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**Processes of Immigration and Demographic
Consequences for Swedish Rural Areas**

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**‘Every Soul is Needed!’
Processes of Immigration and
Demographic Consequences for Swedish Rural Areas**

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Abstract: In this paper, I outline processes of international migration to the Swedish countryside by investigating the demographic effects and the interregional mobility of international migrants in rural Sweden from a labour market perspective. The study is based on longitudinal register-data, and combines data on immigration to Sweden with unique micro-level geographical data. The results show that the annual increase of international migration is higher in rural and small-scale localities than in larger localities. The demographic effects of international migration are positive in rural and small-scale localities compared to those in larger localities. The total dependency ratio is relatively low. Accordingly, immigration is contributing to a positive population structure in the countryside. Moreover, international migrants have a higher employment rate in rural and small-scale localities than in larger localities, also when aspects such as country of birth are controlled for. The analysis also indicates that rural and small-scale localities are characterised by considerably higher interregional mobility of international migrants than are larger localities. Mobility is higher among newly-arrived migrants, migrants outside the labour market and self-settled and authority-settled refugees. Accordingly, international migration to the countryside is characterised by relatively high diversity and mobility. The increasing volume, the positive demographic effects and the favourable employment structure, at least in relative terms, point to an increasing importance of international migration for the Swedish countryside.

Introduction

It's an important resource. [...] Every soul is needed! Because we see that the young people are leaving, we are becoming an ageing population and everybody is very important. We need lots of in-migration. (Integration advisor in a rural municipality).

Rural areas are often pictured as stagnating areas that are losing population in favour of urban areas. The outmigration of young people tends to leave rural areas with an ageing population. The missing demographic component when rural areas are concerned, however, is that of international migration. Despite negative interregional net migration and a negative net fertility rate, remote regions in Sweden have a positive international net migration rate (Glesbygdsverket, 2008). In the future, with the ageing population, the Swedish population will decline without the diverse flows of international migration that are facing the country (Statistics Sweden, 2009).

Sweden has been a country of immigration since World War II (Nilsson, 2004). Three main phases have occurred, which still characterise the stock of international migrants. The first phase occurred in the 1960s, when labour migrants arrived from Finland and other European countries. The second phase took place in the 1980s, when refugees from Chile and West Asian countries entered the country. The last phase was initiated in the 1990s, when refugees from the former Yugoslavia, and later from Iraq, arrived in Sweden. The last phase, however, is not solely characterised by refugees and their families but also by an increasing diversity of migrants that arrive from all parts of the world due to reasons of labour, study, marriage and to improve their quality of life (Hedberg and Malmberg, 2010).

Waves of international migration have implied both demographic and qualitative changes and possibilities in rural areas. As the quotation above implies, international migrants should be seen not only as a demographic contribution to the countryside, but also as a potential resource. In a special issue of *Population Space and Place*, the editors stress the increasing importance of international migration to changing ruralities in high-income countries (Hugo and Morén-Alegret, 2008). They argue that international migration is

important for rural areas in at least three ways: (1) due to the demographic effects, (2) as a part of the counter-urbanisation process and (3) offering alternative processes of integration. Moreover, international migration connects rural areas to the world through the direct links of transnational networks, which contain the potential for dynamic change (Hedberg and Carmo, forthcoming). The countryside is influenced by the influx of international migrants through transnational social, economic and institutional networks, which directly intersect with the local area. This is in line with the basic premise of Swedish migration policy, that ‘immigration helps vitalise society, the labour market and the economy, thanks to the new knowledge and experience that new arrivals bring from their home countries’ (Ministry of Justice, 2010).

Based on a broad understanding of the demographic shifts and possibilities international migration can bring to rural areas, this paper aims to analyse the demographic effects and the interregional mobility of international migrants in rural Sweden from a labour market perspective. International migration to the Swedish countryside is compared with the rest of Sweden in the period 1998–2007. Moreover, the effects of international migration are investigated through the analysis of the dependency ratio and of labour market participation. Mobility flows between urban and rural areas are analysed on the basis of various cohorts of international migrants, depending on date of arrival in Sweden, labour market status and refugee category. Throughout the paper, rural areas are compared with localities of other types.

Migration policy in Sweden and rural mobility flows

International migration to Sweden has been characterised by high mobility from the Nordic countries, and particularly from Finland, ever since the aftermath of World War II. Mobility between the Nordic countries was promoted under the Nordic Agreement for Labour Mobility from 1947, and since 2001 it has been complemented by the Schengen Agreement, with increased focus on free mobility of labour within the European Union (Pedersen et al., 2008; Swedish Board of Migration, 2010). Compared with other OECD

countries, labour migration to Sweden from countries outside the European Union has been low (OECD, 2008). Only recently, in December 2008, has Sweden adopted a policy of labour migration which promotes the migration of both highly-skilled and lower-skilled labour (Regeringens proposition, 2008).

Apart from European and Nordic migration, much migration to Sweden has been centred on humanitarian policies and the reception of family migrants (Swedish Board of Migration, 2010). In a document from the Ministry of Justice (2010) it is proclaimed that:

Sweden is to have a humane refugee policy and be a place of refuge for people fleeing persecution and oppression. The right to seek asylum must be safeguarded and the trend in Europe towards closed borders must be opposed.

Humanitarian migration into Sweden is divided into two categories; resettlement strategies, where refugees in second countries¹ are distributed by the UNHCR to third countries according to a quota, and asylum seekers, who enter Sweden as the second country on their own account. These are then granted permission to stay, mainly as refugees or with the right of protection (Swedish Government, 2008). When asylum seekers have been granted a residence permit, they are either offered residence in a certain municipality by the Swedish Board of Migration, or they can find a place of residence on their own. Taken together, in 1997–2007, around half of the refugees and asylum seekers chose to find a place of residence on their own (*Eget Boende (EBO)*) (Statistics Sweden, 2008). Mainly they find their own residence through friends and relatives, and the result is that they tend to become concentrated in large cities. The other half mainly consists of the group placed in particular apartments (*Anläggningsboende (ABO)*), but quota refugees and other refugees are also distributed regionally in the municipalities through discussions with the County Administrative Boards. In this paper, the former are termed self-settled refugees (EBO), whereas the latter are termed authority-settled refugees (ABO and other refugee groups).

¹ 'Second country' refers to the first country of refuge since leaving the homeland, whereas 'third country' refers to the second country after leaving the homeland.

This policy is subsequent to the ‘All Sweden Strategy’, which was a migration settlement policy in operation from 1987 to 1991 aiming to distribute refugees more evenly across Sweden. During this period, 90 per cent of the refugees were distributed by the authorities in Sweden, leaving little room for the individual migrant to decide their initial place of residence (Statistics Sweden, 2008). The largest group of migrants from non-European countries was, however, the broad category of family migrants (Swedish Board of Migration, 2010). They could either be accompanying refugees or labour migrants, or they could be accompanying other residents in Sweden, such as adopted children, marriage migrants etc.

The migration policies outlined above have influenced the regional distribution of international migrants in Sweden (Statistics Sweden, 2008). In total, of all immigrants arriving to Sweden from 1997 to 2002, 46 per cent had their first place of residence in the three large urban regions and another 40 per cent in larger regional centres. Only refugees and Nordic migrants resided to some extent in other types of region². Within a five-year period, the regional mobility from these rather large labour-market regions was limited. Only refugees showed a moderate mobility; 5.8 per cent had moved to the large urban regions. This mobility was due to the migration of quota refugees, who mainly moved from smaller regional centres to the large city regions, and refugees who had been settled by the Swedish Board of Migration (ABO), who moved from the larger regional centres either to the large urban regions or to smaller regional centres. The main explanation for the mobility of refugees towards urban regions has been the desire to reside closer to their co-ethnics and relatives in the larger cities, and to some extent also labour-market issues (Aslund, 2005).

This paper views the regional mobility of international migrants from a rural perspective. In accordance with this, research has focussed on the importance of international migration from the point of view of the regional labour market, not least due to

² The types of regions referred to in the study by Statistics Sweden (2008) are relatively large geographical areas, so-called labour-market regions (FA regions), which have been classified into five categories: (1) large urban regions (Stockholm, Göteborg, Malmö), (2) larger regional centres, (3) smaller regional centres, (4) small-sized regions with mainly private employment and (5) small-sized regions with mainly public employment. Due to their size, local variations, including rural areas, are not considered.

demographic reasons. Rural areas in Greece, for instance, are dependent on international workers across various sectors in the labour market (Kasimis et al., 2010), and British horticulture has been acknowledged for its increasing dependence on foreign workers (Rogaly, 2008). In Sweden too studies point to the need for international migrants in Swedish municipalities and in sparsely populated regions in the future (Glesbygdsverket, 2008; Hojem, 2010). However, few studies have investigated the population flows and demographic effects of international migration within Sweden, which is why this study is engaged with this question.

Data and methods

The paper uses a longitudinal database (STATIV), which contains detailed information on all individuals in Sweden from 1998 to 2007. The database contains information from various population registers, in particular the population register and the income tax register have been used. Previously administered by the Swedish Board of Integration, STATIV contains detailed information on international migration to Sweden. To this has been added the variable ‘locality’³, which gives the data set unique possibilities to analyse immigration to rural areas.

Based on ‘locality’ as the administrative unit, in this paper rural areas are defined by the size of the population in the localities, which has been categorised into three classes: (1) Rural areas (< 3000 inhabitants), (2) Small-scale localities (3000–10,000 inhabitants), and (3) Larger localities (> 10,000 inhabitants). Accordingly, the categorisation takes its starting point from localities of small sizes, whereas all other localities are grouped into one single category. This enables the analysis to take a rural perspective, while simultaneously being able to compare rural areas with urban areas.

³ In Swedish *tätort*, which is a small geographical unit that delimits all localities in Sweden as long as the population size is at least 200 individuals with a maximum of 200 metres between the buildings. This implies that both large and small-scale cities, as well as small villages (above the size of 200 individuals) are given a value.

The *dependency ratio* is calculated in three steps. First, we analyse the child dependency ratio, where the population of working age is compared with the population aged 0–20 years⁴. The child dependency ratio was calculated according to the following:

$$\text{CDR} = \frac{\text{Pop}^{0-20}}{\text{Pop}^{20-65}} \times 100$$

Second, the elderly dependency ratio was calculated, where the population aged 65 years and above was compared with the working-age population:

$$\text{EDR} = \frac{\text{Pop}^{65+}}{\text{Pop}^{20-65}} \times 100$$

Third, the total dependency ratio adds the effects of the child dependency ratio and the elderly dependency ratio:

$$\text{TDR} = \frac{\text{Pop}^{0-20} + \text{Pop}^{65+}}{\text{Pop}^{20-65}} \times 100$$

Of course, the child dependency ratio and the elderly dependency ratio may be in conflict with each other. Arguably, a high share of children in a rural area is not only a high dependency on the working-age population, but it also holds an indication of population increase in the future. Equally, although the child dependency ratio would be low in a district with few children, there would also be few possibilities for the region to increase the working-age population in the future. Nonetheless, the dependency ratio is a measure of the relationship between the population of working age and the rest of the population, indicating how many are available to provide for the elderly and children in a given region.

⁴ Usually, the child dependency rate is calculated on the population aged 0–16, but in the Swedish case it is rather unusual to start working before the age of 20.

International migrants are defined by their country of birth. Accordingly, only those who were born outside Sweden are categorised as international migrants, or foreign born, whereas their children are categorised as native born. However, an exception is made from this principle when the child dependency ratio and total dependency ratio are calculated. International migrants tend to postpone the birth of their children until after migration (Andersson 2004), which means that a large proportion of their children are born in Sweden. Accordingly, for the calculation of the dependency ratio, children under 20 have been classified as foreign born even if they were born in Sweden, provided they have two foreign-born parents.

Employment is defined according to each individual's main source of income. All individuals who had their main source of income registered from employment or self-employment were defined as employed, as long as their income in 2007 was higher than the basic amount geared to the price index (*prisbasbeloppet*, 40,300 SEK). If their income was higher due to other life events, such as studying, parental leave or unemployment, individuals were counted as being outside the labour market.

A logistic regression analysis has been performed in order to analyse the differences in employment between rural, small-scale and larger localities (Table 6, Model 1). In the modelling, both personal characteristics (Table 6, Model 2) and regional variations in Sweden (Table 6, Model 3) have been controlled for. The analysis thus eliminates the regional variations in, for instance, country of birth, time of residence etc., on the employment levels between various regions.

Empirical findings

International migrants in rural Sweden

In 2007, around 30 per cent of the total population in Sweden resided in rural areas and an additional share of 13 per cent resided in small-scale localities (Table 1). This distribution was very different for the foreign-born population, of whom less than 15 per cent resided in rural areas. Instead, almost three-quarters of the foreign-born population resided in larger localities. Accordingly, there is a relatively high concentration of the foreign-born population in larger localities (Aslund, 2005; Bartel, 1989; Damm, 2009).

Table 1: Distribution of population by type of locality, 2007.

	Total population		Foreign born pop.	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
<i>Rural area</i> (pop. <3000)	2 719 000	29.6	178 000	14.5
<i>Small-scale localities</i> (pop. 3000–10 000)	1 221 000	13.3	132 000	10.7
<i>Larger localities</i> (pop. >10 000)	5 243 000	57.1	918 000	74.8
<i>Total</i>	9 183 000	100.0	1 228 000	100.0

The concentration of international migrants in urban areas is also obvious when compared with the total population in each region. The share of the foreign born in the total population increases with the size of the type of locality and is considerably higher in larger localities than in rural or small-scale localities (Table 2, Figure 1).

Table 2: Development of the foreign born population 1998–2007. (% of total population)

	1998	2007	Δ 2007–1998	Annual growth rate 1998–2007
Rural areas	5.2	6.6	1.4	3.0
Small-scale localities	8.8	10.8	2.0	2.1
Larger localities	14.6	17.5	2.9	2.7
Total	11	13.4	2.4	2.6

However, although most international migrants resided in larger localities, there is a growing trend for the foreign-born population to reside in rural areas. More than 300,000 foreign-born individuals resided in rural and small-scale localities in 2007, pointing to a large number of international migrants residing in rural areas *per se*. Moreover, the annual growth rate of the foreign-born population from 1998 to 2007 was higher in rural areas than for Sweden overall (Table 2). This implies that international migration to rural areas is increasing, an increase which was higher in rural than small-scale localities. Nonetheless, the increase was noticeable in rural and small-scale as well as larger localities.

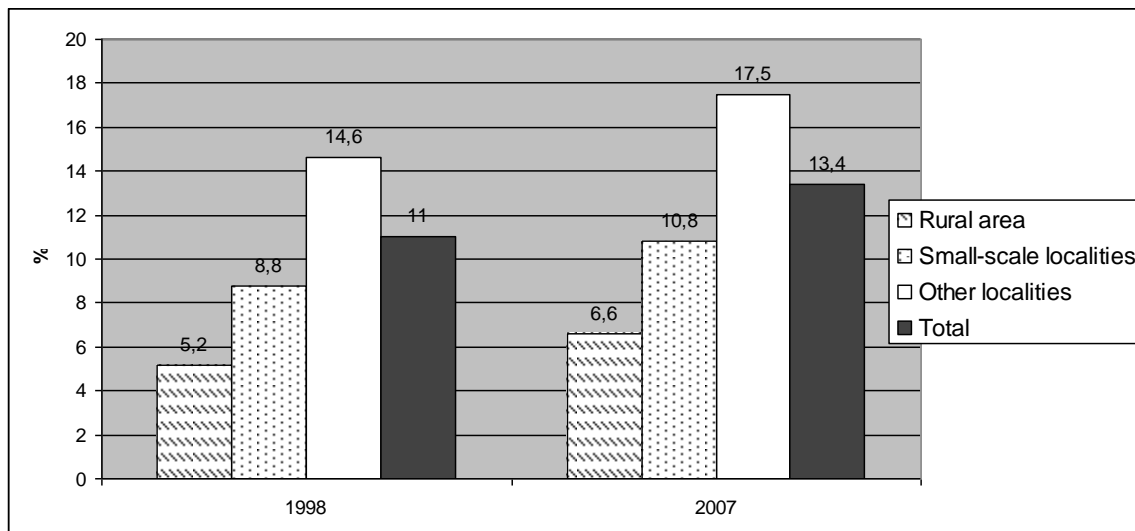


Figure 1: The share of the foreign-born population by type of region, 1998 and 2007.

The majority of the international migrants residing in the Swedish countryside were from western Europe, and particularly from the Nordic countries (Table 3). In general, the proportion of migrants from western Europe decreased the larger the locality. In small-scale localities there was a larger share coming from eastern Europe and western Asia than in rural areas. Individuals from western Asia were particularly common in larger localities. The region of birth is also mirrored in the figures on migration status, showing that migrants residing in rural areas had come to Sweden either within the common Nordic labour market or within the European Union. Small-scale localities show a different picture, with additional large shares of refugees and family migrants. In larger localities the latter type of migration is even more common, together with a small share of migrants arriving as labour migrants or students from outside the EU.

The share of refugees and family migrants tend to be rather similar in a locality, due to the subsequent waves of family members that accompany refugees within the following years (Migrationsverket, 2007). The occurrence of refugees and their families in both small-scale and larger localities is due to the policy of distribution of refugees to municipality centres around Sweden (Statistics Sweden, 2008). In rural areas, however, we can observe a different process. The share of family migrants is particularly higher than that of refugees, which in these areas probably reflects the marriage of foreign-born individuals to Swedish citizens (Niedomysl et al., 2010). Moreover, the higher proportion of EU migrants probably consists of people who migrated within Europe to improve their lifestyle (Glesbygdsverket, 2008, Robertson, 2010).

The distribution of migrants residing in Sweden was relatively similar between men and women, which is also the general trend internationally (United Nations, 2005). When rural and small-scale localities are compared with larger localities, however, there is a somewhat larger share of women residing in the countryside than in the larger cities (Table 2). Regarding the age distribution, there is a larger share of migrants of working age in the larger localities than in the rural and small-scale localities. This should not be confused with the demographic effects of immigration on the total age structure in a region, however, which will be analysed in the following section.

Table 3: Demographic characteristics of migrants in rural Sweden, 2007.

		Rural area	Small-scale localities	Larger localities	Total	Freq.
<i>Country region</i>	<i>W Europe</i>	58.3	39.2	25.3	31.6	387 900
	<i>E Europe</i>	16.4	24.9	22.4	21.8	267 800
	<i>W Asia</i>	7.3	15.0	26.4	22.4	275 200
	<i>E Asia</i>	9.5	9.6	10.2	10.0	123 000
	<i>Africa</i>	2.4	4.7	7.9	6.7	82 500
	<i>N America</i>	2.5	1.7	1.6	1.8	21 700
	<i>S America</i>	3.5	4.8	6.1	5.6	69 100
	<i>Total</i>	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	1 227 800
<i>Migration status</i> ⁵	<i>Refugee</i>	9.1	25.5	28.9	25.5	266 700
	<i>Family</i>	15.7	21.5	29.7	26.6	278 500
	<i>Nordic countries</i>	47.8	34.3	20.3	26.1	272 500
	<i>European Union</i>	26.7	17.9	18.1	19.4	202 800
	<i>Other</i>	0.7	0.8	2.9	2.4	24 600
	<i>Total</i>	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	1 045 000
<i>Gender</i>	<i>Man</i>	47.6	47.4	48.6	47.6	593 000
	<i>Woman</i>	52.4	52.6	51.4	52.4	634 700
	<i>Total</i>	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	1 227 800
<i>Age distribution</i>	<i>Child</i>	12.6	13.8	10.6	11.2	137 500
	<i>Working age</i>	68.7	68.7	75.7	73.9	907 600
	<i>Elderly people</i>	18.8	17.5	13.7	14.9	182 700
	<i>Total</i>	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	1 227 800

Migration affecting the age structure in the Swedish countryside

The population growth in sparsely populated regions in Sweden is negative due to both low fertility rates and negative interregional net migration (Glesbygdsverket, 2008). International migration, however, counterbalances this development, although not enough to impede the population decline. Given the fact that international migrants tend to be young (Warnes, 1992), these figures indicate that immigration to the countryside might contribute to a more positive age structure in the countryside. The population in Western societies is ageing, and most particularly so in rural areas. Even though there were higher shares of young migrants in the larger localities than in the rural and small-scale localities in absolute terms (Table 2), the effects of immigration on the age structure must be

⁵ According to Statistics Sweden, these figures should only be interpreted as tentative. The categorisation of migrants is unreliable and Statistics Sweden is working on improving the quality of this variable.

related to the total population. Accordingly, the age structure of the immigrant population is interesting above all in relation to the age structure of the native-born population in that region.

The *dependency ratio* measures the share of children and elderly people in relation to the population of working age. Comparing first the native-born population with the foreign-born population in Sweden as a whole, we can observe that both the child dependency ratio and the elderly dependency ratio are higher among the native-born population (Table 4). Particularly, the elderly dependency ratio is higher among the native-born population, indicating that there are more elderly people in relation to the working-age population in the Swedish-born population than among international migrants. Taken together, this means that whereas 100 Swedish-born individuals had to support 73 elderly and children, 100 foreign born individuals had to support 59 elderly and children.

Table 4: Dependency ratio of regions by country of birth, 2007 (child < 20 years; working-age ≥ 20 years and ≤ 65 years; and elderly > 65 years).

	Child dependency ratio		
	Native born pop.	Foreign born pop.	Δ Native born – foreign born pop.
<i>Rural areas</i>	47	30	-17
<i>Small-scale localities</i>	47	41	-6
<i>Larger localities</i>	36	40	4
<i>Total</i>	41	39	-2
	Elderly dependency ratio		
	Native born pop.	Foreign born pop.	Δ Native born – foreign born pop.
<i>Rural areas</i>	32	27	-4
<i>Small-scale localities</i>	36	26	-11
<i>Larger localities</i>	18	14	-4
<i>Total</i>	32	20	-12
	Total dependency ratio		
	Native born pop.	Foreign born pop.	Δ Native born – foreign born pop.
<i>Rural areas</i>	78	57	-21
<i>Small-scale localities</i>	83	67	-17
<i>Larger localities</i>	67	58	-9
<i>Total</i>	73	59	-14

Turning then to the demographic analysis of immigration in the countryside, we can observe that the child dependency ratio among the native-born population is higher in the countryside than in the larger localities (Table 4). The foreign-born population, however, which had a lower child dependency ratio in Sweden overall, had an even lower dependency ratio in rural areas. The elderly dependency ratio is higher in the countryside than in the larger localities for both population groups, however, it is higher for the native-born population than the foreign-born population. Particularly in small-scale localities, the international migrants contribute with a younger population structure than the Swedish-born population.

As a consequence, with respect to the age structure, international migrants are contributing to supporting the ageing population of the rural and small-scale areas. The total dependency ratio, roughly, means that 100 foreign born have to support 21 persons less than the native-born population in rural areas and 17 persons less in small-scale localities (Table 4). Accordingly, when the age structure is concerned, the foreign born population contributes to the support of the native-born population; it is ‘nourishing’ rather than ‘consuming’.

Favourable rural labour markets

The favourable age structure of international migrants in rural areas is not reflected in labour market participation, however. As is widely acknowledged, the gap in the labour market between the foreign-born and the native-born populations is wide, due to possible explanations such as discrimination, less favourable networks etc. (le Grand and Szulkin, 2002; Rydgren, 2004). As Table 5 shows, only 57 per cent of the foreign-born men of working age were employed or self-employed in Sweden overall, and 50 per cent of the foreign-born women. Instead, many occupied vulnerable positions, where they received their main income from social security allowances or, for newly arrived refugees, the

introductory allowance. Employment thus was considerably lower than in the native-born population regarding both men and women.

Despite these discrepancies, a rural perspective on employment gives a different picture. The employment of international migrants was somewhat higher in rural areas and small-scale localities than in larger localities for both men and women (Table 5). Moreover, the gap between foreign-born and native-born populations was smaller in the countryside than in larger localities. Entrepreneurship was, furthermore, higher in rural areas than in small-scale and larger localities, particularly among men. However, compared with the native-born population, the share of self-employed was low within the male foreign-born population in rural areas.

The largest proportion of immigrant men worked in the manufacturing sector, and secondly within the service sector (Table 6). Foreign-born women, on the other hand, mainly worked in the health care sector, and secondly in the service sector. Compared with the native-born population, foreign-born men were overrepresented in the hotel and restaurant sector and underrepresented in the construction sector. Foreign-born women, on the other hand, had a more similar pattern of employment to the Swedish-born population. To some extent, however, they were overrepresented in manufacturing, hotel and restaurant, services and health care. As has been shown elsewhere, the differences rather exist at a more nuanced level, and in wage levels, where both immigrant women and immigrant men earn considerably less than the native-born population (Hedberg, 2009).

Table 5: The employment structure of the foreign born by type of area, 2007 (aged 20–65 years).

		Rural areas	Small-scale localities	Larger localities	Total
		Foreign born			
<i>Man</i>	<i>Employed</i>	52.4	55.9	50.4	51.2
	<i>Entrepreneur</i>	8.0	5.8	5.8	6.1
	<i>Vulnerable position</i>	38.3	37.5	42.8	41.7
	<i>Other</i>	1.3	0.8	1.0	1.0
		100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
<i>Woman</i>	<i>Employed</i>	50.4	49.9	46.5	47.4
	<i>Entrepreneur</i>	3.1	2.4	2.1	2.3
	<i>Vulnerable position</i>	43.6	45.3	48.9	47.8
	<i>Other</i>	2.9	2.4	2.5	2.6
		100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
		Δ foreign born – native born			
<i>Man</i>	<i>Employed</i>	-17.4	-18.9	-22.4	-20.9
	<i>Entrepreneur</i>	-4.6	-1.8	-0.8	-2.6
	<i>Vulnerable position</i>	21.7	20.5	23.3	23.5
	<i>Other</i>	0.3	0.2	0.0	0.0
		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<i>Woman</i>	<i>Employed</i>	-19.2	-21.2	-24.3	-23.1
	<i>Entrepreneur</i>	-0.8	-0.4	-0.6	-0.8
	<i>Vulnerable position</i>	21.0	22.6	25.8	24.9
	<i>Other</i>	-1.0	-0.9	-1.0	-1.1
		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

The dominance in manufacturing among foreign-born men is particularly visible in rural areas and small-scale localities, where they are overrepresented in relation to the native-born population. The high share of foreign-born men working in the hotel and restaurant sector is not so dominant in rural areas, where foreign-born men are also underrepresented in farming. Among women also, the foreign-born population is overrepresented in manufacturing in rural and small-scale localities. Both men and women work less in the service sector in rural and small-scale localities than in larger localities, but they are overrepresented compared with the native-born population. Accordingly, in the countryside, the manufacturing sector could be viewed as the typical sector for the employment of international migrants.

The differences in migrant characteristics could explain some of the differences between employment figures in rural, small-scale and large-scale areas (Table 7). When only the

type of region is accounted for, there is a significantly higher chance of being in employment for the foreign-born population in rural and small-scale areas compared with those residing in larger localities (Model 1). When personal characteristics were added to the model, the chance for employment in rural areas and larger localities were about the same, while the possibilities for employment remained higher in small-scale localities (Model 2). In particular, coming from western Asia or Africa affected employment patterns negatively, while time of residence in Sweden strongly affected the chances for employment in a positive direction, as did a medium or high level of education. Being a woman affected employment negatively, as did also belonging to the oldest age group. The middle-aged age group, however, had a strong probability of becoming employed.

Table 6: Sector of work among foreign-born population by type of region, 2007 (aged 20–65 years).

		Foreign born				Δ foreign born – native born			
		Rural areas	Small-scale localities	Larger localities	Total	Rural areas	Small-scale localities	Larger localities	Total
<i>Man</i>	<i>Farming</i>	4.2	1.6	1.4	1.8	-2.7	0.0	0.4	-1.2
	<i>Manufacturing</i>	32.6	37.2	21.3	24.6	5.1	7.4	1.2	0.7
	<i>Construction</i>	10.9	7.2	5.7	6.6	-4.7	-5.7	-4.2	-5.6
	<i>Trade</i>	10.9	11.1	11.7	11.5	-1.1	-2.4	-2.2	-1.7
	<i>Hotel, rest.</i>	4.2	6.3	9.4	8.3	3.2	5.2	7.5	6.9
	<i>Transport</i>	7.8	7.8	11.4	10.5	-1.1	-0.5	3.0	1.9
	<i>Services</i>	14.6	14.9	20.6	19.2	1.0	-0.8	-2.7	0.1
	<i>Education</i>	4.6	3.9	5.4	5.2	0.5	-0.7	-0.2	0.2
	<i>Health care</i>	6.5	6.6	8.8	8.2	2.9	2.4	3.2	3.5
	<i>Other</i>	3.8	3.3	4.2	4.0	-3.1	-5.0	-6.0	-4.8
		100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<i>Woman</i>	<i>Farming</i>	3.1	1.8	1.9	2.0	0.3	0.7	0.9	0.5
	<i>Manufacturing</i>	14.6	17.0	9.2	10.9	4.6	6.3	1.7	2.2
	<i>Construction</i>	1.0	0.8	0.6	0.7	-0.2	-0.3	-0.4	-0.4
	<i>Trade</i>	8.7	9.0	9.0	8.9	-1.7	-2.5	-2.9	-2.4
	<i>Hotel, rest.</i>	3.9	4.4	5.3	5.0	1.6	2.2	2.6	2.5
	<i>Transport</i>	2.8	2.3	3.0	2.9	-0.3	-0.8	-0.8	-0.6
	<i>Services</i>	14.3	14.3	18.6	17.5	1.7	1.3	0.5	1.8
	<i>Education</i>	13.8	13.3	14.6	14.3	-3.7	-4.9	-1.9	-2.7
	<i>Health care</i>	32.1	32.0	30.8	31.2	0.1	1.7	4.8	2.8
	<i>Other</i>	5.8	5.2	7.0	6.6	-2.4	-3.7	-4.6	-3.6
		100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

When the geographical region of residence in Sweden is added, the difference in employment of foreign-born individuals between rural and small-scale localities towards larger localities is once again accentuated (Table 7, Model 3). Employment is once again highest in small-scale localities, but also in rural areas employment is now significantly higher than in larger localities. The regional analysis highlights that employment of foreign-born individuals is highest in Jönköping County in southern Sweden, which is well-known for its manufacturing sector in the Gnosjö district. Moreover, employment is high in the region of the capital city, Stockholm. The lowest employment figures are in the border regions of Skåne and Värmland, where probably some of the migrants are commuting to Denmark or Norway. Low employment figures are also found in Östergötland, Blekinge and Gotland in southern and central Sweden.

Taken together, the analysis shows that employment was particularly favourable in small-scale localities, and also more positive in rural areas than in larger localities when the region was taken into consideration. Whether this result is due to a positive selectivity of those who stay in the rural and small-scale localities, who would tend to move more often if they were outside the labour market, will be explored in the following section of this paper.

Table 7: Logistic regression on the probability of being employed in 2007.

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	Exp(B)	Sig.	Exp(B)	Sig.	Exp(B)	Sig.
Type of region (Base: larger locality)						
Rural areas	1,19	***	1,03	***	1,12	***
Small-scale areas	1,20	***	1,13	***	1,19	***
Region of origin (Base: West Europe)						
East Europe			1,07	***	1,10	***
East Asia			0,96	**	0,93	***
West Asia			0,64	***	0,60	***
Africa			0,70	***	0,64	***
North America			1,03		0,98	
South America			1,13	***	1,04	*
Time in Sweden (Base: Short (0-7 years))						
Mid (8-21 years)			3,02	***	3,00	***
Long (22 years or more)			3,74	***	3,62	***
Migration reason (Base: refugee)						
Family			1,15	***	1,13	***
Nordic			1,34	***	1,30	***
EU			1,27	***	1,20	***
Other			0,88	***	0,86	***
Age (Base: 20-35)						
35-50			1,33	***	1,31	***
50-65			0,61	***	0,61	***
Gender (Base: woman)						
Man			1,52	***	1,53	***
Education (Base: <12 years)						
12 years			2,07	***	2,08	***
>12 years			2,67	***	2,67	***
Region in Sweden (Base: Stockholm)						
Uppsala					0,82	***
Sörmland					0,77	***
Östergötland					0,65	***
Jönköping					1,06	***
Kronoberg					0,89	***
Kalmar					0,73	***
Gotland					0,64	***
Blekinge					0,65	***
Skåne					0,57	***
Halland					0,84	***
V_Götaaland					0,79	***
Värmland					0,60	***
Örebro					0,76	***
Västmanland					0,83	***
Dalarna					0,79	***
Gävleborg					0,76	***
Västernorrland					0,74	***
Jämtland					0,85	***

Interregional flows of international migrants

International migrants have higher interregional migration rates than the native-born population (Fischer and Malmberg, 2001). When people arrive from a foreign country they are less settled in the new place than the native-born population and they set out to find a place of residence in the new country. In this way, migration is a part of the individual life course, and just as mobility is higher in younger age groups it is also higher for newly arrived international migrants.

This section of the paper analyses the mobility flows between rural localities, small-scale localities and larger localities between two points in time; 1998 and 2007. It starts with a comparison of mobility flows between the native-born and the foreign-born population stocks. Thereafter, it will investigate the mobility of the migrant cohorts arriving in Sweden in 1998 and 1994–1997 respectively. The cohort arriving in 1998 is investigated in order to analyse the mobility pattern of a newly arrived cohort where the exact year of arrival is known. This cohort is then compared with a cohort of migrants who arrived between 1994 and 1997, which gives the mobility of a cohort from a slightly more long-term perspective and simultaneously gives a larger population for investigation. The size of the cohort is crucial for the next steps of the investigation, analysing the mobility of the cohort arriving 1994–1997 from a labour-market perspective. Also, the mobility of refugees arriving in 1997⁶ is analysed. Lastly, the net mobility flows of rural and small-scale areas, on the one hand, and larger localities, on the other, will be compared in order to investigate the regional effects of the rural–urban population exchange.

Comparison between the foreign-born population and the native-born population

When the total stock of international migrants in Sweden is examined, there was substantial mobility from the countryside to other localities from 1998 to 2007 (Table 8). Of all foreign-born individuals who resided in rural areas in 1998, only 71.4 per cent remained there ten years later. Among foreign-born individuals who resided in small-

⁶ There are no statistics for type of settlement (ABO, EBO, or other categorisations) among refugees prior to 1997.

scale localities the propensity to stay was even lower. Among those who resided in other localities, on the other hand, almost everybody remained. Accordingly, the stability among the international migrant population was considerably lower in rural areas and small-scale localities than in larger localities, and the mobility was mainly directed towards larger localities, even though there were also migrants who had moved from rural areas to small-scale localities, and vice versa. From the larger localities, there was a counter-stream of international migrants to rural areas, a mobility flow which was smaller to small-scale localities.

Table 8: Interregional mobility of the total foreign-born population, 1998–2007 (%).

		Rural areas	T = 2007 Small-scale localities	Larger localities	Total	
					Total	Total
T = 1998	Rural areas	71.4	6.7	21.9	100.0	113 211
	Small-scale localities	7.9	68.3	23.7	100.0	90 507
	Larger localities	4.7	2.8	92.5	100.0	584 000
	No position 1998 ⁷	14.3	10.4	75.3	100.0	439 286
	Total	14.5	10.7	74.8	100.0	1 227 004

The mobility flows of international migrants (Table 8) can be compared with those of the native-born population (Table 9). Here it becomes obvious that the mobility of international migrants to the larger localities was higher, whereas the mobility to rural areas was higher within the native-born population. However, although there were differences, these were relatively small, particularly if one considers that the stock of international migrants also contains newly-arrived migrants who are in a particularly mobile phase of the life course.

⁷ Individuals who immigrated 1998–2006.

Table 9: Interregional mobility of the total native-born population, 1998–2007 (%).

		T = 2007				
		Rural areas	Small-scale localities	Larger localities	Total	Total
T = 1998	Rural areas	78.4	5.3	16.3	100.0	2 263 484
	Small-scale localities	12.0	71.1	16.9	100.0	1 002 955
	Larger localities	9.4	3.4	87.2	100.0	3 731 395
	No position 1998 ⁸	30.6	13.5	55.8	100.0	957 322
	Total	31.9	13.7	54.4	100.0	7 955 156

Mobility flows of newly arrived cohorts

As argued above, the life course perspective suggests that the mobility of newly arrived international migrants would be particularly high (Fischer and Malmberg, 2001). When we analyse the cohort of migrants arriving in Sweden in 1998, the mobility flows are indeed quite high (Table 10). Particularly, the process of urban concentration is considerable, compared with the total foreign-born population (Table 8). However, there is also a somewhat higher mobility of the newly-arrived cohort from larger localities to both rural and large-scale localities. More than 40 per cent of all migrants who arrived in Sweden in 1998, and who resided in rural or small-scale areas that same year, had moved to larger localities by 2007. There was thus a considerable urbanisation process going on among the newly arrived migrants. However, there was also a noticeable exchange of populations between rural and small-scale localities, probably illustrating a local settlement process in the initial stage of migration to Sweden. Moreover, there was a counter-flow going from larger localities to rural and small-scale localities, which however was relatively smaller than the population exchange between rural and small-scale localities. Nonetheless, these flows indicate an important number of international migrants who made an active choice to live in the countryside. All in all, there was a high turnover in all types of areas due to the mobile character of newly-arrived migrants.

⁸ Individuals who immigrated or were born 1998–2006.

Table 10: Interregional mobility from 1998 to 2007 of the migrant cohort arriving in Sweden in 1998 (%).

		T = 2007			Total	
		Rural area	Small-scale locality	Larger locality		
T = 1998	Rural area	50.5	9.0	40.6	100.0	2 000
	Small-scale locality	10.1	45.8	44.1	100.0	1 981
	Larger locality	5.2	4.4	90.4	100.0	16 343
		10.2	8.9	81.0	100.0	20 324

For the cohort arriving between 1994 and 1997 the flows towards larger localities were high also, but not to the same extent as for the cohort arriving in 1998 (Table 11). Accordingly, mobility slows down some years after arrival and the mobility in the initial years is quite important for the subsequent place of residence. About one-third of all migrants who arrived in Sweden between 1994 and 1997, and who resided in rural or small-scale areas in 1998, had moved to larger localities by 2007. However, here as well, there were counter-flows going in the opposite direction, with about 4 per cent of the newly arrived migrants moving from larger localities to rural areas and 3.5 per cent moving to small-scale localities.

Table 11: Interregional mobility from 1998 to 2007 of the migrant cohort arriving in Sweden in 1994–1997 (%).

		T = 2007			Total	
		Rural area	Small-scale locality	Larger locality		
T = 1998	Rural area	58.8	9.0	32.2	100.0	11 563
	Small-scale locality	6.4	58.6	35.0	100.0	16 085
	Larger locality	4.2	3.5	92.3	100.0	100 433
		9.4	10.9	79.7	100.0	128 081

Mobility of a newly-arrived cohort depending on labour-market status

To investigate how employment status affected the mobility flows, the working-age population of the migrant cohort that arrived in Sweden between 1994 and 1997 was examined further. The interregional mobility of the employed population (Table 12) is compared with the mobility of the population outside the labour market (Table 13). There is a somewhat higher probability that newly arrived international migrants would remain in rural areas or small-scale localities if they were employed than if they were outside the labour market. The differences are not very large, however. Even if international migrants were employed when they resided in rural areas or small-scale localities, almost 30 per cent still preferred to migrate to larger localities. Accordingly, even though it is true that the employment status could have changed between 1998 and 2007 it still indicates that lack of employment alone does not explain the urban concentration of international migrants. Instead, it gives support to the additional role of social networks in this migration process, with migrants moving to larger cities in order to live closer to relatives and co-ethnics (Aslund, 2005). Moreover, among the employed population there was also a larger mobility from rural areas to small-scale localities within this population group, which might indicate that this mobility was job-related.

Table 12: Interregional mobility between 1998 and 2007 of the migrant cohort arriving in Sweden between 1994 and 1997 who were in employment, 1998 (aged 20–65 years).

		T=2007			Total	
		Rural area	Small-scale locality	Other locality		
T=1998	Rural area	62.7	10.0	27.3	100.0	2 427
	Small-scale locality	8.6	63.1	28.3	100.0	2 846
	Larger locality	6.9	4.9	88.2	100.0	16 204
		13.5	13.2	73.4	100.0	21 477

Table 13: Interregional mobility between 1998 and 2007 of the migrant cohort arriving in Sweden between 1994 and 1997 who were outside the labour market in 1998 (aged 20–65 years).

		T=2007				
		Rural area	Small-scale locality	Larger locality	Total	
T=1998	Rural area	56.6	9.3	34.1	100.0	3 878
	Small-scale locality	6.3	57.4	36.3	100.0	6 201
	Larger locality	4.1	3.4	92.5	100.0	46 934
		7.9	9.7	82.4	100.0	57 013

Mobility flows of refugees depending on initial regional settlement patterns

In previous research, the mobility of international migrants towards urban areas has been found to be particularly high among refugees (Johansson and Rauhut, 2008; Statistics Sweden, 2008). This process has been linked to the Swedish settlement policy, which distributes refugees regionally in Sweden. The geographical unit of analysis in previous research has been labour-market regions, which are large geographical units that do not take rural aspects into account. This analysis complements these studies by analysing rural, small-scale and larger localities, focusing on the mobility pattern from 1998 to 2007 of the cohort of refugees arriving in 1997.

In 1997, 9000 refugees arrived in Sweden (Table 14), of whom around 40 per cent were self-settled (ABO) and 60 per cent authority-settled (EBO or other refugee categories). As expected, in 1998 there was a higher concentration of self-settled refugees in larger localities than authority-settled refugees (Table 15). Ten years later, in 2007, there had been a concentration of authority-settled refugees towards urban areas, even though a higher proportion of them still resided in rural and small-scale areas than did self-settled refugees.

Table 14: Refugees arriving in Sweden 1997.

	Freq.	%
Authority-settled	5 513	59.9
Self-settled	3 685	40.1
<i>Total</i>	<i>9 198</i>	<i>100.0</i>

Table 15: Settlement in 1998 and 2007 of refugees who arrived in 1997 (%).

	Self-settled	Authority-settled
<i>1998</i>		
Rural areas	3.7	5.0
Small-scale localities	9.2	15.5
Larger localities	87.1	79.5
Total	100.0	100.0
<i>2007</i>		
Rural areas	3.7	5.5
Small-scale localities	8.5	11.2
Larger localities	87.8	83.3
Total	100.0	100.0

The interregional mobility pattern among authority-settled and self-settled refugees between 1998 and 2007 shows particularly high mobility compared with all other cohorts investigated (Tables 16 and 17). The tendency to remain in rural areas was low in both groups, but among authority-settled migrants it was even lower. As can be seen in Table 15, only one-third of these refugees remained in a rural area in 2007 and instead 10 per cent had moved to a small-scale locality, while the majority had continued on to larger localities. Looking at the same pattern for self-settled refugees, these flows were somewhat lower (Table 17).

Accordingly, the regional settlement pattern that was found in previous studies (Statistics Sweden, 2008) seems to have an additional rural dimension. Refugees who have been settled by authorities move particularly from rural localities to small-scale and larger localities. However, the counter-flows, from urban to more rural areas, also differed between the groups and were higher for the authority-settled refugees (Tables 16 and 17). Thus, even in the case of authority-settled refugees, there are flows going in both directions, showing that there are refugees who are willing to reside in both urban and rural areas.

Table 16: The mobility pattern between 1998 and 2007 of authority-settled refugees who arrived in Sweden in 1997.

		T=2007				
		Rural area	Small-scale locality	Larger locality	Total	
T=1998	Rural area	36.5	9.4	54.2	100.0	277
	Small-scale locality	3.3	47.8	48.9	100.0	854
	Larger locality	3.9	4.2	91.9	100.0	4 382
		5.5	11.2	83.3	100.0	5 513

Table 17: The mobility pattern between 1998 and 2007 of self-settled refugees who arrived in Sweden in 1997.

		T=2007				
		Rural area	Small-scale locality	Larger locality	Total	
T=1998	Rural area	39.4	7.3	53.3	100.0	137
	Small-scale locality	5.6	53.7	40.7	100.0	339
	Larger locality	2.0	3.7	94.2	100.0	3 209
		3.7	8.5	87.8	100.0	3 685

Net mobility flows between rural/small-scale areas and larger localities

In all the cases analysed above there has been a considerably greater tendency for international migrants to stay in larger localities than in rural and small-scale localities. In relative terms, the flows towards larger localities have been higher than the counter-flows to rural and small-scale localities. However, as Table 2 showed at the beginning of this paper, the annual growth rate of international migrants was higher in rural areas than in larger localities, while it was lower in small-scale localities.

This indicates that when it comes to rural areas the relative figures in Tables 9–17 give only half the truth. In absolute numbers, the counter-flow from larger localities to rural areas was actually higher among most of the cohorts investigated above (Table 18). For small-scale localities, on the other hand, the pattern tended to be reversed. Accordingly, even though a high proportion of the international migrants is leaving rural areas, there is an even higher number that actively seeks to live there. The net gain of rural areas is positive compared with larger localities, which indicates a ‘green wave’ including inter-

national migrants. Small-scale localities, on the other hand, are losing population towards larger localities.

Comparing net mobility between the total foreign-born population and the total native-born population in rural areas the former had a positive net mobility, whereas the latter had a negative net mobility (Table 18). In small-scale localities both are negative. For rural areas in particular, the foreign-born population thus contributed with population compared with the native-born population.

Table 18: Net gain of rural and small-scale localities in relation to larger localities, 1998–2007.

	Rural area	Small-scale locality
Total foreign born pop.	2 581	-5 148
Total native born pop.	-15 672	-43 802
Migrant cohort 1998	47	-162
Migrant cohort 1994–1997	495	-2 092
Migrant cohort 1994–1997, employed	461	-13
Migrant cohort 1994–1997, outside labour market	588	-632
Refugee cohort 1997, authority-settled	23	-234
Refugee cohort 1997, self-settled	-8	-18

The two cohorts of newly-arrived migrants, 1998 and 1994–1997, both showed positive in-migration to rural areas from larger localities, whereas the mobility for small-scale localities was negative (Table 18). The same pattern goes for the cohort that arrived between 1994 and 1997, when labour market status is investigated. Here, however, the net loss for small-scale localities was small, thus indicating job-related migration to these areas.

Refugees, on the other hand, had a diverging mobility pattern (Table 18). Whereas the group of authority-settled refugees in rural areas had a positive population exchange compared with larger localities, the opposite was true for self-settled refugees. They

concentrated in larger localities to an even higher degree. This result speaks against previous research, pointing to an urban concentration of authority-settled refugees as time passes, which can be explained by a different use of geographical units in the analysis.

Conclusions

This paper has investigated the distribution and effects of international migrants in Sweden from a rural perspective. It has examined the characteristics of migrants, and their effects on the countryside regarding the age structure of the population. Moreover, it has analysed international migrants from a labour-market perspective. Furthermore the interregional mobility of international migrants in Sweden has been investigated, compared with the native-born population, regarding newly arrived cohorts, their labour-market status and refugee status.

The paper finds that there are large differences between the patterns and processes of international migration to the countryside compared with the larger localities. Individuals have mainly migrated to rural areas as part of the intra-European and intra-Nordic mobility process. In respect of larger localities, on the other hand, refugees and family migration is the most prominent migration process. Small-scale localities take a middle position, with both intra-European and refugee-related migration as the main migration processes. Nonetheless, there are also groups of refugees and family-related migration in rural areas as well.

The paper seeks to analyse whether international migration contains possibilities for rural Sweden. In the analysis of the demographic effects it is found that the foreign born population contributes positively to the age structure in rural and small-scale localities. Both the child dependency ratio and the elderly dependency ratio are higher for the native-born population than for international migrants. Accordingly, international migrants are already a resource to the countryside when the population structure is considered.

However, the potential that international migration brings to the countryside in terms of a positive age structure is not reflected in the labour market. In the countryside, as well as in the rest of Sweden, there is a wide gap in the labour market between the foreign-born and the native-born population. Importantly, however, this gap is somewhat smaller in rural areas and small-scale localities than it is in the larger localities, a divergence that is not explained by the migrants' different characteristics. When aspects such as the migrants' country of birth, age structure, gender, and region of residence in Sweden were controlled for, the higher employment propensity remained in the countryside. Particularly high employment was found in small-scale localities. Employment of international migrants in rural and small-scale localities is primarily in the manufacturing sector. This concerns men, but women are also overrepresented in manufacturing work compared with the native-born population.

The analysis of interregional mobility between types of regions indicates the complexity in mobility patterns among international migrants. The total immigrant population had a slightly higher mobility than the native-born population. Mobility was particularly high among newly arrived migrant cohorts, however, with refugees showing by far the highest mobility pattern. As expected, authority-settled refugees had a higher mobility than self-settled refugees. Mobility was also higher among migrants outside the labour market than those migrants having employment.

The analysis of the direction of these mobilities depends on whether the flows are analysed in relative or in absolute terms. The population turnover is considerably higher in rural and small-scale localities than in larger localities. Whereas there is a high share of international migrants moving from the countryside towards urban areas, the flows going in the opposite direction are quite small. However, to mention this just as a loss of rural and small-scale localities towards larger localities would be misleading, since the net mobility for rural areas is actually positive. These flows going from larger to rural localities are probably connected to a life-style related counter-urbanisation process among international migrants, which could not be discerned among the native-born

population. Authority-settled refugees also followed this pattern, thus indicating that the high mobility of this group is not only directed towards co-ethnics in the large urban regions but also contains a number of individuals who are looking for rural living conditions. The same process of positive net mobility and counter-urbanisation could not be found among small-sized localities.

This analysis indicates that international migration holds the potential for the development of rural and small-scale areas in Sweden. In the future, in the ageing society, the population will decrease further and the positive age structure of international migrants compared with the Swedish-born population could be a very important factor for the countryside. Interregional mobilities towards the countryside are of importance to the regional population structures even though these mobilities are small when seen from the perspective of larger localities. Accordingly, international migration could function as a 'demographic refill' of rural populations in the future.

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