

TITLE:

Emigration of Immigrants' Descendants from Norway, and Their Possible Return to Norway

ABSTRACT:

Whereas emigration of immigrants' descendants has received increasing scholarly attention, little is known about the difference between those who move to their parents' origin and those who move to another country, and very little is known about the extent to which they come back after having emigrated. Few theoretical works exist in this field, and there is little knowledge of the mechanisms behind their choice of destination and possible return.

In this study, we use a three-step analytical process, combining qualitative and quantitative methods, to investigate emigration of immigrants' adult children in Norway. First, descriptive analyses of rich register data illuminate who leaves and where they leave, as well as who returns to Norway again. These results are used – along with other considerations – to guide our selection of interviewees. Second, we use in-depth interviews with emigrated descendants to explore why they emigrate and why some of them return to Norway again. Third, the results from the interviews are used to develop hypotheses about the mechanisms at work – hypotheses which we aim at testing using register data analyses.

AUTHORS:

Tone Liodden and Marianne Tønnessen, Oslo Metropolitan University, Norway

EXTENDED ABSTRACT:

Introduction

Until now, immigrants' descendants in Norway have been a young group, mostly consisting of children and adolescents who, if they migrate, tend to do so with their parents. However, as this group ages and a substantial number of them have reached young adulthood, it is increasingly possible to investigate their migration behavior as more independent individuals.

The migration behavior of young adult descendants of emigrants may differ both from that of immigrants and that of natives without immigrant parents.

Exploring the opportunities of close qualitative-quantitative-collaboration, this study uses Norway as a case to investigate the emigration of the descendants of immigrants, as well as their potential return to Norway again. We use both qualitative and quantitative approaches, analyzing rich register data to map the *who* and *where* – who emigrates (in numbers and shares among their group), where they emigrate, and who moves back to Norway again. These results, in turn, guide our search for interviewees. We will interview ten emigrated descendants to explore the *why* – their reason for leaving Norway and for their choice of destination, and possibly the reason for returning to Norway. Based on the qualitative results, we will develop various hypotheses about possible mechanisms governing the who, where and why of descendants' migration and return. Finally, we aim at testing hypotheses which are testable using register data.

The first quantitative part – descriptive register data analyses

In the quantitative part, we use rich Norwegian register data for the period 2000-2023. Our main sample are people born in Norway with two immigrant parents, as well as people who immigrated to Norway as children (immigration age 0-9). We restrict the sample to young adults, i.e. those aged 18-35.

The quantitative analyses will first describe how numbers and rates have changed over time. We show changes in the number of emigrations in this group from 2000 to 2023, and well as in their emigration rates (i.e. emigrations per 100, per year) in the same period. We compare these results to other groups of the same age, e.g. people born in Norway with one foreign-born parent, immigrants, and natives without any immigrant parent.

Secondly, we provide a more thorough description of those descendants of immigrants who emigrated during this period, including their education level and the parents' country of

origin, and we explore to what extent the emigrants move to their parents' country of origin, or to a new country, and how this varies by education level and the parents' country of origin.

Finally, we analyse which of these emigrants who move back to Norway after a period abroad, and how this differs by parents' country of origin and by level of education (in Norway before emigration).

First preliminary results

Preliminary results from the first register data analyses are shown in Table 1 and Figure 1. In both, the largest groups of emigrants by parental origin country/countries are shown separately; the remaining ones are grouped together in 'other countries'.

Table 1 Descriptives of emigrants in this study (young adult descendants of immigrants in Norway)

| Parents' origin country | Number of emigrants | Annual % emigrating | % with higher education | % back in Norway 5 years later |
|---------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Pakistan | 1,350 | 0.7 | 28 | 48 |
| Denmark | 568 | 1.6 | 20 | 30 |
| Somalia&Djibouti | 564 | 0.8 | 9 | 37 |
| Former Yugoslavia, non-EU | 523 | 0.4 | 28 | 46 |
| Sweden | 491 | 1.3 | 23 | 28 |
| Iraq | 483 | 0.8 | 16 | 40 |
| Iceland | 384 | 1.7 | 23 | 36 |
| Turkey | 363 | 0.5 | 17 | 42 |
| Iran | 334 | 0.7 | 31 | 43 |
| Vietnam | 332 | 0.4 | 42 | 51 |
| Other countries | 3,505 | 0.6 | 31 | 37 |

As Table 1 shows, descendants with parents from Pakistan are the largest group (by numbers of emigrants), which is not surprising since they are a relatively large group among immigrants' descendants living in Norway. However, the annual percentage who emigrate in this group is relatively low, only 0.7%. This share is higher among descendants with parents from the other Nordic countries (Denmark, Sweden and Iceland). Also descendants with parents from Somalia (and Djibouti) constitute a fair share of these emigrants, as do those with parents from Former Yugoslavia (non-EU). Among these two groups, those with parents from Somalia have a considerably higher risk of emigrating than those from (the non-EU parts of) Former Yugoslavia. Also among descendants with parents from Iraq and Iran the risk of emigrating is higher than, for instance, among those with parents from Turkey or Vietnam.

The table also displays considerable variation in the percentage of emigrants with higher education – from 42% among those with parents from Vietnam to 9% for those with parents from Somalia and Djibouti.

Finally, the last column in Table 1 shows that a relatively large share of the young adult descendants of immigrants who emigrate from Norway, return to Norway after some years abroad. This share is highest for those with parents from Vietnam (51% are back five years after emigration) and lowest for those with parents from Sweden (28%).

The groups (by parental origin country) also differ when it comes to their choice of destination (Figure 1). The majority emigrate to a different country than their parents' origin, but this is not the case for those with parents from other Nordic countries. Among descendants with parents from countries outside the Nordics, those with parents from Turkey have the highest propensity to move to their parents' origin, but even in this group there are more emigrants going to other countries.

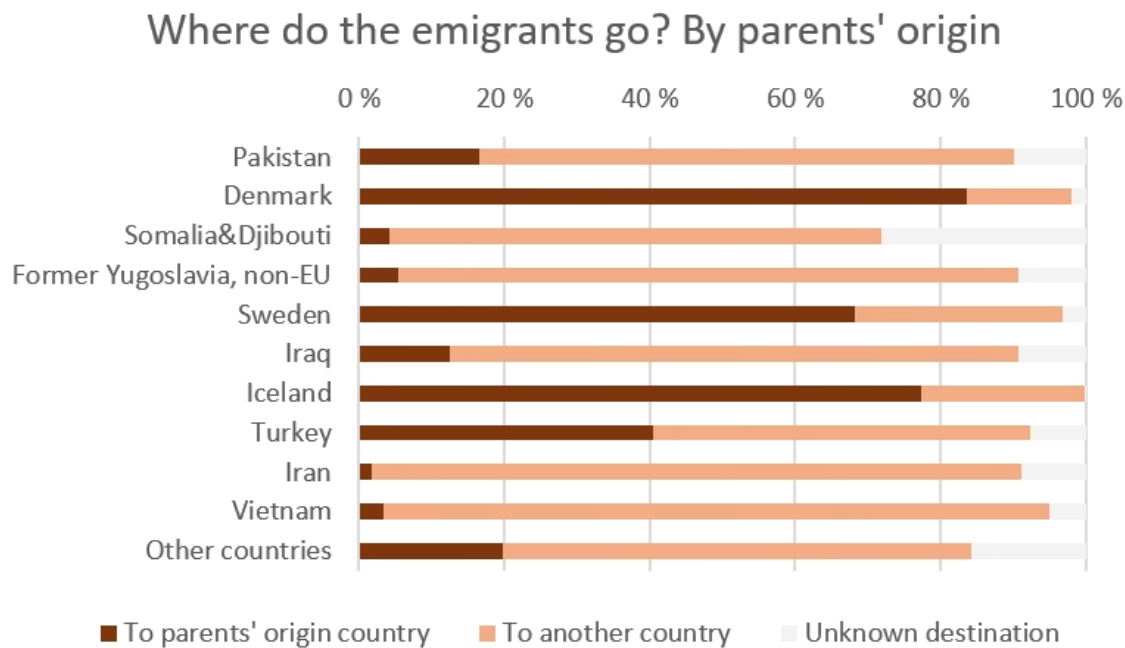


Figure 1 Emigrants by parents' origin and their choice of destination country

The qualitative part – interviews with emigrants and development of hypotheses

We will conduct 10 interviews with descendants of immigrants who have moved abroad. We aim at including some interviewees from the largest groups of young adult descendants in Norway, such as descendants with Pakistani, Turkish and Somali backgrounds, and we also want to include interviewees from these groups: 1) Descendants who have moved to a third country, since there is considerably less knowledge about descendants who travel to a

third country, compared to those who move to their parents' home country. 2) Descendants who have moved from Norway to a country in the "global south". This is interesting because such emigration breaks with traditional "push-pull" theories that indicate that migration usually goes in the other direction. 3) We also aim to include some descendants with parents from other European countries, such as Denmark or Sweden, because their parents often are not even referred to as "immigrants" in debates on the topic since they come from countries similar to Norway, but who still may have transnational ties and network, like other descendants. 4) Among the above interviewees, there will also be descendants who moved abroad and then returned.

The last quantitative part – testing of hypotheses using register data

Based on the findings from the qualitative interviews, and drawing on concepts such as migration capital, belonging/exclusion, intergenerational aspirations, transnationalism and the integration paradox, we will develop hypotheses about possible mechanisms governing the who, where and why of descendants' migration and return – i) who emigrates and who stays, and ii) among those who emigrate: who move to their parents' origin, and who moves to another country, and finally: iii) who comes back to Norway and who stays abroad.

Our aim is to develop hypotheses that may be tested using register data. These data allow us to utilize variation when it comes to parental origin, parental reason for migration (admission category), parents' duration of stay in Norway, the descendants' own educational level and age/gender, as well as differences between Norwegian-born children of immigrants and those who were born abroad and came to Norway as children, those with one foreign-born and one Norwegian-born parent, and (other) native children.