

Handläggare
Avdelning

Refugee's income sources during their first 15 years

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Study background

Much is known about the labour market situation among the foreign-born population in Sweden. Yet, most studies have investigated one event at a time, such as from unemployment to employment at a specific time since immigration. The analysis of a sequence of several transitions at once is relatively less common.

Objectives

Detailed individual-level longitudinal data is used to investigate how persons who immigrated as refugees made a living during their first 15 years in Sweden. Differences in trajectories by sex, age at immigration, level of education and region of citizenship, among others, are also explored.

Data and methods

Register data on all those who immigrated as refugees in the ages 18–49 between 1997 and 2001 was followed for 15 years, in total 30 600 persons. Cluster analysis is used to identify the most common trajectories concerning among nine different income patterns and logistic regression to present odds ratios for the risk to follow different pathways.

Results

Six typical pathways have been identified from the cluster analysis.

- 1) Quickly joins the workforce
- 2) Prolonged period without employment
- 3) Weak position on the labour market
- 4) With reduced capacity to work
- 5) Many years receiving social assistance
- 6) Leaves Sweden

Those who immigrated at younger ages or tertiary educated are most likely to follow path 1. There are no differences between the

sexes concerning following the first path but men are overrepresented in pathway 2. Persons immigrated at older ages are more likely to follow pathway 4 while women are more likely to follow the fifth pathway.

Main conclusion

The joint analysis of several events over a long time period provides a rich picture of the transition between different income sources which would not have been possible with the analysis of a single event. The result also illustrates the potential for the use of register data for similar studies about immigrant integration in the Nordic countries.