

The Long-Term Integration of Refugee Children

Swedish experiences after the Yugoslav wars

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Introduction

Motivation

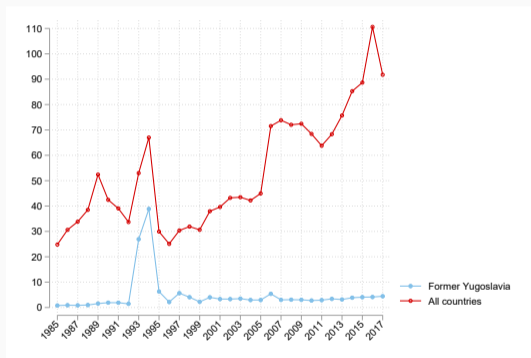
- Major issue in public debate – individuals, families, and societies
 - Need to understand mechanisms and outcomes
- Surprisingly(?) few quantitative (longitudinal) studies on long-term outcomes of refugee children
- Topical – similarities with current European situation
 - Major and rapid flows due to armed conflict
 - Uncertainty about future developments
 - Political tensions
- Sweden interesting case
 - Major recipient of humanitarian migrants
 - Pre-existing Yugoslavian diaspora (labor migration)
 - Extensive policy efforts

This paper

- Refugee youth from former Yugoslavia; 1993–1994
 - Born 1977–1999 \Rightarrow -6–16 years old at migration
- Economic and social integration 1994–2019
 - Educational performance
 - Labor market outcomes
 - Social integration
 - Residential and workplace segregation
 - Family formation – endogamy
- We find
 - Strong educational and labor market integration
 - Performance gaps decrease by birth cohort and time
 - Age at migration $\leq 7 \approx$ natives
 - Striking segregation in family formation
 - 3-4 years old at migration: endogamy 60-70%
 - Gender differences, socioeconomic gradients
 - Associated with future migration

Background – Yugoslav war refugees in Sweden

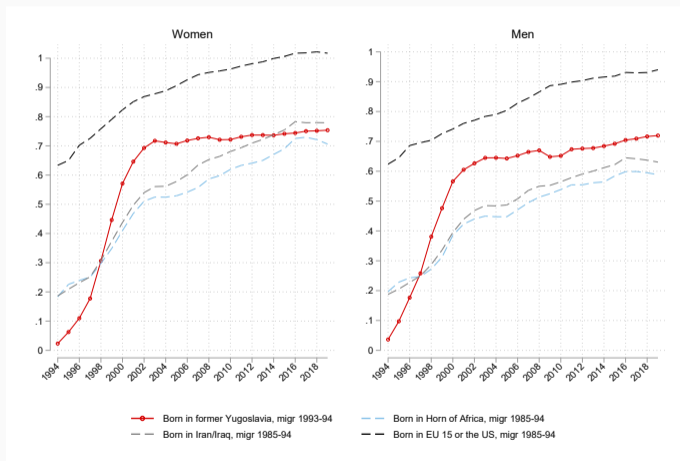
- Sweden: 66,000 refugees and 11,000 tied movers 1993-1994
 - Asylum seekers from 1991
- Met very poor economic conditions
 - National unemployment 2 → 10 percent in early 1990s
- Substantial targeted policy efforts
- Previous work also on youth, but no comprehensive study of long-run outcomes(?) (Bucken-Knapp et al., 2020; Bennich-Björkman et al., 2016; Frykman, 2012; Ekblad, 1993; Angel et al., 2001)



Immigration to Sweden 1985–2017

Adults: Stagnating success story. Vast majority remained.

(Collaboration with World Bank project "The International Migration in ECA: evidence, challenges and policy solutions")



Average earnings relative to same-age natives

Theoretical considerations

- Formation of skills (Borjas, 2014; Duleep, 2015)
 - Related to age at migration (Bleakley and Chin, 2010; Cunha et al., 2006)
- Identity formation (Erikson, 1968)
- Cultural transmission (Bisin and Verdier, 2001)
 - Possibly gendered (Fernández and Fogli, 2009)
- Traumatic experiences, health (Fazel et al., 2012)
- Intermarriage – endogamy (Hannemann et al., 2018; Dribe and Lundh, 2011)
 - Preferences – identity
 - Social status
 - Assortative mating

Refugee children – examples of previous findings

- Literature spans many disciplines and perspectives, but few broad longitudinal investigations (Pritchard et al., 2019)
 - Language and literacy (Paradis et al., 2020)
 - Health challenges (Fazel et al., 2012; Jervelund et al., 2020)
 - Labor market entry and family formation (Yoshida and Amoyaw, 2020)
- Swedish evidence
 - Performance gaps in education - "accounted for" by parental and contextual characteristics (Grönqvist and Niknami, 2017),
 - Unaccompanied minors
 - Similar to other refugees (Celikaksoy and Wadensjö, 2017)
 - 2015 cohort: Strong employment outcomes, fewer attain higher education (Statistics Sweden, 2023),

Data and empirical strategy

- Population-wide longitudinal administrative data (IFAU database)
 - Population registers and tax records
 - Education registers
 - Multi-generation register
 - SPES data on unemployment and ALMP participation
 - Linked employer-employee data
- Sample
 - (Parents) Immigrated 1993-1994, born in "Yugoslavia" or "Bosnia-Herzegovina"
 - Child migrants 0-16, children of immigrants born before 1999
 - Outcomes 1994-2019 ⇒ up to 25 years

Group Characteristics

Birth cohorts	1977–1981	1982–1986	1987–1999
Age at migration (res permit)	12–16	7–12	-6–7
Female	0.48	0.49	0.48
<i>Parental education (highest):</i>			
At most compulsory	0.24	0.20	0.14
At most 3-year secondary	0.41	0.48	0.54
Any tertiary	0.31	0.32	0.32
Missing (both parents)	0.03	0.00	0.00
N	5,626	7,467	18,059

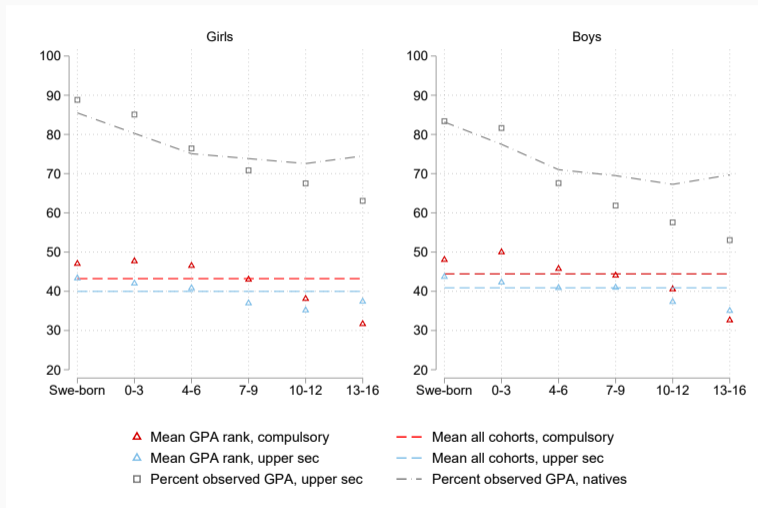
► Details

Outcomes and methods

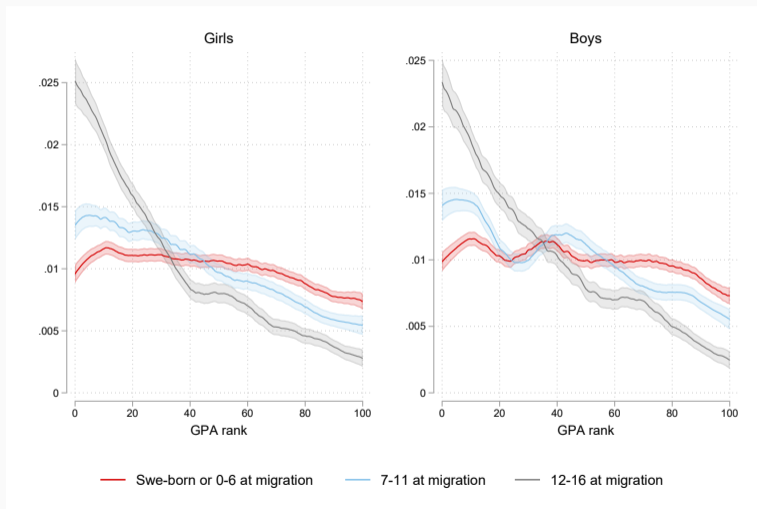
- Outcomes
 - Education: GPA, highest completed level
 - Labor market: earnings, unemployment, NEET, tasks (O*NET)
 - Age 25+
 - Family formation: endogamy based on partner origin
 - Partner = other parent of first child
 - Residential and workplace segregation
 - Exposure and overexposure (Aslund and Skans, 2009)
- Methods
 - Main: descriptions relative to natives of same age and gender
 - Regressions - parental education, contextual FE
 - Age at migration - family FE

Results

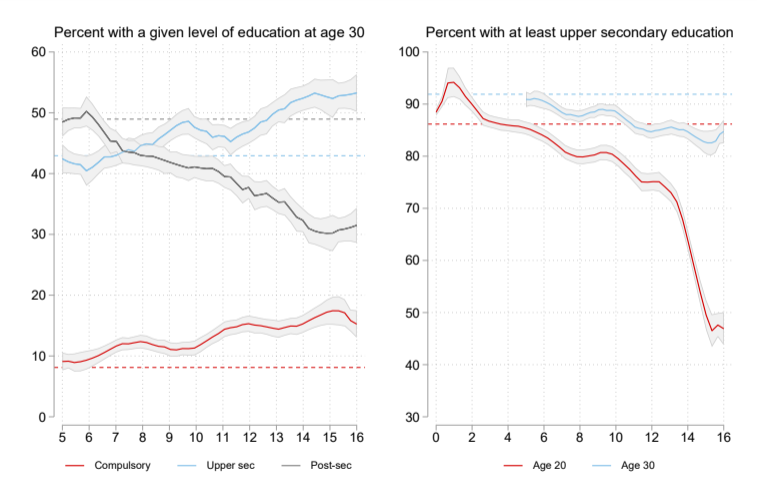
Compulsory and upper secondary school GPA



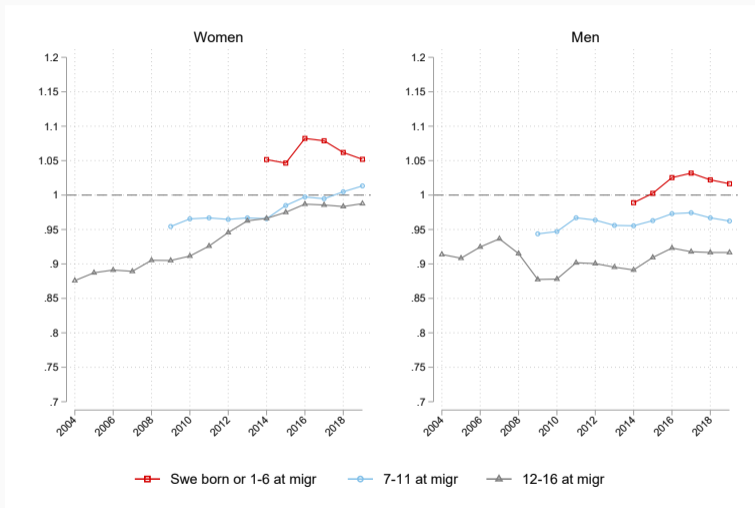
Grade 9 GPA distribution



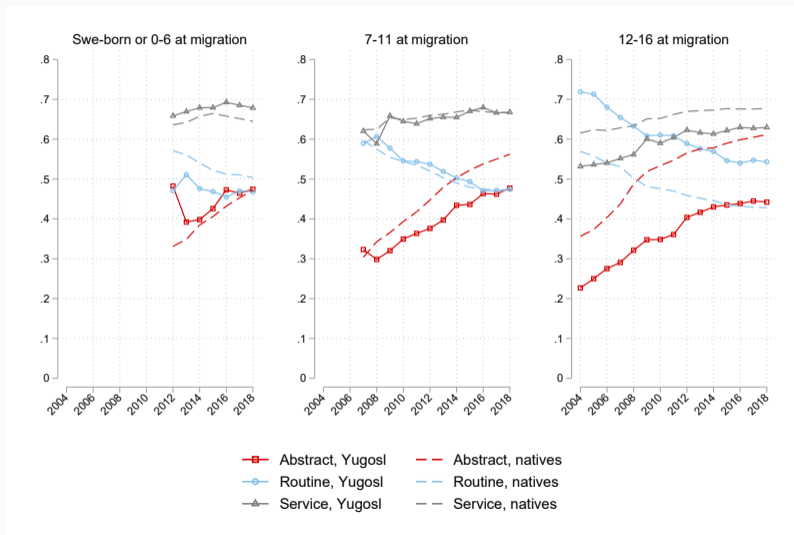
Educational attainment at age 20 and 30



Earnings relative to natives of the same age. (Age ≥ 25 .)



Task composition (Share in occupation with task score > overall mean)

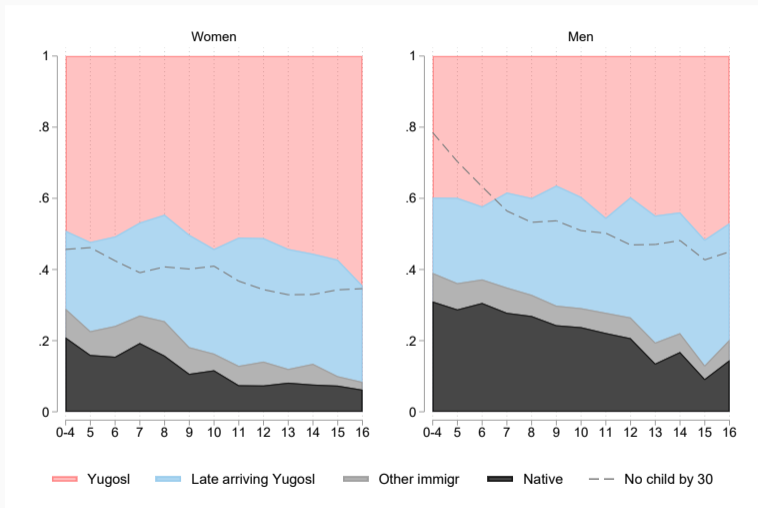


Note: Classification follows Goos et al. (2009)

Social integration

- Residential and workplace segregation
 - Significant overexposure to Yugoslavs ▶ Residential ▶ Workplace
 - Decreases with education
 - Less clearly connected to age at migration (cond. on education)
 - Decrease over time (particularly residential)
- Family formation – endogamy/exogamy
 - Extent and predictors
 - Gender differences
 - Partner characteristics

Partner background (among those with first child by age 30)

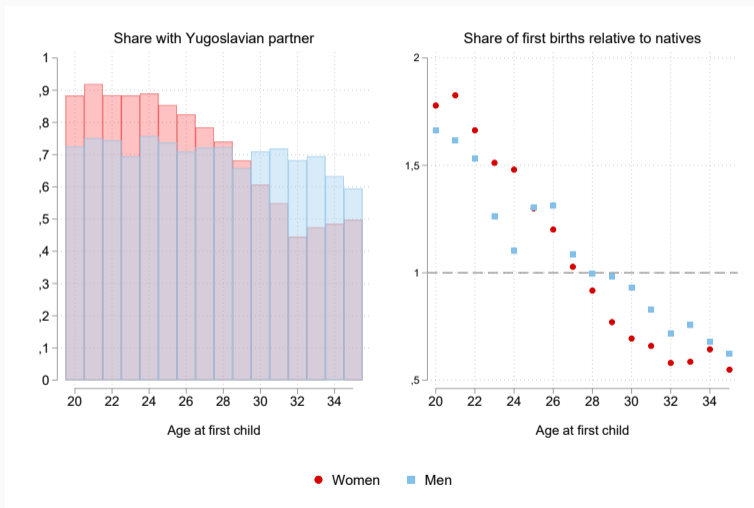


Note: "Yugoslavian partner" = (at least 1 parent) born in fm Yugoslavia

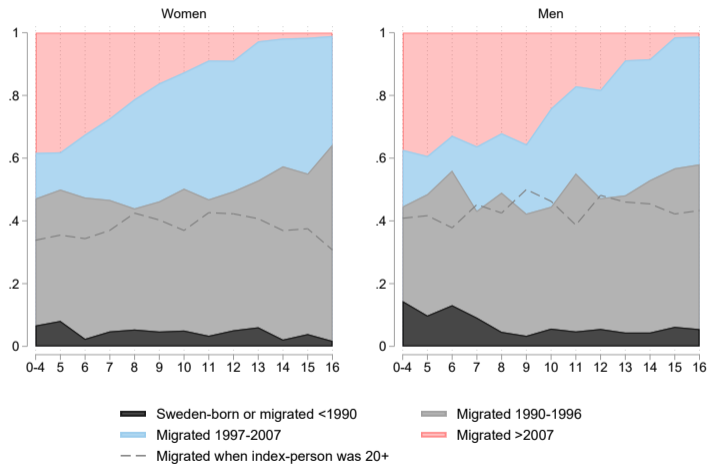
Predictors of exogamy (among those with first child by age 30)

	(1) Women	(2) Men
<i>Outcome: Partner with non-Yugoslavian background</i>		
Age at migration: 7-11	-0.047*** (0.014)	-0.066*** (0.019)
Age at migration: 12-16	-0.119*** (0.014)	-0.178*** (0.020)
Parental education: upper sec	0.026** (0.013)	0.068*** (0.018)
Parental education: post-sec	0.094*** (0.016)	0.097*** (0.020)
Bosnia-born	0.052*** (0.011)	0.074*** (0.014)
GPA rank, 9th grade	0.066*** (0.022)	0.006 (0.033)
Observations	5,738	4,330
R-squared	0.038	0.038
Y mean	0.186	0.282

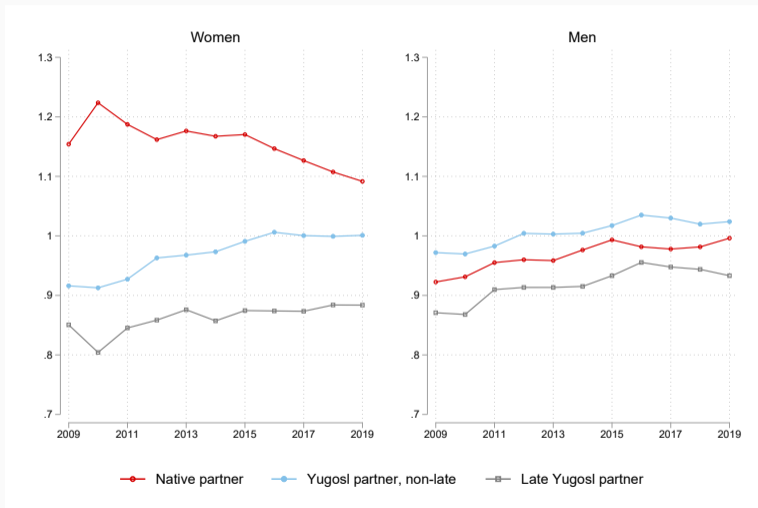
Timing of first birth, gender, and endogamy



Time of immigration, Yugoslavian partners

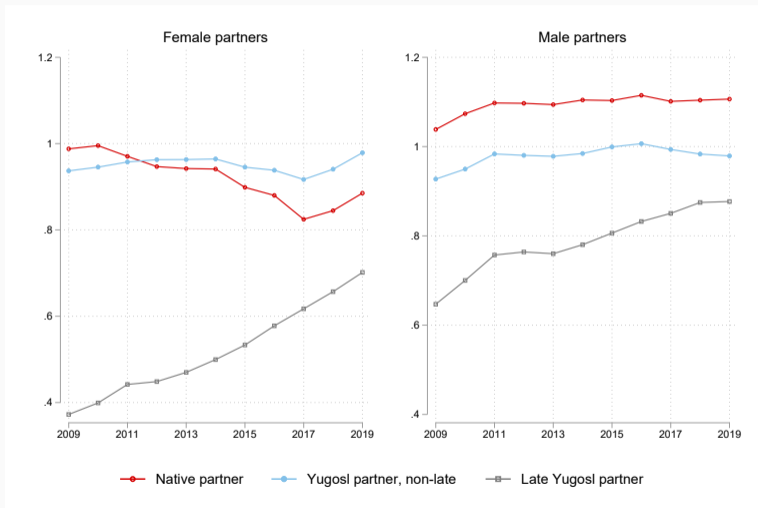


Earnings by partner category



Note: Relative to same-age natives

Partner earnings



Note: Relative to same-age natives

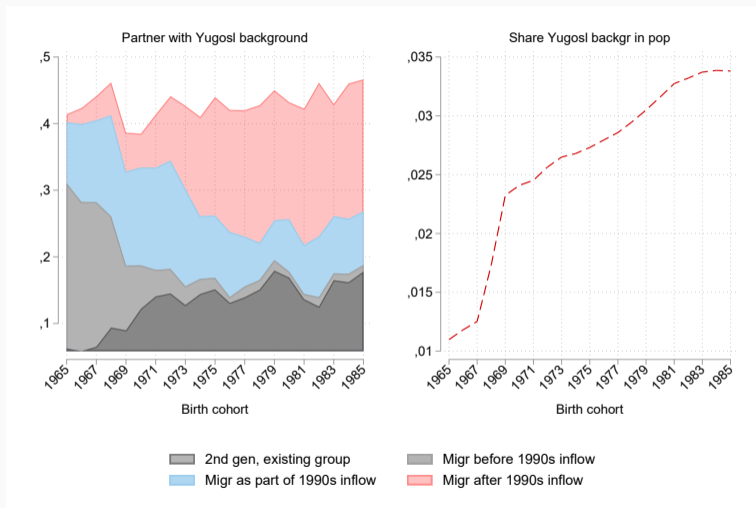
Exogamy and gender differences in parental leave benefits

Parental leave uptake and partner's background

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Outcome: diff in parental leave benefits (woman's uptake–man's uptake)	Women	Women excl late partner	Men	Men excl late partner
Native partner	-47,298*** (6,803)	-43,657*** (7,056)	42,332*** (6,683)	-3,732 (7,019)
Observations	5,425	3,831	4,214	2,972
R-squared	0.19	0.16	0.13	0.14
Mean outcome	220,500	207,600	172,900	211,400

- Note 1: Mean outcome $> 0 \Rightarrow$ women take more leave
- Note 2: Conditional on earnings year before child birth
- Note 3: Eligibility issues late partners (affect females more)
- Indication endogamy related to gender norms

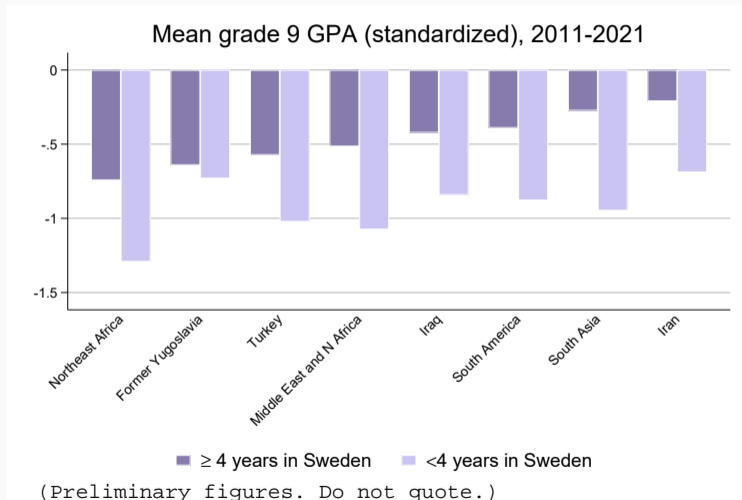
Supply shock for previous Yugoslavs? (2nd gen living in Sweden before the 1990s)



(Share Yugo age 20–30 when focal individual 25)

Conclusions

Relevance for current situation?



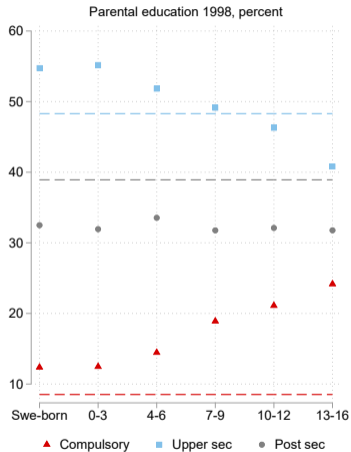
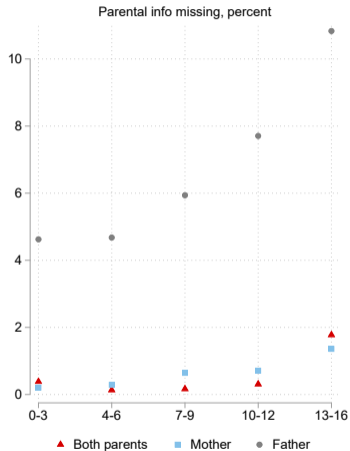
- UNHCR, Sep. 2023:
"Almost half of school-aged refugee children from Ukraine not enrolled in host country schools"

Concluding remarks

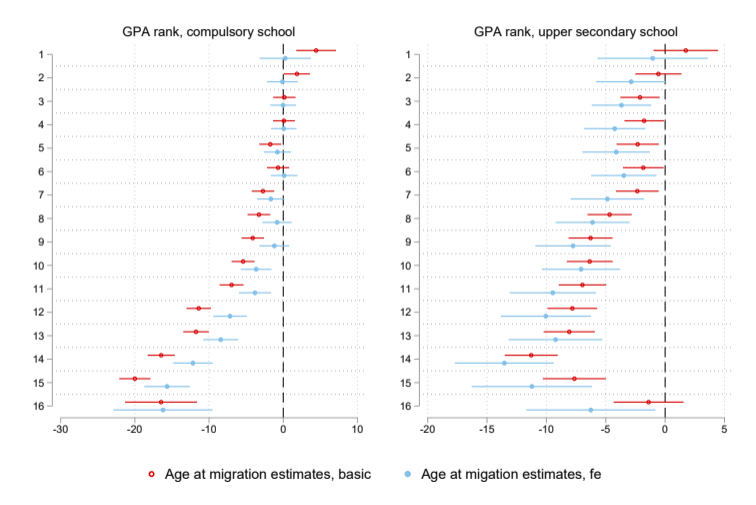
- Long-term integration of refugee children
 - Former Yugoslavia to Sweden early 1990s
- Education and the labor market
 - Overall successful
 - Age at migration matters
 - Many reach parity with natives (especially girls/women)
- The marriage market
 - Extensive endogamy
 - Gendered and related to age at migration and socioeconomic status
 - No support for "Muslim vs. other"
 - Speculations
 - Local supply of limited importance
 - ⇒ Bearing on migration flows
 - 40–50% vs 60–70%: Parental integration or impact of trauma?

Appendix

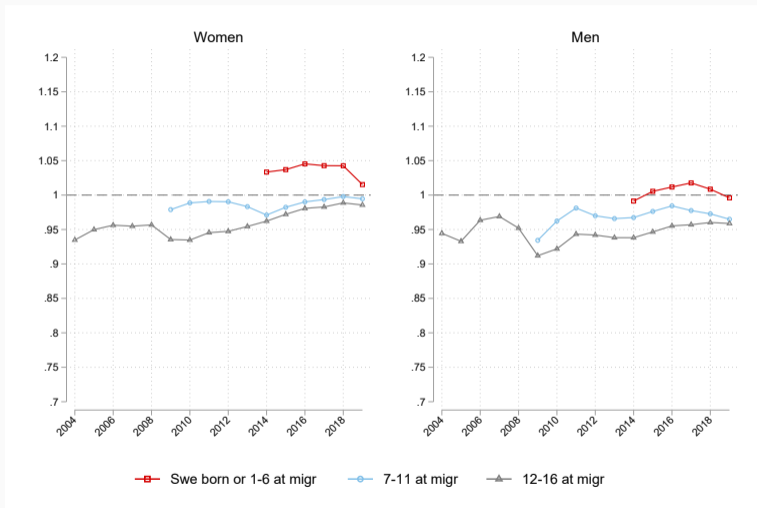
Details on parental education



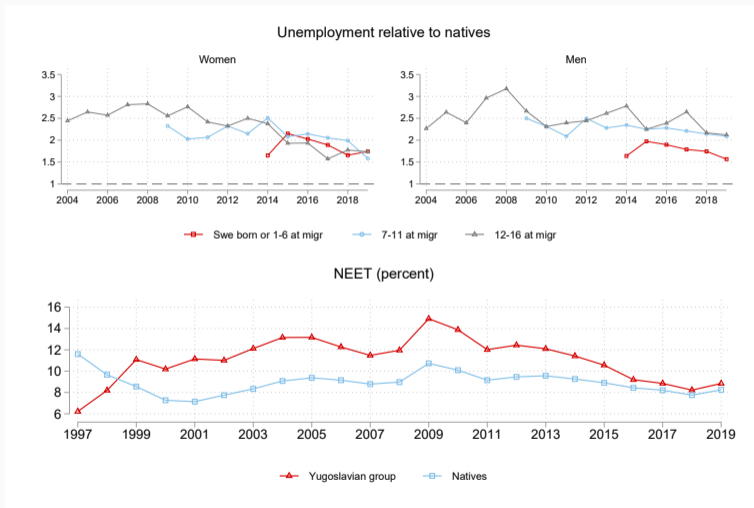
Regression of outcomes on age at migration, with and without family fe:s



Employment relative to natives of the same age

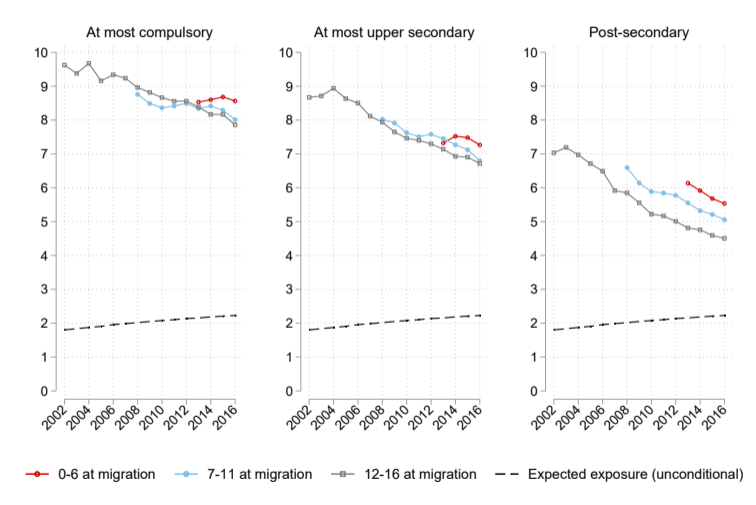


NEET and long-term unemployment



Note: Share unemployed > 180 days, relative to natives.

Exposure to Yugoslavian neighbors



Exposure to Yugoslavian co-workers

