saarela, 2007). The differences in return intentions related to the initial immigration goal might explain why empirical studies find different results in relation to levels of education and income. Although return migration decreases with higher education in some studies (e.g., Barbiano di Belgiojoso & Ortensi, 2013, in a study of migrants in Italy), it increases with education and income in others (e.g., Nekby, 2006, in a study of migrants in Sweden).

The plan of someday returning might be present alongside an actual return driven by an experienced “migration failure”, as was the case in a study of Ecuadorian migrants in Italy, where Boccagni (2011) found that even in the cases where the plan was to someday return, actual returns to Ecuador were more spontaneous than planned and more often due to unfulfilled expectations and family left behind. Duleep (1994) found that “mistaken migrants” return soon after immigration. These are the migrants who soon realize that the real migration experience does not match their expectations. This notion corresponds to the steady decrease in risk of return alongside time spent in the host country, as found in the study by Massey and Espinosa (1997). The determinants behind emigration are likely to differ also from a life course perspective, where older participants were found to be more likely to emigrate for retirement and younger generations for educational and employment opportunities (Barbiano di Belgiojoso & Ortensi, 2013; Jeffery & Murison, 2011).

In addition to the ability to make economic savings and remit them, the possibility to reunite is important for the intention to return. In a study by Barbiano di Belgiojoso and Ortensi (2013), the presence of family members and children left in the country of origin was found to increase the likelihood of the intention to return and move onward to another country. Although true for both genders, this relationship is more strongly emphasized among women. Similar results were found in Sweden, where having small children decreased the likelihood of emigration (Nekby, 2006). In a study of EU15 migrants in Sweden, Raneke (2017) analysed the impact of children on remigration likelihoods. His study showed that the

presence of children is more important than civil status and that children born in Sweden increase the incentives to stay.

Previous studies do not pay as much attention to noneconomic migrants, especially not refugees, sometimes even excluding them from analysis (Jensen & Pedersen, 2007). However, given the growing differentiation of international migration and the increase in forced migration, the diversity of migrant groups and characteristics needs to be reflected in the search for return determinants (Cassarino, 2004), especially considering the importance of the circumstances surrounding initial migration in explaining return risks and the economic and political conditions at origin (Bhatt & Roberts, 2012).

For obvious reasons, forced migrants are hindered from returning to their countries of origin for various periods of time. They face not only political uncertainty but also economic instability, which impede migration (Eastmond, 2006; Klinthäll, 2007). On the other hand, they might be more likely to move onward as a way of “adjusting” their migration context, as their choice of receiving country may have been made less out of free will. For example, legal integration through the means of citizenship is used to overcome legal barriers to preferred host countries (Mas Giralt, 2017; Ortensi & Barbiano di Belgiojoso, 2018).

Because of its importance to home country development, many studies focus on aspects of repatriation of diasporas: brain gain or brain circulation (De Haas, 2010; Robertson, 2006). Some studies question the concept of “going home” and consider the complexity of readaptation processes in the country of origin (Sinatti, 2011). From a host country policy point of view, return migration has been considered the ultimate solution to an experienced problem with refugee immigration (Jeffery & Murison, 2011). However, research shows that various state-financed “return programs” fail to match migrants’ ideas and needs (Boccagni, 2011; Eastmond, 2006). Once they reach security, the fear of losing a permanent residence permit or even citizenship hinders former refugees from considering re-emigration (Eastmond, 2006). Klinthäll (2007) found in his study of refugees to Sweden that politically-oriented refugees from Chile were more inclined to defy economic uncertainty and return to Chile, but migrants not as politically motivated would not risk the same.

In contrast to the interpretation of return migration as a disruption of initial migration, onward migration is seen more in relation to a continued migratory process in search for better opportunities. For example, Barbiano di Belgiojoso and Ortensi (2013) notice onward migration intentions from Italy, in contrast to return migration intentions, as even more related to unemployment and economic downturn. And even if men are overrepresented in terms of onward migration (Haandrikman & Hassanen, 2014; Nekby, 2006), this finding

holds true also for female unemployment, showing the importance of female breadwinners and their decisions in the household (Ortensi & Barbiano di Belgiojoso, 2018). Whereas Barbiano di Belgiojoso and Ortensi (2013) find that those with higher education had decreased return probabilities, they also find that more highly educated men had a higher likelihood of onward migration. Also, Nekby (2006) found onward migrants were more positively selected in education than return migrants. However, she also found onward migrants more often belong to lower income groups. In a study of migrants moving onward to the United States, Takenaka (2007) found these migrants to be more educated than one-time migrants, more likely to enter as labour migrants (many of them as they migrate directly within an international company), and more likely to have higher-skilled jobs. In the same study, Takenaka found the onward migrants to be a heterogeneous group with many geographical backgrounds.

In a case study of Iranian refugees moving onward from Sweden by Kelly (2013), onward migration was found to be related to processes of overcoming feelings of displacement and reinforcing personal agency. As with many other onward migrants, this group of refugees had a high educational level. However, in this study, Kelly showed onward migration to Britain was more of a reclaiming of lost middle-class identity rather than poor structural integration in Sweden. Onward and return migration could also in the case of refugees be thought of as enhancing possibilities to find employment or reunite with other family members (Kelly, 2013; Takenaka, 2007; van Liempt, 2011).

In their recent study, Ortensi and Barbiano di Belgiojosi (2018) found the drivers behind onward migration to be the subject of constant change. Political instability and policy changes such as Brexit and the asylum policy turnaround in Sweden influencing perceived opportunities and mobility possibilities might therefore influence directions of flows and destinations dramatically in relatively short periods of time.

Considering previous studies, it is expected in this analysis that the likelihood of return and onward migration is strongly related to the situation of original immigration to Sweden. Furthermore, it is expected that migrants are more positively selected for onward migration than return migration in relation to education and employment.

## **Data and Methods**

By using detailed Swedish administrative register data from 1990 to 2015, I can observe actual emigration of migrants, differentiate return from onward migration, and



include information on destinations. The details of the register data additionally allow us to analyse when re-emigration occurs if it does and who is mostly likely to become such a migrant.

Migrants with the legal right to live in Sweden and with the intention to do so for at least one year are registered as part of the official Swedish population. In order to have a more homogenous (although still very diverse in terms of origins) study population, it is restricted to nonadopted foreign-born migrants with two foreign-born parents immigrating for the first time to Sweden between 1990 and 2015. Individuals migrating as students are excluded because of their high emigration rate together with their education level, which, if I included it, would overestimate the emigration rate and the educational selectivity in emigration, especially in the descriptive analysis.

To answer the first research question, I mapped the emigration patterns of the study population, including origins (countries of birth) and destinations after the move from Sweden. To create an overview of these patterns, I used Sankey Network diagrams created within the `networkD3` package in R (Allaire et al., 2017) for visualization. In tables describing the share of re-emigration to various destinations, I include only migrants arriving in Sweden for the first time between 1990 and the end of 1995. In this way, the re-emigration rates are not distorted by some migrant groups arriving later to Sweden and not having the time to re-migrate.

Previous studies showed the importance of timing in eventual re-emigration and integration (Duleep, 1994; Dustman, 2003; Massey & Espinosa, 1997). Therefore, to answer the second research question on determinants of return and onward migration, I use event history analysis. Statistical reports on emigration among foreign-born people from Sweden show a general risk of emigration that is higher the year after migration and then decreases continuously after time since migration. However, looking at various migration groups with various origins, the risk over time varies (Statistics Sweden, 2011). Given the importance of time in the host country and many of the independent variables, as well as the large number of observations, I used exponential piecewise event history models in the study of re-emigration determinants. I observed time-related hazards after 1, 3, 5, and 10 years since migration.

Time is measured in months from original immigration to Sweden. Although they are at risk of re-emigration already from the time of first legal entry, I included only people older than 16, as younger migrants are not likely to move without older family members. In total, these criteria leave over 1,220,000 individuals in the study's population.

Return migration is seldom explicitly defined in terms of the type of origin a person returns to. In this paper, the event of emigration is differentiated according to destination: those who (a) return to the country of birth, (b) move back to the country of residence prior to original immigration (if different from the country of birth), (c) move onward to another country (i.e., neither country of birth nor the country of residence prior to Sweden), or (d) move to an unknown destination. Analysed events are return (a) and onward (c) migration, in separate models. The other types of emigration (i.e., the competing risks) are treated with censoring. Interactions including legal entry, sex, education, prior migration, and civil and citizen status, as well as variables on children, have been run to analyse intersectional aspects of the various determinants. These interactions are shown in Figure 3. Robustness checks, including the main models run separately by gender and mode of legal entry (not shown in this paper), support the presented findings.

The variable mode of legal entry corresponds to the classification of the first residence permit obtained. The categories included in the study are *labour migrants* (due to employment or work within own firm), *family migrants* (could be family to native Swedes, working migrants, or forced migrants), and *forced migrants* (refugees and persons in need of protection). The category *other/missing* consists largely of people born in the Nordic countries. These persons do not need any permit or registered reason for their stay. Other migrants in this category are EU citizens with enough financial means to support themselves and non EU-citizens who have lived in a European country long enough to be granted a permit in Sweden.

Other variables include gender, age at immigration, country of birth, and a dummy variable considering whether the country of residence prior to Sweden is the same as the country of birth. These variables are all time-constant. Other time-varying variables include civil status, Swedish citizenship, employment status (measured as being employed or not), social allowance received, and highest attained education.

If a child has been living in Sweden, it is possible to link him or her through the registers to his or her parents. It is thus possible with this data to analyse the family context in Sweden at arrival and during life in Sweden. Because the effect of a child might differ depending on where and when he or she was born, I include two variables for children. One variable measures the number of children born to the respondent, and the other measures whether the respondent had at least one child who was born in Sweden.

The observed events are based on registered emigrations. A person is required to register if he or she moves out of the country and has the intention to stay abroad most of his

or her time for at least one year. This implies that in most cases, the individuals registering for emigration plan for a long-term emigration from the country. It also implies that shorter emigrations are not accounted for. More important, because not all people deregister although they are supposed to, it means that emigrations are underestimated. In some cases, people are deregistered by the tax authorities after an investigation of inactivity in the official registers. The persons deregistered by tax authorities will have no destination information recorded. The unregistered emigrations are estimated to be low in general (Statistics Sweden, 2015b). However, big differences exist across groups, with higher unregistered emigrations in groups born outside Europe. In general, unregistered emigrations follow the same patterns as the registered ones, which means that in groups in which emigrations are high, they are probably even higher than recorded (Monti et. al, 2018).

### **Sweden—A Country of Immigration**

Sweden has been a country of immigration roughly since the Second World War, and immigration to Sweden has continued to increase since then. The share of persons living in Sweden and born abroad has risen from 4% in 1960 to almost 18% in 2016 (Statistics Sweden, 2018). This immigration had been characterized by labour migration mainly from Southern Europe from the 1960s to mid-1970s, but more recent migration to Sweden is more diverse in terms of countries of origin and modes of legal entry.

Immigration to Sweden is historically marked by a large migration from Finland. Finnish-born migrants in 2015 were still the biggest migrant group in Sweden<sup>1</sup>. During the 2000s, however, immigration from Denmark exceeded that from Finland, to a large extent driven by the opening of the Öresund Bridge connecting the two countries. Besides this temporary increase, the immigration of people born in other Nordic countries has remained relatively stable during the study period. As mentioned, Nordic migrants are free to move to and from Sweden without any residence permit.

The labour migration during the 1960s and 1970s has resulted in a continued, network-maintained migration of family migrants from countries also after 1990, for example from Turkey. This migration has additionally been reinforced by political instability in Turkey, leading to immigration of various groups such as Kurds and Assyrians. Political instability and armed conflict has also led to a large number of Iranian and Iraqi immigrants, starting in the 1980s and continuing during the 1990s. These migrants came to Sweden either

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<sup>1</sup> In 2017, this changed to migrants born in Syria (Statistics Sweden 2018b).

as forced migrants or family members. After the war in Iraq started in 2003, migration from Iraq to Sweden intensified. In 2007, Sweden was the main European destination among Iraqis in absolute and relative numbers. Among the migrants from Iran, many were highly educated. In Sweden, migrants from Iran form the largest immigrant group entering higher education (Statistics Sweden, 2006).

In the beginning of the 1990s, immigration to Sweden was dominated by forced migrants and their families from Bosnia and other countries from the former Yugoslavia. Compared to other migrant groups, a high share of these migrants has entered higher studies in Sweden (Statistics Sweden, 2006, 2014).

Sweden became a member of the European Union in 1995. Since then, there has been an increase in migrants from other EU countries, among them Germany and the UK. From Germany, there was a notable increase in immigration around 2007, with many of the migrants residing in smaller cities and the Swedish countryside. This specific migration has sometimes been interpreted as lifestyle migration (Statistics Sweden, 2014). Coinciding with EU expansion, migrants from new member countries have migrated to Sweden. For example, there was an increase in Polish and Hungarian work and family migrants after 2004 and in Romanian and Bulgarian migrants after 2007<sup>1</sup>. After the financial crisis at the end of 2000s, high unemployment levels in Europe led to an increase of migrants, especially from Southern Europe.

During the 2000s, Sweden received large groups of immigrants from Central Asia and the Horn of Africa, especially from Afghanistan and Somalia. These migrants were relatively young. For example, a majority of the migrants from Afghanistan were young men. Also, this group has come to Sweden either as forced or family migrants. Migrants from these regions have in general lower educational levels than other migrants. They also face higher risks of economic distress and lower employment levels after a longer time in Sweden (Statistics Sweden, 2013). A contrasting group arriving from 2000 and onwards in terms of employment levels is labour (and student) migrants from India and Pakistan.

Family migration to Sweden is deeply connected to forced migration from the same regions. However, the group of family migrants includes marriage migration of foreign-born people marrying Swedish-born counterparts, not related to forced migration. Half of these marriage migrants are men, mainly from Western Europe, and the other half are women, with a majority coming from Southeast Asia, mainly Thailand (Niedomysl et al., 2010).

The social democratic welfare state of Sweden has been famous for its inclusive

immigration policies that include other citizens in a system of universal rights (Sainsbury, 2006; Schierup et al., 2006). However, Sweden's immigration and integration policies have become more restrictive since the 1990s. Today, Sweden continues to be a country of immigration although national populist movements have gained much influence.

With the increasing politicization of migration, the notion of involuntary return is increasingly important (Bhatt & Roberts, 2012). Among registered Swedish residents, migrants accepted as refugees had generally been given permanent residence permits until 2016, when Swedish immigration policies turned around. Within this paper's study population, temporary resident permits are instead more prevalent among labour migrants.

## **Results**

### *Re-emigration Patterns*

Who is emigrating from Sweden and to where do they go? Overall, almost 27% of the migrants migrating to Sweden between 1990 and 1995 had emigrated from Sweden within 10 to 15 years (Table 1). However, emigration rates across birth origin and legal entry categories differ greatly. The highest emigration rates were found among migrants from Oceania, the United States/Canada, and the Nordic countries, where more than 75% of migrants had remigrated until end of 2015. Nordic migrants migrate freely within Nordic countries and do not require any residence permit. In another context of relatively free mobility, within the EU, emigration rates are also high. Other birth regions whose migrants show high emigration rates are East Asia, Somalia, other Sub-Saharan African countries, India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. The lowest shares of emigration are noted among migrants born in the former Yugoslavia, Turkey, and Iraq.

Among those migrants who emigrated from Sweden, a majority returned to their countries of birth. From countries with high emigration rates, I also found higher return rates (e.g., Nordic and other European countries). However, among some groups, onward migration is more common than return migration. Compared to the share of return migrants, relatively high shares of onward migrants are found among those born in Somalia, Sudan, Eritrea, Ethiopia, and other Sub-Saharan countries. For example, by the end of 2015, more than 20% of the Somali migrants who had arrived between 1990 and 1995 had moved onward from Sweden, but less than 6% had returned to Somalia. Forced migrants differ from other

migrants not only by remigrating to a lesser extent but also by moving onward rather than returning to their countries of birth (Tables 1 and 2).

In terms of destination, the onward migration patterns from Sweden are diverse, similar to the diversity reported by Takenaka (2007) in onward migrants arriving in the United States. The main destinations are other Nordic countries, the UK, other European countries, and the United States together with Canada. In terms of absolute numbers, the biggest onward flows from Sweden consist of Somali, Iraqi, and Sub-Saharan African migrants moving to the UK and the former Yugoslavia and Nordic migrants moving to other Nordic countries. Figure 2 shows the onward migration flows from Sweden. Only flows bigger than 1% of the total onward migrations are included in the graph because of the very large diversity in onward migration.

Table 1

*Reemigration From Sweden by Country of Birth*

Country of birth	No emigration	Return	Prior	Onward	To unknown	Total, %	Total, Nr
Oceania	19.36	54.44	2.66	7.82	15.72	100	1126
US and Canada	22.35	50.48	2.56	8.05	16.56	100	4457
Nordic countries	24.26	69.69	0.86	4.43	0.76	100	28065
GB, Ireland	36.43	37.49	3.45	9.84	12.80	100	3884
Southern Europe	42.95	35.39	2.43	5.34	13.88	100	2752
Western Europe	46.40	30.14	2.51	10.81	10.14	100	4506
Germany	48.02	32.68	4.77	7.71	6.83	100	2959
East Asia	48.78	25.20	2.27	11.46	12.29	100	4059
Somalia	57.67	5.53	0.38	20.13	16.29	100	9370
Sub-Saharan Africa	64.61	8.29	2.33	16.90	7.87	100	5019
India, Pakistan, Bangladesh	69.45	7.87	2.31	13.16	7.21	100	4066
Latin America	71.33	14.37	1.55	7.14	5.60	100	10290
Northern Africa	73.29	10.18	1.90	7.70	6.93	100	3781
Sudan, Eritrea, Ethiopia	74.85	2.44	0.87	13.27	8.56	100	6096
Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary	80.10	8.66	0.79	6.41	4.03	100	7941
Central Asia	80.25	5.77	0.93	8.7	4.36	100	7457
Iran	81.32	5.37	0.50	7.92	4.89	100	15407
Thailand	82.55	8.70	0.34	5.00	3.42	100	3277
Poland	82.61	9.61	0.72	3.43	3.64	100	7094
Middle East	83.47	7.70	0.58	5.07	3.19	100	17080
Iraq	85.22	3.72	0.52	7.08	3.45	100	18182
Turkey	85.81	5.38	1.31	4.50	2.99	100	7020
Former Yugoslavia	92.12	3.16	0.32	3.42	0.98	100	78751
Total	73.1	15.26	0.91	6.53	4.2	100	259001

*Note.* Data is from the 1990-1995 immigrant cohort observed until the end of 2015 and is

expressed in percentage distributions. The calculations were made by the author. Adapted

from Swedish register data.

Table 2

*Re-emigration From Sweden by Mode of Legal Entry*

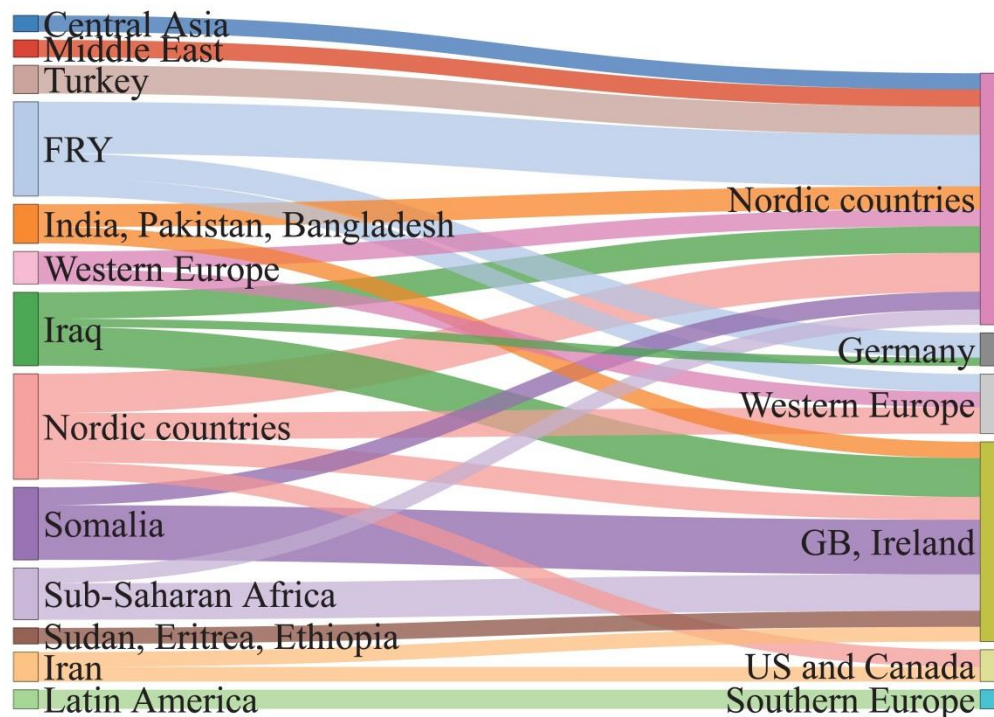
Legal entry	No emigration	Return	Prior	Onward	To unknown	Total, %	Total, Nr
Work	26.60	40.20	4.40	15.29	13.51	100	4087
Family	75.27	11.56	1.05	6.92	5.20	100	89135
Forced	88.00	3.03	0.19	6.16	2.61	100	124818
Other/Missing	27.63	58.07	2.45	5.93	5.93	100	40961
Total	73.10	15.26	0.91	6.53	4.20	100	259001

*Note.* Data is from the 1990-1995 immigrant cohort observed until the end of 2015 and is

expressed in percentage distributions. The calculations were made by the author. Adapted

from Swedish register data.

*Figure 2.* Top onward migration flows, including countries of birth and destinations, 1990-2015. Author's visualization, based on main onward migration flows, N=17,459. Adapted from Swedish register data.



### *Determinants of Re-emigration*

What are the determinants of return- and onward migration? Table 3 shows the two main event history models of re-emigration, one with return migration and the other with onward migration as the main event. Interactions are shown in Figure 3.

In terms of return migration, large differences are found related to birth countries. Migrants born in Nordic countries, the United States, and Canada show the highest return likelihoods, followed by migrants from Oceania, Great Britain, and Germany. The lowest return likelihoods are found among migrants from poorer and politically more unstable regions like Sudan, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Central Asia, and South East Asia. Relative to labour migrants, family migrants and even more forced migrants are less likely to return. Women are less likely to return than men. However, female family migrants are slightly more likely to return than female labour migrants (Figure 3). This likelihood might be due to the fact that female family migrants move together with their male partners initially and in eventual return.



Migrants immigrating to Sweden for the first time in their 20s show the highest return likelihoods, closely followed by migrants in their 30s. The propensity to return drops for migrants moving to Sweden at older ages. However, being 18 years old or younger at initial migration is related to the lowest return propensities, possibly due to the host country's specific skills and social capital acquired at these younger ages.

Return likelihoods are highest one to three years after immigration. This figure is reasonable for migrants for whom the return was part of the initial migration plan (Constant & Massey, 2002, 2003) and for mistaken migrants (Duleep, 1994). After five years, the likelihood is lower than during the first year, and after 10 years, it is even lower. This decrease is in line with previous research on increased integration and decreased remigration alongside time spent in the host country (Massey & Espinosa, 1997).

Prior migration experience makes return less likely because connection with the country of origin is probably weaker in that case. Reflecting political and civic integration, having obtained Swedish citizenship is also related to lower return probabilities; however, among forced migrants, Swedish citizenship actually increases the probability of return (Figure 3). Having low return likelihoods overall, Swedish citizenship at least grants forced migrants a certain security and the possibility to move back to Sweden if needed. This finding is strongly linked to the previous findings by Eastmond (2006), stressing the importance of security in mobility.

Having a tertiary education slightly increases the return probabilities, compared to having a primary education. Having a secondary education, though, decreases it, but the effect is very small. It should be noted that among more recently arriving migrants, the misclassification of educational attainment is widespread, which could introduce bias into the results (Saarela & Weber, 2017).

Economic attachment to Sweden decreases the likelihood of return substantially. It is interesting that this applies to being employed and receiving social benefits, giving a twofold answer to the question of economic selectivity in return migration.

Married individuals show lower return probabilities than do singles in the main models although the interaction effect between sex and civil status shows that this likelihood is mainly driven by married women showing lower return probabilities. On the other hand, the number of children increases the likelihood of return, but it decreases when at least one child is born in Sweden. Again, this family effect is stressed even more for women (Figure 3).

Turning to the determinants of onward migration, Sub-Saharan migrants are found to have the highest probabilities of remigration, closely followed by Nordic migrants and

migrants from India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. Polish migrants and migrants from the former Yugoslavia have the lowest likelihoods of onward migration. Labour migrants are still the most likely to remigrate, but the difference between family migrants and forced migrants is not as large as that for return migration. As with return migration, women are less prone to move onward. Similarly, being a female family migrant or forced migrant increases the likelihood of onward migration, compared to being a female labour migrant (Figure 3).

The age at original immigration does not affect onward migration as much as return migration, with the exception of older migrants whose onward migration probabilities are visibly lower. Migrants arriving in Sweden at 18 years of age are almost as likely to move onward as those immigrating in their 20s. Also, in contrast with return likelihoods, the probability of moving onward is more stable as time in Sweden increases after an initial increase following the first year, even increasing a bit.

Having previous migration experience before moving to Sweden increases the chances of moving onward, which makes sense because these individuals already have proven to be mobile. As with return migration, obtaining Swedish citizenship decreases remigration likelihoods but not as much as for return migration because citizenship also enables individuals to move more freely, for example within the European Union (Ortensi & Barbiano di Belgiojoso, 2018). The possibility of movement attached with citizenship is more important for family migrants and especially forced migrants than for labour migrants (Figure 3).

Attaining higher education is linked to higher propensities of onward migration. The effect of education on onward migration is clearer than for return migration. Economic attachment to Sweden through employment or social benefits decreases the likelihood of onward migration in the same forcible way it does for return migration.

Although the effect is not great, married and divorce migrants are actually more likely to move onward than singles. However, being a nonsingle woman decreases these chances, compared to men. The gendered differences in terms of family-related determinants also include the presence of children (Figure 3). Whereas having children increases onward propensities, having at least one child born in Sweden decreases the same. Having children in general and Swedish-born children in particular affects women more than men.

Table 3

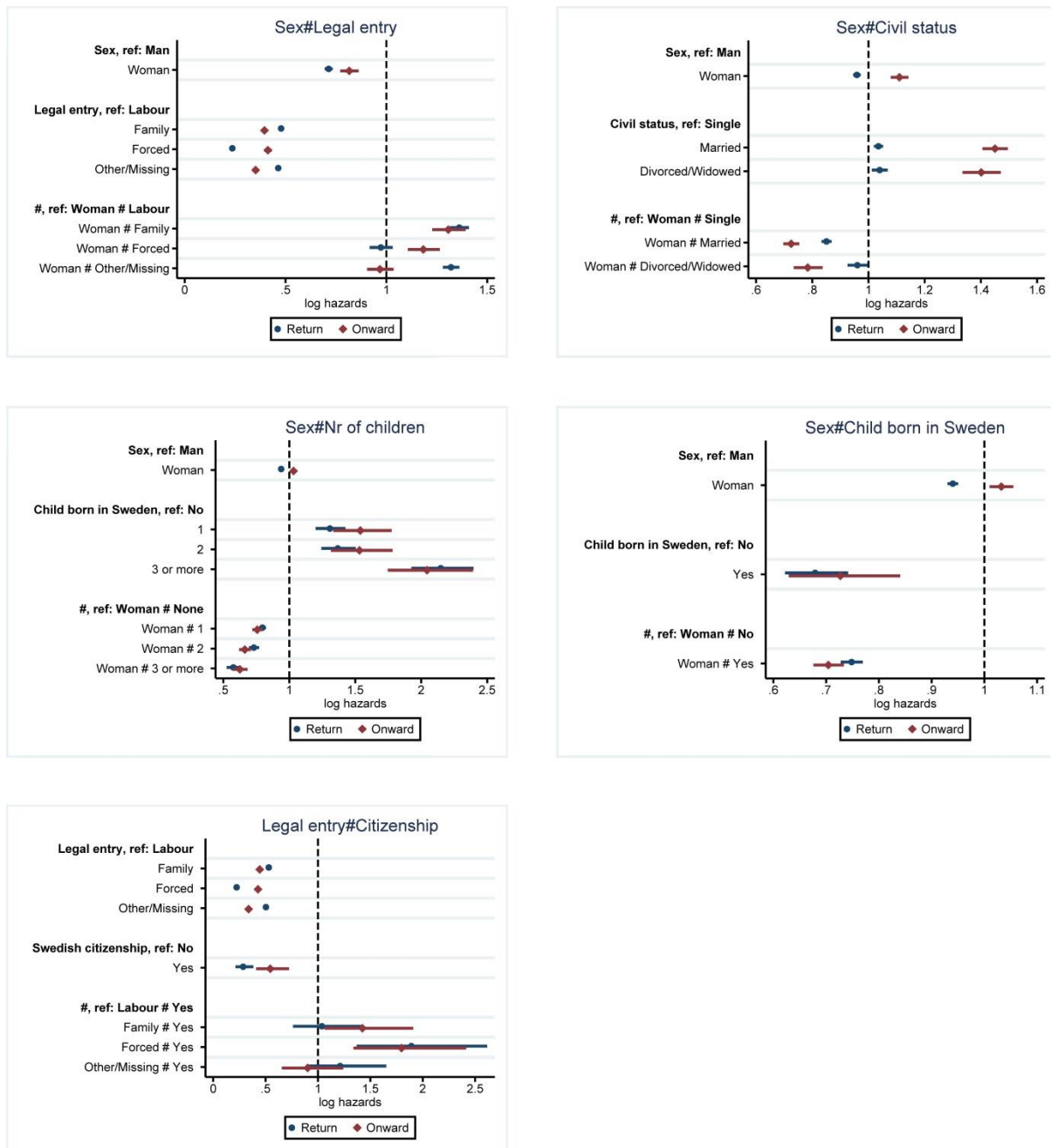
*Odds Ratios of Return and Onward Migration From Sweden, 1990-2015*

	<u>Return migration</u>		<u>Onward migration</u>	
<b>Country of birth,</b>				
<b>ref: Southern Europe</b>	1		1	
Nordic countries	3.85	***	1.58	***
Former Yugoslavia	0.34	***	0.50	***
Poland	0.56	***	0.34	***
GB incl. Northern Ireland	1.42	***	1.49	***
Western Europe	1.04	*	1.29	***
Germany	1.32	***	1.03	
Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary	0.72	***	0.72	***
Central Asia	0.28	***	0.72	***
US and Canada	2.03	***	1.42	***
Latin Amerika	0.69	***	1.01	
Somalia	0.38	***	1.35	***
Sudan, Eritrea, Ethiopia	0.14	***	1.02	
Northern Africa	0.36	***	0.78	***
Sub-Saharan Africa	0.37	***	1.70	***
Oceania	1.84	***	1.50	***
Turkey	0.35	***	0.96	
Iran	0.38	***	0.74	***
Iraq	0.45	***	0.74	***
Middle East	0.39	***	0.56	***
East Asia	1.02		1.02	
India, Pakistan, Bangladesh	0.95	*	1.55	***
Thailand	0.34	***	0.50	***
Southeast Asia	0.30	***	0.87	***
<b>Gender,</b>				
<b>ref: Man</b>	1		1	
Woman	0.90	***	0.94	***
<b>Legal entry,</b>				
<b>ref: Labour</b>	1		1	
Family	0.53	***	0.45	***
Forced	0.23	***	0.44	***
Other/Missing	0.50	***	0.33	***
<b>Age at immigration,</b>				
<b>ref: 18 years or younger</b>	1		1	
19-29	2.02	***	1.05	***
30-39	1.86	***	0.93	***
40 years or older	1.20	***	0.50	***
<b>Prior migration experience,</b>				
<b>ref: No</b>	1		1	
Yes	0.51	***	1.33	***
<b>Number of children,</b>				

<b>ref: None</b>	1		1	
1	1.25	***	1.43	***
2	1.25	***	1.33	***
3 or more	1.70	***	1.72	***
<b>Child born in Sweden,</b>				
<b>ref: No</b>	1		1	
Yes	0.59	***	0.62	***
<b>Time since migration,</b>				
<b>ref: Less than 1 year</b>	1		1	
1 up to 3 years	1.48	***	2.07	***
3 up to 5 years	1.19	***	2.15	***
5 up to 10 years	0.86	***	2.72	***
More than 10 years	0.52	***	2.64	***
<b>Swedish citizenship,</b>				
<b>ref: No</b>	1		1	
Yes	0.34	***	0.78	***
<b>Highest attained education,</b>				
<b>ref: Primary</b>	1		1	
Secondary	0.94	***	1.44	***
Tertiary	1.12	***	1.92	***
Level missing	1.40	***	1.29	***
<b>Employed,</b>				
<b>ref: No</b>	1		1	
Yes	0.08	***	0.08	***
<b>Receiving social benefits,</b>				
<b>ref: No</b>	1		1	
Yes	0.11	***	0.12	***
<b>Civil status, ref: Single</b>				
<b>ref: Single</b>	1		1	
Married	0.96	***	1.24	***
Divorced/Widowed	1.02	*	1.25	***
Information missing	0.57	***	0.62	***
<i>Baseline hazard</i>	<i>0.00</i>	<i>***</i>	<i>0.00</i>	<i>***</i>
N(individuals)	1 220 192		1 220 192	
Time at risk (months)	121 159 617		121 159 804	
Log likelihood	-456 042		-189 111	
***<=0.001 **>=0.01 *<=0.1				

*Note.* Results are from the main event-history analysis. The calculations were made by the author. Adapted from Swedish register data.

*Figure 3.* Interactions of variables in main models of return and onward migration from Sweden, 1990-2015. The calculations were made by the author. Adapted from Swedish register data.



## Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to analyse the differences in emigration patterns and propensities among foreign-born people, focusing on return and onward migration. The paper has aimed at illustrating the **re-emigration** patterns from Sweden and providing an empirical analysis of the determinants of return and onward migration. In my analyses, I focused on whether various forms of remigration (i.e., return and onward migration) are determined by similar or different social and economic factors at the time of immigration and throughout the time spent in Sweden. I also focused on whether similar types of flows can be understood differently depending on migrant group in terms of legal entry.

In previous literature, remigration has mainly been understood as return migration to the country of origin. This study's results show that this is a reasonable assumption for most migrant groups because a vast majority of remigrations actually are back to the country of birth. However, this study also points out that for some migrant groups born in less economic affluent and politically stable countries, onward migration is more plausible than return. The propensity to return or to move onward is highly dependent on the country of birth and the mode of legal entry, supporting previous notions of selectivity in remigration based on the reasons of initial migration. Labour migrants, Nordic migrants, and migrants from other "Western" societies show the highest overall emigration rates and are the ones most likely to return. Higher propensities of onward migration are found in migrant groups such as migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa, India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. Forced migrants are less likely to remigrate. This result is expected and driven by political or economic instability in the home countries, making return less likely (Eastmond, 2006; Klinthäll, 2007). If they do remigrate, they are more likely to move on. Onward migration among forced migrants might explain the lack of return migration, for example family reunification or reclaiming of agency (Kelly, 2013; Takenaka, 2007; van Liempt, 2011).

Selectivity in repeat migration is important in sending- and receiving-country contexts. The aim of the paper was not to conform to neoclassical economics or the new economics of labour migration or to verify remigrating individuals as "the worst of the best" or "the best of the worst". However, analytical findings show that migrants with tertiary education do have stronger return probabilities and even higher onward probabilities, similar to findings from previous studies (Nekby, 2006; Takenaka, 2007). Additionally, economic host country attachment, whether in terms of employment or social benefits, decreases the chances of return and onward migration substantially.

Probabilities of return and onward migration show some similarities in terms of

migrant characteristics. Being male, arriving as a labour migrant, and being born in a country with relatively free mobility in and out of Sweden increases the chances of both remigration types. As previous studies showed (Nekby, 2006; Raneke, 2017), family attachment such as having a Swedish-born child lowers those chances. This study's findings show that this trend is especially relevant for women.

Although determinants of return and onward migration show some similarities, differences between them suggest that these migration phenomena should be analysed separately to properly be understood. For example, regarding the timing of remigration, which in previous literature has been one of the key aspects in analysing return migration, the chances of return migration shortly after initial immigration are high but then steadily decrease (Duleep, 1994; Dustman, 2003; Massey & Espinosa, 1997). The analysis of return migration in this paper supports this view. More important, though, this paper shows how onward migration follows another time logic in terms of time spent in the host country and age at initial migration. Onward migration risks are elevated after the first year of immigration and remain on a steady, even increasing, level long after immigration. Similarly, teenage migrants are as likely to move onward as migrants in their 20s. And although older migrants still display relatively high probabilities of moving back to their countries of birth, they are much less likely to move onward. Additionally, previous migration before arriving in Sweden spurs onward migration while hindering return. More mobile individuals are selected in a continuation of the migration experience, and return is more related to birth country attachment.

Legal and civic integration through acquired citizenship is indeed a factor decreasing the probability of leaving the host country although it simultaneously enables immigrants to do so (Ortensi & Barbiano di Belgiojoso, 2018). The latter is especially true for forced migrants, who otherwise would not risk their achieved security (Eastmond, 2006). In 2016, Sweden dramatically limited the possibility of forced migrants acquiring even residence permits. Considering this study's results, such restrictions will have consequences for future remigration propensities and flows of forced migrants from Sweden. Ortensi and Barbiano di Belgiojoso (2018) suggest that changing European policies (e.g., Brexit) and restrictions on asylum acceptance in Germany and Sweden will influence future migrants' onward migration intentions. This study's results show that the onward migration flows are heavily diverse and thereby possibly more open to change than if there had been only a few, more massive flows. Return and onward migration will thereby most likely continue growing in importance in the near future.

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