

New immigration destinations in Sweden: Migrant residential trajectories intersecting rural areas

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Abstract

This paper aims to examine the residential trajectories of immigrants that intersect rural areas in Sweden. It adds to the literature on new immigration destinations (NIDs) and addresses the need to include migration routes intersecting rural areas, immigrants' secondary migration patterns and temporal dimensions of migration, as well as the multiplicity of migrants in such destinations. We examine whether NIDs have emerged in Sweden and immigrants' subsequent internal mobility from such areas and its determinants. Employing sequence analysis to full-population register data, we identify typical migration pathways. According to the results, NIDs are an emerging phenomenon in rural and small-sized cities in Sweden. We find limited support for the Swedish discourse that the diverse groups of rural migrants leave soon after arrival; also, those leaving are not doing so for labour market-related reasons, nor are they heading for metropolitan areas. We suggest that NIDs offer an important contribution to understanding migration patterns.

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KEYWORDS

International migration, new immigration destinations, residential trajectories, secondary migration, sequence analysis

INTRODUCTION

International migration flows are taking multiple directions, with migrants not only embarking on journeys towards metropolitan areas but also moving to smaller towns and settlements. Emerging regionalisation of new immigration destinations (NIDs) points towards the renewed importance of studying the regional dispersal and socioeconomic outcomes for migrants (Lichter & Johnson, 2006; McAreavey & Argent, 2018). The geographical distribution of migrants within nation-states has also received renewed attention among policymakers. Policies focusing on the regionalisation of refugee settlements have emerged in Canada, Australia and New Zealand, attempting to reverse regional population decline (Akbari & MacDonald, 2014; Fang et al., 2018). According to Lichter and Johnson (2006), the emergence of new gateways in the United States was an empirical surprise, which entailed both socioeconomic challenges and promises for rural areas and small towns. Accordingly, 'it will be more important than ever to monitor non-metro population trends, especially those of minorities, and to broaden the study of assimilation to include immigrants living in less densely settled geographic areas' (Lichter & Johnson, 2006, pp. 129–130).

In addition to the ongoing research into migration to NIDs, an important question is also whether migrants tend to stay in these areas, or if, alternatively, they move onwards from small towns or rural areas (Lichter & Johnson, 2006; Shihadeh & Barranco, 2010). Here, we can learn from the expanding literature that examines migrants' movements between multiple countries, known as stepwise migration (Conway, 1980; Konadu-Agyemang, 1999; Paul, 2011), onward migration (Lindley & Van Hear, 2007), serial migration (Zufferey, 2019) or secondary migration (Ott, 2011; Takenaka, 2007). Such studies describe migration processes in stages, in particular pathways from smaller villages to towns, onwards to bigger cities and potentially onwards to other countries. The life paths of migrants are increasingly understood as path-dependent trajectories, where earlier moves impact later choices of migration, including both internal and international migration (Bernard & Perales, 2021; 2022; Coulter & Van Ham, 2013). Migrants gather migration capital, including past experiences, which serves to fuel potential future movements (Moret, 2018; Paul, 2017).

In this paper, we approach rural areas as both transient and stable areas of international migration (Weidinger & Kordel, 2022), and as diverse and dynamic rather than static and fixed (Hedberg & do Carmo, 2012). This is in line with a major strand of literature in the research into rural migration (McCarthy, 2008), which identifies how international migration has contributed to globalising rural areas and constructing 'global countrysides' (Woods, 2007). We identify here how the globalisation of rural areas has contributed to showing the multiplicity and plurality of migration that characterises these areas. A range of studies has revealed how rural areas were turned into 'rural melting-pots' of mixed internal and international migration processes (Oliva, 2010), how return migration has played a major role in rural areas (Farrell et al., 2012), and how international migration has been repopulating rural areas (Hedberg & Haandrikman, 2014), contributing to 'rural cosmopolitanism' (Woods, 2018) and affecting rural communities (Papadopoulos & Fratsea, 2021). A major strand of the literature has also been discussing the 'agriculture–migration nexus' (King et al., 2021), that is, the central role of migrant workers in

agriculture (Corrado et al., 2017; Fonseca, 2008), and how migrant workers are contributing to multifunctional labour markets (Kasimis et al., 2010). Other studies have explored lifestyle migration to rural idylls (Eimermann, 2015), and the study of new gateways, or NIDs, to the United States (Lichter & Johnson, 2006; Winders, 2014) and to Europe (Fromentin, 2021, for France, and McAreavey, 2017, for Northern Ireland).

In relation to migration to NIDs, and the potential secondary migration from these areas, we identify four gaps in international research on this issue. *First*, the direction of migration in previous studies is mostly seen as migration up the urban hierarchy (Conway, 1980; Konadu-Agyemang, 1999; Waldinger, 2001), with rural-born migrants moving to increasingly urbanised areas in a spatial progression (Paul, 2011). Existing studies focus mainly on mobility patterns between urban neighbourhoods (Bolt et al., 2010; Finney & Catney, 2012). *Second*, there is little attention given to the internal mobility patterns of immigrants once they have reached their destinations (Bernard & Perales, 2022). The field is seen to be in its infancy, theoretically, methodologically and empirically, with existing studies primarily focusing on migration flows from or between ethnic neighbourhoods (Finney et al., 2015). *Third*, migration processes should not only be understood in spatial terms, but also in terms of their distinct temporal dimensions. Migrant trajectories consist of a sequence of stages, not least related to their position in the labour market (Cwerner, 2001; Fuller, 2015) and level of attachment to host countries (Piore, 1979). The emerging interest has, however, not translated into methodologically innovative studies (Finney & Catney, 2012); instead, the majority of studies have been descriptive, showing a lack of more appropriate methods of incorporating the temporal dimensions of internal migration patterns of immigrants. *Fourth*, most studies on NIDs have been preoccupied with specific migrant groups, such as low-qualified labour migrants from developing countries (Paul, 2011, 2017), or refugees (Konadu-Agyemang, 1999; Moret, 2018; Ott, 2011), with many studies focusing on a specific migrant group, such as so-called A8 migrants in the UK (Jivraj et al., 2012; Trevena et al., 2013), Iranians in Sweden (Kelly, 2013) or Somalis in the Netherlands (Van Liempt, 2011), while leaving out other emerging and relevant migrant groups such as lifestyle migrants and migrants from neighbouring countries.

In this paper, we address these gaps in several ways. First, we question the assumed migration up the urban hierarchy by engaging in the discussion on NIDs, with their transient nature as both ports of entry and as stepping-stones towards other destinations. We argue for the importance of integrating both dimensions into the analysis in order to understand the fuller picture of international migration to rural areas, addressing the second research gap, which relates to examining how migration is affecting receiving communities, and facilitating the policy-making of the regionalisation of migration. As pointed out by Milbourne (2007), there is a need for quantitative studies to engage with the dynamics of international migration to rural areas through the use of nationally representative longitudinal data, rather than being limited to aggregate statistics. In addition, we attend to the lack of recognition of temporal dimensions in quantitative studies on migrant residential trajectories through a large-scale, dynamic and methodological approach that investigates how international migrants are affecting rural areas through both initial entrance and subsequent migrant trajectories, using sequence analysis. This method is well suited to examining migrants' long-term mobility trajectories between different kinds of places, such as rural areas, small towns and urban areas.

The paper takes its starting point in Sweden, where most rural areas only grow because of net immigration, with increases in immigration having led to the repopulation of sparsely populated areas by a multiplicity of migrant groups (Hedberg & Haandrikman, 2014). This issue engages with the *fourth* identified gap in the research and has been explained by an increase in lifestyle migration, local regions trying to attract families to their declining regions, and the substantial

increase in refugee flows dispersed throughout the country (Cvetkovic, 2009; Hedberg & Haandrikman, 2014; Syssner, 2014). In addition, there are substantial flows of seasonal migrant workers in the green industries of agriculture, forestry and wild berry picking (Olofsson et al., 2023). These migrant workers, however, are temporary and as such not included in national statistics. Unfortunately, the register data we use do not include temporary migrants in the 'agriculture–migration nexus' (King et al., 2021), which, however, is analysed at length in other papers (Carmo & Hedberg, 2019; Hedberg, 2021; Olofsson et al., 2023). The Swedish case also fits with the first gap, which relates to the fact that, despite the trend within rural studies to discuss global issues, there is still an urban focus on migration, which is operating within an 'urban age' (Brenner & Schmid, 2014). Accordingly, national policies in Sweden tend to have an urban- and growth-oriented focus (Holdo, 2020; Syssner, 2020). Common beliefs prevail of refugees placed in rural areas who, after the initial introduction programme period is over, move onwards to the big cities for employment reasons or to live with co-ethnics (Statistics Sweden, 2016; SVT, 2020). Such an urban focus, we argue, fuels a discourse about how international migrants are primarily aiming for urban and metropolitan destinations. In the paper, we recognise the need to debunk similar ideas about international migration, these being that (1) most international migration is directed to urban areas, and (2) that those migrants who enter rural areas mostly move onwards to metropolitan areas.

By addressing the four identified research gaps, showing the need to include migration that is not up the urban hierarchy, secondary migration and temporal dimensions of migration, as well as the multiplicity of migrants, this paper thus aims to examine the residential trajectories of immigrants intersecting rural areas in Sweden. First, we not only address whether NIDs have emerged in Sweden but also investigate migrants' subsequent internal mobility and determine what explains these patterns. Second, we analyse the manifold directions in which migrants are moving, entering and leaving NIDs and other areas, while integrating a temporal perspective of migrant mobility across a 10-year period. Third, we include multiple migrant groups, in order to capture the heterogeneity of migrants that characterises global countrysides. In this way, the paper shows that migrants do not move only up the urban hierarchy, and rural areas are not only transit areas for onward migration to metropolitan areas, but that rural, small and middle-sized areas can be attractive residential areas for many migrants.

NEW IMMIGRATION DESTINATIONS

Against the urban norm, empirical studies have for some time shown a reverse pattern of international migration. In parallel with a general awareness of the globalisation and interlinkages of rural areas (Hedberg & do Carmo, 2012; Woods, 2007; Woods et al., 2021), a range of studies show tendencies towards regional dispersal to rural areas and small towns. The renewed interest among migration scholars in rural perspectives on international migration has recently been conceptualised as migration to NIDs, focusing on incorporation processes into rural areas (McAreevey & Argent, 2018), and on how international migration flows are repopulating rural areas (Hedberg & Haandrikman, 2014).

The increased regional dispersal of international migrants has been outlined by Lichter (2012) as one of the most unexpected but discernible population trends in the contemporary United States. This research has focused on how traditional gateways used by international migrants have been replaced by new ports of entry (Lichter & Johnson, 2006, 2009). Although traditional gateway metropolitan areas in the northeast and southwest of the United States still attract the majority of migrants, new destinations have begun to gain in importance (Lichter & Johnson, 2006). An

upcoming group in these destinations are Hispanics, who in the 1990s increased more in numbers in rural than in urban areas (Kandel & Cromartie, 2004; Saenz & Torres, 2003). Hispanics had previously been the most urbanised group in the United States, but were now increasingly changing routes to smaller locations suffering from population decline.

Lichter and Johnson (2006) distinguish between migrants who first enter by traditional gateways, to subsequently move onwards to new destinations, and those migrants who directly enter new destinations. These authors' findings indicate that migrants had often moved directly to smaller areas, without crossing the main gateways. NIDs tend to be characterised by a lack of institutional infrastructure and an absence of established ethnic resources (Winders, 2014). Immigration is primarily motivated by employment, with industries demanding low-wage labour (Waters & Jiménez, 2005). New gateways are formed due to well-developed and growing low-skilled service sectors that attract immigrants. Migrants in NIDs are more often unskilled, less highly educated, married, older, more often have family living nearby, and are more likely to originate from rural areas themselves (Farmer & Moon, 2009; Lichter & Johnston, 2009).

Research from other traditional immigration destination countries, such as Canada and Australia, in the 2000s identified a shift in migration patterns towards regional dispersion (Bonikowska et al., 2017; Hugo, 2008). In both countries, international migration has gone from being completely urban-centred, directed towards a few metropolitan nodes, to a more regionally dispersed migration pattern. This is explained by a mix of changing immigrant selection programmes, novel regions of migrant origin and changing regional conditions in the receiving society. In Australia, immigration policy has settled one-fifth of international migrants in regions in the economic periphery (Hugo, 2008).

In Sweden, immigration to rural areas has been on the agenda for some time. Over the last two decades, small towns have seen an increase in the share of non-European migrants (Malmberg et al., 2018). During the 1990s, newly arrived migrants moved to cities where their co-ethnics were residing, and those migrants residing in dispersed regions tended to move onwards to urban, primarily metropolitan, areas (Andersson, 1998). Recent studies show that international migration has increased in rural and sparsely populated areas (Hedberg & Haandrikman, 2014). The increase in international migration has been explained both from the perspective of the migrants themselves, who are searching for new lifestyles, and from the perspective of local regions, who want population influxes to dampen ongoing population decline (Cvetkovic, 2009; Syssner, 2014). Especially in the wake of the vast refugee flows into Sweden in 2015, the role that refugees may play in population processes is increasingly discussed (Arora-Jonsson, 2017). Migrants tend to stay for short periods in rural areas (Hedberg & Haandrikman, 2014), which is why it has been argued that these areas should no longer be seen as 'areas of reception' but rather as 'areas of welcome'¹ (Pelling, 2017), implying that rural areas can specialise in the reception of newly arrived migrants, without the expectation that they should stay long-term.

The population of rural international migrants is increasingly heterogeneous, as a result of rural areas attracting different groups of people (McAreevey & Argent, 2018). In Sweden, the majority of international migrants in rural areas in 2008 consisted of middle-aged and older Nordic and European lifestyle migrants (Hedberg & Haandrikman, 2014). There is a long tradition of inter-Nordic migration, due to the common Nordic labour market and geographical closeness (Reinans, 1996). In particular, migration between Sweden and Finland has been massive, although migration motives shifted in the 1990s from traditional labour migration to lifestyle and career-related migration (Hedberg & Kepsu, 2003). Lifestyle migration to rural Sweden has otherwise often been associated with European migrants, such as Dutch families moving to rural Sweden to escape overpopulation and pressure at work and in the living environment

(Eimermann, 2015). Marriage and partner-related migration has been typical of women from Thailand (Haandrikman, 2014). Asylum seekers are more often concentrated in rural areas in Sweden than the general population (Proietti & Veneri, 2021), which is partly due to refugee dispersal policies.² Another type of international migration typical for rural Sweden is seasonal labour migration within the green industries of agriculture, forestry and wild berry picking (Hedberg, 2013; Olofsson et al., 2023). Due to their circular nature, these groups are not included in national registers and are therefore not part of this study.

SECONDARY MIGRATION FROM NEW IMMIGRATION DESTINATIONS

The internal migration of immigrants is on the agenda of both policy and research. Migration to less dense areas tends to be seen as a sign of desegregation, counteracting urban segregation through the dispersal of migrants (Bolt et al., 2010). While this process is deemed important for social cohesion and diversity, it may also contribute to the revival of rural areas through a much-needed 'demographic refill' (Bayona-i-Carrasco & Gil-Alonso, 2012; Finney & Catney, 2012; Hedberg & Haandrikman, 2014; Labrianidis & Sykas, 2009). Whether refugee dispersal policies work out in practice, i.e. whether refugees stay put or move out of designated areas, is crucial knowledge for local and national politicians (Andersson, 2012). Finally, the integration processes and the well-being of immigrants are strongly correlated with social and geographical mobility (e.g. Bolt et al., 2010) and therefore deserve further attention.

The secondary migration of migrants is a clear sign of the fact that migration is seldom a one-time event (Halfacree & Rivera, 2012). Rather, it is a process; as biographies change over one's life course, different triggers for subsequent mobility emerge. Secondary migration may be understood as part of a lifelong migration trajectory that includes international and internal migration (Bernard & Perales, 2021, 2022; Coulter & Van Ham, 2013). In order to understand immigrant settlement patterns, we need to integrate migration to NIDs or ports of entry with secondary migration (Lichter & Johnson, 2009).

The study of secondary migration from rural and small-sized areas is particularly significant since international migrants experience considerably higher internal mobility than the native-born population (Finney & Catney, 2012; Raymer & Baffour, 2018; Silvestre & Reher, 2014; Smith et al., 2015; Statistics Sweden, 2020). Kritz et al. (2011) found that in the United States, the level of out-migration was higher from NIDs compared to traditional migration localities.

From the literature on migrants moving between multiple countries, we know that labour market attachment is a prime determinant of subsequent mobility. Especially for low-skilled migrants, the accumulation of savings, work experience and educational qualifications, as well as social networks in different places, build up to form migration capital that is needed to reach more desirable destination countries (Moret, 2018; Paul, 2011, 2017). Studies linking patterns of international migration to internal migration in countries of destination have found that the determinants of both migration types are somewhat similar, mostly related to life-course events and aspirations (Bernard & Perales, 2022). Mobility after immigration is indeed often associated with labour market-related reasons, such as moving to better regional labour market areas and moving for educational opportunities, though some studies also stress the importance of social motives (Åslund, 2005; Kritz et al., 2011; Trevena et al., 2013). Hispanic migrants leaving new gateways in the United States were often more highly educated than those Hispanics already living in these areas (Lichter & Johnston, 2009), indicating moves for better matched jobs. Having a family also

plays a role, with Trevena et al. (2012) finding that younger Polish labour migrants who had families in the UK were more willing to move onwards to rural areas, and Zorlu and Mulder (2008) showing that migrants with families, especially, more often moved to areas in the Netherlands that were less migrant-dense.

Secondary migration among immigrants has, in the North American and European literature, often been understood as a sign of spatial assimilation, with immigrants moving out of ethnic concentrations in metropolitan areas when they do not need the resources offered there anymore (Bolt et al., 2010; Finney & Catney, 2012; Waters & Jiménez, 2005). While theories of spatial assimilation have mostly focused on the intra-urban deconcentration of immigrants, mainly to suburbanised areas, Lichter and Johnson (2006) argue that there is a regional component to spatial assimilation as well. Even migration across regional borders may indicate spatial assimilation, with moving from the main gateways, either to suburbs or to rural areas, seen as a sign of desegregation, and thus an indicator of integration (Finney & Catney, 2012).

Recent research on migration to NIDs has thrown renewed light on the incorporation processes of international migrants in rural areas, and also on their regional implications (McAreavey & Argent, 2018). Migrant integration in rural areas may have distinct features compared to integration processes in urban areas (Arora-Jonsson & Larsson, 2021; McAreavey & Argent, 2018; Stenbacka, 2013). Small-sized localities may, for instance, imply less social isolation and increase the chances for interaction between migrants and the native population. Research in Greece has shown that immigrant work in agriculture has been mutually beneficial for both the migrants and the shrinking regions (Labrianidis & Sykas, 2009). In Catalonia, small municipalities close to urban areas have mostly benefited from increasing immigration, while inland areas show few signs of demographic repopulation (Bayona-i-Carrasco & Gil-Alonso, 2012).

On the other hand, these localities might also lack the institutional settings to assist migrants, which are more common in traditional gateways. Examining the changing settlement patterns of Hispanic migrants in rural America, Kandel and Cromartie (2004) emphasised that rural areas needed population, but that at the same time, they were unprepared for it. Local residents feared a lowering of wages, and there were challenges of discrimination and prejudice. The perceived increased insecurity in Swedish metropolitan areas, associated with criminality, car burnings and shootings, made some migrants move to rural areas (Hedberg et al., 2023). Arora-Jonsson and Larsson (2021) argue that refugees who arrived in large numbers in Swedish rural areas in 2015 were at risk of feeling isolated, as a result of their situation of uncertainty and lack of social networks. Many areas were not prepared to receive migrants, which echoed the official government evaluation of the refugee crisis in 2015 (Swedish National Audit Office, 2017). McAreavey and Argent (2018) argue that a lack of institutional structures might be mitigated by the engagement of civil societies in small-sized areas.

Research into the association between the internal mobility of immigrants and their employment in small-sized and rural localities in Sweden is rather scarce and gives contradictory findings. Whereas Hedberg and Haandrikman (2014), for immigrants in general, and Statistics Sweden (2016), for refugees, find support for similar or even more positive employment chances for immigrants in rural areas compared to urban areas, Åslund et al. (2010) found that living in rural areas negatively impacted employment levels. The most advantageous regions for migrants to find work were either Stockholm or small rural areas, according to Vogiazides and Mondani (2021). Statistics Sweden (2016) reported that refugees who were placed in or moved to rural areas had higher employment chances than those residing in large cities. Adserà et al. (2022) found that refugees assigned to the least central municipalities in Norway had the highest employment rates in the first years after arrival, though spatial differences equalled out over time.

For refugees, mobility patterns and the reasons for moving may be different from those of other migrant groups. In Sweden, a policy shift towards a regionalisation of refugees since the 1980s has implied compulsory placement of refugees in municipalities throughout the country. This policy is generally seen as a failure in terms of socioeconomic integration (Åslund & Rooth, 2007; Åslund et al., 2010; Edin et al., 2004) since many migrants were placed in localities with limited work opportunities. Secondary migration was high among both dispersed and non-dispersed refugees, with migrants leaving small for large localities (Andersson, 1998). In the period of study of this paper, refugees could either choose their own place of residence or be located in a certain region, based on municipality size, the number of resident refugees and the local labour market situation. Those choosing their own accommodation tended to reside in metropolitan areas to a greater extent than those who were assigned housing (Statistics Sweden, 2016).

Important factors in whether refugees stay are a larger immigrant population and better labour market prospects (Aradhya et al., 2017; Åslund, 2005), while some groups may move to be closer to co-ethnics (Aradhya et al., 2017). Van Liempt (2011) argued that the social isolation of some Somalis in the Netherlands may have led them to move onwards to the UK. In Denmark, refugees left the areas where they had been settled because of high regional unemployment and lack of co-nationals and immigrants in general in order to search for educational opportunities in urban areas (Damm, 2009). However, recent studies have underlined that a majority of refugees actually tend to stay in the areas they initially moved to. In the Netherlands, such stable trajectories were most common for dispersed refugees, with some indications that support networks play a role, while the study found no support for labour market factors (De Hoon et al., 2021). In Sweden, mobility up the urban hierarchy is neither the only nor the most frequent long-term residential trajectory among recent migrants; most migrants stay in their initial area, both in deprived urban areas (Vogiazides & Chihaya, 2020) and in small-sized and rural areas (Vogiazides & Mondani, 2021). Among recent refugees with assigned housing in non-metropolitan areas, out-migration is declining (Vogiazides & Mondani, 2021).

DATA AND METHODS

The study cohort

We use longitudinal register data on the full population of Sweden. Data from the Total Population Register (RTB), the Longitudinal Integrated Database for Health Insurance and Labour Market Studies (LISA) and the Register for Migration and Asylum Statistics (STATIV) were combined using anonymised IDs. There is some under-registration and over-coverage, but the registers are considered to be of very high quality (Swedish Tax Agency, 2006). For this study, we first examined all newly arrived migrants defined as foreign-born individuals, excluding those with both parents born in Sweden, who arrived in the years 1990–2016, and their initial place of residence. In a second step, we followed all migrants arriving in 2002 for a period of 10 years and examined their initial place of residence and subsequent mobility using sequence analysis.

One limitation of the data is that we were not able to document temporary migration. Neither can we determine why people move. In addition, we examined mobility based on annual place of residence, which might underestimate the number of moves individuals undertake within a given year. Notwithstanding these limitations, there is a large potential in the distinction of residential trajectories among the whole registered migrant population, using longitudinal data

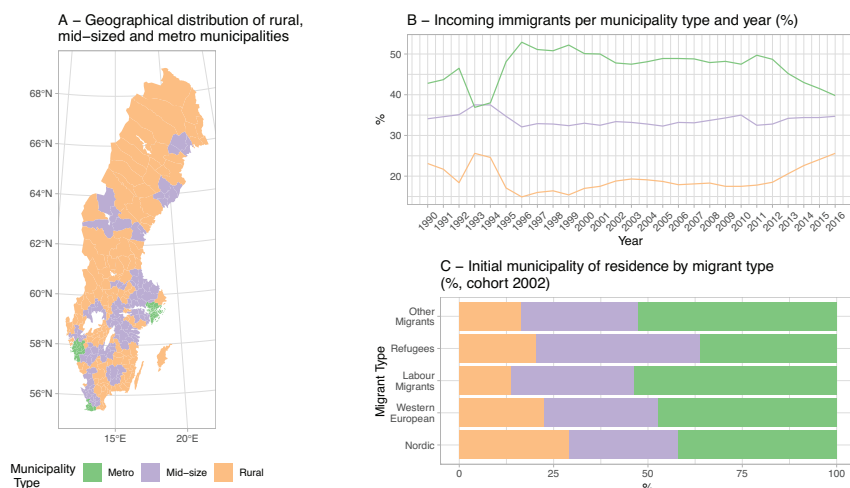


FIGURE 1 Geographical distribution of municipality types (A), historical migration trends by municipality type (B) and initial municipality type by migrant group in the study cohort (C). *Source:* register data, authors' calculations.

for a long period of time, and including country of origin, grounds for settlement, type of refugee as determined by the housing policy in place, place of residence and labour market status.

One of the gaps in the existing literature is that there has been limited attention given to the internal mobility patterns of immigrants and that existing studies tend to focus on mobility up the urban hierarchy. In this study, we define mobility as any move between a different place-type. Place-type is based on place of residence as one of the following states: living in a metropolitan area, living in a mid-sized area or living in a rural area. This distinction is based on a commonly used municipality classification (Swedish Association of Local Authorities & Regions, 2016). Metropolitan municipalities include the largest cities (Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö), other large cities and commuting municipalities near large cities. Mid-sized municipalities cover medium-sized towns and commuting municipalities near medium-sized towns. Rural areas include small towns and rural municipalities. We applied the 2017 classification to each year to examine changes over time in place-type. Figure 1A shows the location of these municipalities throughout Sweden.

Analytical approach

This study addresses the demand for studies focusing on the distinct temporal dimensions of migration processes. The residential trajectories of immigrants intersecting rural areas are therefore studied using a method that explicitly takes into account the timing and duration of mobility over time. We chose sequence analysis, as we aim to identify typical migration pathways for migrants between areas with different degrees of urbanisation. Sequence analysis is an excellent tool to identify such trajectories (Coulter et al., 2016; Stovel & Bolan, 2004), as it addresses the timing of different types of mobility, the duration of stay in different areas, and the order of different types of mobility. The sequence analyses were conducted for both the whole cohort of migrants arriving in 2002 and for those initially residing in rural areas. A sequence starts the year a migrant

arrives in Sweden, following each migrant for a period of 10 years, from 2002 to 2011. We included only those migrants staying in Sweden for the entire time period, meaning that we excluded those migrants dying or emigrating.

We used the technique of optimal matching for calculating dissimilarities between pairs of sequences. This method defines dissimilarity between any two sequences based on the cost of transforming one sequence into another, and that cost depends on a function assigned by the researcher. Because we wanted to identify groups of sequences likely to end in the same type of municipality, we used a cost function that emphasises similarities in terms of destination within the sequence (i.e. shared common futures; Rousset et al., 2012). Based on a matrix showing the extent of dissimilarity of each pair of sequences, combined hierarchical and k-means cluster analysis was then conducted to detect groups of sequences that were more similar than others in terms of ordering, timing and duration of states (Studer & Ritschard, 2016). The most optimal clustering is chosen based on a range of quality statistics, such as the average silhouette width (Studer, 2013), which in our analysis resulted in three clusters when examining the initial settlement of all migrants arriving in 2002, and in three clusters when examining only those initially settling in rural areas. Analyses were performed in R using TraMineR (Gabadinho et al., 2011).

The descriptive sequence analyses were followed by multinomial regression analysis to estimate the effects of individual socioeconomic and demographic characteristics on the probability of following specific residential trajectories from initially settling in rural areas. We are interested in how residential trajectories vary by migrant type, as we are interested in examining these patterns and trajectories for different migrant groups. In Sweden, it is uncommon to define migrants by citizenship. Many migrants hold Swedish citizenship, as it is relatively easy to obtain compared to other countries. There are variations, with low citizenship rates for migrants from the EU and higher rates among refugees. Citizenship hardly plays a role in societal rights and participation (Bevelander & Pendakur, 2011). In addition, register data only register Swedish citizenship when migrants hold dual citizenship.

We distinguish between Nordic migrants, Western European migrants, labour migrants, refugees and their families, and other migrants. These groups were defined using a combination of country of origin and grounds for settlement as determined by the Swedish Migration Agency. *Nordic migrants* are those migrants born in Finland, Norway, Denmark or Iceland. They constitute one of the larger migrant groups in Sweden (11% in 2021), and stand out, as these countries allow free labour within their borders. *Western European migrants* are individuals born in Western Europe, plus Spain, Portugal, Italy and Greece,³ regardless of their reason for moving to Sweden. This group is identified based on country of birth, with the aim of approximating source countries of lifestyle migrants. The group of *labour migrants* comprises both labour migrants and students, and their families, who were born outside Western Europe. Students and labour migrants were grouped together, as student migration is closely associated with labour migration (Kordel & Weidinger, 2020, pp. 41–42). *Refugees* were defined as those individuals who obtained residence permits based on asylum, which includes asylum based on humanitarian grounds, persons in need of subsidiary protection in accordance with joint EU regulations, and quota refugees. Family members of refugees were also included in this category. Finally, the group of other migrants consists mostly of family migrants, such as marriage migrants and other family migrants, mostly from countries such as Thailand, Russia and the former Yugoslavia.

Other independent variables include gender, age, education and having a Swedish partner. We included those migrants who were aged 25 to 54 at the time of entry to Sweden, as we are interested in independent adult moves that tend to be associated with participation in the labour market, and therefore we also have an upper age limit of 54 to be able to follow migrants for

10 years on the labour market before retirement. Education was operationalised as the highest completed education. As having a Swedish partner may influence place of residence, we include whether migrants had a Swedish-born, foreign-born or no partner at arrival. Partner is defined as a person one shares a household with based on marriage or joint children. Employment was measured as being employed or self-employed based on the largest income source. Dispersal policy for refugees was operationalised as choosing their own accommodation upon obtaining a residence permit or living in assigned housing. In the multinomial regression analysis, the dependent variable was cluster membership. Independent variables were measured upon arrival, except for employment and education, which were measured as the proportion of the 10-year period being (self-)employed, and the proportion of the period being more highly educated.

FINDINGS

Increased immigration to rural areas

We start by analysing the first stage in migration, when migrants are entering the country. In the last two decades, the annual number of immigrants arriving in Sweden has increased substantially. Many of the immigration peaks were caused by political instability in other parts of the world, such as increasing immigration from Iraq in 2006 and the unprecedented flow of 160,000 Syrian immigrants in 2015.

At the beginning of our study period, the character of immigration to Sweden was predominantly urban, fitting well with the urban discourse in migration studies that we identified as the first research gap. As we show in Figure 1B, however, the share of migrants residing in metropolitan areas has varied over time and has been decreasing since 2011. At the highest, in 1996, the share starting off in metropolitan areas was about 53%, which is much lower than in many other Western countries, such as Australia (Hugo, 2008). The share of migrants initially residing in mid-sized areas has been relatively stable over time, with about a third of all migrants living in such areas upon arrival. Key to our study is that the share of migrants arriving in rural areas increased from 18% in 2011 to 26% in 2016.

We conclude that international migrants form an increasingly important element of population flows in rural areas. The fact that a quarter of all migrants are arriving in rural areas indicates that NIDs have emerged in Sweden. In fact, the tendency of rural migration to increase has been discernible since the mid-1990s, indicating that rural immigration is a long-term trend rather than attached to single events such as the peak of refugees in 2015. We also conclude that there is a convergence in migrant settlement regarding the different types of areas, at the cost of settlement in metropolitan areas. These developments may point to structural changes in the residential preferences of immigrants, which may have long-term consequences for both urban and rural areas.

The multiplicity of migrants in new immigrant destinations

Turning to the fourth research gap, we analysed the multiplicity of migrants who are arriving in NIDs. This section shows into which types of areas different migrants first began arriving in 2002, and how their initial place of residence varies with migrant characteristics.

TABLE 1 Number of municipalities by most common migrant type, migrant cohort 2002^a.

Migrant type	Type of municipality			
	Metropolitan	Mid-sized	Rural	
Western European	1	3	5	9
Nordic	7	18	26	51
Refugees	7	45	41	93
Other migrants	28	25	34	87
Mix of types	2	3	8	13
Too few migrants	1	14	21	36
	46	108	135	291

Source: Swedish register data, authors' calculations.

^aLabour migrants did not form the largest group of migrants in any municipality in 2002.

Figure 1C shows that Nordic migrants are the most likely migrants to initially reside in rural areas. However, we do see almost all migrant types in rural communities, except for long-term labour migrants and students. Refugees are most likely to initially settle in mid-sized areas, whereas labour migrants (seasonal migrants excluded), and other migrants, are more likely to live in metropolitan areas and in mid-sized towns.

There is substantial spatial variation in the migrant type dominating each municipality. Table 1 shows the most frequent migrant type per municipality for migrants arriving in 2002. Other migrants – most often family migrants – are the most dominant migrant type in metropolitan municipalities. In contrast, in mid-sized municipalities, refugees are the most common new migrant group, whereas in rural areas, a mix of migrant types occurs. In 41 rural municipalities, refugees are the most common type, while in 34 municipalities, other migrants are most common. In 26 rural municipalities, Nordic migrants are the most common migrant type. In five rural municipalities, Western European migrants are most common, which is much rarer in more urban areas.

The maps in Figure 2 show the distribution of each migrant type across Sweden for the migrant cohort of 2002. Nordic migrants, mostly Norwegians, dominate in rural areas on the north-western coast as well as in other areas neighbouring the Norwegian border. Likewise, Danish migrants are most frequent in a few southern areas, while Finnish migrants dominate in a few areas near the Finnish border. Refugees are the most typical migrant group in many inland areas across the country, particularly in southern and central Sweden. Western European migrants are not often the dominant migrant group, except in some areas in the south. Labour migrants are a smaller group and have a less distinct spatial pattern. In short, we see that NIDs are characterised by a multiplicity of migrant types, with a majority being refugees or family migrants, but Nordic and lifestyle migrants are also included. The heterogeneity of immigrants in the Swedish countryside may be seen as a positive phenomenon, which is repopulating shrinking areas (Hedberg & Haandrikman, 2014) but also bringing about socioeconomic challenges for such areas. The discourse of a homogeneous White rurality (Panelli et al., 2009) no longer holds, and rural communities will in many aspects be affected, warranting more research into the socioeconomic and cultural consequences of decades of international migration. Further research should focus on the experiences of different migrant cohorts and possible changes in the diversity of migrants over time.

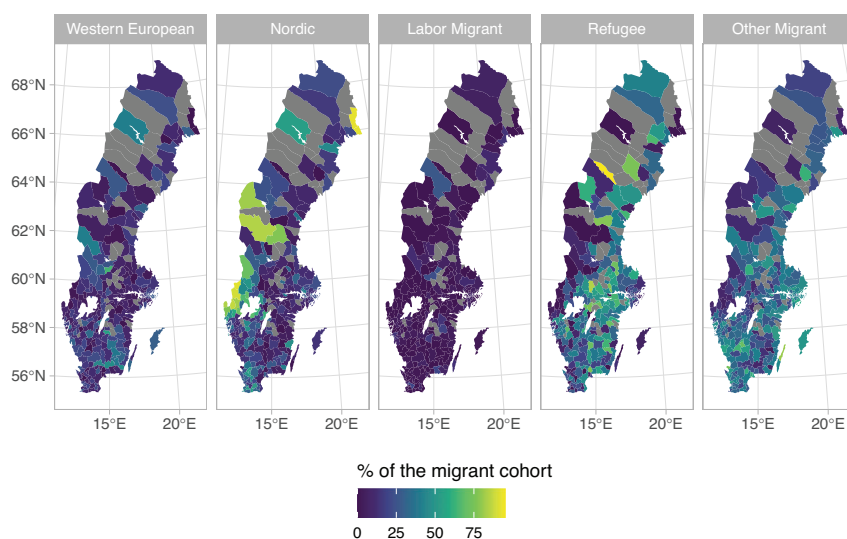


FIGURE 2 Spatial distribution of the different types of migrants, migrant cohort 2002. *Source:* register data, authors' calculations.

Migrant residential trajectories

Turning to address the second and third research gaps, we analysed how understanding secondary migration is a vital part of understanding the dynamics of NIDs, and how the timing of secondary migration, and the specific order and duration of moves, shed light on migration as a stepwise process (Paul, 2017). We examined the residential trajectories of all migrants arriving in Sweden in 2002, and their subsequent internal migration over a period of ten years, by using sequence analysis. Figure A1A in the Appendix visualises how these trajectories are grouped, using index plots of unique sequences that show the most typical migrant residential trajectories (Appendix Figure A1A), as well as the mean time spent in each state (Appendix Figure A1B). Residential trajectories for all migrants are summarised best by three different trajectory types.

The overall trend of these graphs is a pattern of stability. Accordingly, migrants tend to stay in the same type of place that they initially enter when first moving to Sweden. It is most common for migrants to stay in or move to metropolitan areas (49%), while 35% of migrants tend to stay in mid-sized areas. No less than 17% of all migrants reside in rural areas and stay there for the next 10 years. The common Swedish discourse, that the majority of migrants move away from rural areas after a few years, seems to be disproved.

We now concentrate on those migrants who initially resided in rural areas and examine their residential trajectories in terms of moving or staying. We analysed destinations among movers and the timing of secondary migration, in order to address the call for more attention to the distinct temporal dimensions of migration (Cwerner, 2001; Fuller, 2015). To this end, a second sequence analysis was conducted, including only those migrants whose first residence was in a rural location. Figure 3 shows the resulting three major trajectories, with Figure 3A showing index plots of unique sequences and Figure 3B showing the mean time spent in each residential state.

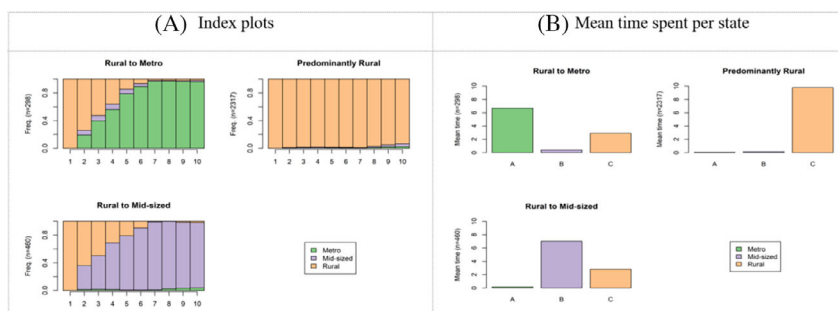


FIGURE 3 Sequence plots of residential trajectories for migrants initially residing in rural areas, migrant cohort 2002: Index plots (A) and mean time spent per state (B). X-axis shows years since arrival. *Source:* register data, authors' calculations.

Our main finding is that three-quarters of those who initially resided in rural areas also continue to stay in this type of area. The other quarter mostly moves onwards to mid-sized areas, while a smaller share moves to metropolitan areas. Based on this analysis, we can debunk the idea that the majority of immigrants moving to Swedish rural areas tend to move away to metropolitan areas after some time. Those moving to mid-sized areas mostly stay in rural areas for a short period of time, while those moving to metropolitan areas usually stay in rural areas for slightly longer before they move onwards (see Figure 3B).

In summary, an analysis of the residential trajectories of migrants to Sweden focusing on place-type and temporal dimensions reveals that initial place of residence has long-standing consequences, as most migrants stay in place for the first 10 years after arrival. Of those entering Sweden via rural areas, three-quarters continue to stay in such areas. Internal mobility rates are high in Sweden compared to other countries, especially for immigrants (Bernard & Vidal, 2020), but these patterns are not reflected in the secondary migration rates for immigrants who start off in rural areas. Only a quarter of these migrants move away, mostly after a few years. How these relatively low migration rates are associated with specific migrant characteristics is explored in the next section.

Focusing again on the multiplicity of migrants in NIDs (gap 4), we analysed which migrants follow these distinct residential trajectory types. Table A1 in the Appendix shows descriptive statistics for the residential trajectories of migrants who arrived in rural areas. Among Nordic migrants, the predominantly rural trajectory is most common – almost all Nordic migrants (91%) who arrived in rural areas stayed there for the next 10 years. Western European migrants also tend to stay in rural areas if they moved there (85%), but are slightly more likely to move on, either to mid-sized or metropolitan areas. More than half of the refugees (62%) stayed in rural areas, while a quarter moved on to mid-sized areas and only 14% to metropolitan areas. Most other migrants (80%) also stayed in rural areas. Labour migrants and students form only a small group of rural migrants, but the majority of them stayed in these areas.

Having a social network is one type of capital that migrants gather in destination countries, affecting their life courses as well as possible secondary migration (Moret, 2018; Paul, 2017). Our findings show that having a partner, especially a Swedish-born partner, is very common for those staying in rural areas. In a similar vein, having children is more common among those staying or those moving to mid-sized areas. Women more often follow the predominantly rural trajectory, belonging to the category 'other' migrants, who are living with a partner. Family-building

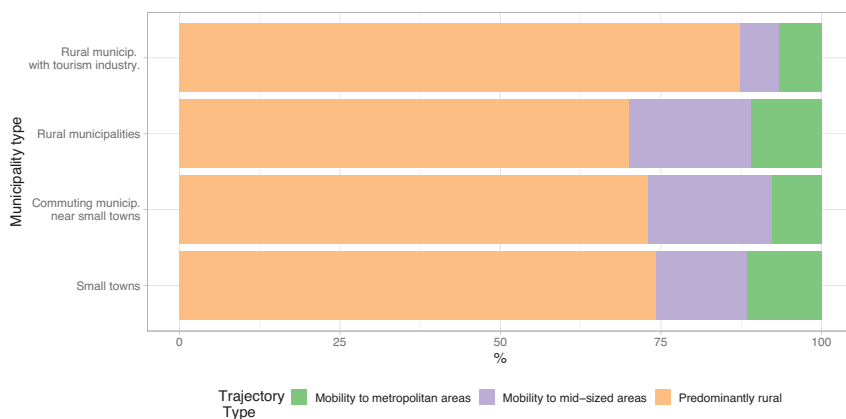


FIGURE 4 Residential trajectories for migrants initially settling in rural areas by type of initial rural area. *Source:* register data, authors' calculations.

accordingly appears as one crucial event in the life course that leads migrants to stay in rural and small-sized areas. These findings may also be related to migrants moving to rural areas because of marriage, such as Thai migrants marrying Swedish men living in the countryside (Webster & Haandrikman, 2016). Family migrants tend to be less affected by labour market factors compared with other migrants (Zorlu & Mulder, 2008). Finally, immigrants, like natives, may be attracted to rural areas when raising a family (Kulu, 2008). Mobility from rural areas to metropolitan areas is not as high as expected, but the group most likely to do so is refugees (53% of all persons in this trajectory are refugees). Refugees with their own housing more often follow the predominantly rural cluster, but more than half of the refugees with assigned housing also stay in rural areas. In line with other life course-related studies, this study finds that younger people, migrants and natives alike, are more likely to move to metropolitan areas, which is in line with expectations given the location of higher education institutes and job opportunities in such areas. It is also more likely that more highly educated people will leave for metropolitan areas. Highly educated immigrants in Sweden concentrate in urban areas, due to the availability of specialised jobs and jobs for highly skilled individuals, cultural amenities and concentrations of other highly educated people (Khaef & Haandrikman 2023). It is, therefore, likely that highly educated refugees move to areas with more educational and labour market possibilities after their introduction programme is finished. The role of employment is not straightforward. Those moving away from rural areas are employed to a lower extent compared with those staying, but the differences are not large.

The type of rural area that a migrant initially moves to may play a role in whether migrants stay there, not least since Sweden has a large variation of rural areas, with varying levels of employment opportunities. Figure 4 shows that the predominantly rural trajectory is most common for migrants in the 'least' rural category: small towns, while it is least common for those initially residing in the most rural category: rural municipalities, without a visitor industry. However, as many as 72% did stay in such areas. In rural areas with a tourism industry, the share staying is as high as 89%, which may mean that the labour market for migrants is much better there compared with areas with fewer work opportunities. Mobility to mid-sized areas occurs from all types of rural areas, but is least common for migrants living in rural municipalities with a visitor industry, while moving to metropolitan areas is most common for migrants initially residing in small towns or rural municipalities without a visitor industry.

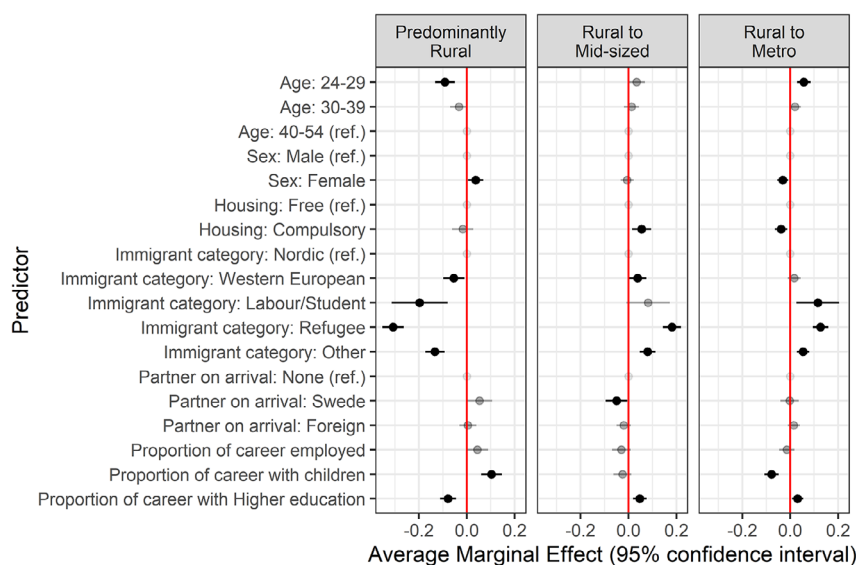


FIGURE 5 Average marginal effects from multinomial logit regression of migrants' residential trajectories for those initially residing in rural areas, including 95% confidence intervals. *Source:* register data, authors' calculations.

Determinants of migrant residential trajectories

In order to estimate the independent association of several individual characteristics with the three residential trajectories for migrants initially arriving in rural areas, we conducted multinomial regression analyses. Table A2 in the Appendix shows the full results, while Figure 5 shows a coefficient plot of the average marginal effects. Partly confirming the descriptive findings, Western European migrants are similar to Nordic migrants in their residential patterns: They are both equally likely to stay in rural areas. Labour migrants and students are less likely to be long-term residents of rural areas, and more often move from rural areas to metropolitan areas, compared with Nordic migrants. Refugees are least likely to belong to the predominantly rural cluster and move from rural areas more often than Nordic migrants. Controlling for all other individual characteristics, refugees are more likely to move to mid-sized than to metropolitan areas, though differences are small.

Confirming the descriptive results, women are more likely to stay in rural areas, even when controlling for migrant type and family situation. We see that it is mostly the younger migrants who move away from rural areas, although those in their 30s are not more likely to move away than older migrants. Having a Swedish partner has a substantial independent effect on staying in rural areas. Those with children are more likely to stay in rural areas and less likely to move to metropolitan areas. These findings are in line with the importance of life-course events to migration patterns, which applies to natives as well as to immigrants.

Finally, for refugees, compulsory placement versus choosing their own accommodation is associated with increasing mobility from rural areas, but to mid-sized areas only. This finding is partly as expected, as some placement municipalities may not have suitable jobs, educational institutions or perhaps concentrations of co-ethnics that are known to play a role for immigrants (Khaef & Haandrikman, 2022). On the other hand, the common Swedish discourse, that refugees

in assigned housing tend to move to metropolitan areas after their introduction programme, is refuted; the likelihood of their moving to metropolitan areas is in fact lower compared with that of those who choose their own accommodation.

There are no significant effects of employment status on migrants following certain residential trajectories after arriving in rural areas, but the more highly educated the migrant, the less likely they are to stay in rural areas. Accordingly, whereas educational level contributes to explaining secondary migration, the idea that migrants move to urban and metropolitan areas for employment finds no support in this study.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

International migration to rural areas, and the contribution of these flows to globalised countryside, has been a strong focus in rural studies during the last two decades. Research on NIDs has pointed to the relative novelty of migration to small-sized and rural areas, compared to migration to metropolitan and other large-sized areas. The fact that international migration is a comparatively new component to the population structure of rural communities may explain why research into it has been dominated by urban norms, an idea that to some extent is still lingering. This applies to both the initial settlement of immigrants and to secondary migration – the discourse being that international migrants mainly enter countries via urban areas, and the idea prevailing in Sweden that those who start off from rural areas are leaving for metropolitan regions as soon as possible.

In this paper, we aimed to enhance our understanding of the contribution and dynamics of international migration to rural areas and NIDs and addressed four research gaps. We recognised the need to acknowledge (1) the fact that migrants head not only for urban destinations; (2) the internal mobility of immigrants; (3) the temporal dimensions of international and secondary migration; and (4) the multiplicity of migrants intersecting rural areas.

We find that not only is the share of migrants heading for rural and small-sized areas increasing, but also that migrants are tending to stay there. We discerned a converging pattern of rural and metropolitan migration, which started off in the mid-1990s. In other words, international migration to rural areas is by no means a new phenomenon but has intensified significantly during the last decade. In 2016, a quarter of all migrants started their Swedish journeys from rural areas. This implies that international migrants compose an increasingly important part of the rural population.

Concerning the second research gap, regarding the secondary migration of immigrants, our results show that most international migrants who settle in rural areas stay, and if they move, they are more likely to move to mid-sized towns than to metropolitan areas. Migrant residential pathways thus not only go up the urban hierarchy, but rural migrants tend to be permanent stayers, with a small share moving onwards to other small-sized areas. One reason for this could be that migrants originate from rural areas in their home countries (Aradhya et al., 2017), which may affect their residential preferences in Sweden. Another explanation could be connected to migrant capital, where past experiences impact later-life mobility decisions (Moret, 2018; Paul, 2017). Accordingly, the residential experience in a rural area may be affecting onward mobility. One such pathway may be mobility out of rural areas, based on labour market mismatch or, as Carson et al. (2018) found for international lifestyle migrants in Northern Sweden, that some see their stay in remote areas as temporary from the start. However, our study has established that the rate of secondary migration among international migrants from rural areas is low, given the

overall high internal migration rate among immigrants (Bernard & Vidal, 2020). Even among migrants who initially resided in disadvantaged urban neighbourhoods, stability is the main trajectory (Vogiazides & Chihaya, 2020). Further research into the reasons why migrants stay in rural areas is therefore warranted.

The migrant group that is most likely to move from rural areas is refugees, and within this group, the most likely to do so are those who first received assigned housing. However, their mobility is not directed towards metropolitan areas, but towards mid-sized municipalities. This finding is understandable given that placement policies were often not based on the availability of employment but rather on housing opportunities.

Confirming other studies (Hedberg & Haandrikman, 2014; Nedomysl, 2011), we find that the role of employment in people's internal migration patterns in Sweden is unsettled; we find no significant impact of employment on mobility. Some migrants may move to find more suitable jobs in larger towns, while others may fill local vacancies in rural areas. The role of self-employment is important for Western European migrants, refugees and family migrants in Swedish rural areas (Barth & Zalkat, 2011; Lundmark et al., 2020; Webster & Haandrikman, 2022), which also affects these patterns. Further research is needed to examine the role of employment for different migrant groups across and within the urban hierarchy. We do find that more highly educated immigrants are more likely to leave rural areas, which can be explained by the reduced availability of jobs for highly skilled personnel in such areas, and the attractions of urban areas, especially regarding amenities, cultural facilities and knowledge hubs (Khaef & Haandrikman, 2023).

Stage in the life course has a particularly clear connection to mobility. Confirming patterns for natives, younger immigrants tend to leave rural areas, and those with children are more inclined to stay. Female immigrants are less likely to move from rural areas, which may be explained by the phenomenon of marriage migration, as having a Swedish partner has a large effect on staying, and also by the fact that traditionally female jobs in health care are available there (Hedberg & Haandrikman, 2014). Secondary migration might occur, though, due to the specific location of an individual's social network (Erdal et al., 2023). This study has assessed the role of family members, educational attainment and employment situation, but has not been able to determine the role of people's other networks in their mobility decisions, such as acquaintances, other family members or work contacts, which future studies may pick up on.

The third research gap this study addressed was the lack of attention to temporal dimensions in studies of international and secondary migration. Using the method of sequence analysis, we mapped the spatial and temporal dimensions of migrants' residential trajectories, with a focus on how these intersect rural areas. The study revealed that the majority of migrants tend to stay in rural areas, but if they leave, this happens after a few years, and mostly to move to mid-sized areas and to a lesser extent to metropolitan areas. Although there is some back-and-forth mobility between areas, the majority of immigrants tend to stay put. Sequence analysis is an appropriate tool for examining mobility trajectories, especially in relation to timing, order and duration of events, and in combination with regression analysis, the technique is well suited to modelling the determinants of residential trajectories.

Finally, addressing the fourth research gap, regarding the multiplicity of migrants, we find that the type of rural migrant shows great diversity, with the majority being family and refugee migrants, but with Nordic and Western European migrants also common. We know that labour migration to rural areas is also widespread; however, the vast majority of these migrants are seasonal and as such not included in this register-based study. The heterogeneity of migrants in rural areas may offer opportunities, for instance, to revive local communities, but also challenges, especially in areas that are less prepared for larger flows of immigrants. Further research should focus

on the socioeconomic and cultural consequences of decades of international migration for rural areas and possible changes over time regarding the diversity of migrants.

Our study shows the transient nature of migration intersecting rural areas, the potential permanence of migration to rural areas, and the multiple groups of migrants who are residing there. Our longitudinal full-population data and methods of sequence analysis, besides their benefits, also have some disadvantages. Seasonal migrants are not included in population registers, which leads to an underestimation of, for instance, labour migrants in agriculture and related sectors. For those coming from Scandinavia and the EU, for whom residence permits are not required, reasons for settlement are unknown. Based on country of birth, we can assume the main migration motive, but we cannot determine why people move, i.e. whether people are lifestyle migrants, move for work or join their partners. Additional qualitative or mixed methods studies may shine a light on the motivation of immigrants for moving to and staying in rural areas.

Taken together, our results suggest that NIDs are indeed emerging in rural and small-sized areas in Sweden. This conclusion is partly based on the increasing share of international migrants to these areas, and the large share staying there. These findings send important signals regarding regionalisation policies and to rural and small-sized municipalities. First, they challenge the discourse that most migrants settle in urban areas, as long as they are not settled there by authorities. Second, they challenge the idea that most migrants who start off in rural areas will then leave these areas. Instead, our study shows that by approaching the transient and multifaceted nature of immigrants' internal migration patterns, we come closer to addressing the long-term effects of international migration on rural communities. We have shown how complex mobility processes lead to both temporary, and above all, permanent residency of immigrants in rural areas. Those who leave rural areas are often young migrants and more highly educated. The secondary migration patterns of immigrants resemble the internal migration patterns of domestic migrants and are to be seen in the light of triggers and residential preferences emerging from multiple life-course domains. This suggests that rural communities may lose part of their immigrant population, in the same way as they lose out on native-born groups, but at the same time, they can also trust that most migrants arriving in rural areas will be relatively permanent. International migrants are therefore important contributors to rural population structures.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data used in this study concern micro-level register data on the full population of Sweden, and can only be accessed by researchers granted access to undertake research for specific projects associated with these data, based on ethical vetting by the Swedish Ethical Review Authority and a confidentiality assessment by Statistics Sweden.

ETHICS APPROVAL STATEMENT

The data used for the project have received approval from the Swedish Ethical Review, including 'Lyckliga Gatan: Geografisk polarisering och social sammanhållning i dagens Sverige' (Dnr 2019-02826, 03-06-2019) and 'Migranternas livsförlopp: flyttningar, familj, arbete, utbildning och socialförsäkring i Sverige 1990 — 2016' (Dnr 2017/1329-31, 09-10-2017).

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ENDNOTES

¹A parallel here is ‘the welcoming cities movement’ in the United States, searching to improve integration in US cities (McDaniel et al., 2019).

²In the period 1985–1994, the Sweden-wide strategy was in force that aimed for a more even geographical distribution of refugees across municipalities. Since 1994, asylum seekers may choose their own accommodation (EBO) or otherwise be placed in accommodation arranged for by the Swedish Migration Agency (ABO) – the latter more often located outside metropolitan areas (Statistics Sweden, 2016). From 2020, a new policy was introduced that takes away financial assistance for those asylum seekers settling in certain deprived areas, in order to decrease segregation and overcrowding.

³These countries were grouped together in the data, together with Andorra and Albania. Another group of small countries was included here as well, comprising of Cyprus, Malta, Gibraltar, San Marino and Vatican City.

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APPENDIX

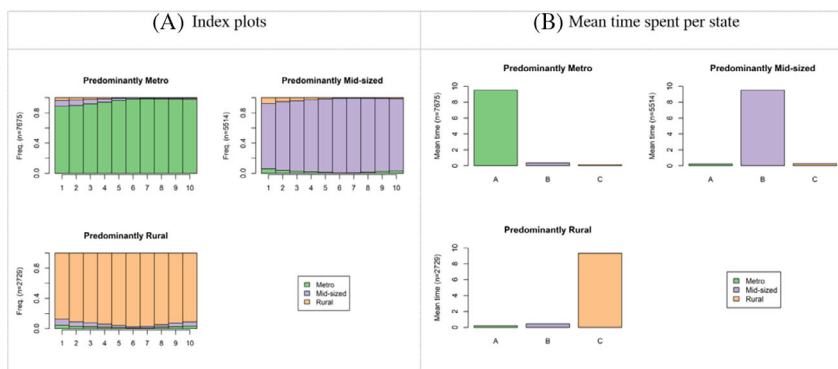


FIGURE A1 Sequence plots of residential trajectories for all migrants arriving in 2002: Index plots (A), and mean time spent per state (B). X-axis shows years since arrival. *Source:* register data, authors' calculations.

TABLE A1 Descriptive statistics for migrants by residential trajectory types

	Predominantly rural	Mobility to mid-sized	Mobility to metro	Total
Migrant type				
Western European	85.4	7.9	6.8	100% (355)
Nordic	90.8	4.9	4.3	100% (369)
Labour migrants and students	71.2	11.9	16.9	100% (59)
Refugees	62.1	23.7	14.2	100% (1170)
Other	80.2	10.7	9.0	100% (1073)
Gender				
Men	71.4	16.0	12.6	100% (1337)
Women	77.8	13.7	8.5	100% (1689)
Age at arrival				
24–29	71.2	15.6	13.2	100% (961)
30–39	75.6	15.0	9.4	100% (1277)
40–54	78.4	13.2	8.4	100% (788)
Employed or self-employed (mean % over 10 years)	55.3	51.9	54.0	54.7 (mean)
Tertiary educated (mean % over 10 years)	42.8	47.3	49.8	44.2 (mean)
Refugee housing				
Assigned housing	61.4	28.5	10.0	100% (498)
Own housing	73.4	14.3	12.3	100% (244)
Other categories	78.1	11.7	10.2	100% (2284)
Having a partner				
Swedish-born partner	85.5	7.5	7.0	100% (399)
Foreign-born partner	74.1	15.5	10.3	100% (1210)
No partner	72.7	16.0	11.3	100% (1417)
Children (mean % over 10 years)	61.9	64.4	54.5	61.5 (mean)

Source: Register data, authors' calculations.

TABLE A.2 Results of multinomial logit model of migrants' residential trajectories for those initially residing in rural areas, average marginal effects (AME) and standard (St) errors ($N = 3,026$)

	Predominantly rural		Rural to mid-sized		Rural to metro	
	AME	St error	AME	St error	AME	St error
Migrant type (ref: Nordic)						
Western European	-0.044	0.023	0.027	0.019	0.017	0.015
Labour migrants/students	-0.172**	0.058	0.065	0.043	0.107*	0.045
Refugees	-0.275***	0.023	0.159***	0.019	0.116***	0.016
Other migrants	-0.123***	0.021	0.070***	0.017	0.055***	0.014
Gender						
Female (ref: Male)	0.044**	0.016	-0.003	0.013	-0.041**	0.012
Age at arrival (ref: 40-54)						
24-29	-0.088***	0.021	0.037*	0.017	0.051**	0.015
30-39	-0.021	0.018	0.012	0.015	0.009	0.013
Family situation (ref: no partner)						
Swedish-born partner	0.085**	0.026	-0.057**	0.022	-0.028	0.018
Foreign-born partner	0.037*	0.017	-0.023	0.014	-0.014	0.012
Housing policy						
Compulsory placement (vs not)	-0.021	0.022	0.066**	0.020	-0.045***	0.013
Employment—share of period (self-employed)	0.041	0.023	-0.021	0.019	-0.019	0.017
Education—share of period higher educated	-0.081***	0.017	0.046**	0.014	0.034**	0.012

Note: * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$. Source: Register data, authors' calculations.