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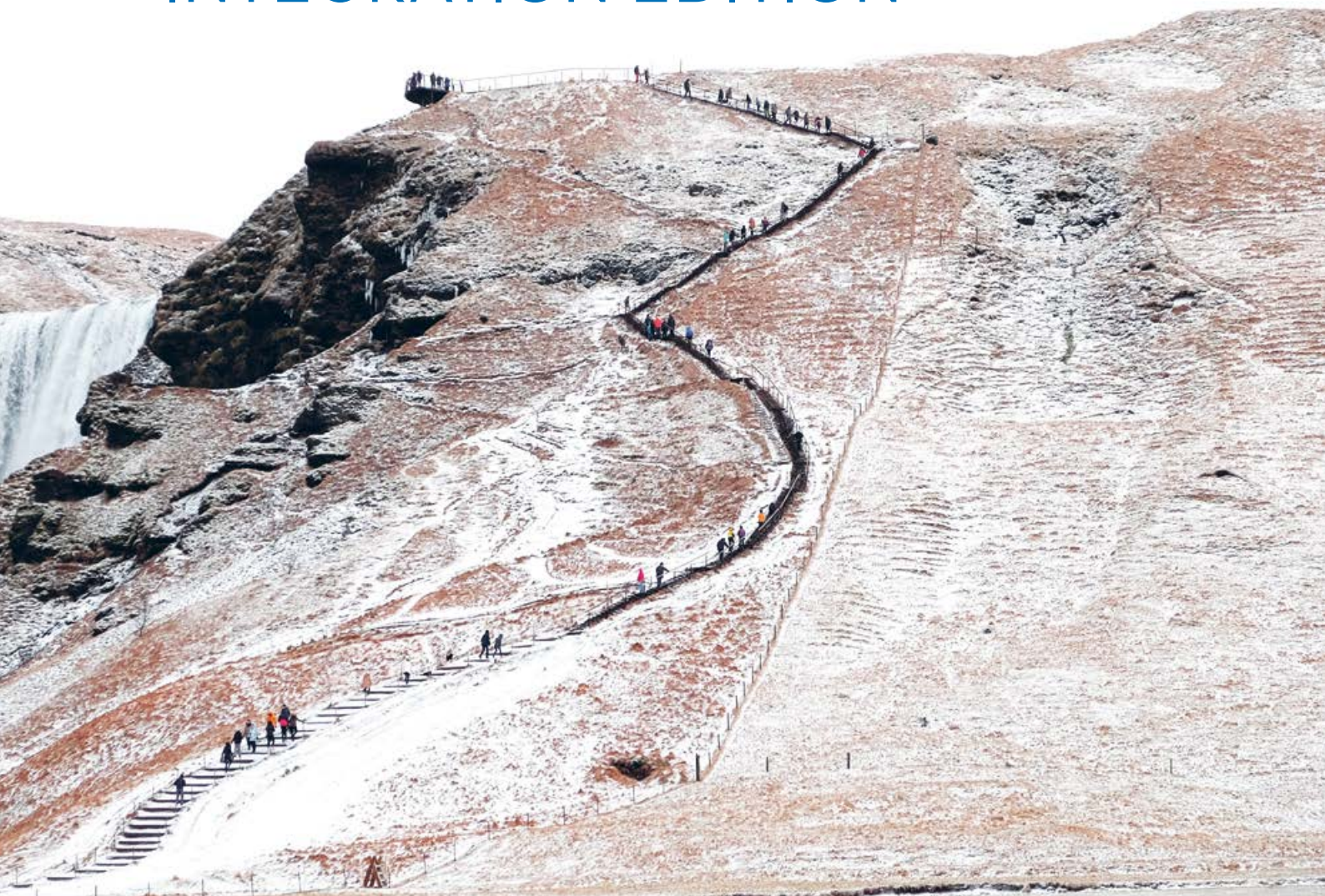
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# STATE OF THE NORDIC REGION

# 2018

## IMMIGRATION AND INTEGRATION EDITION



STATE OF THE NORDIC REGION 2018  
IMMIGRATION AND INTEGRATION EDITION

*Anna Karlsdóttir, Gustaf Norlén, Linus Rispling and Linda Randall (Eds).*

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This report was produced by Nordregio on behalf of Nordic Welfare Centre and the programme Nordic co-operation on integration of refugees and migrants. The report is partly based on State of the Nordic Region 2018.

Anna Karlsdóttir together with Linus Rispling, Gustaf Norlén and Linda Randall coordinated with authors from Nordregio and other NCM institutions. In addition to the authors from Nordregio, Erik Peurell from the Nordic Agency for Cultural Policy Analysis should be acknowledged for writing the chapter nine on Representation of people with a foreign background in state funded culture in the Nordic Region, and Nina Rehn-Mendoza from the Nordic Welfare Centre for writing chapter five on Health and wellbeing in the immigrant population. Finally, a number of Nordregio researchers have contributed to the development of several chapters: Nora Sánchez Gassen and Timothy Heleniak (chapter six on Naturalization and chapter seven on Labour market integration) and Hjördís Rut Sigurjónsdóttir (chapter eight on Females and labour market integration). Communication activities have been overseen by Helena Lagercrantz, Nordregio.

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# Preface

Managing migration is one of the most complex challenges for politicians and societies in our time. Statistics about migration have become both politically and economically prominent and sensitive. Numbers matter and here scientists have an important role to play.

To facilitate integration policies that work, we must start by analysing comprehensive and accurate data. Only with those data at hand it is possible to maximise the benefits and minimise the costs of migration, both from an economic and a humanitarian point of view. Immigrants provide a potential solution to labour market shortages and can help reverse the ongoing trend of ageing population in the Nordic countries. At the same time, integration of newcomers into the labour market has proven to be a big challenge in many cases and while the welfare society is dependent on immigration in the long term, in the short term it has led to rising costs. But effective integration policies will not only improve people's lives, they will also strengthen the Nordic welfare state over time.

This report aims to contribute to this challenge by providing up-to-date data about migration, immigrants and integration, putting together harmonised and comparable across Nordic municipalities and regions over time. With this data at hand local, regional and national authorities can make informed decisions about integration. It offers them the possibility to compare with, and learn from, the situation in other parts of the Nordic Region.

We hope that the report will help to dispel myths on a complex political and social issue, and that it will contribute to a solid vision of how to make integration work in the Nordic countries.

Ewa Persson Göransson  
*Director, Nordic Welfare Centre*

Kjell Nilsson  
*Director, Nordregio*

This report was produced by Nordregio on behalf of Nordic Welfare Centre and the programme Nordic co-operation on integration of refugees and migrants. The report is partly based on State of the Nordic Region 2018, which is a unique compilation of statistics and maps, giving a detailed view of the Nordic countries at both national and regional level. For more information, please refer to: [www.norden.org/nordicregion2018](http://www.norden.org/nordicregion2018)

For more information on the project Nordic collaboration on integration of refugees and migrants, please visit: [www.integrationnorden.org](http://www.integrationnorden.org)







# INTRODUCTION

# INTRODUCTION

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Migration has been a major driving force behind population growth in the Nordic Region<sup>1</sup> in recent years. Alongside this, the make-up of migrant flows has changed dramatically, evolving from primarily intra-Nordic immigration in the 1990s to inflows from an increasingly diverse range of countries between 2010-2016. Of particular note is the most recent refugee crisis in 2015, during which the Nordic countries received large numbers of asylum seekers both in comparison with many other European countries and in the context of their relatively small populations. This publication is motivated by this context.

Over the coming years, there is much work to be done to support the integration of these new arrivals into the Nordic societies and labour markets. Successful integration has the potential not only to benefit migrants themselves, but also to inject new life into ageing Nordic societies, fuel economic progress and reinvigorate ailing welfare systems. Successful integration of the most recent newcomers, but also of other migrant groups, is thus of utmost political importance. But the path to successful integration is not easy. Available research shows that migrants fare worse than the native-born population on the labour market, in terms of educational achievement, salaries, housing standards, and other social indicators. There are thus both challenges and opportunities attached to the integration process.

To develop new strategies and programmes to support integration, such as those agreed upon in the Nordic cooperation on integration of refugees and immigrants, policy makers need solid evidence and data. This is the first step in safeguarding the Nordic countries as safe, innovative and inclusive

**Over the coming years, there is much work to be done to support the integration of new arrivals into the Nordic societies and labour markets**

places to live. However, when it comes to migration, solid evidence is often hard to get. At the peak of the refugee crisis, it was not even clear how many people had come and moved through Europe (due to double reporting, quick moves of migrants etc.). Even basic definitions relating to different types of migrants differs across countries. Harmonization of data to make indicators comparable across national borders and over time is difficult. Public debates about migration and integration, particularly in the context of the recent refugee crisis, thus become driven by media reports and anecdotal evidence.

In recent years, several projects have aimed to harmonise, disseminate or give an overview of statistical data related to migration and integration in the Nordic Region. This report is partly based on data and visualisations developed for one such project, *Nordic co-operation on integration of refugees and immigrants* (Nordic Welfare Centre, 2018), which aimed, among other things, to collect, harmonise and present statistical data not only at the national level, as with previous projects, but also to gather similar data at the regional and municipal level across the Nordic Region.<sup>2</sup> This report also draws on

<sup>1</sup>The Nordic Region in this report is defined as Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden as well as Faroe Islands and Greenland (both part of the Kingdom of Denmark) and Åland (part of the Republic of Finland).

<sup>2</sup>The results of the harmonised data in the form of maps are available at Nordregio's map gallery at <http://www.nordregio.se/en/Maps/>



State of the Nordic Region 2018, which is a unique compilation of statistics and maps, giving a detailed view of the Nordic countries at both national and regional level.

We have brought the data from this project together in this publication with the aim of providing evidence based knowledge, statistics and analysis that will hopefully be an eye opener and contribute to developing the contemporary societal debate.<sup>3</sup> The goal of this report is therefore to provide policy makers, researchers, journalists and interested public, as well as civil servants and statisticians, with the most up-to-date and comparable information about migration, immigrants and integration, including comparisons across regions and municipalities of the Nordic Region. This can assist local, regional and national authorities to make informed decisions about future migration and integration policies and allow for a balanced perspective on migration, while also offering the possibility to compare with, and learn, from the situation in other parts of the Nordic Region.

The report is presented in three parts. *Theme 1: Coming to the Nordic Region* presents data on who the migrants to the Nordic Region have been in recent years. *Chapter 1* deals with migration numbers and flows over time, describes different types of migration and outlines the channels through which different groups of migrants arrive. *Chapter 2* focuses on asylum seekers, providing knowledge on the countries origin of asylum seekers in recent years. *Chapter 3* takes a narrower scope, focusing on the arrival of unaccompanied minors as part of the big wave of asylum seekers who came to the Nordic Region in 2015.

*Theme 2: Making the Nordic Region home* focuses on what happens after new migrants become part of the Nordic populations. *Chapter 4* focuses on how the size of the foreign-born population has changed in the Nordic Region in recent decades, both with respect to absolute numbers and as a share of the total population. *Chapter 5* provides interesting perspectives on the health status of new migrants when compared with the native-born population, considering the implications of this for integration. *Chapter 6* explores the different conditions migrants currently have to fulfil to qualify for citizenship in the Nordic countries and presents naturalization statistics to show how many migrants in the Nordic countries take up a Nordic citizenship.

*Theme 3: Entering the Nordic labour market* covers one of the questions that has been particularly prominent in the debate; How are migrants currently faring on the Nordic labour markets? *Chapter 7* gives a broad overview, comparing the labour market outcomes of migrants with those of the native-born population. *Chapter 8* takes a narrower focus, looking at the labour-market situation for female migrants. Finally, *Chapter 9* zooms in to take a look at the representation of people with a foreign background in state funded culture in the Nordic Region.

The report also includes a *Technical annex*, where we discuss the data issues encountered while producing the maps and charts included in this report, for example, challenges in accessing the data and lack of data at the local level. We also address the challenges of harmonising datasets related to immigration, especially in the light of the large influx of refugees who arrived in 2015, which resulted in considerable pressure to produce and provide access to relevant data. It concludes by discussing future possibilities for improving the production of comparable data across the Nordic Region.

While statistics alone cannot possibly do justice to the myriad of life stories and motivations of different people who come to the Nordic countries, they do offer sound structural knowledge. This knowledge contributes to a better understanding of the State of the Nordic Region with respect to migration and integration and provides a solid basis for national, regional and local policy making in this space.

## Understanding immigration

Despite the increased attention centred on immigration in recent years, considerable confusion remains with respect to how different groups of migrants are defined and the ways in which different people move through immigration systems. This is particularly relevant from a statistical perspective, as clear definitions are vital to ensuring accurate interpretation of data in the policy-making process. In this report, we generally refer to immigrants as a broad group, encompassing all people who immigrated to any of the Nordic countries. However, as the figure on the asylum-refugee-immigration system demonstrates (see page 13), immigrants are a heterogenous group, both with respect to their

<sup>3</sup> A more detailed account of the methodological considerations relevant to the project can be found in the Annex A: Technical considerations.



migration journeys and regarding their pathways through the Nordic immigration systems. The most important distinction in this report is between those who immigrate to the Nordic Region on humanitarian grounds, often referred to as *forced migration*, and those who come for other reasons, otherwise referred to as *voluntary migration*. Thus, the main aim of the definitions below is to make this distinction as clear as possible so as to aid the reader in interpreting the data presented in this report.

In the broadest sense, *immigration* is defined as 'a process by which non-nationals move into a country for the purpose of settlement' (IOM 2011, p. 49). From a statistical perspective, a *registered immigrant* is a person who has immigrated to the country in a legal way and is now registered in the population data of that country. *Labour migration* is a common form of immigration and refers to 'movement of persons from one State to another [...] for the purpose of employment' (IOM 2011, p. 58).

An *asylum seeker* is 'a person who seeks safety from persecution or serious harm in a country other than his or her own and awaits a decision on the application for refugee status under relevant international and national instruments' (IOM 2011, p. 12). There are different grounds for being granted asylum, including subsidiary protection, humanitarian reasons and UN convention on refugee protection. The latter group are often referred to as *quota refugees* and are selected by the UNHCR to be resettled in a third country. In the case of a positive decision, the person is considered to be a legitimate refugee and, from a statistical perspective, becomes a *registered immigrant*.<sup>4</sup>

A *refugee* is 'a person who "owing to a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinions, is outside the country of his[/her] nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail him[/her]self of the protection of that country"<sup>5</sup>' (IOM 2011, p. 49). *Refugees* 'also include persons who flee their country "because their lives, security or freedom have been threatened by generalized violence, foreign aggression, internal

conflicts, massive violations of human rights or other circumstances which have seriously disturbed public order"<sup>6</sup>' (IOM 2011, p. 50).

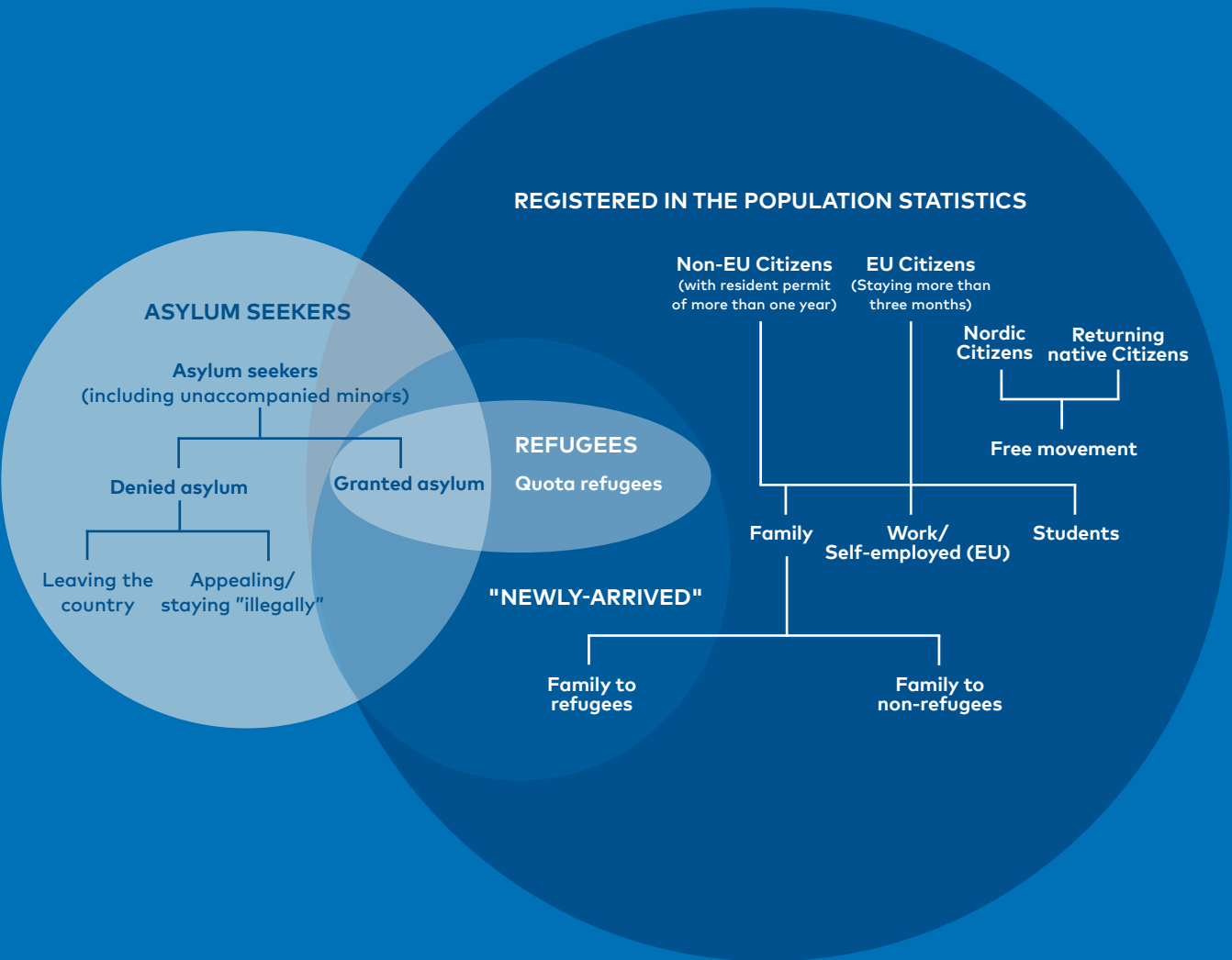
Importantly, at the point at which a person is recognised as a refugee it may become difficult to distinguish them from other types of immigrants in the statistics without considering additional variables, such as country of origin. In the Nordic countries the term *newly-arrived* is often used by authorities and NGOs in order to identify those immigrants who have been granted residence on humanitarian grounds and ensure their access to the relevant integration and support programs. In the case of a negative decision, the person must leave the country or risk being expelled (IOM 2011, p. 12 & p. 102). *Asylum seekers* are not recorded in the immigration or general demographic statistical records and, as such, data on asylum seekers presented in this report has, in most cases, been obtained from the migration agencies in the respective Nordic countries.

An *unaccompanied minor* (sometimes also referred to as a separated refugee child or similar) is 'a person who is under the age of eighteen years [...] and who is separated from both parents and is not being cared for by an adult who by law or custom has responsibility to do so' (UNHCR, 1997, p. 7). This group is often discussed as a discreet category due to the unique policy challenges that arise when working with children in the context of forced migration. *Family reunification/reunion* refers to a 'process whereby family members separated through forced or voluntary migration regroup in a country other than the one of their origin' (IOM 2011, p. 37). Importantly, in the case of family reunification necessitated by forced migration, family members are not included in the asylum or refugee processes. Instead, they are granted permission for residence to a Nordic country in a similar way to the families of immigrants who settle in a Nordic country voluntarily. In this case, the term *newly-arrived* is again useful in pin-pointing those who have come to the country on humanitarian grounds and may require additional support.

<sup>4</sup> With the exception of quota refugees who become registered immigrants upon arrival.

<sup>5</sup> As stated in Art. 1(A) (2), Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, 80 International Migration Law Art. 1A(2), 1951 as modified by the 1967 Protocol: <http://www.unhcr.org/1951-refugee-convention.html>

<sup>6</sup> As stated in the 1984 Cartagena Declaration: <http://www.unhcr.org/about-us/background/45dc19084/cartagena-declaration-refugees-adopted-colloquium-international-protection.html>







THEME 1

# COMING TO THE NORDIC REGION



# Chapter 1

## MAJOR IMMIGRATION FLOWS TO THE NORDIC REGION

Author: Linus Rispling

Map and data: Linus Rispling and Gustaf Norlén

Immigration flows are of growing interest due to the recent unprecedented numbers of immigrants arriving in the Nordic Region. Successful integration of these newcomers is vital to ensuring long-term social sustainability, particularly for rural municipalities struggling with population decline. As this chapter will demonstrate, immigration to the Nordic Region has increased drastically in recent decades, with major inflows from neighbouring Nordic and European countries, as well as from further afield. This international immigration is having a profound effect on the population structure at municipal level across the Nordic Region both due to its sheer scale and because of the diverse nature of the migrant population. The reasons underpinning immigration vary greatly both between the Nordic countries and between migration groups.

### Immigration the driving force behind population increase

In recent decades, the population of the Nordic Region has increased rapidly, reaching a total of close to 27 million in 2017 (Grunfelder et al., 2018). This equates to growth of 16 percent between 1990 and 2017 and stems both from natural increase (more births than deaths) and positive net immigration (more immigrants than emigrants). Interestingly, net migration is the primary source of growth, accounting for about two-thirds of the total population increase, while natural increase accounts for only one-third (Heleniak, 2018).

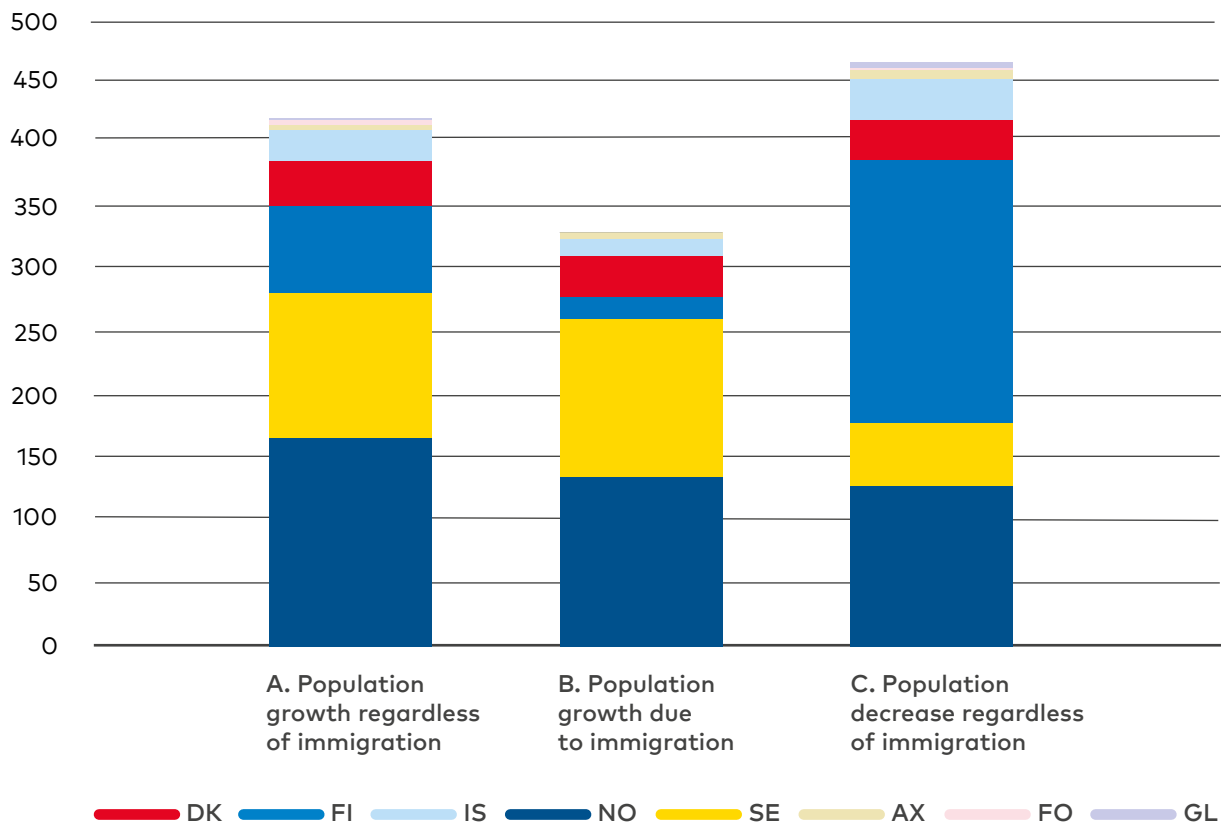
The pattern and drivers behind the population increase has been quite different across the Nordic Region. Between 1990 and 2017, the population in-

crease was 17 percent or higher in Sweden, Åland, Norway and Iceland, 12 percent in Denmark and 11 percent in Finland. The Faroe Islands saw more modest increase, around 4 percent, while Greenland had only a 0.5 percent change. Immigration accounted for the bulk of population growth in Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Åland, while in Iceland, which has among the highest birth rates in Europe, natural increase was the main reason for population growth. In Finland, the Faroe Islands and Greenland, natural increase and net migration were at equivalent levels (Heleniak, 2018).

Despite these between-country differences, it is clear that immigration has played the most important role in population change across the Nordic Region. Stable population numbers, which might be achieved through positive net migration, are crucial for balanced regional development and sustainable economic growth (Rispling & Grunfelder, 2016). Many Nordic rural municipalities would, without immigration, have seen their populations decline between 2011 and 2016. Recent research by Nordregio found that 310, or 26 percent, of all Nordic municipalities, experienced population increase between 2011-2015 only due to immigration (figure 1.1, bar B) (Nordregio, 2017a; Grunfelder et al., 2018). A

**Despite between-country differences, it is clear that immigration has played the most important role in population change across the Nordic Region**

**Figure 1.1 Role of international migration for population change 2011-2016: Number of Nordic municipalities for which population growth: A) happened regardless of immigration, B) happened only due to immigration, C) didn't happen (i.e. regardless of immigration, there was a population decrease).**



Data source: NSIs. Note: DK: Includes Christiansø (C), formally not a municipality. FO: Includes the sýsla (regional) division instead of municipalities, for better comparability. GL: Includes Kommuneqarfiit avataanni (C), formally outside municipalities. NO: based on municipal 2016 division.

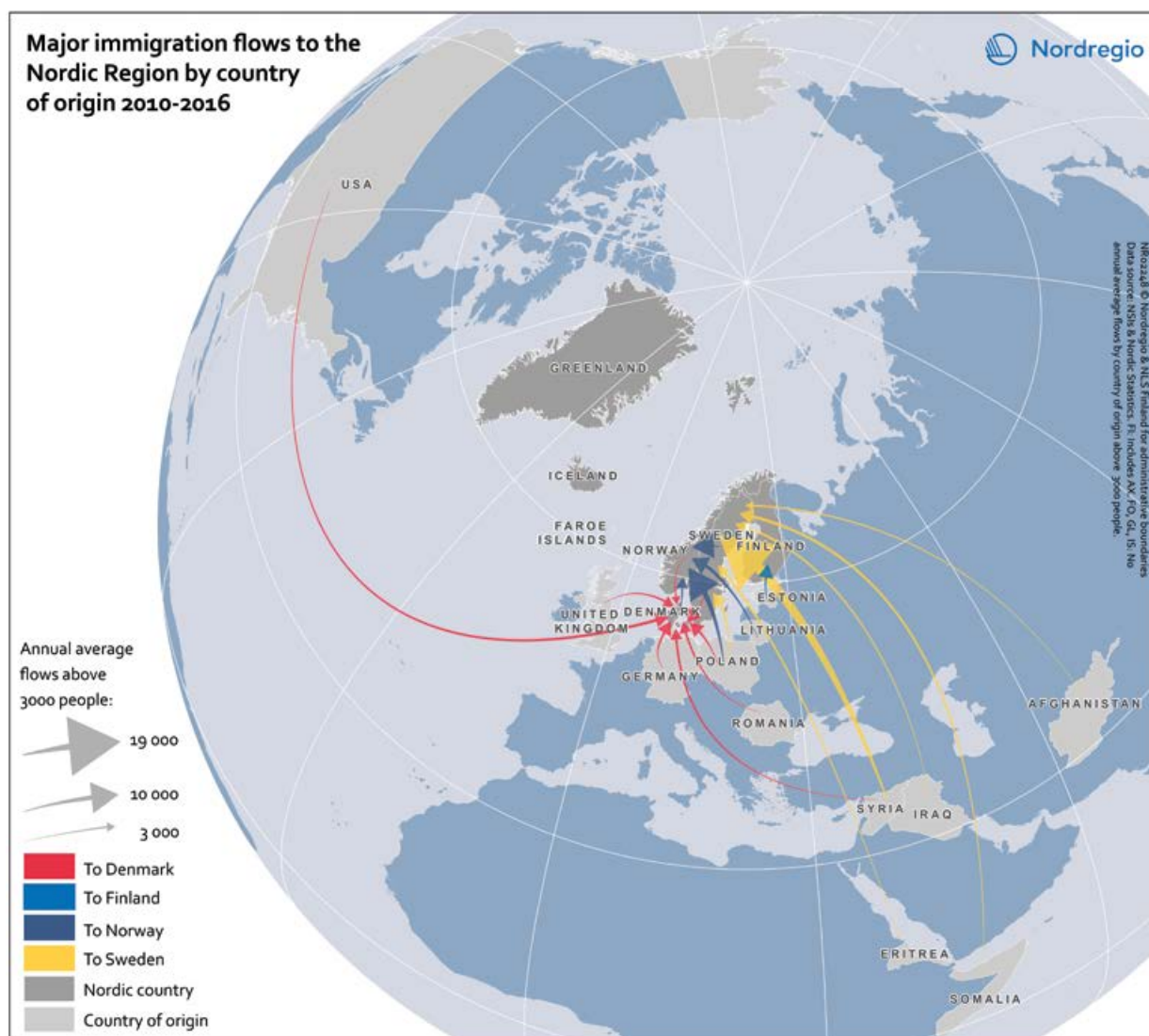
substantial share of these are rural municipalities, which have for many years suffered from out-migration, ageing population and diminishing services. If integration of the recent immigrants to these municipalities succeeds, the result may be influential in reversing these trends, improving social and economic sustainability in the long-term.

## From intra-Nordic to global migration inflows

Another important change in recent decades has been the increased diversity in the countries of origin of immigrants to the Nordic Region. In the

1990s, according to available data, Denmark was the only Nordic countries to experience any major immigration flow (average annual flows of at least 3,000 from a single country of origin) from countries outside the Nordic Region (Nordregio, 2017b).<sup>7</sup> In Sweden, Norway and Finland, major flows during this decade were limited to an exchange of people between the Nordic countries, building on the long tradition (since 1952) of the Nordic passport union, which allows any citizen of a Nordic country to reside in any other Nordic country. In the following decade, 2000-2009, Denmark remained the country with the most non-Nordic major inflows (more than 3,000 annually from the USA, Germany, the UK and Poland). Norway and Sweden also saw similar sized

<sup>7</sup> For Sweden during the 1990s, there was an annual average inflow of some 6,000 people in total from "Other Europe" (i.e. European origin countries outside the Nordic Region), which, however are not further specified in the NSI data. A large share of these were most likely from former Yugoslavia.



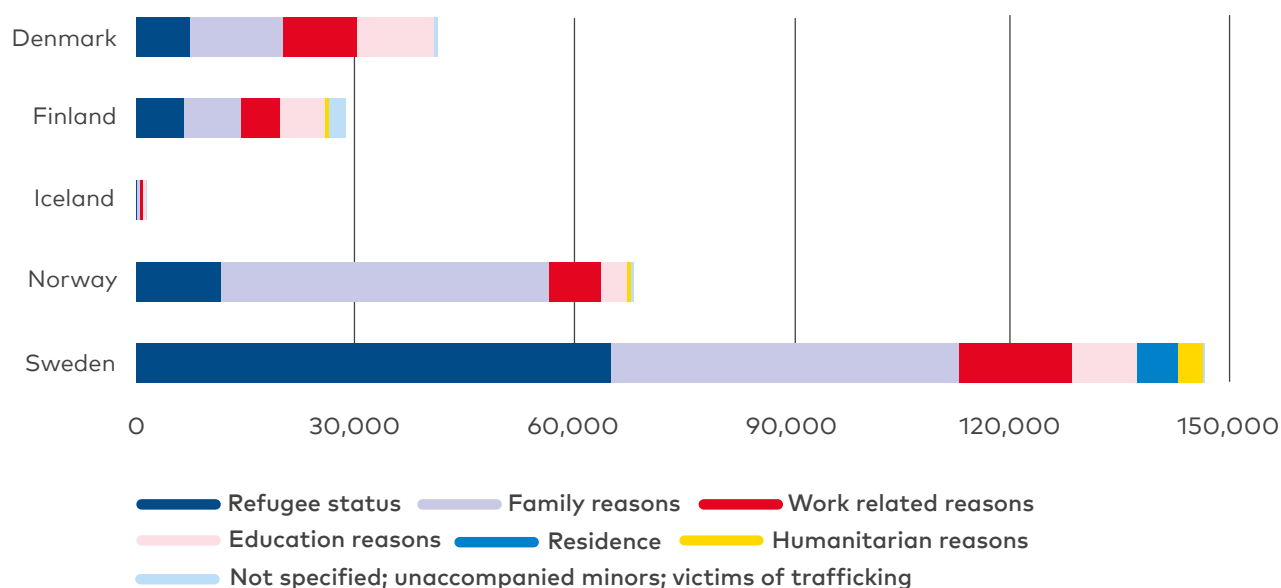
**Figure 1.2 Major immigration flows to the Nordic Region by country of origin 2010-2016.**

inflows from Poland during this period, largely due to the availability of jobs at the time, particularly in Norway due to its strong economy. Sweden, as a consequence of the war, also had a large inflow of immigrants from Iraq (Nordregio, 2017c).

Moving forward to the current decade and the years 2010-2016, a strikingly different picture emerges. As figure 1.2 shows, not only are immigrant flows increasing in size, the diversity in their countries of origin is also growing. Sweden and Denmark, in particular, experienced large inflows from non-Nordic countries during this period, with Sweden standing out as the Nordic country with by far the largest immigrant in-flows. A large portion of

these arrivals were from war-torn Syria (an annual average of almost 19,000), followed by Somalia and Poland (5,000 each), Iraq and Eritrea (4,000 each), and Afghanistan. Although Denmark experienced a similar number of inflows above 3,000 people, these inflows were smaller and more evenly distributed than in Sweden. The largest non-Nordic inflows to Denmark were around 5,000 people (per sending country) and included migrants from the U.S., Germany and Poland. For Norway, large non-Nordic inflows were limited to Lithuania and Poland. Similarly, Finland had only one major inflow, from Estonia.

**Figure 1.3 First permits for non-EU residents issued in 2016, by reason.**



Data source: Eurostat, calculations by Nordregio. Note: Only residence permits decided during 2016 included.

Intra-Nordic migration flows are still substantial, particularly in Norway and, to a lesser extent, Denmark and Sweden, but overall these are rather small when compared to the non-Nordic inflows (Nordregio, 2017d). This intra-Nordic migration is still largely based on labour migrants (although quantifying types of migration is rather complex; see, for example, chapter eight). Similar to intra-Nordic migration, migration from Estonia, Lithuania and Poland to the Nordic Region is also largely driven by the labour market. The in-flows seen today first appeared in the 2000s, a decade after the collapse of the Soviet Union and following the accession to the EU<sup>8</sup> (Heleniak, 2018). For Estonian migrants, Finland has traditionally been the main receiving country, due to close geographic proximity, good accessibility and the closely related Finno-Ugric languages (Berlina et al., 2017). Lithuanian migration to Norway, and increasingly Denmark and Sweden, is connected to the generally high levels of

out-migration from Lithuania to other European countries following the 2008 global financial crisis, which hit Lithuania hard (Rispling & Grunfelder, 2016). In contrast to Lithuania, Poland was not severely hit by the economic crisis, and instead the large Polish migration to the Nordic Region can be attributed to the economic upturns in certain Nordic economies acting as pull-factors, particularly in the case of Norway (Lindahl, 2017, June).

Due to their relatively small populations, the largest inflows to the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Iceland have remained under 3,000 people per year during the period and, as such, do not appear on the map in figure 1.2. In Iceland, migration from Poland and Denmark made up the only two average annual inflows above 1,000 between 2010-2016 (Nordregio, 2017e). The in-flows from Poland can again be explained by pull-factors associated with the strong Icelandic labour market, while the Danish immigration has more to do with historic and cultural ties

<sup>8</sup> Norway, receiving many work immigrants from EU countries, is not a EU member, but the EEA agreement gives Norway access to the EU's internal market.



between the two countries (e.g. children of native Icelanders who have been working or studying in Denmark) (Velferðarráðuneytið, 2012). Interestingly, four percent of the total population in Iceland in 2017 was born in Poland (Statistics Iceland, 2017).

## Refugee status and family reunions main reason for residence permits

Figure 1.3 provides a snapshot of the reason behind all first resident permits approved by each Nordic country in 2016. A first resident permit is the first permit of residence which a person receives when immigrating to a country.<sup>9</sup> Measured in absolute numbers, Sweden approved by far the most resident permits of all the Nordic countries in 2016. This is the case even when taking into account the fact that Sweden's population is almost twice as large as that of Denmark, Finland or Norway. The dominant share of the residence permits approved by Sweden and Norway were for refugees and family reunifications. In Denmark and Finland, the share of permits granted for this reason was also substantial but not dominant to the same extent as in Sweden and Norway (refugee applicants and family unifications made up about half of all approved permits). Interestingly, Denmark granted a larger share of permits based on work and education than any other Nordic country.

## Concluding remarks

The population of the Nordic Region has increased substantially in recent decades, growing by 16 percent between 1990 and 2017. Migration has taken over as the major driver of population growth, staving off population decline in many rural municipalities. The nature of major immigration flows to the Nordic countries has also undergone a transformation, evolving from primarily intra-Nordic immigration in the 1990s to inflows from an increasingly diverse range of countries between 2010 and 2016. A large portion of these more recent migrants have come to the Nordic Region on humanitarian grounds, particularly to Sweden and Norway.

<sup>9</sup> It should be noted, however, that the chart is based on the so-called flow data, meaning that only residence permits decided during 2016 are included (i.e. the decisions are based on applications from 2016 or previous years; and applications handed in but not yet processed in 2016 are excluded).



# Chapter 2

## ASYLUM SEEKERS

Authors: Linus Rispling and Gustaf Norlén

Map and data: Linus Rispling and Gustaf Norlén

Asylum seekers are those who apply for asylum, and who may or may not stay in a country, depending on decisions made by immigration authorities (see figure on page 13). They are a group of immigrants who have gotten particular attention in Europe in recent years, largely due to the sheer magnitude of asylum applications which have been received. Such numbers have not been seen in most European countries since World War II, and eventually led some governments (including several Nordic countries) to make policy changes that in most cases resulted in fewer asylum seekers being accepted.<sup>10</sup> As this chapter will demonstrate, these policy changes contributed to an abrupt decline in asylum applications between 2015 and 2016. Despite this, the magnitude of the 2015 inflow means that large numbers of asylum seekers are still awaiting a decision on their refugee status across the Nordic Region.

### The big wave of 2015 – before and after

Figure 2.1 shows the citizenship of those who sought asylum in the Nordic countries from 2014-2017. Two main patterns can be discerned regarding these three years. First, as evident for each country on the vertical axes, there was an unprecedented increase in number of asylum seekers in 2015 compared to the 2014 levels. Second, this “big wave” went into sharp decline by 2016, and rather low levels were evident again in 2017 (although there was

**Generally, the acceptance rates for asylum applications differ between countries and from year to year, largely dependent on the policies in place**

no 2017 data for Sweden available). The latter is perhaps related to the stricter immigration legislation which was imposed across all Nordic countries in late 2015. Regarding nationalities of the asylum seekers, differences exist between the receiving Nordic countries, Syrians were the largest group, followed by Iraqis and Afghans.

Looking at the developments country by country, Sweden saw by far the most asylum seeker arrivals over the period 2014-2017.<sup>11</sup> Sweden’s peak in 2015 was, from a European perspective comparable to that of Hungary and Germany. Despite Germany receiving three times as many asylum seekers in absolute numbers, when considered as a portion of the existing population, the numbers were actually higher in Sweden (ESPON, 2015). The volume of asylum seekers in Sweden followed a distinctly unique path compared to the neighboring Nordic countries. Despite the drastic shift of policies in late 2015, Sweden went on to receive a similar number of asylum seekers in 2016 as Finland and Norway did during their peak year, 2015.

<sup>10</sup> Another consequence of these changes was that validation processes, previously only offered to those whose refugee status had been granted, were expanded to include asylum seekers in some countries, in order to speed up integration processes.

<sup>11</sup> No 2017 data for Sweden was available when this report was produced.

## A note on the definition and statistics on asylum seekers

An asylum seeker is a person who applied for, and awaits a decision from the authorities of the sought arrival country, on whether he or she is allowed to stay (granted asylum). Asylum seekers are not part of the immigration or general demographic statistical records until after their application is accepted. At which point they become residents and are no longer considered asylum seekers. Asylum seekers typically reside in the arrival country, awaiting the decision on the asylum application, either in asylum centers provided by the migration

authorities or private accommodation organised by the asylum seeker themselves. An asylum seeker who is denied asylum is legally obliged to leave the country. As statistical data on asylum seekers is not included in the standard demographic statistical records, the data is usually collected and provided by the migration authorities in the Nordic countries. In some cases, this data may also be packaged and provided by the official national statistical authorities.

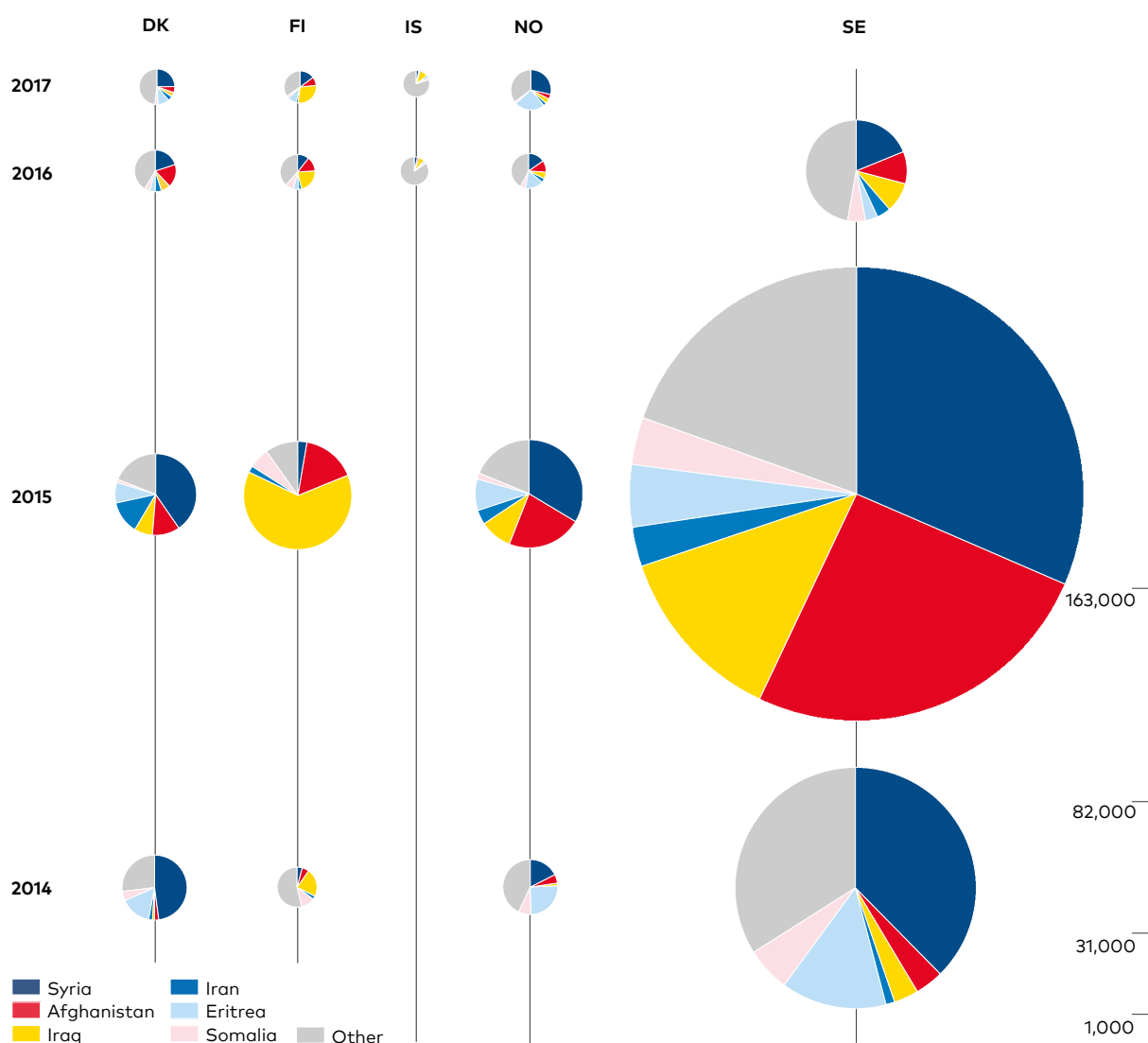
Denmark, Norway and Finland received rather similar numbers when comparing the totals over the four years. However, the levels in the three countries changed in quite different ways over the period. Denmark, which was experiencing rather high levels already in 2014, saw a relatively slight increase in 2015, followed by a dramatic decrease between 2015 and 2016, which continued into 2017. Norway received a smaller number of asylum seekers than Denmark in 2014, with levels rising above that of Denmark in 2015, followed by a similar decline by 2016, and a slight increase in 2017. Finland, on the other hand, experienced the same peak in 2015, but with rather smaller numbers either side in 2014 and 2016-2017. Finland's and Norway's dramatic increases 2015-2016 can partly be attributed to the relatively stricter enforcements Denmark had in place before the other Nordic countries, which meant that many refugees bypassed Denmark and aimed for Sweden in particular, but also Norway and Finland. Furthermore, Finland received more Iraqis – more than half of the asylum seekers to Finland in 2015. Interestingly, Iceland, compared to much more populous Denmark, Finland and Norway, received a distinctively larger share of asylum seekers as share of the total population in

2016. Unlike the other Nordic countries, most asylum seekers in Iceland in recent years were not from Syria, Iraq or Afghanistan, but mainly from countries such as Macedonia and Albania, Georgia and Kosovo. Almost all of the latter asylum applicants have been rejected (Statistics 2017b; Útlendingastofnun, 2018).

Generally, the acceptance rates for asylum applications differ between countries and from year to year, largely dependent on the policies in place. As a snapshot example, the most recent data for Finland shows that, in 2017, 40 percent of asylum applications received a positive outcome, and 42 percent were negative (with the remaining 18% belonging to other categories) (Maahanmuuttovirasto, 2018). In Sweden 46 percent of asylum application resulted in a positive outcome in 2017. This can be compared to 2016 when 77 percent of decisions were positive (Migrationsverket, 2016; Migrationsverket, 2017). A similar trend is evident in Denmark where 72 percent of the applications were accepted in 2016 compared to 35 percent in 2017 (Refugees.DK, 2018). Norway experienced a different trend, with 66 percent of the asylum applications accepted in 2016 and 67 percent in 2017 (UDI, 2016; UDI 2017).



Figure 2.1 Asylum seekers by citizenship to the Nordic countries, 2014-2017.



Data source: NSIs (DK, SE), Maahanmuuttovirasto (FI), Utlendingsdirektoratet (NO), Útlendingastofnun (IS). Note: FO, GL, IS 2014-15, SE 2017: No data.

## Varied dispersion of asylum seekers across the Nordic countries

Figure 2.2 provides a snap-shot of the distribution of asylum seekers across the Nordic Region for the month of March 2017.<sup>12</sup> When examining the map,

it is important to keep in mind that the situation has been in constant flux during the past three years, both in relation to the big wave in 2015 and the subsequent diminishing flows in 2016-2017. The numbers are also impacted by the speed with which migration authorities in the different Nordic countries process asylum applications. For example, in

<sup>12</sup> The grey hues in the map in figure 2.2 represent municipalities with no asylum seekers (or, in exceptional cases, no data on lodging asylum seekers). Data for Greenland and the Faroe Islands was not available, as in Greenland and the Faroe Islands, immigration and border control, including handling of asylum applications, is administered by the Danish Government. Consequently, and as an example, for the month shown in the map, March 2017, Faroe Islands not received any granted asylum seekers from Denmark (David Im, personal communication, 6 March 2017).

Sweden the waiting times have been quite long - in many cases well over a year. Improvements have been made across the Nordic Region in this regard. Denmark and Norway have sped up significantly and Sweden is working to achieve similar improvements. Finland has also set up special procedures based on the number of days spent at the border. Despite these recent efforts, long waiting periods have an influence on the statistical data and the cumulative number of asylum seekers.

National policies also have huge implications for the spatial distribution of asylum seekers. For example, Sweden's policy approach requires all Swedish municipalities to host asylum seekers. Moreover, in Sweden, the law popularly known as "Lagen om eget boende" or, in short, "EBO-lagen", which came into force in 1994, stipulates that an asylum seeker has the right to settle anywhere in the country, while still receiving daily allowance from the migration authorities. However, this law is currently under revision, as it is seen as an obstacle for asylum seekers' access to the labour market, and has led to overcrowding in certain municipalities and districts (Regeringskansliet, 2017). In Finland, the majority of asylum seekers live in asylum centres, but there are also a substantial portion who reside in private accommodation. In March 2017, 23 percent of asylum seekers in Finland had private accommodation, of which about 50 percent lived in Helsinki, Espoo and Vantaa, and ten percent in Turku area, six percent each in Oulu and Tampere (Ulla Harmonen, personal communication). Similarly, in Norway, accommodation in asylum centres is optional for asylum seekers, though a majority do choose this form of accommodation (Statistics Norway, 2016). In Denmark and Iceland, asylum seekers are concentrated in a smaller number of municipalities corresponding with the locations of the country's asylum centres. It should also be noted that national policies concerning asylum have been subject to rapid change during this period, meaning that the numbers at municipal level might change fast, particularly in countries where most asylum seekers are found in reception centres, which may close with short notice (e.g. Denmark and Finland).

The map in figure 2.2 shows that, in March 2017, a large portion of the asylum seekers in the Nordic Region were housed in Sweden. In fact, the 35 Nordic municipalities hosting the largest number of asylum seekers in March 2017 were all in Sweden, housing between 760 and 5707 asylum seekers each. The number of asylum seekers per municipal-

## **The 35 Nordic municipalities hosting the largest number of asylum seekers in March 2017 were all in Sweden, housing between 760 and 5707 asylum seekers each**

ity in Sweden was high both in absolute terms (indicated by the size of the circles) and in terms of asylum seekers as a share of the total municipal population (indicated by the green shading – darker green shading means a higher share of asylum seekers in the context of the overall population). With the exception of a few cases in mid-Sweden with high rates, the largest shares can be found in the sparsely populated municipalities in the inner (Western) parts of Norrland. Similarly, in Denmark, the highest shares of asylum seekers per total population, above 1 percent, were found in rather "peripheral" municipalities in North-Jylland – Thisted, Jammerbugt and Vesthimmerlands Kommune – as well as in four municipalities in Sjælland, namely Sorø, Lejre, Allerød and Dragør. In Finland, more than a dozen municipalities had shares of asylum seekers per total population above one percent, with the highest shares, above five percent, in Ranua in the Lappi, followed by Kristinestad on the west coast in Österbotten, as well as Kihniö, Pirkanmaa. In Iceland, asylum seekers were housed in municipalities in, or close to, the capital region, but, even here, numbers are small in the context of the total population (<0,98%). In Norway, refugee populations are similarly contained to municipalities with asylum centres. The number and distribution of centres is greater than in Denmark and Finland however, resulting in the presence of asylum seekers in more municipalities but in lower numbers (in most cases <1%). This is an indication of a Norwegian strategy of distributing the asylum centres more evenly, based on a policy of using the whole country, for easier integration of each municipality's services, and better interaction between the centres and municipal authorities (Drangsdal et al., 2010).

Asylum seekers are, by definition, not permanent residents, but often only temporary residing in a municipality. However, by their actual presence, asylum seekers contribute substantially to the local

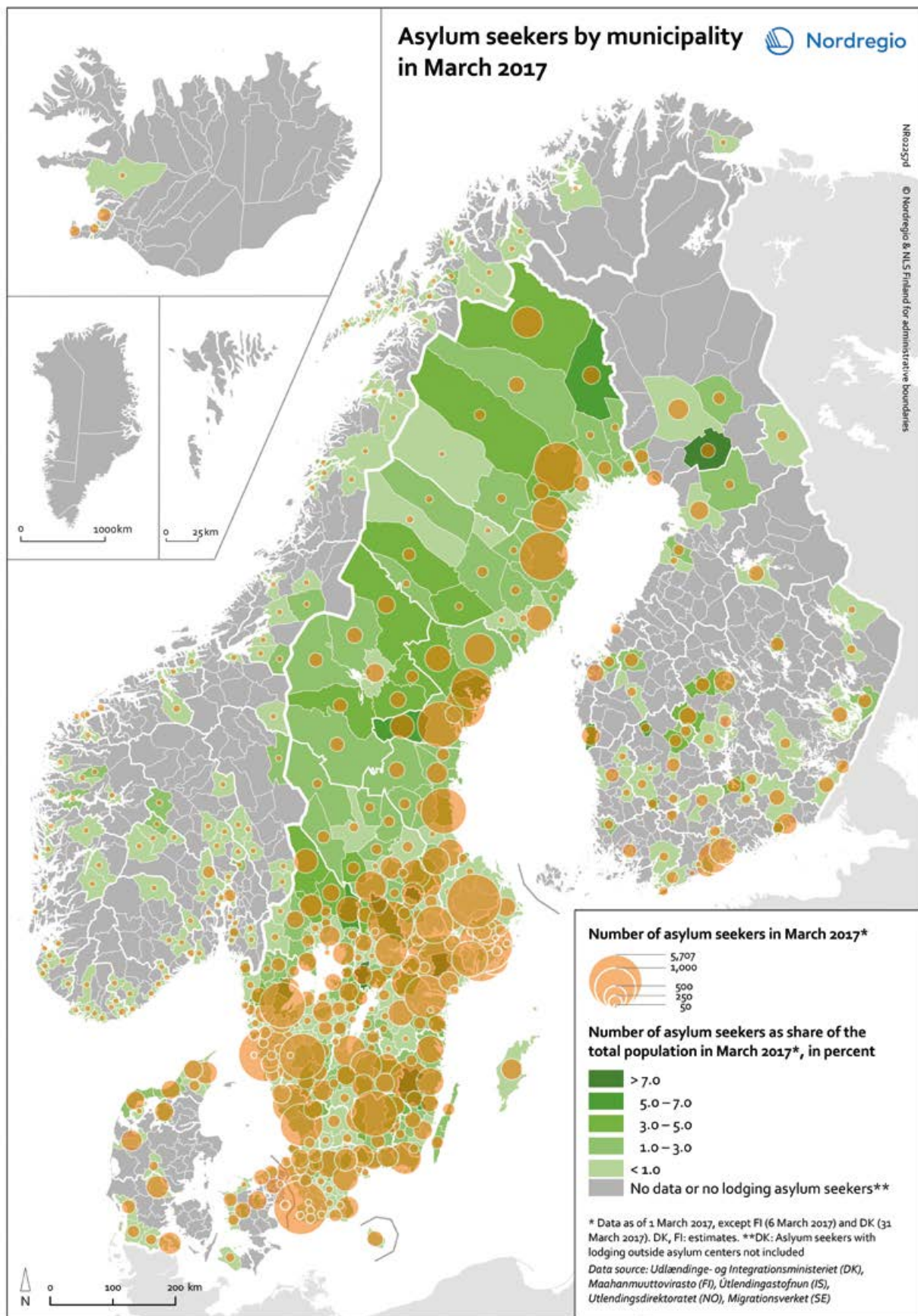


Figure 2.2 Asylum seekers by municipality in March 2017.

economy and job creation, for example in selected places where cases are being processed by authorities, but also more locally through their use of housing, schools and health care services (Statistics Sweden, 2016a). Furthermore, in Denmark and Finland, asylum seekers have full access to the labour markets, and in Norway and Sweden, a large share of asylum seekers have this access. In Norway, there are several formal requirements to be fulfilled, while in Sweden, a valid ID is required (Karlsdóttir et al., 2017).

## Concluding remarks

The large wave of asylum seekers to Europe in 2015 has had a substantial impact on the Nordic Region. Nowhere is this more evident than in Sweden, which received more immigrants per capita than any other European country in 2015 (ESPON, 2015). In response, several Nordic countries tightened their policies, contributing to a substantial drop in the figures in 2016. At the time of writing, many asylum seekers were still awaiting decisions in reception centres and private accommodation in various Nordic municipalities. Again, the numbers are highest in Sweden, with asylum seekers making up over seven percent of the population in five municipalities as of March 2017.



## Chapter 3

# UNACCOMPANIED MINORS TO THE NORDIC REGION

**Authors: Gustaf Norlén and Linus Rispling**

**Maps and data: Gustaf Norlén and Linus Rispling**

Unaccompanied minors are a group of asylum-seekers who have received particular attention both in media, research and from policy makers in recent years. As explained in the introduction, the UN defines an unaccompanied minor (sometimes also referred to as separated refugee children or similarly) as 'a person who is under the age of eighteen years [...] and who is separated from both parents and is not being cared for by an adult who by law or custom has responsibility to do so' (UNHCR, 1997, p. 7). There can be different reasons to why child migrates without a parent or legal guardian, for example, due to economic or practical reasons, as a first step of family migration when the rest of the family intend to come later, or when one or both parents have migrated before the child. The child may also be an orphan and without other legal guardians (Çelikaksoy & Wadensjö, 2015). This chapter will build on the previous, addressing the statistics on unaccompanied minors seeking asylum in the Nordic countries with a focus on the available, harmonised data related to the large wave of asylum seekers to the Nordic Region in 2015.

### Unaccompanied minors over time – and the recent peak

Although the Nordic countries have a long history of receiving unaccompanied minors, there have been some clear peaks. Sweden, for example received 70,000 children from Finland during World War II, 10,000 of whom remained after the war (Gärdegård, 2017). The other, more recent, peak was the wave of migrants that came in 2015 when the Nordic Region received a disproportionately high

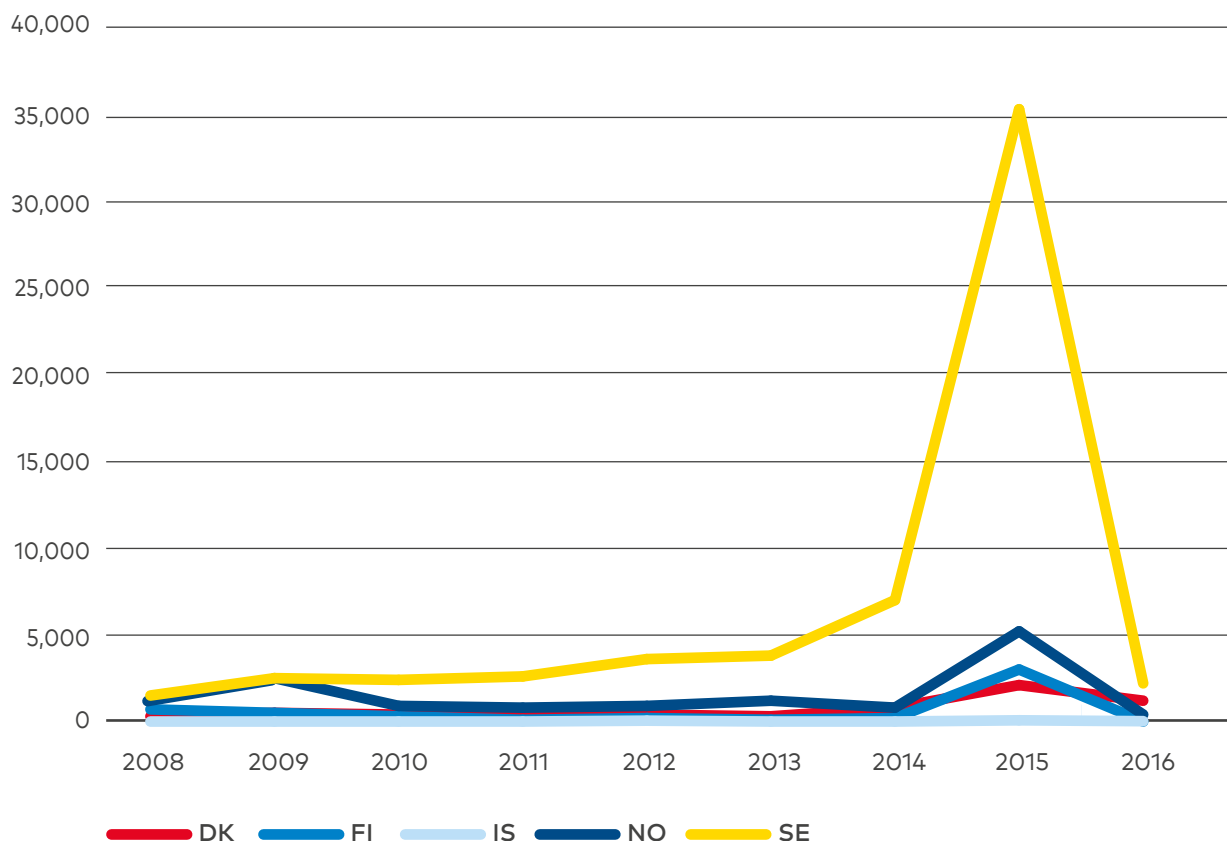
number of unaccompanied minors compared to other European countries. In total, 45,765 unaccompanied minors sought asylum in the Nordic countries in 2015 - more than half of the unaccompanied minors who sought asylum in the EU that year. Sweden received the most – more than 35,000 – followed by Norway (5,297), Finland (3,024), Denmark (2,068) and Iceland (7). If one also includes the asylum-seeking minors who were accompanied by a parent or guardian, more than half (58%) of the asylum seekers in 2015 were under 18 years of age (Norlén, 2017).

As seen in figure 3.1, 2015 stands out with more than five times as many unaccompanied minors seeking asylum as in 2014, and more than 10 times more than 2016. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the decrease in 2016 can likely be explained by the introduction of border controls and new more strict policies. In 2016 only 4,157 unaccompanied minors sought asylum in the Nordic countries. The biggest decrease was in Sweden, where just over 2,000 unaccompanied minors sought asylum in 2016.

**In total, 45,765 unaccompanied minors sought asylum in the Nordic countries in 2015 - more than half of the unaccompanied minors who sought asylum in the EU that year**

**Figure 3.1 Number of unaccompanied minors seeking asylum in the Nordic countries 2008-2016.**

### Unaccompanied minors



Data source: DK: Udlændinge- og Integrationsministeriet, FI: Maahanmuuttovirasto, IS: Útlendingastofnun, NO: Utlendingsdirektoratet, SE: Migrationsverket.

## Afghanistan most common country of origin

Figure 3.2 shows the countries of origin of unaccompanied minors who sought asylum in the different Nordic countries in 2015. It includes the five largest in-flows for each Nordic country as well as two additional in-flows to Sweden. These additional in-flows, from Ethiopia (891) and Morocco (403), were included as they are still substantial in the context of the in-flows of unaccompanied minors to the other Nordic countries.

A large portion (66 percent) of the unaccompanied minors that sought asylum in Sweden were from Afghanistan. Seventy-eight<sup>13</sup> percent of the asylum cases for unaccompanied minors from Afghanistan were accepted in 2016 and 82 percent of

the cases in 2017 (Migrationsverket, 2016; Migrationsverket, 2017). Afghanistan was also the most common country of origin for unaccompanied minors arriving in Norway (65 percent), Finland (63 percent) and Denmark (38 percent). Following Afghanistan, the most common countries of origin were Eritrea, Syria, Iraq and Somalia. Eleven percent of unaccompanied minors arriving in the Nordic Region in 2015 came from Syria. Unaccompanied minors from Syria, made up the largest share of the national total in Denmark (28 percent), and the smallest in Finland (1 percent).

More than nine out of ten of the unaccompanied minors that sought asylum in the Nordic countries in 2015 were boys and more than half were 16-17 years old.

<sup>13</sup> Proportion of total number of granted decisions with Dublin and others excluded.

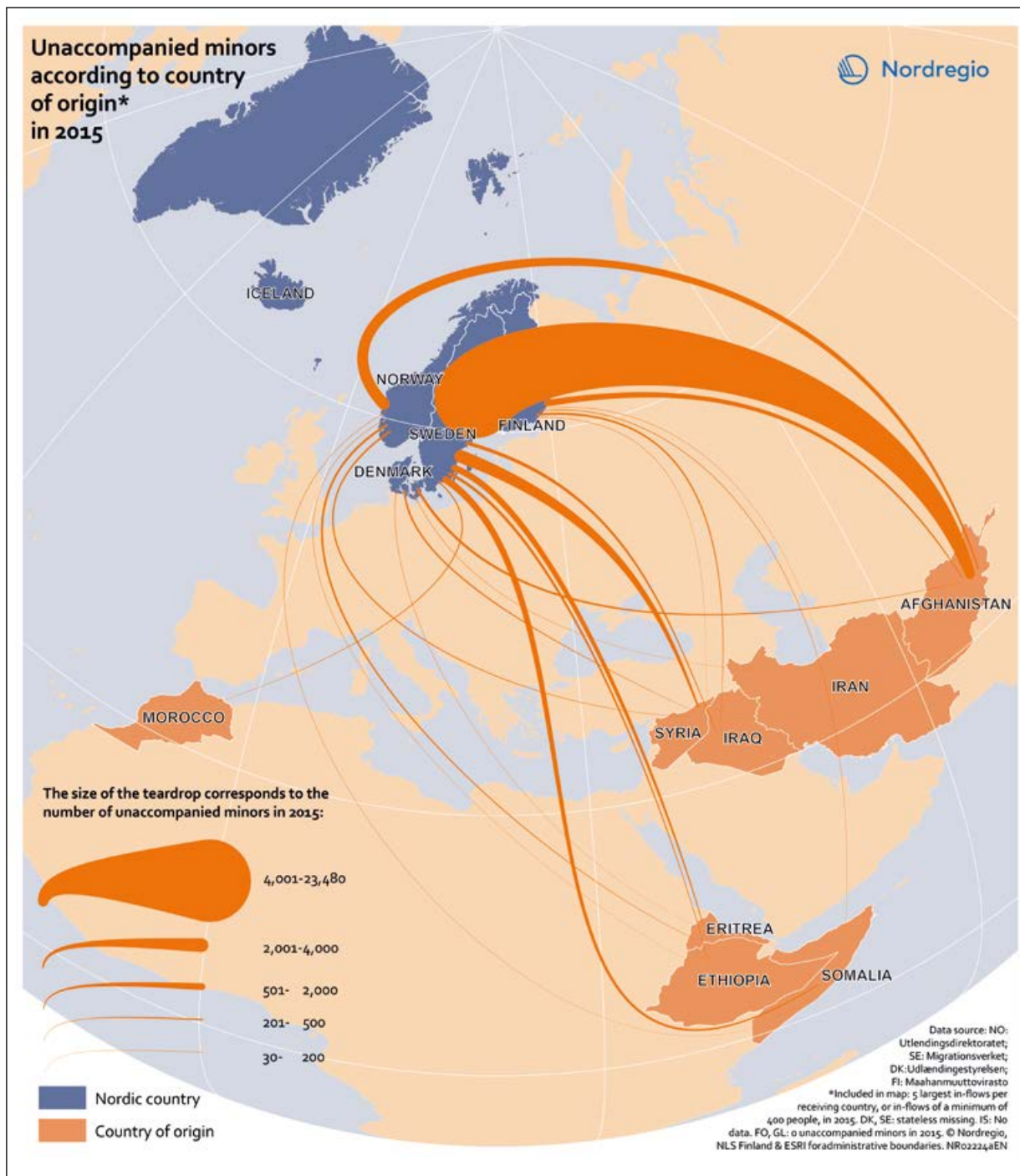


Figure 3.2 Unaccompanied minors according to country of origin 2015.

## Geographic distribution of the unaccompanied minors

Figure 3.3 shows the total number of unaccompanied minors per municipality (circles) as well as per 1,000 children (0-17 years) in 2015. In absolute numbers the municipality that received the highest number of unaccompanied minors in 2015 was Stockholm (around 2,200) followed by Gothenburg (1,700). Looking at the number of unaccompanied minors per 1,000 children the ratio is particularly high in a number of sparsely populated municipalities, such as Hyllestad and Ibestad in Norway, Ærø in Denmark; and Åsele and Sorsele in Sweden. In all of these municipalities, unaccompanied minors made up around 10 percent of the total number of children (0-17 years).

The way that the reception of unaccompanied minors is organised differs between the Nordic countries. In Sweden an agreement to receive unaccompanied minors signed by all the municipalities has resulted in them being distributed over the whole country. In Norway, Denmark and Finland unaccompanied minors were directed to accommodation centres resulting in higher concentrations in certain municipalities based on the location of these centres.

## Concluding remarks

In 2015, more than half of the unaccompanied minors who sought asylum in the EU did so in a Nordic country. The most common country of origin was Afghanistan followed by Eritrea, Syria, Iraq and Somalia. Sweden received by far the largest numbers. Following 2015 the number of unaccompanied minors seeking asylum in the Nordic Region decreased drastically in all countries except Iceland. In line with this, the focus shifted from reception to assessing the asylum cases and working on integrating those who have been granted asylum. This chapter has focused on the asylum seeking unaccompanied minors, for future research it would be interesting to look at patterns of migration and integration of those who have been granted asylum. For example, research has shown that unaccompanied minors do better in the Swedish labour market than those who arrive with their parents and that they often integrate faster into society (Jonsson & Gärdegård, 2017).



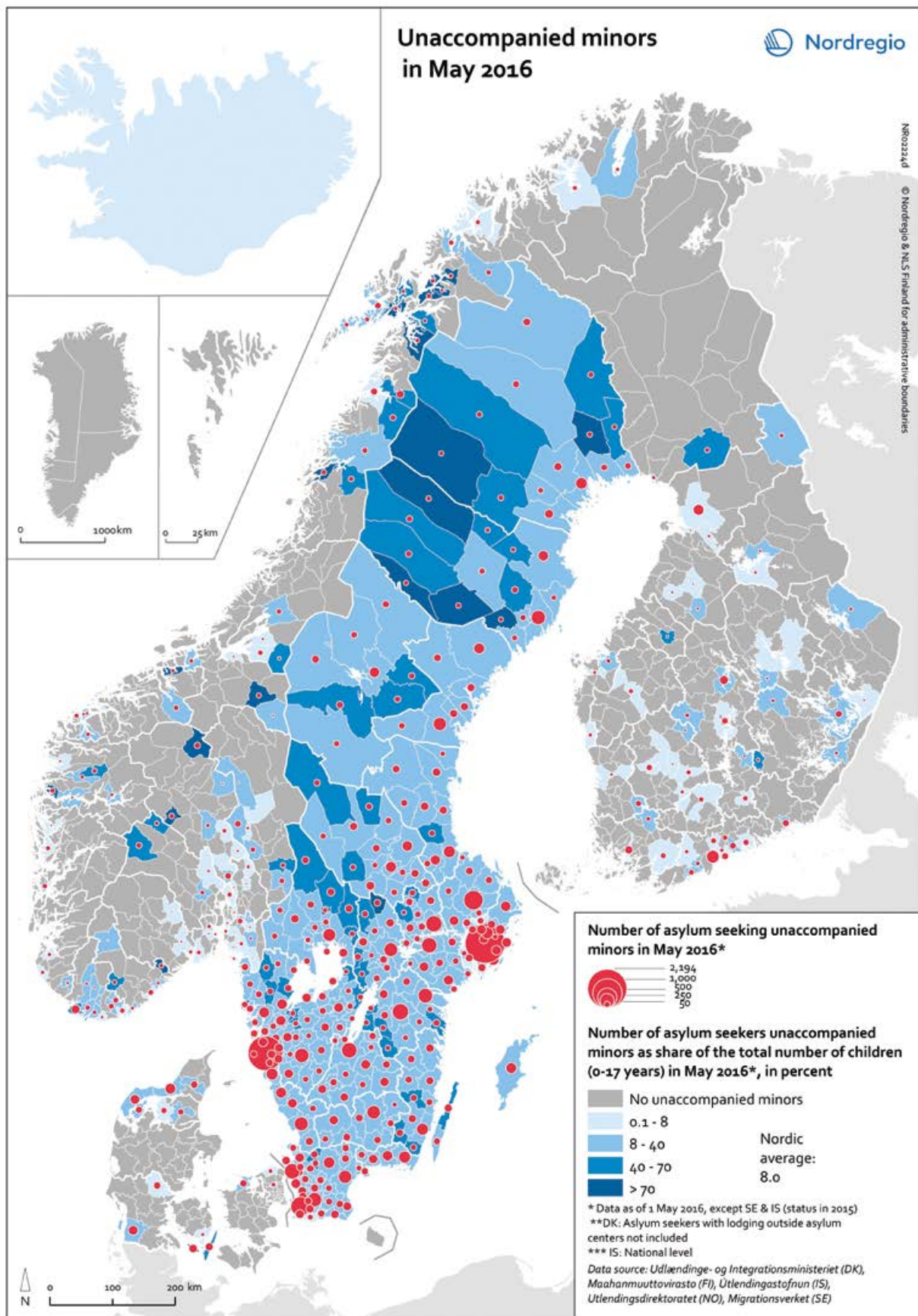


Figure 3.3 Unaccompanied minors per 1,000 children and in absolute numbers 2015.









THEME 2

# **MAKING THE NORDIC REGION HOME**

# Chapter 4

## FOREIGN-BORN PERSONS IN THE NORDIC REGION

Authors: Gustaf Norlén and Linus Rispling  
Map and data: Gustaf Norlén and Linus Rispling

In line with the general trend of increased immigration to the Nordic Region discussed under Theme 1 of this report, the number of inhabitants who are born abroad is increasing across the Nordic Region. While this trend is most pronounced in the capital areas and other big cities, it can also be seen in almost all Nordic municipalities and regions. The share of foreign-born persons in the total population is often used as an indicator for overall migration. However, it is a less useful indicator when it comes to studying refugee populations. This is because the statistics on the foreign-born population do not say anything about the reasons for migration, an impor-

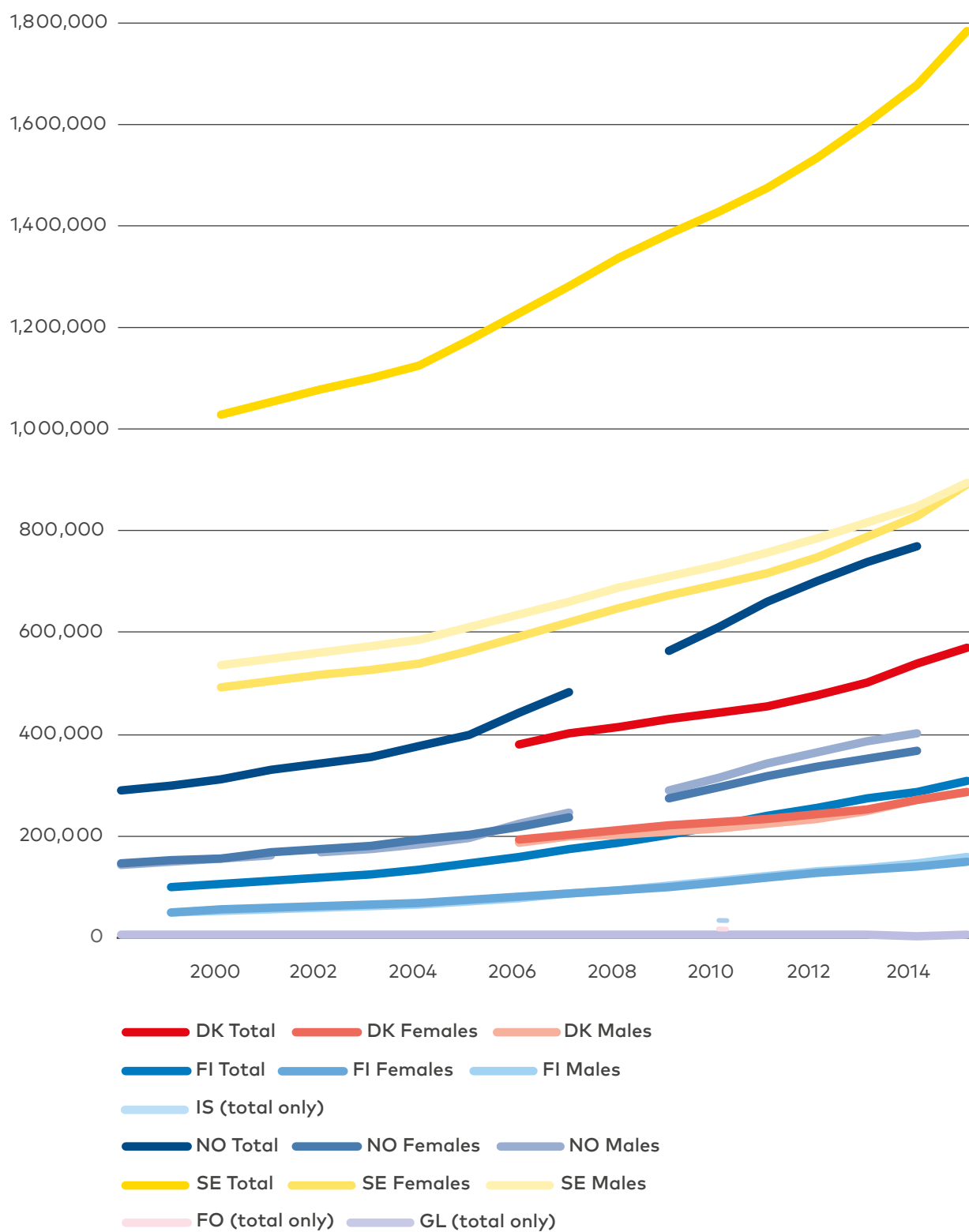
tant detail when it comes to policy-making. Still, statistics based on country of origin is often used by media and different authorities to estimate the proportion of refugees and labour migrants in, for example, the labour market, based on the assumption that migrants from certain countries could be considered to be either refugees or labour migrants. This chapter will first show how the numbers of foreign-born persons in the population have changed in the Nordic Region in recent decades, before presenting the variations across Nordic countries regarding foreign-born persons as a share of the total population.

### "Foreign born" and "Foreign background"

There are differences between countries in the way the origin of an immigrant is measured. "Foreign born" is probably the most coherent, but even with this seemingly straight-forward term definitions differ. In Finland, Denmark and Norway the statistics excludes people born abroad if they also hold the nationality of the respective country. Although this category is quite small it results in a slightly higher statistical share of foreign-born inhabitants in the other countries. In addition to foreign born

there is an indicator on "foreign background". Again, definitions differ slightly between the Nordic countries. In Sweden and Finland, foreign background is defined as a native-born person with two foreign-born parents. In Denmark, it refers to a person whose parents are either immigrants or descendants with foreign citizenship. In Norway, foreign background refers to a native-born person with two foreign-born parents and four foreign-born grandparents.

Figure 4.1 Foreign-born population, 2000-2017.



Data source: NSIs. Note: FI includes AX. Several data gaps (e.g. FO, IS: 2012 only).



## Increase in foreign-born population strongest in Sweden and Norway

Figure 4.1 shows the developments in the size of the foreign-born population over the period 2000-2017. Due to limited data availability or lack of comparability there are several gaps, but an overall trend is apparent at the national level (full colour lines), with a steady increase of foreign-born persons in the Nordic populations across the time period that grows stronger around 2006-2007. This trend was particularly pronounced in Norway and Sweden. Among the foreign-born population in Sweden in 2015, close to half (49%) were born in Europe, with Finland (9% of all foreign born) the most common country of birth (Statistics Sweden, 2016b). Denmark (missing data before 2006) and Finland have also seen rather distinctive increases in recent years. However, considering their similar population sizes, Norway today has a much higher share of foreign-born inhabitants than Denmark and Finland. This is particularly interesting given that in 2008 Norway and Denmark had comparable numbers of foreign-born persons in their populations. In Norway 13 percent of all the foreign-born persons were born in Poland, followed by Lithuania (5.2%) and Sweden (5%), indicating that labour migration is important. In Denmark seven percent of the foreign-born population were born in Poland, followed by Syria and Turkey (6%).

In fact, over the last two decades, Greenland was the only place in the Nordic Region which saw a decrease in number of foreign-born persons in its population. This is perhaps unsurprising given that Greenland had by far the lowest net-migration rate in the Nordic Region during the last ten years (2007-2017). The net-migration rate in Greenland actually fell as low as -7.5 percent (i.e. emigration instead of immigration), but was counteracted by a high birth rate – one of the highest in the Region (Grunfelder

**However, considering their similar population sizes, Norway today has a much higher share of foreign-born inhabitants than Denmark and Finland**

et al., 2018). Furthermore, of the over 1,200 Nordic municipalities, only 12 municipalities in Finland and a handful across the other Nordic countries experienced a decrease in foreign-born inhabitants between 1995 and 2015 (ibid).

## Even gender distribution in the foreign-born population

As shown by the paler lines in figure 4.1, males and females have made up an equal share of the foreign-born population in Denmark and Finland since 2000. This is also now the case in Sweden, following a disproportionate increase in the number of foreign-born females in 2016-2017. In Norway, the reverse trend has been evident since 2007, with more foreign-born males in the population than females. Looking at the gender distribution of the foreign-born population across the Nordic Region in 2016 reveals a fairly balanced picture (101 males per 100 females) (Nordregio, 2017f). Greenland stands out with almost twice as many foreign-born males as females. In Norway males also dominate the foreign-born population (107 males per 100 females). In the south-western Norwegian regions, where the economy is dominated by the oil industry, the foreign-born population is particularly dominated by males. Conversely, in the sparsely populated areas of Northern and Eastern Finland females tend to be overrepresented in the foreign-born population (ibid).

## Capitals attract highest number of foreigners

Figure 4.2 shows foreign-born inhabitants as a share of the total population for Nordic municipalities (big map) and regions (small map) in 2016. The darker, purple colours show municipalities and regions where higher shares of the population were born in a foreign country and the light blue colours lower shares. At the national level, Sweden has the highest share of its population born in a foreign country (17%) and Finland the lowest (5.2%). Iceland also had high shares of foreign-born inhabitants, with between 10-15 percent of the population for the whole country. Despite the low levels of immigration to Greenland discussed above, parts of Greenland have shares of foreign-born inhabitants above 15 percent.

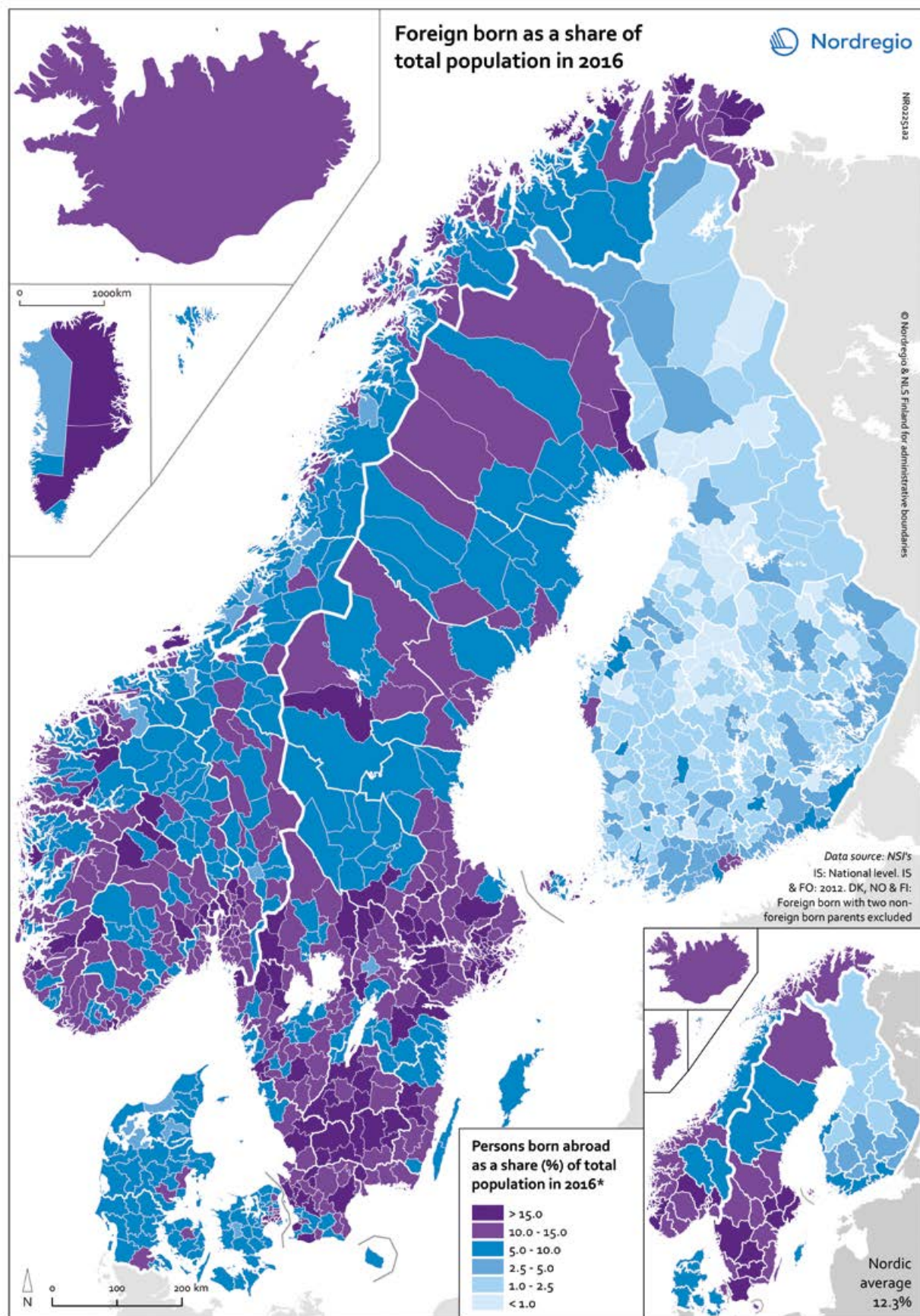


Figure 4.2 Foreign-born inhabitants as a share of total population in 2016.

Zooming in to the regional and municipal level, populations which include the highest share of foreign-born inhabitants can be found in border municipalities such as Haparanda (40%) and in capital cities such as Oslo (27%), Stockholm (24%), Copenhagen (18%) and Helsinki (12%). Sweden and Norway have the most substantial number of municipalities and regions with high shares of foreign-born inhabitants, particularly in the south and, interestingly, the far north. In Denmark, the foreign-born population is mainly concentrated in the capital area and a few selected municipalities in Fyn or Jylland. Similarly, in Finland, high shares of foreign-born inhabitants are found only in the Helsinki area and Närpes on the west coast. Otherwise, in 53 of the 311 Finnish municipalities, less than one percent of the population were born in a foreign country. For Iceland, data was only available on national level, but the picture is rather striking: among the Nordic countries, Iceland, with 14 percent, has one of the highest shares of foreign-born persons in its population. Almost one third of the foreign-born persons in Iceland were born in Poland (30%) followed by Denmark (7%) and the USA (5%).

Region during the 2000s. This increase has been the most pronounced in Sweden and Norway, the countries which also saw the largest number of arrivals in 2015. The gender balance of the foreign-born population is relatively equal at a Nordic level, though regional variation is apparent. Finland remains the country with the lowest share of its population born outside the country, followed by Denmark. It is important to acknowledge the limitations of "foreign-born" as an indicator of cultural diversity. Although it highlights the portion of the population born abroad, it is difficult to assess the impact of this from an integration perspective without further information such as the migration pathway (e.g. refugee or labour migrant) or country of origin. As mentioned above, varying definitions of the term foreign-born between the Nordic countries also presents challenges with respect to comparability. Despite these shortcomings, foreign born is one out of rather few indicators available for all Nordic countries, in almost all cases at both national as well as regional and municipal level, which provides information on the immigrant background of the population.

## Concluding remarks

Although the migration events of 2015 were unique in many ways, it is also helpful to put them in the context of the increase in numbers of foreign-born inhabitants that has been occurring in the Nordic



# Chapter 5

## HEALTH AND WELLBEING IN THE IMMIGRANT POPULATION

Author: Nina Rehn-Mendoza

Data: Linus Rispling

### Introduction

As demonstrated in Theme 1 of this report, immigrants to the Nordic Region are a heterogeneous group. Thus, their situation with respect to physical and mental health is also characterised by a high degree of heterogeneity. Background factors such as reason for immigrating, when they immigrated, country of origin, from what political and humanitarian situation did they come, as well as genetics, environment, and asylum regulations of the receiving country, all interplay. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to provide an overview of health status of all migrant groups in the Nordic countries. Instead, this chapter aims to highlight some of the physical and mental health issues that are prevalent, with a particular focus on the immigrant population arriving from non-western countries. It begins with a brief overview of the policy context before presenting data and analysis related to mortality rates, mental health and socio-economic factors.

### Policy context

Best possible physical and mental health is a basic human right and a prerequisite for successful integration. It is necessary if one is to follow a language course, attend school or search for employment. As a result, the Nordic countries have policies and programs in place designed to support the health and well-being of immigrants. For example, in Norway the Government recognised that equal health and social services are fundamental for a society that values inclusion and equality. Therefore,

**Immigrants from non-western countries tend to eat more fruit and vegetables, they drink less alcohol, and women tend not to smoke**

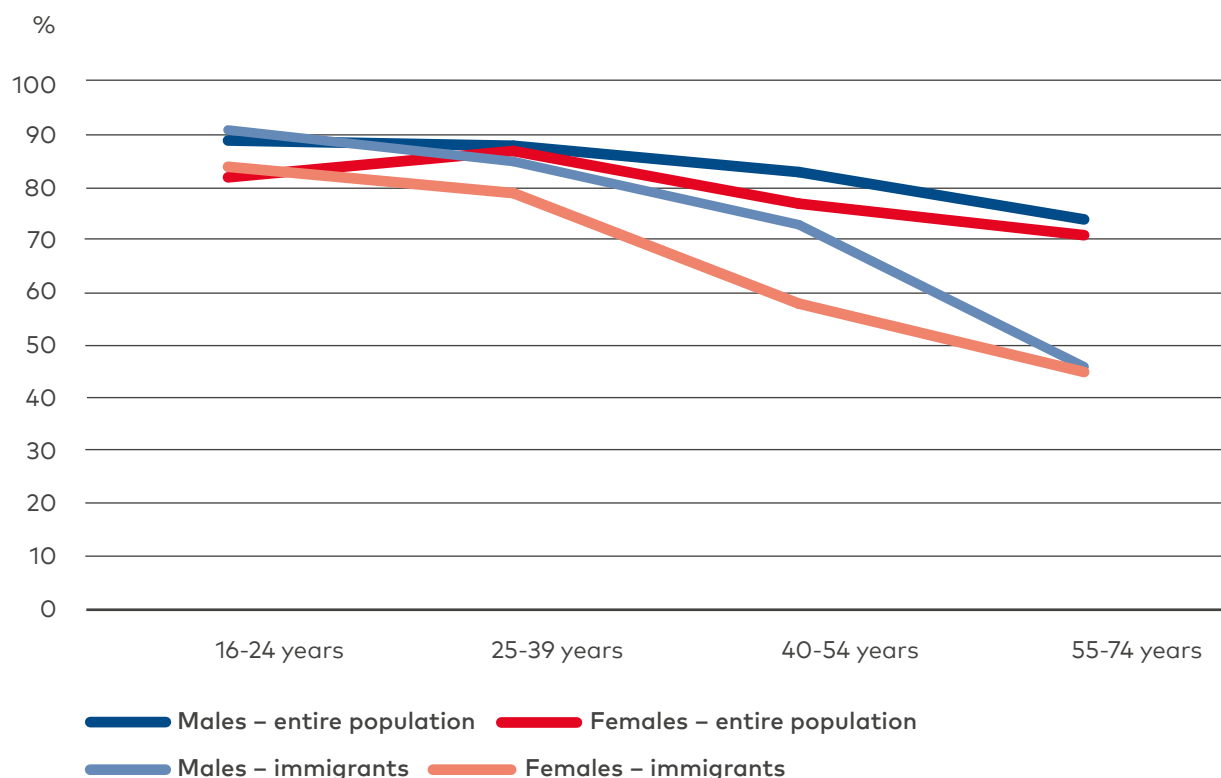
the Ministry of Health and Care Services developed a National Strategy for Immigrant Health 2013-2017, which highlights some of the specific health challenges in a heterogeneous immigrant population, for example, tuberculosis, HIV, mental illness, oral health, women's genital mutilation, and reproductive health, and aims to increase competence around these health issues among service providers (Helse- og omsorgsdepartementet, 2013). In Denmark, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Integration directed the Research Centre for Migration, Ethnicity and Health to collect existing research and shed light on the health status of immigrants, including information about how the health services are organised for this group and their utilisation of existing services (MESU, 2013).

### Mortality lower among immigrants than native populations

Data from Sweden (Socialstyrelsen, 2009), Finland (Lehti et al., 2016) and Denmark (MESU, 2013) show that immigrant populations born outside



**Figure 5.1 Share of age groups in Norway who consider their health to be good or very good, among males/females and immigrants, in percent of total.**



Data source: Statistics Norway.

In Norway, a study about the living conditions of the migrant population is conducted every ten years, most recently in 2016. The study includes questions about health (see figure 5.1), employment, education, housing, discrimination

and social relationships. Migrants are selected from 12 different countries and do not therefore represent the whole migrant population (Statistics Norway, 2017).

Europe have longer life expectancy and/or lower overall mortality than the general population in the receiving countries. This is perhaps surprising as many immigrants originate from countries with significantly lower life expectancy than our Nordic countries.

In Sweden, immigrants born outside Europe have a lower risk of dying prematurely than native Swedes. Conversely, if studying the immigrant group in Sweden which was born within EU, the majority of whom are Finnish, the likelihood of dying prematurely is remarkably higher, compared with

native Swedes. This is largely due to increased rates of heart disease, alcohol-related diseases and cancer (Socialstyrelsen, 2009). In Finland, mortality rates of those born in North Africa and Middle East, sub-Saharan Africa, and Asia is 30-50 percent lower than among native Finns. Cancer rates are 24 percent lower among immigrant women and heart disease is 15 percent lower among immigrant men than among native Finns. The length of stay did not affect mortality rates. The higher mortality among the native Finnish population is to a large extent explained by alcohol-related conditions and exter-

nal causes of death, for example, suicide and accidents (Lehti et al., 2016).

Generally, immigrants arriving to the Nordic countries from non-western countries show higher levels of infectious diseases such as tuberculosis, HIV, hepatitis B and C, are more likely to have parasites and other stomach and bowel diseases, and suffer more frequently from diabetes and poor dental health. Almost all immigrants have anemia and vitamin D deficiency, and neither children nor adults have been vaccinated according to any schedule (MESU, 2013).

Regarding health behaviors, immigrants from non-western countries tend to eat more fruit and vegetables, they drink less alcohol, and women tend not to smoke. On the other hand, immigrant women in particular are less physically active. Young immigrants use cannabis and alcohol less than their native peers. For example, a study of adolescents 14-17 years in Oslo, Norway, found significantly lower levels of binge drinking and cannabis use among both first and second-generation immigrants from Middle East, Africa and Asia than among native-born Norwegians. Tobacco use was found to be at similar levels among immigrants and native-born Norwegians. Interestingly, the study found little evidence of the practices of the host culture being adopted over time, with lower rates of binge drinking and cannabis use remaining for second-generation immigrant youth in Norway (Abebe et al., 2015).

In general, both international and Nordic studies offer three main explanations for the overall lower mortality. First, the healthy migrant or selective migration effect, which means that it is those who are healthier than average that move, with the sick and disabled in many cases staying behind. Second, immigrants are more likely to engage in favorable health behaviors such as incorporating more fruits and vegetables in their diets and drinking less alcohol. Third, possible data issues such as registration errors, missing data for immigrants re-emigrating and underreporting of deaths that take place outside of Europe.

**While sex, age and country of origin clearly play a role in health status among immigrants, socio-economic factors also play an important role**

## **Contradictory findings regarding mental health in the immigrant population**

Studies on migrant's mental health in different countries show varying results. In Sweden (Socialstyrelsen, 2009) and Denmark (MESU, 2013), and in systematic reviews conducted outside the Nordic Region, studies indicate higher incidence and prevalence of mental disorders among immigrants. In Norway, studies often show an increased risk of self-reported mental distress, but lower utilisation of mental health services than among native Norwegians. This means that, although immigrants are more likely to report mental health problems, they are less likely to seek professional help. Specific studies about prevalence rates are lacking in Norway (Kale & Hjelde, 2017).

The first large-scale study in Finland (2017) showed a generally lower risk of mental disorders among the immigrant population, but large variation based on the immigrant group in question and the disorders experienced. For example, incidences of bipolar, depressive and alcohol use disorders were lower among immigrants than native-born Finns, while incidences of psychotic disorders were lower among female immigrants and at the same level as native-born Finns among male immigrants. Incidences of post-traumatic stress disorder were higher among male immigrants than both female immigrants and native-born Finns. Interestingly, the findings of the Finnish study run counter to international research, which consistently finds an elevated risk of psychotic disorders in both first and second-generation migrants. One explanation for this may be the high prevalence of psychotic disorders in Finland. This contention is further supported by the fact that the rate of psychosis among Finnish migrants in Sweden is among the highest of all migrant groups (Markkula et al., 2017).

Mental distress or ill-health is a bigger problem among newly arrived asylum-seekers than among other migrant groups (Socialstyrelsen, 2009). For

example, in Denmark, risk of mental disorders in family reunification migrants is lower than among native Danes (MESU, 2013).

## **Socio-economic factors a strong influence on health status**

Figure 5.1 illustrates, in this case for Norway, that although overall mortality may be lower, the self-perceived health status of immigrants in most age groups is worse than among the native population. Young immigrants perceive their health to be as good as native Norwegians. Immigrant men in the adult population (25-39 years of age) also perceive their health as good, while for women there is a steady deterioration in perceived health status starting from around age 18. With age, everybody's perception of their health declines, with the sharpest drop evident in immigrant women. By age 55-74 self-perceived health status among immigrant men also declines substantially, resulting in a large gap between immigrants and native Norwegians in this age group. There are also large differences in self-perceived health status depending on country of origin. For example, immigrants from Iran, Iraq and Pakistan show high level of self-perceived ill-health, while immigrants from Somalia and Eritrea generally perceive their health as good (Statistics Norway, 2017).

While findings related to health service utilisation among immigrants in Denmark have been somewhat inconsistent, some studies show that although immigrants make more frequent visits to hospitals and primary care units, they are less likely to use dental services and prescribed medicines (MESU, 2013). The latter two require patients to pay which may be a barrier. Data from Denmark also shows that although immigrants are less likely to have cancers, when they do they are diagnosed at a later stage, and that screening programmes are less likely attended by immigrant women. In general, immigrants are likely to experience multiple barriers to service utilisation, such as language, money, transport, trust in professionals, culture and norms around some diseases such as mental or reproductive health issues, and knowledge about the health system. The barriers are probably different in different immigrant groups and age groups.

While sex, age and country of origin clearly play a role in health status among immigrants, socio-economic factors also play an important role.

## **Strong religious beliefs and a preference for social contact with other immigrants from same country of origin is associated with lower health status**

Studies in Norway confirm that higher education, employment, good standard of living and housing, good knowledge of the local language, friends and married life all contribute to better health status. At the other end of the spectrum, strong religious beliefs and a preference for social contact with other immigrants from same country of origin is associated with lower health status. Ill-health increases with age in the immigrant population faster than in the native population. This may contribute to the tendency for the employment rate to decrease after 10-15 years of living in Norway among some immigrant groups, and the need for health insurance benefits and rehabilitation services increase (Statistics Norway, 2011).

Similarly, in Sweden, all migrant groups report more ill-health than native-born persons, but when results are adjusted for social factors such as employment, economic resources and housing status the differences in self-perceived health status decrease remarkably. This suggests that it is largely the socio-economic living conditions that explain differences in health status between immigrants and native Swedes (Socialstyrelsen, 2009).

The strong correlation between good health and socio-economic factors such as social relations, education, employment and income is no surprise. Although the causality is not clear, it is likely the relationship goes both ways – better health status leads to greater socio-economic opportunity, while at the same time a better socio-economic situation has positive health effects.

## **Concluding remarks**

Assisting people to achieve their best possible physical and mental wellbeing must be one of the priorities in integrating newcomers into the Nordic societies. This requires a holistic approach as we know

that poverty, inadequate housing, unemployment, refugee status, lack of social networks, language barriers and being illiterate are among the biggest risk factors for ill-health. As such, continued recognition and discussion of the role of the socio-economic situation on the health of immigrants is vital. This includes understanding the importance of meaningful leisure time, contacts to local people, involvement in for example NGOs, and meetings with local health and social service providers. Upon arrival, there is a need for systematic and full health checks for all immigrants that include, for example, tests for tuberculosis, hepatitis and HIV, vaccinations, and reproductive health checks for women. National guidelines for local health services with checklists of services to be given to newly arrived non-western immigrants would be useful to ensure equal service delivery. This should be followed up by local introduction programmes for newly arrived immigrants that include all aspects of health such as female and reproductive health, diet and physical activity, tobacco cessation, mental health and introduction to local services, both health and social.

Further efforts are also required to understand and remove existing barriers to health service utili-

## **Assisting people to achieve their best possible physical and mental wellbeing must be one of the priorities in integrating newcomers into the Nordic societies**

sation such as language, money, transport, trust in professionals, knowledge about the health system. Health and social services need flexibility to meet the different needs of different groups of immigrants, and staff may need additional capacity building about specific migrant health issues, including mental health. Finally, more research and data is necessary, in particular focusing on grouping immigrants according to different background and selection criteria. Few, if any, studies in the Nordic countries currently meet these criteria. For example, understanding the lower mortality among migrants (taking into consideration healthy migrant effect, data issues, re-migration back, genetics and healthy lifestyles).





# Chapter 6

## NATURALIZATION

**Authors:** Nora Sánchez Gassen and Timothy Heleniak  
**Map and data:** Linus Rispling and Nora Sánchez Gassen

Naturalization – the act of granting citizenship – is often considered the last step or ‘pinnacle’ of a migrant’s integration (Gest et al., 2014). It typically comes after migrants have lived in their host country for several years, have acquired at least basic language skills and have become established on the labour market or participated in educational programs. This chapter briefly touches on the benefits, rights and responsibilities associated with naturalization in the Nordic countries before outlining the conditions which migrants currently have to fulfil to qualify in each country. Further, naturalization statistics are presented to show how many migrants in the Nordic countries take up a Nordic citizenship.

### Rights and responsibilities following naturalization

Naturalization entitles the successful applicant to all rights and duties that are reserved for citizens. In the Nordic countries and most other Western societies, these are few but important rights. For example, the Swedish migration agency defines four concrete benefits that come with Swedish citizenship: a) the absolute right to live and work in Sweden, b) the right to vote in elections to the Swedish Parliament and be elected to it, c) the right to join the police or armed forces (as well as a few other occupations which are available only to Swedes) and d) easier access to live and work in other EU member states (Migrationsverket, 2018).

To these one could add the benefit of travelling with a Swedish passport, which allows visa-free entry in many countries (Passport Index, 2018). Similar benefits come from citizenship in the other Nordic countries. Alongside these, many rights and obligations – such as access to health and education systems, the duty to pay taxes and access to most professions – are also available to foreign residents. In addition to rights and benefits gained, naturalization is also considered to have a symbolic value. For many migrants, becoming a citizen can be an expression of belonging to and identification with the host country (Bakkær Simonsen, 2017).

### Requirements for naturalization differ across the Nordic Region

Table 6.1 shows the requirements that an adult migrant from outside the Nordic Region currently has to meet in order to be eligible for naturalization in the Nordic countries. While the Nordic countries form a homogenous region in many policy areas, the differences in access to citizenship are remarkable. To name just a few examples, Sweden allows migrants to naturalize after five years of residence while nine years are required in Denmark.<sup>14</sup> Norway is the only Nordic country that does not expect citizenship applicants to be economically self-sufficient, but it is one of only two countries that asks them to pass a citizenship (“social studies”) test and the only country that does not allow naturalized cit-

<sup>14</sup> All Nordic countries entitle specific migrant groups, such as refugees, spouses of citizens and/or citizens of other Nordic countries to naturalize after shorter periods of residence than those stated in the table.

Requirements	Sweden	Norway	Denmark	Finland	Iceland
Permanent right of residence	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes (exceptions possible)
Duration of residence	Five years	Seven years within the last ten years	Nine years	Five years without interruption; or seven years since reaching age 15, with the last two years without interruption	Seven years
Law abidingness	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Self-support	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Lack of public debt	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Language skills	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Pledge of allegiance	No	No	Yes	No	No
Citizenship test	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
Loss of previous citizenship	No	Yes (exceptions possible)	No	No	No
National security considerations	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Fee	1500 SEK	3700 NOK	1200 DKK	440 € (electronic applications: 350 €)	25.000 ISK

**Table 6.1 Requirements for naturalization in the Nordic countries. Source: Overview based on citizenship laws in each country.**

izens to keep their previous citizenship (exceptions exist). Denmark is the only Nordic country that asks new citizens to declare a pledge of allegiance and all countries except Sweden require applicants to have at least basic skills in the local language. Fees for naturalization are highest in Finland and Norway. Overall, Sweden has the least requirements for naturalization and Denmark the most, with Norway, Finland and Iceland in the middle of the spectrum.

## Strong differences in naturalization rates across the Nordic Region

In addition to these differences in naturalization requirements, we also find considerable variation in naturalization rates across Nordic Region (figure 6.1). In 2016, naturalization rates were particu-

## For many migrants, becoming a citizen can be an expression of belonging to and identification with the host country

larly high in Swedish and Finnish municipalities. In the southern part of Sweden and Eastern Finland, more than 10 out of 100 foreign residents naturalized. Much lower rates were registered in Norway, Iceland and Denmark. In almost all municipalities in these two countries, less than 5 out of 100 foreign residents naturalized in 2016.

These differences in naturalization rates may partly reflect differences in naturalization laws. In Sweden, where migrants have to fulfil fewer require-

ments to become eligible for citizenship, more people might be interested in applying. The differences in rates may however also reflect differences in the composition of the migrant population in each municipality or region. If a large share of migrants have arrived only in recent years, few may already be eligible to apply for citizenship and therefore naturalization rates may be low. Similarly, research has shown that migrants from other European or Western industrialized countries are less likely to apply for citizenship in their host country than migrants from developing countries (Böcker & Thränhardt, 2006). Low naturalization rates in some municipalities could hence also be a reflection of migrants' countries of origin.

## Concluding remarks

Previous chapters in this report show that the population in all Nordic countries has become more diverse during the last decades – an increasing share of the populations are immigrants. While the Nordic countries share this demographic characteristic, they differ in terms of their legal responses. This

## While the Nordic countries form a homogenous region in many policy areas, the differences in access to citizenship are remarkable

chapter has shown that at least in terms of naturalization policies, the Nordic countries set their own, and often varying, conditions that foreign residents must fulfil before applying for citizenship. In addition to differences in policies, we find strong differences in naturalization rates between municipalities, regions and countries. Future research could deepen our understanding of the factors which explain the differences in legal approaches and naturalization rates in the Nordic Region. As Nordic societies are becoming increasingly diverse, naturalization remains an important tool to help migrants transition from newcomers to full members of the political community.

## Definitions

Naturalization rates are calculated as the ratio of the number of citizenship acquisitions during a year divided over the total stock of residents with a foreign citizenship at the beginning of the year. Differences in a rate over time or

space can be the result of differences in the number of citizenship acquisitions; or they can result from differences in the size and composition of the migrant population.

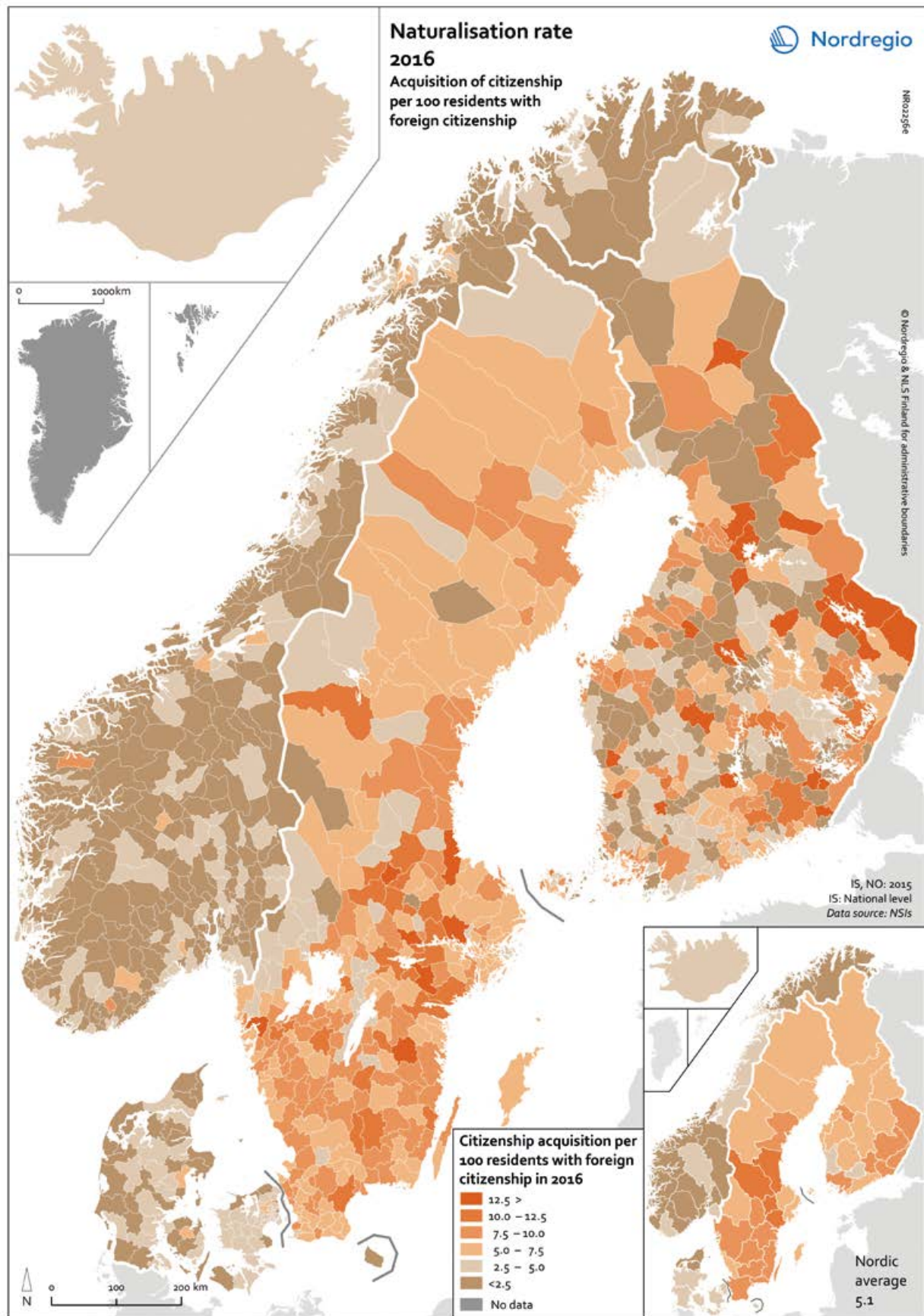


Figure 6.1 Naturalization rates in the Nordic Region, 2016.









THEME 3

# **ENTERING THE NORDIC LABOUR MARKET**

# Chapter 7

## LABOUR MARKET INTEGRATION

**Authors:** Nora Sánchez Gassen and Timothy Heleniak  
**Map and data:** Linus Rispling and Nora Sánchez Gassen

When migrants are asked about their reasons for coming to Europe, the 'search for a better life' is a frequent response, and this motivation often includes the hope of finding better job opportunities than in the country of origin (Djaha, 2013; Jawad et al., 2016). Nonetheless, when they arrive and settle in Europe, migrants face obstacles to entering the labour market. Existing research shows that foreign-born persons are more likely to be unemployed, and, when in employment, are more likely to work in short-term or part-time positions than native-born persons (Arbetsmarknadsekonomska rådet, 2017). With length of stay in the host country, employment gaps narrow but do not fully disappear (Karlsdóttir et al., 2017). This chapter will highlight current employment gaps across the Nordic Region between native and foreign-born persons. It will also highlight differences in employment rates within the diverse group of foreign-born migrants.

### Unemployment rates highest among migrants born outside the European Union

While the employment gap between immigrants and the native-born population is evident across the Nordic Region, figure 7.1 indicates that some migrant groups face more barriers to labour market entry than others.

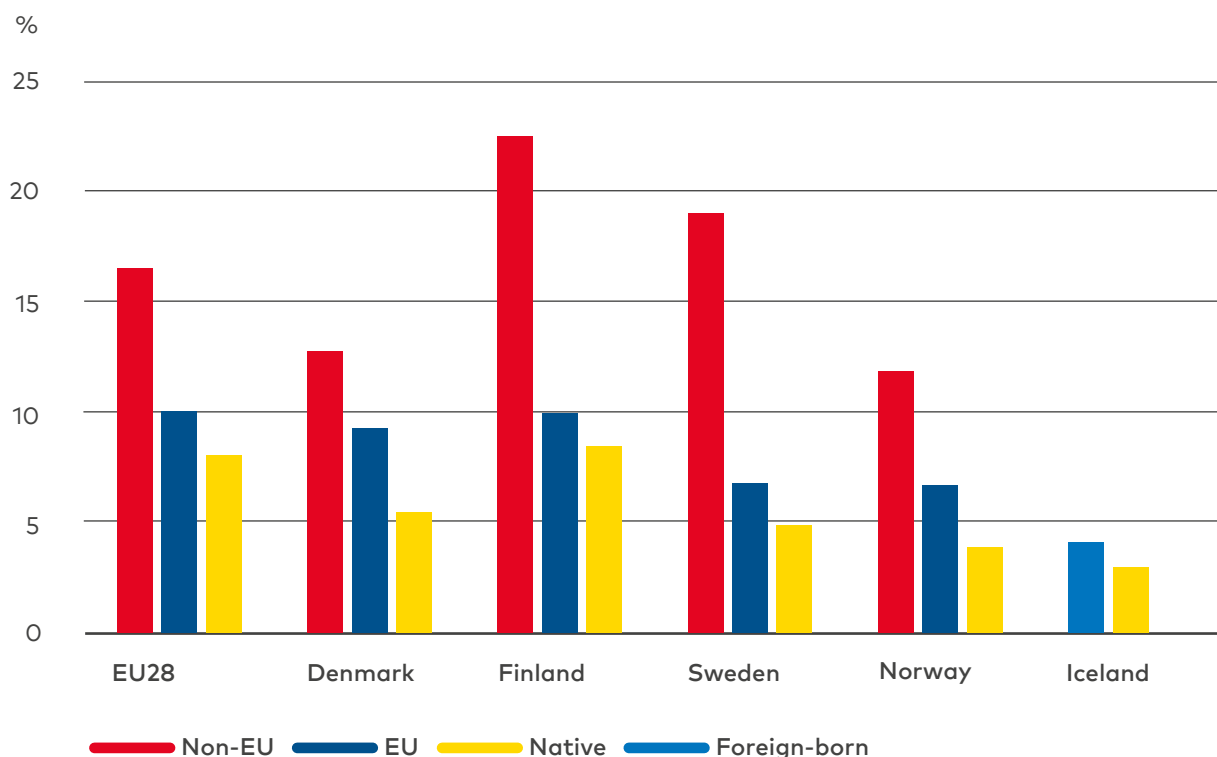
The figure shows unemployment rates in each Nordic country and, for comparison, the average rates across the European Union. We distinguish between unemployment rates by country of birth: outside the European Union (non-EU), in the European Union (EU), and native born. Two findings stand

### Migrants appear to face greater barriers to finding a job in the Nordic region than in many other European countries

out: First, the foreign-born population had higher unemployment rates in 2016 than the native-born population in all Nordic countries. The difference is particularly stark when comparing those born outside the EU with the native-born populations. In Norway and Sweden, for instance, unemployment rates of non-EU migrants were at least three times higher than those of their native-born peers (SE: 19.1% vs. 4.9%; NO: 11.9% vs. 3.9%). The unemployment rates among the EU-migrant population was also higher than that of the native-born population, but here the differences are less pronounced. This suggests that migrants from outside the EU face particular barriers to entering the Nordic labour market. Note that in Iceland distinctions between those born in an EU country and outside the EU are not possible. The difference in unemployment rates between the foreign-born and native-born population is small (4.1% vs. 3.0%).

The second finding that stands out in figure 7.1 is that migrants appear to face greater barriers to finding a job in the Nordic Region than in many other European countries. Based on the EU-average, unemployment rates of migrants born outside the EU were about twice as high as those of the native-born population (16.6% vs. 8.1%). Denmark, Sweden and Finland had larger gaps. This can partly, but not com-

**Figure 7.1 Unemployment rates by place of birth 2016.**



Data source: Nordregio's calculations based on Eurostat.

pletely, be explained by the low unemployment rates of native-born persons in all Nordic countries except Finland. Overall, migrants born outside the EU had the highest unemployment rates in Finland (22.6%), but the gap in unemployment rates between non-EU migrants and their native-born peers was largest in Sweden.

## Higher education facilitates entry into the labour market

In addition to country of origin, labour market outcomes of immigrants and the native-born population differ based on educational attainment level. Figure 7.2 shows employment rates of the native and the foreign-born population in different Nordic regions (NUTS 2 level). Distinctions are made between foreign-born and native-born individuals with low educational achievements (ISCED levels

0-2: lower secondary education or below; upper left and right panels); and their peers with high levels of educational attainment (ISCED levels 5-8: tertiary/university-level education; lower left and right panels).<sup>15</sup> The panels show that higher education facilitates entry into the labour market. Across all regions shown on the map, native-born persons with high educational attainment had higher employment rates than native-born persons with lower education. Similarly, highly educated foreign-born persons were more likely to be employed than their lower-educated peers. The advantage of persons with high educational attainment also holds when comparing highly educated foreign-born persons with lower educated native-born persons. Across the Nordic Region, the latter group overall had lower employment rates than the former.

When comparing employment rates within each educational group, further interesting patterns emerge. Among the higher educated group (lower

<sup>15</sup> Employment rates of foreign-born and native-born persons with medium educational attainments (ISCED levels 3-4) are also available on the Eurostat database (<http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database>), but not shown here due to limits of space. In almost all regions, employment rates of those with medium education lie between those with low and those with high educational achievements, and native-born persons with medium educational levels have higher employment than their foreign-born peers almost everywhere.

## Unemployment and employment

The *unemployment rate* shows unemployed persons as a share of the economically active population in each country. The economically active population includes all employed or unemployed persons.

The *employment rate* is defined as the share of the working-age population (ages 15-64 years) that is in employment.

panels), employment rates of native-born persons were generally higher than those of foreign-born persons in 2016. In Iceland, and the regions Oslo og Akershus and Nord-Norge in Norway, both groups of highly educated persons reached employment levels of 84 percent or higher. By contrast, among the lower educated group (upper panels), foreign-born persons reached higher employment levels than native-born persons in a few regions, most notably around the capitals Helsinki, Oslo, Stockholm and in Iceland. In at least some Nordic regions, it appears that lower-educated migrants are more willing or able to take on employment than their native-born peers. Nonetheless, it is important to note that differences in labour market access also exist among the group of lower educated migrants. Refugees, for instance, may find it more difficult to find a first job than lower-skilled labour migrants from other Nordic countries or EU member states. These exceptions notwithstanding, lower-educated native-born individuals reached similar or higher employment rates than their foreign-born peers in 2016.

### Nordic approaches to close the employment gap

The reasons for the employment gap between the native-born populations and immigrants are manifold and include differences in educational attainment and formal qualifications, language skills and access to local networks. More traditional gender roles among some migrant groups can also create barriers to employment for migrant women.

### More targeted measures are needed to promote the integration of low and informally skilled people

Poor health and experiences of discrimination also may play a role (Karlsdóttir et al., 2017). The Nordic municipal, regional and national governments have taken a range of measures in recent years to address these challenges and facilitate migrants' integration into the labour market. These range from language training, attempts to improve access to low-cost housing, mapping of competences, validation of experiences and qualifications, on-the-job training and job matching (Harbo et al., 2017). Specific programmes like *Snabbspåret* in Sweden, and *Hurtigsporet* in Norway add hope to a faster integration of skilled refugees in the matchmaking to the labour market. More targeted measures are needed to promote the integration of low and informally skilled people. The Norwegian programme *jobbsjansen* is one recent effort in this direction. Furthermore, a myriad of new labour market measures have been taken at the regional and municipal level. There is however scope for employers to become more engaged (Karlsdóttir et al., 2017). Across all these measures there is a need to find the right balance between fast and sustainable integration. Low-skilled jobs may be useful to gain initial work

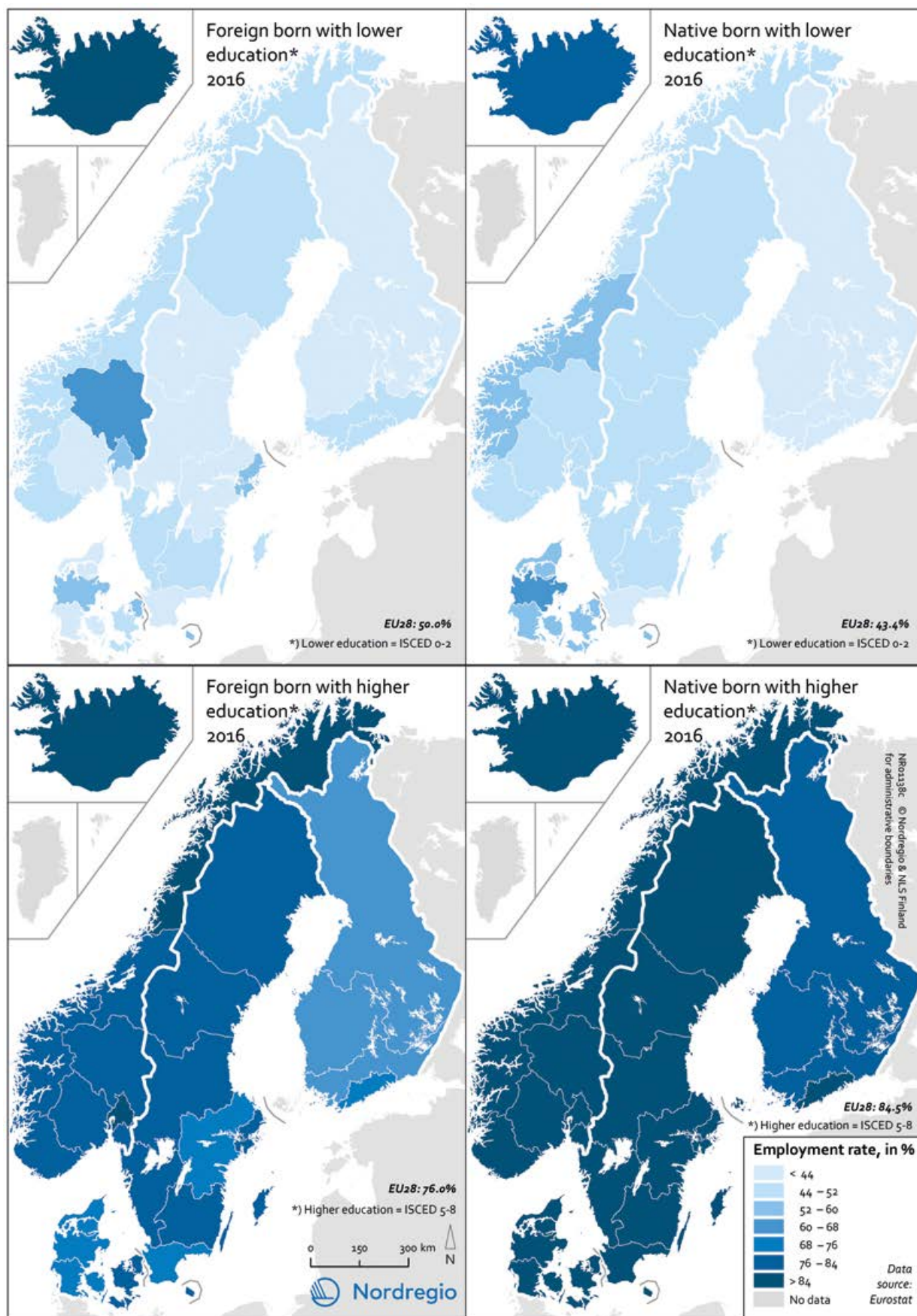


Figure 7.2 Employment rates of foreign-born and native-born persons by region and education.



experience, but career paths should be offered for more sustainable integration (Eurofound, 2016).

## Concluding remarks

Migrants face very different barriers to the Nordic labour market. Some persons move to the Nordic Region precisely because they have been offered a job there and thus are in employment soon after arrival. Other migrants may live for years in the Nordic Region without securing a permanent position. This chapter has highlighted some of the current differences in employment and unemployment levels between native-born and foreign-born populations. One finding is that education matters when trying to integrate on the Nordic labour market,

both for native-born persons and their foreign-born peers. Educational programmes and adult-learning schemes that align skills and competences more closely to labour market demands may therefore be one way of improving chances of employment. Further research is needed to show the effectiveness of these and other measures in facilitating access to the labour market for different groups of migrants (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2017). In the coming years, asylum seekers who have obtained refugee status in the Nordic countries will have to be integrated into the Nordic labour market. Tailored active labour market policies will be more important than ever in succeeding with this task and narrowing existing employment gaps between the native-born population and migrants.



# Chapter 8

## FEMALES AND LABOUR MARKET INTEGRATION

Authors: Hjördís Rut Sigurjónsdóttir and Gustaf Norlén

Data: Gustaf Norlén

Getting a foothold on the labour market is often seen as a key prerequisite for successful integration and supporting new migrants to find employment is a common goal in the Nordic co-operation. The persistent employment gap between immigrants and the native population in the Nordic countries suggests that this is not always easy. This gap is most pronounced for women and is in part explained by the particularly high levels of labour market participation amongst native-born women in comparison to the much lower employment rates of immigrant women (Bratsberg et al., 2016). Refugees and immi-

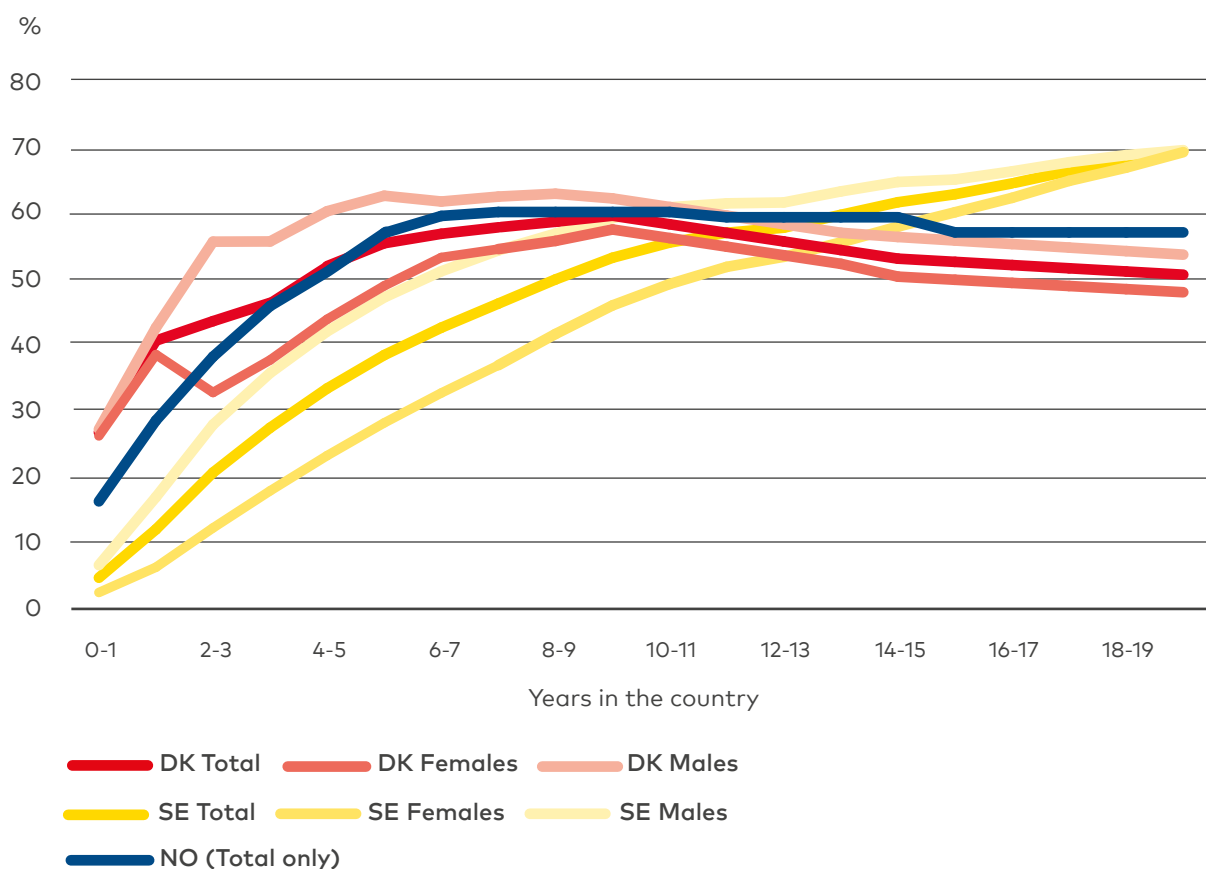
grants from non-western countries face the largest challenge both in comparison to other women, and compared to men from the same background. Low levels of education, less work experience upon arrival and family obligations have considerable impact and can, to some extent, explain why the labour market integration process is slower for immigrant women than men (Karlsdóttir et al., 2017). This chapter explores labour market participation for females and males based on time spent in the host country, economic inactivity and language learning.

### Comparability of integration related employment data

Figure 8.1 shows the employment rate with relation to the length of stay in the country. This indicator takes into consideration that fact that integration immigrants into the labour market takes time. Although the statistics for Sweden, Norway and Denmark are similar, they are not quite comparable. First, the classification of immigrants differs. In Sweden, the data includes refugees who have been granted asylum and in Denmark and Norway it includes all immigrants from "non-western countries", i.e. all countries except EU/EFTA, North America,

Australia and New Zealand. In this group there will also be immigrants who are not refugees. In addition, definitions of employment differ slightly between the countries as well as the age groups (20-64 years for Sweden, 15-74 years for Norway and 16-64 years for Denmark. For Norway the gender data was only roughly divided by years in the country and is therefore shown in a separate figure. These differences notwithstanding the data for each country shows the same trend and gives a good picture of the situation.

**Figure 8.1 Employment rate for non-western immigrants 2016 by period of residence permit.**



Data source: NSIs. Note: DK: 2015. DK & NO: immigrants from non-western countries. SE: refugees who have been granted asylum.

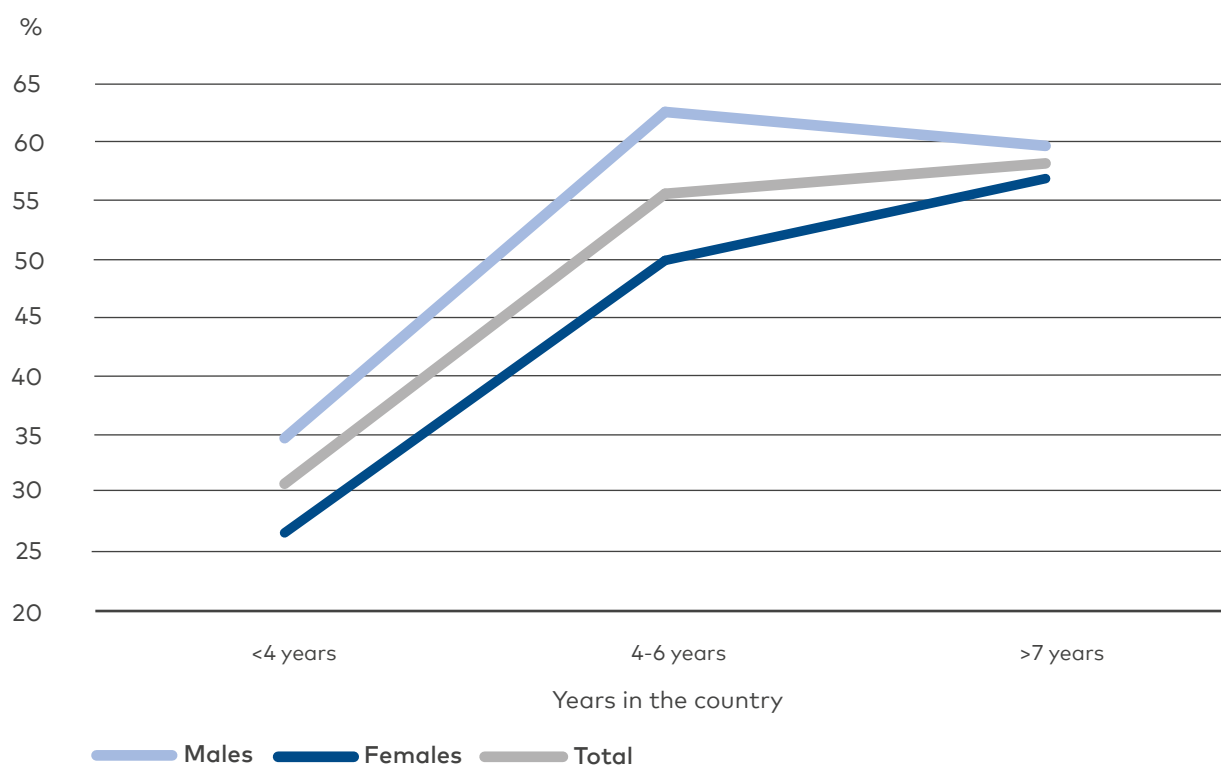
## Gender gap in employment-rate closes with time in the country

In Sweden there is a clear gender difference in the employment rate of newly arrived refugees in the initial stages following arrival. As seen in figure 8.1, however, this difference diminishes with the length of stay in the country. After 10 years, the employment gap between males and females is 13 percent but after 20 years (based on those who arrived in 1997) there is barely any difference in the employment rate for females (69.3%) and males (69.6%). In Denmark, differences in employment rates between male and female remain small the first two years but, following this, increase considerably. The male employment rate grows substantially during the first six years, while the female employment rate reaches the highest point 9-10 years after arrival.

## After 10 years, the employment gap between males and females is 13 percent

In Norway (figure 8.2) the difference in the employment rate between male and female also decreases over time, though notably never fully disappears. For women, employment reaches its peak after residing in the country for seven years or more, while for male this peak occurs already after 4-6 years. For women immigrating to Norway from outside of Europe, the employment rate remains very low the first four years, just over 25 percent, while it is around 35 percent for men. After four years in the country the employment rate begins to increase more rapidly for women and, following seven years

**Figure 8.2 Employment rate for non-western immigrants in Norway 2016 by period of residence permit.**



Data source: NSI.

in the country, almost eclipses that of men's. The increased employment rates for women after four years in the country might be due to municipally-led initiatives improving women's access to the labour market.

## Women born outside the EU more likely to be economically inactive

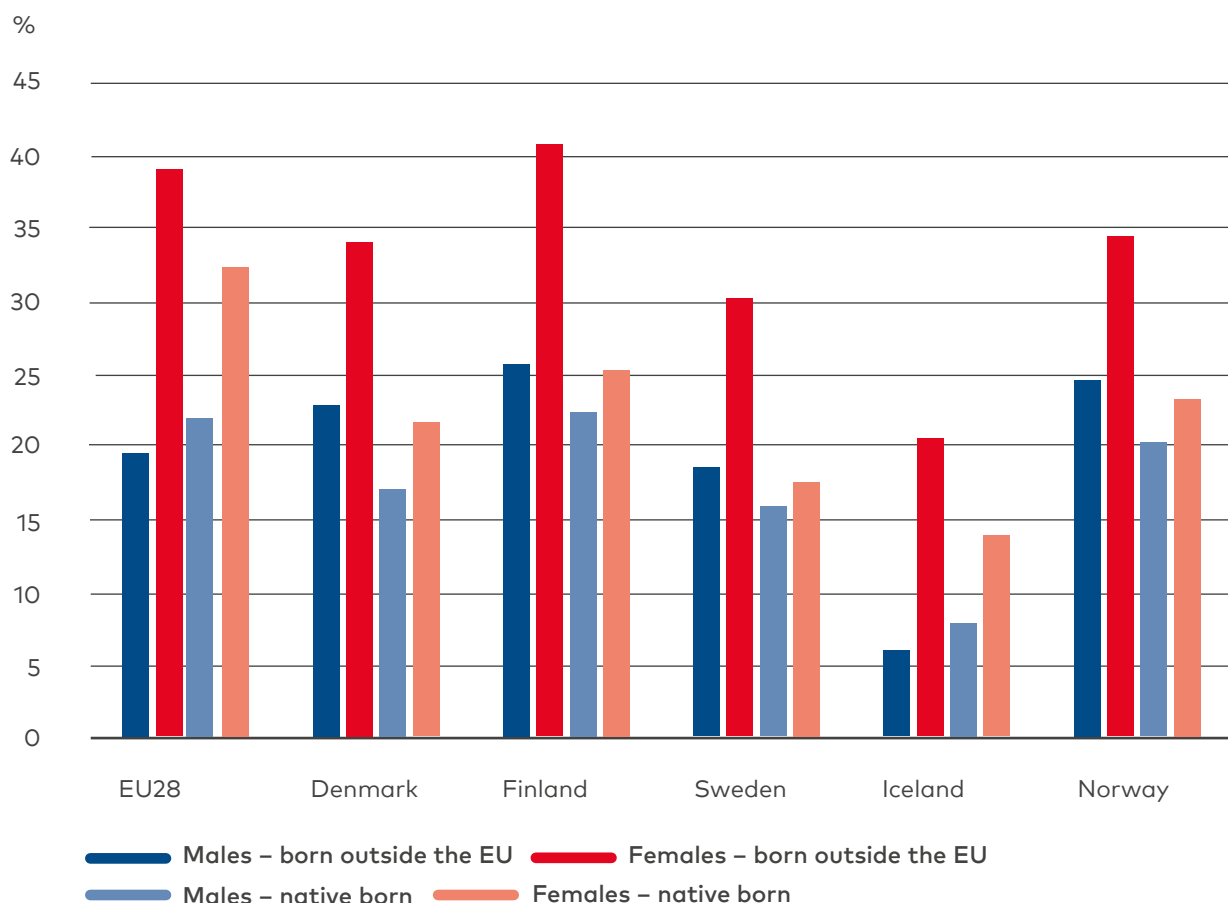
Another measure of labour market participation is the economic inactivity rate. It measures the percentage of those who are outside the labour market of the total population in a specific age group, in other words, those who neither work nor look for a job. They may, however, be occupied with education, family duties or dealing with illness. In general, women are more likely to be economically inactive than men in the same category (e.g. native born, immigrant from inside EU, immigrant from outside the EU) (Grunfelder et al., 2018). However, this gen-

**The economic inactivity rate for women born outside of the EU is much higher than that of both native-born women and men born outside of the EU**

der difference is much more pronounced between men and women born outside the EU than between the native-born population. The economic inactivity rate for women born outside of the EU is much higher than that of both native-born women and men born outside of the EU. This is true of both the EU as a whole (on average) and in all the Nordic countries. Notably, the inactivity rate for men born outside the EU is about the same, or even higher, than for native-born women in all the Nordic countries, except Iceland.



**Figure 8.3 Inactivity rate by gender and country of birth 2016 (15-64 years).**



Data source: Eurostat (Labour force survey).

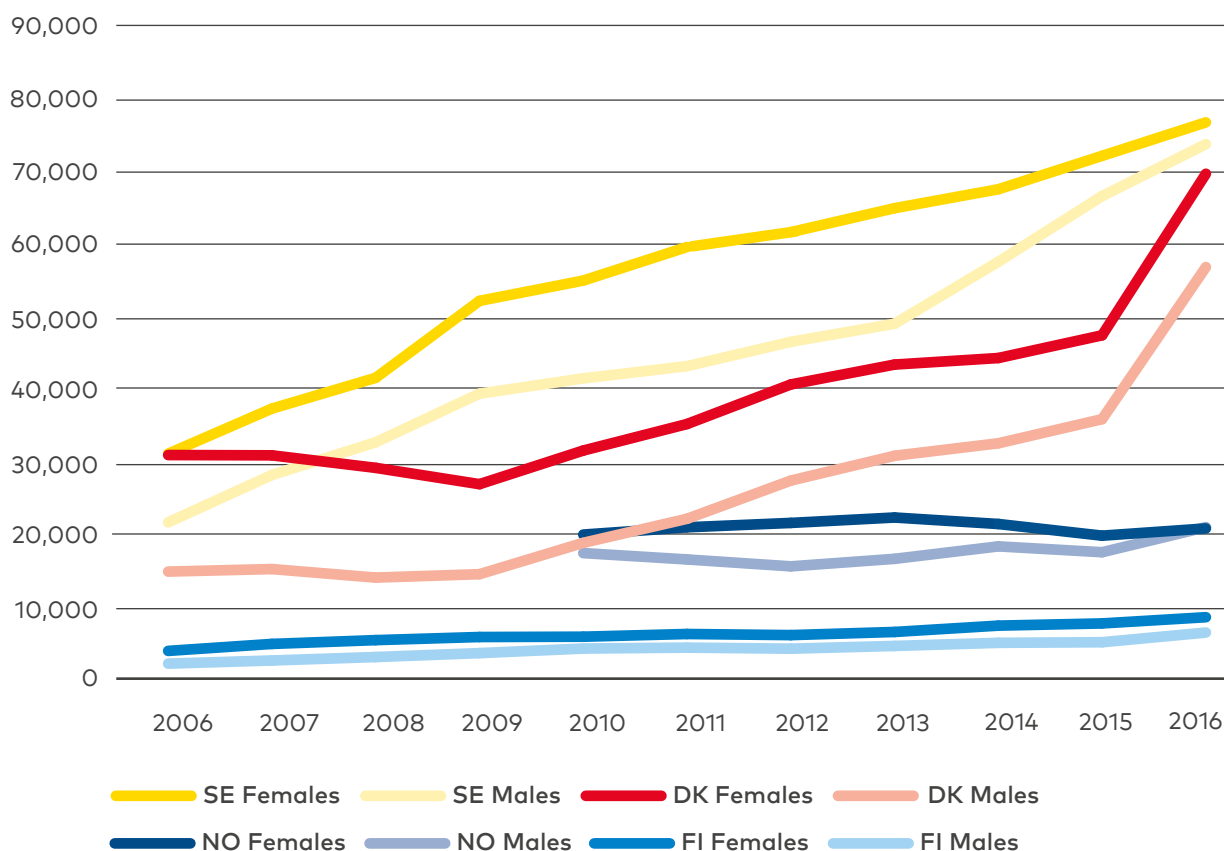
## More women participate in language learning

Language learning is important for long-term integration and faster initial labour market participation. Interestingly, women make up the majority of participants in language courses for immigrants, though the gap has closed in recent years. The structure of language learning for immigrants differs between the Nordic countries with relation to availability and maximum time of entitlement. Sweden has no constraints on access to language courses while in Denmark, Norway and Finland the maximum time of entitlement is five years. As such, the participation rates are not strictly comparable between the countries. Nevertheless, figure 8.4 gives a basic idea of the gender differences in language course participation within four of the Nordic countries.

## The structure of language learning for immigrants differs between the Nordic countries with relation to availability and maximum time of entitlement

Iceland is not included in the chart as quota refugees are the only group that has access to a formal introduction program. Other immigrants, including approved refugees, are left to find their own way through the system of language learning (Jöns-son, 2017; Útlendingastofnun, 2014). However, the unemployment rate in Iceland is extremely low which makes the labour market quite accessible (Karlsdóttir et al., 2017).

**Figure 8.4 Participants in language training.**



Data source: DK: NSI, FI: Statistics from the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment Centre of Expertise of Immigrant Integration, NO: NSI, SE: Skolverket.

## Concluding remarks

It is often reported that the employment rate for foreign-born persons is lower than for their native-born peers. Given the time it takes to access the labour market (after language training, establishment programmes, etc.) this is perhaps not surprising. On average it takes five to ten years for a refugee to find work in the Nordic countries and, as seen in this chapter, it takes longer for women than for men. The Nordic model is characterised by a high female employment rate and labour market integration is not only seen as important from an economic perspective, but also important for successful integration in general (Karlsdóttir et al., 2017). Despite higher levels of involvement in language courses than immigrant men, labour market

integration still appears to take longer for immigrant women. Higher economic inactivity and particularly low employment rate among women who have migrated for humanitarian reasons implies that cultural norms regarding women's social status can be an additional barrier to labour market participation (Djuve & Kavli, 2015; Kjærgård Eide et al., December 2016). Encouragingly, the employment participation gap between immigrant men and women decreases and even disappears with time spent in the host country. The fact that immigrant women are behind regarding labour-market integration has received increased attention and has been, and will continue to be, prioritised at the Swedish Public Employment Service (Arbetsförmedlingen), in the years to come (Karlsdóttir et al., 2017).



## Chapter 9

# REPRESENTATION OF PEOPLE WITH A FOREIGN BACKGROUND IN STATE FUNDED CULTURE



**Author:** Erik Peurell

**Data:** Erik Peurell, Lovisa Sydén, Katharina Tollin and Karolina Windell

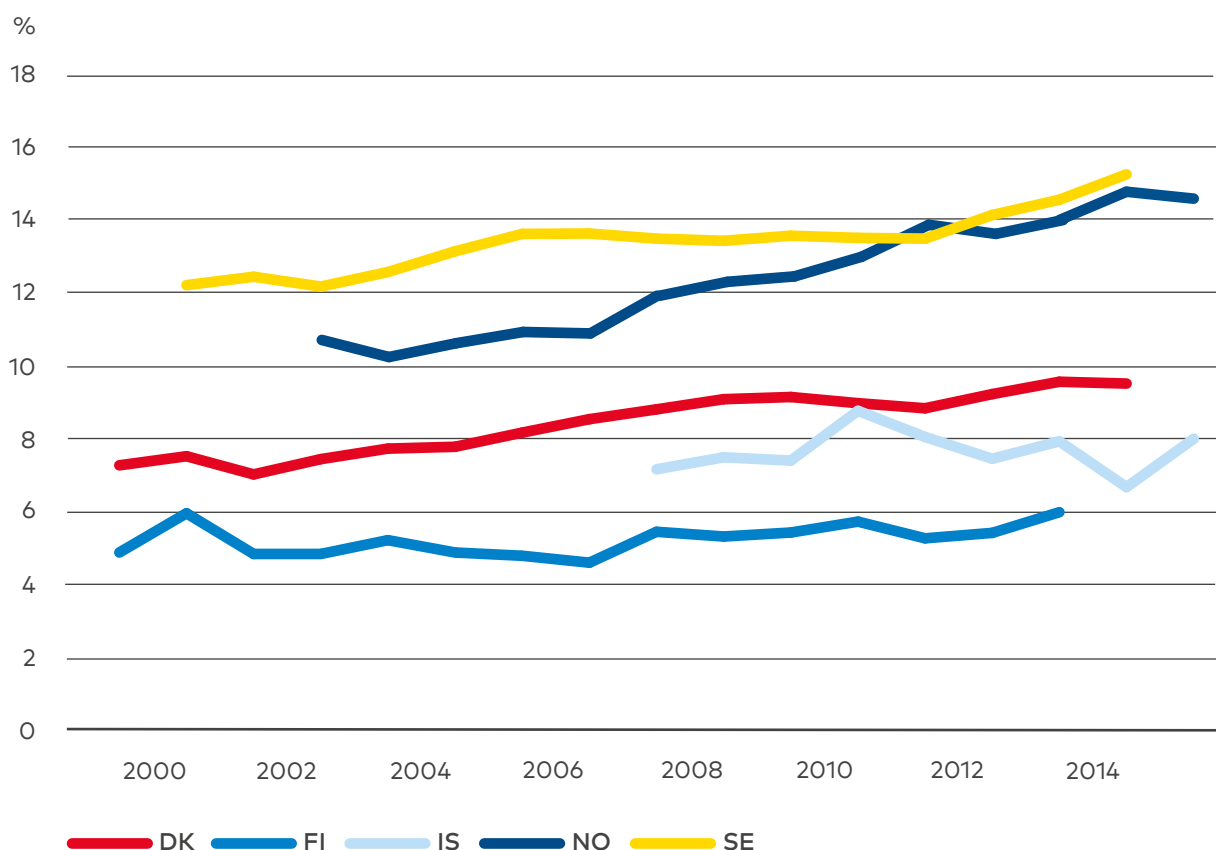
With the increased migration to the Nordic Region and all of Europe, integration and inclusion have become topics of discussion in all policy areas, including cultural. A number of concrete initiatives have been implemented to address the political, social and economic challenges that Europe and the Nordic Region are facing – initiatives in which culture plays a prominent role. These are evidence of the strong belief in the power of art and culture to bring people together. As part of these efforts, the Nordic Agency for Cultural Policy Analysis has conducted a study exploring the representation of employees with a foreign background<sup>16</sup> in government-funded cultural institutions in the Nordic Region between 2000 and 2015. The study identified the percentage of employees with foreign background, in a management role and in artistic professions in different art areas, at the cultural institutions in relation to the percentage of persons with a foreign background in the general population (Kulturanalys Norden, 2017b). The results of this study, including both data and analysis, are presented in this chapter.

### Policy and research context

Proposals for special initiatives in integration and culture have increased rapidly at all levels – national, Nordic and European. At the Nordic level, the Nordic Council of Ministers is in the process of implementing a co-operation programme to support the Nordic countries in their integration work. The co-operation programme spans all policy areas, and has spurred all Nordic Ministers for Culture to jointly raise the question of how culture can contribute to integration and a sustainable society (Nordiska ministerrådet, 2017a). Prior to Norway taking over chairmanship of the Nordic Council of Ministers in 2017, a three-year project on how cultural life and civil society contribute to integration and inclusion in the Nordic societies was presented. The programme's mission statement emphasises the importance of access to cultural life: "An accessible and inclusive cultural and organisational life thus gives immigrants an important opportunity to get to know people living in the community, practice language, use and show their resources, and feel a sense of belonging" (Nordiska ministerrådet 2017b, p. 27).

<sup>16</sup> Foreign-born people make up the largest proportion of the group with foreign background in all countries, while people with two foreign-born parents make up a smaller proportion. In Sweden and Denmark, foreign-born persons make up 75 percent of all people with a foreign background, while the same group accounts for about 85 percent in Norway and Finland, and 90 percent in Iceland.

**Figure 9.1 Proportion of employees with foreign background in statefunded cultural institutions 2000–2015, in percent.**



Data source: NSIs (register data), calculations by The Nordic Agency for Cultural Policy Analysis.

The ambition to use culture as a driving force for creating increased integration can also be seen at the national and local level. A number of regional and local initiatives have been launched in the Nordic countries in recent years with the aim of ensuring that professional cultural stakeholders from other countries and people with roots outside of the Nordic Region have a place in exhibition space, on the stage, in libraries and in other contexts. A number of initiatives strive to ensure that cultural stakeholders with a non-Nordic background are given opportunities to work in their respective professional art field. Other initiatives relate more to integration policy, where cultural activities are used as tools to contribute to the inclusion and integration of refugees and immigrants in Nordic societies.

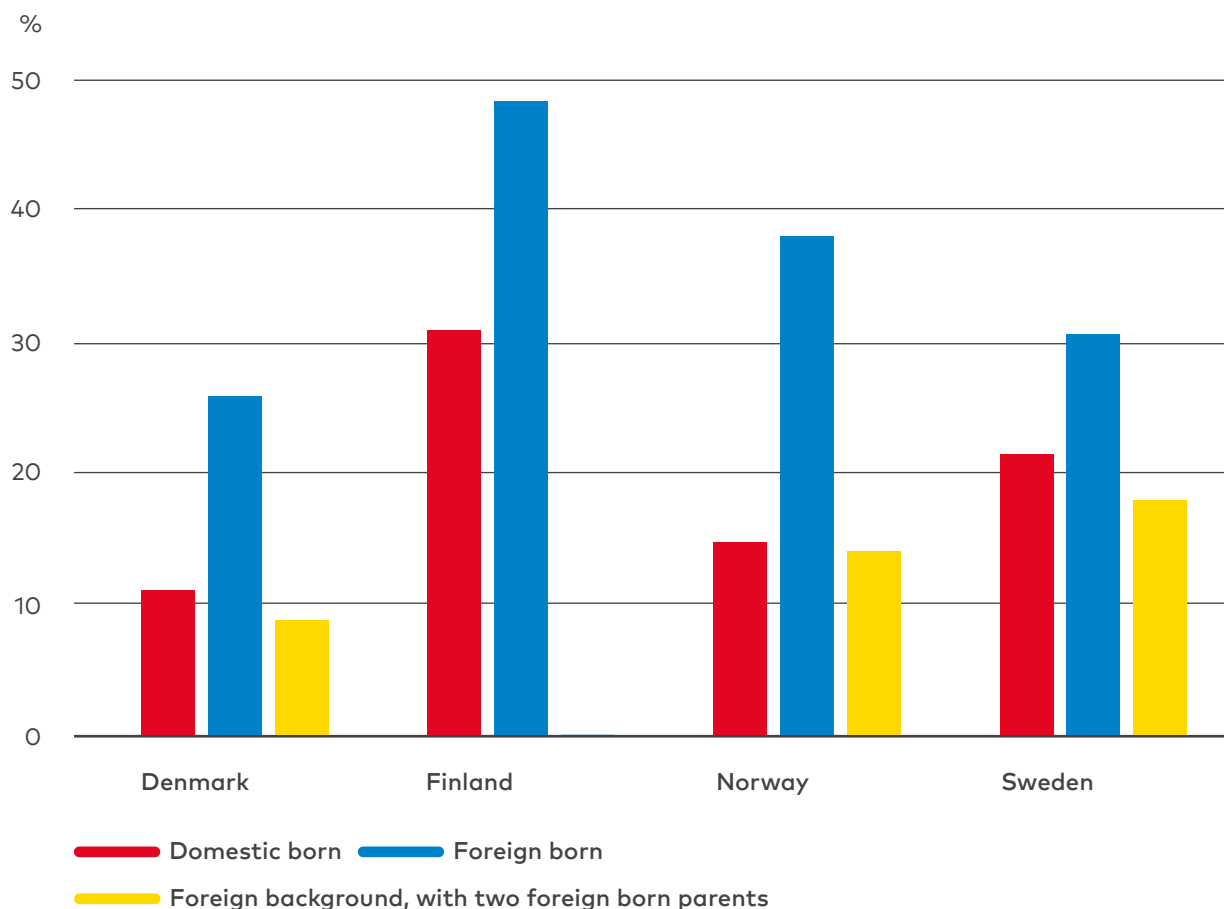
Both the question of how art and culture can contribute to integration and inclusion in society, and the question of how the cultural sector can be

**A number of initiatives strive to ensure that cultural stakeholders with a non-Nordic background are given opportunities to work in their respective professional art field**

more inclusive are thus back at the forefront. These topics have been discussed and debated in the Nordic cultural co-operation previously, most recently in 2012 when the Nordic Council of Ministers published a debate journal on culture, diversity and identity (Nordiska ministerrådet, 2012). The current discussions – and the way in which they are manifested in various political initiatives – testify to a divergence



**Figure 9.2 Proportion of persons in artistic occupations among all employees with domestic background, among all employees with foreign background, and (out of among all employees with foreign background) among all employees with two foreign-born parents 2015 (Finland 2014), in percent. FI: Category "Foreign background, with two foreign-born parents" in principle 0%, i.e. no data included in chart. IS: No data.**



Data source: NSIs (register data), calculations by The Nordic Agency for Cultural Policy Analysis.

between the perspective that the cultural and artistic professional fields should be accessible to everyone and the perspective that culture and its arenas and activities can be used as a tool in integration processes. To some extent, this can be understood to mean that cultural policy should not only strive to make culture accessible to all residents but also flow together with integration policy and thereby act to help create an inclusive society.

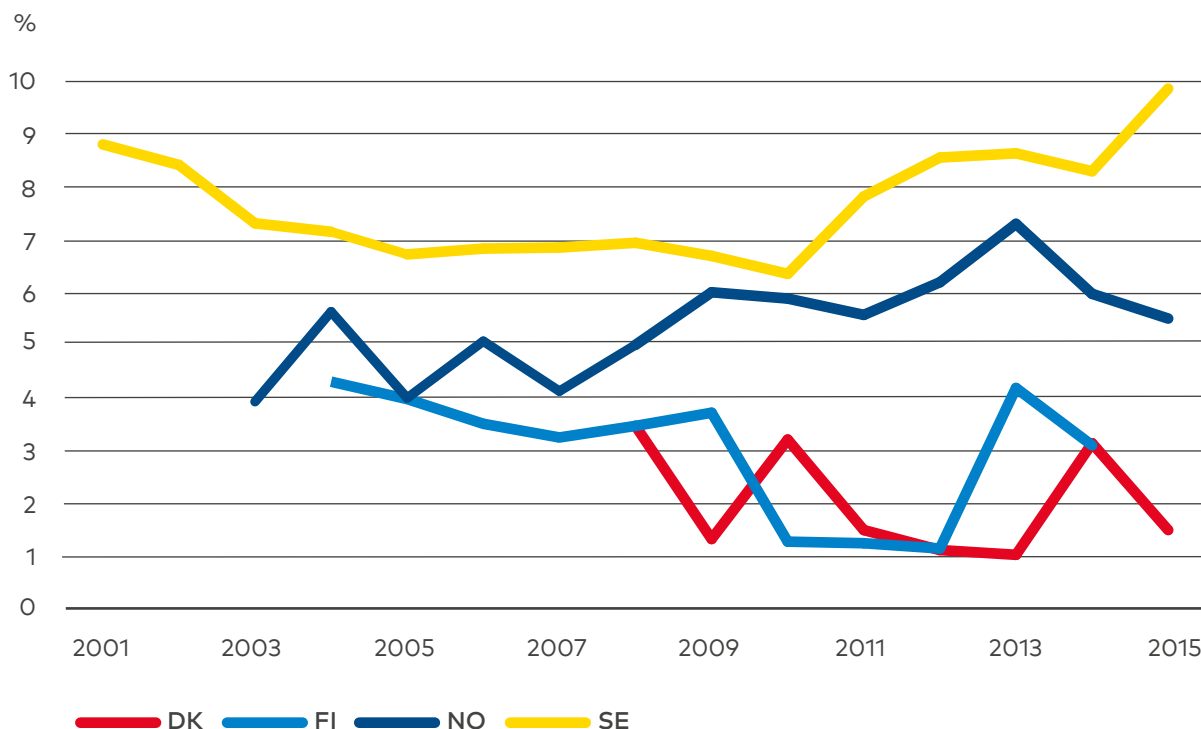
In 2017, The Nordic Agency for Cultural Policy Analysis (Kulturanalys Norden) published an anthology with 12 papers written by researchers from the Nordic countries on the questions of integration and inclusion. In the anthology we have endeavoured to include texts that discuss and problematize the

meeting between cultural policy and integration policy, show what happens when cultural policy ideas meet everyday practice, and illustrate the extent to which minorities, new arrivals and persons with foreign background are involved in the cultural life of the Nordic countries (Kulturanalys Norden, 2017a).

## Cultural institutions are not a reflection of the population

Although the percentage of employees with a foreign background in government-funded cultural institutions in the Nordic Region has increased over

**Figure 9.3 Proportion of employees with foreign background in managerial occupations 2001–2015 in percent.**  
IS: No data.



Data source: NSIs (register data), calculations by The Nordic Agency for Cultural Policy Analysis.

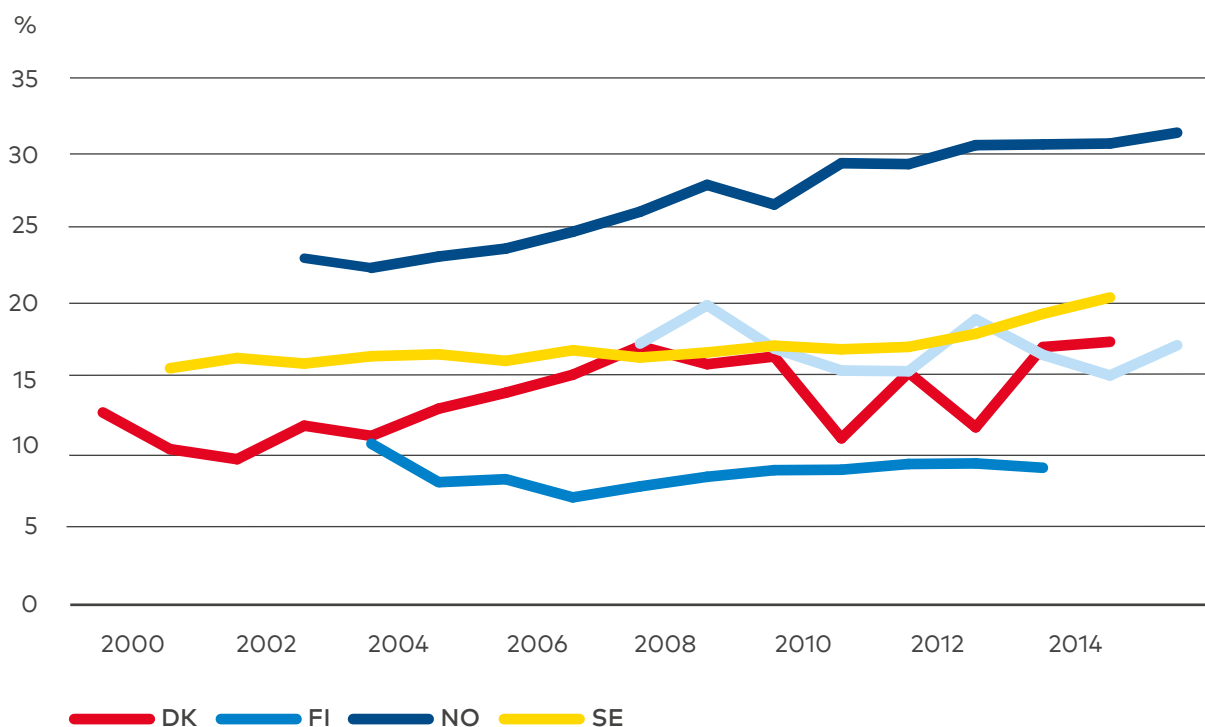
time, this increase has occurred at a slower rate than the increase in the percentage of those with a foreign background in the general population. In practical terms, this means that, despite the upward trend illustrated in figure 9.1, the representation of employees with foreign background has worsened between 2000 and 2015. In Sweden and Norway, the proportion of employees with foreign background in government-funded cultural institutions was around 15 percent in 2015, while the figure was about 10 percent in Denmark and 6–7 percent in Finland and Iceland (figure 9.1). As demonstrated in chapter four these levels are below or significantly below the percentage of persons with foreign background in the overall population within the age range 20 to 64 years.

## Big differences in representation between art areas

Performing arts institutions and orchestras seem to be the two areas where the representation of employees with foreign background is largest in all countries. In Denmark and Norway, the proportion of employees with foreign background in orchestras was over 30 percent in 2015. In Sweden, it was almost 20 percent, and in Finland and Iceland it was about 11–12 percent. These percentages are above or far above the levels for the percentage of employees with foreign background in the entire study population in the respective country. At the other end of the spectrum, museums and the group “Other cultural activities”<sup>17</sup> appear to be the areas in which employ-

<sup>17</sup> “Other cultural activities” is a shortened name for “Other cultural activities with government support in the population” and primarily includes grant-awarding and promoting activities, such as the Swedish Arts Council in Sweden and the Agency for Culture and Palaces in Denmark, as well as the national libraries, language boards and film institutes of the respective countries.

**Figure 9.4 Proportion of employees with foreign background among employees in artistic occupations 2001–2015, in percent.**



Data source: NSIs (register data), calculations by The Nordic Agency for Cultural Policy Analysis.

ees with foreign background are least likely to be represented. National institutions have a higher representation of employees with foreign background than the regional institutions.

## Low representation of domestic-born persons with two foreign-born parents

One difference between the countries is the differing level of representation of employees who are born in the respective country but have two foreign-born parents (figure 9.2). In Sweden, this group represents a comparatively high proportion of the entire group of employees with a foreign background. In Denmark and Norway, the group is significantly smaller, but is represented in all categories of activities. In Finland, this group is only represented by a small number of employees in the performing arts area. In Iceland, this group was not represented at all in 2015.

## Foreign background in management has decreased

In Sweden, about 10 percent of managers had a foreign background in 2015, with the percentage increasing during the latter part of the study period. In Norway (5.5%), there was also a slightly upwards trend over the course of the whole period. In contrast, the percentage of managers with a foreign background decreased in Finland (3%) and Denmark (1.5%) during the period (figure 9.3). In Iceland, there was only one employee with foreign background in a management position during a single year of the study, and Iceland is therefore not included in figure 9.3. Consistent with employment overall, any increases in the percentage of foreign-born persons in management positions have been small compared to the increase of individuals with a foreign background in the population as a whole. As such, representation in management positions can be considered to have worsened over time for the entire Nordic Region.

## Representation in artistic professions varies

There are both differences and similarities between the countries in terms of representation of employees with foreign background in artistic professions. One similarity is that employees with a foreign background are very well represented among employees with an artistic profession in all countries, which is linked to the high percentage of employees with a foreign background in orchestras and performing arts institutions. In all countries, there is also an increase in the percentage of employees with an artistic profession who have a foreign background within the sub-area orchestras, with the reservation that the results for Finland could be due to data availability in different years. The differences between the countries relate to the results for entire populations. Norway has seen a comparatively large increase in the proportion of employees with foreign background within all sub-areas, resulting in 31 percent of those in artistic professions in 2015 having a foreign background. In Sweden, the increase was slightly weaker, yet apparent (20% 2015), and comparatively small in Denmark (7% 2015) and Finland (9% 2014) and occurred in different areas of the arts. The development in Iceland (15% 2015) is the same for artistic professions as for the entire survey population (figure 9.4).

## Western Europeans and English-speakers over-represented among foreign-born

The foreign-born employees were categorised into five groups according to place of birth.<sup>18</sup> Among the foreign-born employees, persons from Asia, Africa and Latin America were underrepresented compared with their numbers in the overall population, while foreign-born persons from Western European and English-speaking countries such as the UK, USA and Australia were overrepresented. However, the differences between country groups have evened out over time. In the beginning of the study period, foreign-born people from the Nordic Region made up the largest group in all countries except Finland.

By the end, the other four groups had grown so much in number and share that foreign-born persons from the Nordic Region did not make up the largest group in any country. In Denmark, Norway and Sweden, the proportions of the five groups were collectively between 15 and 25 percent. In all three countries, there is also a clear increase in the proportion of employees who were born in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Finland stands out in that there is a dominance of foreign-born employees who were born in a non-Nordic country of Europe and a smaller reduction of the group from the Nordic Region than in the other countries. In Finland, where the percentage from a non-Nordic country of Europe is about 45 percent compared to 10 to 20 percent for all other country groups, there is almost no increase in the proportion of foreign-born employees born in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. The Icelandic population is not suitable for analysis with regard to countries of origin as the number of employees with foreign background is so limited.

## Concluding remarks

The low representation of employees with foreign background in the activities we studied when compared with the general population indicates that there may be barriers to integration in government-funded activities in the Nordic Region. The countries all describe cultural institutions as playing an important role in integration. If the government-funded activities we studied fail to achieve a representative level of persons with foreign background compared to that in the general population, there is reason to investigate whether there are any other obstacles to this, particularly in terms of management positions.

**The countries all describe cultural institutions as playing an important role in integration**

<sup>18</sup> These five groups were Nordic countries; English-speaking countries (UK, Ireland, USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand); Other EU-15 countries; Other European countries; countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

Overall, Kulturanalys Norden believes that more in-depth knowledge is needed to understand the reasons for the low representation of employees with foreign background. In our opinion, the most urgent need relates to the international job market in the orchestra and performing arts areas, and the reasons why it seems to be more difficult for persons with foreign background to gain employment in a management position at cultural institutions. It is also necessary to compare the findings in this study to the development of the entire job market for cultural practitioners, including those which are not publicly funded. It would also be very

interesting to look closer at the different conditions for persons with different backgrounds in terms of recruitment to national and regional institutions. In a wider perspective knowledge would also be needed about what recruitment looks like at the universities of the arts and other forms of education relevant for work in, for example, the museum sector with regard to foreign background as well as about what differences exist in cultural habits and cultural practice among children and young people with different backgrounds, what can be done to equalise any differences, and where this equalisation work can take place.





# CONCLUSION

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The number of people *coming to the Nordic Region* has increased dramatically in recent years. The population of the region grew by 16 percent from 1990-2017, with immigration a major driving force behind this increase. Importantly, although intra-Nordic migration is still substantial, the overall make-up of the immigrant population has become increasingly diverse. The unprecedented number of asylum seekers to the Nordic countries in 2015 marked a shift in major reasons for migration to the region, most notably in Sweden. The most numerous arrivals were from Syria and Afghanistan, while people from Iraq still represent a proportionally significant group. Following arrival, asylum seekers became dispersed across the Nordic countries in different ways in line with differing national policies which impacted housing, concentration of the asylum seekers, and led to other challenges associated with integration.

The large wave of asylum seekers in 2014 and 2015 included many unaccompanied minors. Approximately 46 thousand in total, of which, 35 thousand ended up in Sweden alone. To put these numbers in a historical context, it is approximately half the number of foreign minors who came to Sweden during WW2, when 70 thousand Finnish children sought shelter. Most minors came from Afghanistan and over 9 out of 10 were boys. Organisation of the reception of unaccompanied minors varied significantly between the Nordic countries. The magnitude of the refugee crisis in 2015 triggered policy changes that contributed to an abrupt decline in numbers throughout the Nordic countries.

The increasing number of foreign-born persons in the population suggest that many of these new immigrants are *making the Nordic Region home*. The growth in the foreign-born population is most pronounced in the capital areas and other bigger cities. Between countries, the increase is strongest in Swe-

## **The immigrant population born outside Europe have longer life expectancy and are at lower risk of dying prematurely than native-born persons**

den and Norway, but also evident in Iceland. Greenland was the only place in the Nordic Region that experienced decrease in number of foreign-born persons in its population. Overall the gender balance of the foreign-born population in the Nordic countries is fairly even.

Perhaps surprisingly, the immigrant population born outside Europe have longer life expectancy and are at lower risk of dying prematurely than native-born persons. This is in contrast to self-perceived health status of immigrants, which in most age groups is worse than that of their native-born peers. Socio-economic challenges offer some explanation as to why this may be the case and more in-depth research is needed to further explore different explanations. It is of course important to acknowledge the heterogeneity in this group of immigrants with respect to reasons for immigration, as well as physical and mental health.

Naturalization is the process of gaining a citizenship for foreign-born persons in the host country and is sometimes considered the last step or 'pinnacle' of a migrant's integration. Requirements for naturalization differ across the Nordic countries and differing policies may influence the differing rate of foreigners acquiring and achieving national citizenship. These rates were higher in Sweden and Finland compared with the rest of the Nordic countries.

*Entering the Nordic labour market* is of utmost importance to secure necessary economic progress and favourable settlement of new population. Despite being motivated by the hope of finding better job opportunities in a new country, migrants often face obstacles to entering the labour market. Current employment statistics across the Nordic Region between native and foreign-born persons indicate an employment gap between immigrants and native-born population across the Nordic Region, with the foreign-born population in all Nordic countries having higher unemployment rates in 2016 than their native-born peers. Migrants with an EU background fare better than those from outside the EU. However, these migrants still have an unemployment rate higher than that of the native-born population. The group who face the most barriers to getting a job are immigrant women with refugee background. This group is the most likely to be economically inactive. Encouragingly, as time spent in the host country increases, the gap between the employment rates of men and women born outside the EU closes, stabilising at around 65 percent for both genders after ten years. Immigrant women are also more likely to be engaged in language courses than men.

Cultural institutions play an important role in integration in all Nordic countries, yet the representation of employees with foreign background in state funded culture activities is increasing at a slower rate than the share of foreign-born persons in the population as a whole. This is interesting from the perspective of cultural industries and may also indicate barriers to integration in government-funded activities more broadly.

The greater barriers faced by migrants in finding a job in the Nordic Region than in other EU countries indicate that local educational merits are favoured by employers when hiring, making people with foreign experience more vulnerable to being dismissed. Higher educational merits in general help. Highly educated foreign-born persons are more likely to be employed than both their lower educated peers and, perhaps more surprisingly, more likely to be employed than those with low levels of education in the native-born population. Further studies are needed to map the success of the many state and regionally generated labour market integration programmes recently implemented in the different Nordic countries.

With the influences of globalisation and digitalisation, the Nordic countries have in recent decades

**Even if policies on immigration vary across the Nordic countries, there is a common vision of the Nordic Region as a safe and secure place where already settled immigrants should be supported to become fully self-sufficient through work or education**

become more multicultural. Many challenges and opportunities are associated with the two-way adoption/adaptation processes involved. New segment of the population can be an important resource enriching communities and society. For rural regions suffering from out-migration, ageing population and diminishing services, immigrants can be an important social capital contributing to improving demographic, social and economic stability. In other cases, frictions can evolve. The Nordic countries are open democratic societies with strong and robust economies and policies characterized by strong welfare and equality objectives. As a region they are impacted by what happens around in the world – also dynamics of 65 million people on the move in international context. Even if policies on immigration vary across the Nordic countries, there is a common vision of the Nordic Region as a safe and secure place where already settled immigrants should be supported to become fully self-sufficient through work or education. In this publication we have explored some of the more specific aspects and immigrant groups present in the Nordic Region. We hope it contributes to an informed insight into the state of the Nordic Region concerning migration and integration.

# Annex A

# TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS

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**Authors:** Linus Rispling & Gustaf Norlén

**Data:** Linus Rispling & Gustaf Norlén

In recent years, several projects have aimed to harmonise, disseminate or give an overview of statistical data related to migration and integration in the Nordic Region. One such project resulted in the statistical booklet *Nordisk fickfakta 2013: Statistik om integration* (Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet, 2013). Another is the initiative from the Nordic Council of Ministers, *Nordic comparative measures on migration and integration*, which, among other things, harmonises Nordic statistical integration data at national level and disseminates this material through the Nordic statistical portal (Nordic Statistics, 2018). This report is based on data and visualisations developed for a third project, *Nordic co-operation on integration of refugees and immigrants* (Nordic Welfare Centre, 2018), which aimed, among other things, to collect, harmonise and present statistical data not only at the national level, as with the two previously mentioned projects, but also to gather similar data at the regional and municipal level across the Nordic Region.<sup>19</sup>

A regional and local approach was considered important as the increased immigration to the Nordic Region in recent years has an important spatial component. It is connected to aspects such as demography and the labour market at the national level, but also has a strong influence on regional development, for example, in the case where newly arrived immigrants settle in areas which until recently were suffering from depopulation. This project was therefore targeted at policy makers in need of spatially detailed statistical data, which would allow for

evidence-based comparisons, not only within each Nordic country, but also between them. This harmonised regional and municipal data was not intended to cover all available statistics related to migration and integration, nor to give a complete picture. In many cases, data availability and reliability means that the information should be considered as estimates rather than exact figures. Instead, it seeks to demonstrate to statistical authorities, and other experts, what is possible with the data that is available across the Nordic Region, where there are data gaps, and where there is the greatest need for official, internationally comparable integration related data at the regional and municipal level.

There were several challenges in this regard, especially related to data availability, comparability, and harmonisation. Below follows an overview of the technical-statistical challenges faced followed by an overview of the indicators included in the project.

## Access and availability

Statistical data related to migration (typically international and domestic migration) and population (total population, country of origin, citizenship) at national, regional and municipal level is generally part of the standard demographic statistics, openly available from Nordic National Statistical Institutes (NSIs). Regarding asylum seekers, refugees and unaccompanied minors, data sources vary between countries, typically being either NSIs or

<sup>19</sup> The results of the harmonised data in the form of maps are available at Nordregio's map gallery at <http://www.nordregio.se/en/Maps/>

migration offices. The time-lag of available migration and integration data for one single indicator varies between the Nordic countries (1-2 years difference is not unusual). Regarding statistical data from the migration offices, we experienced either delays (especially for data for 2015 or later) or, in several cases, that data was delivered upon request only, rather than being accessible from open databases.

As shown in chapter 7 and chapter 8, the statistical definitions on migration and integration and on labour market and educational level data vary greatly between the Nordic countries, and comparable indicators are rarely available from NSIs even at national level. Concerning the labour market and education levels, however, Eurostat provide harmo-

nised regional data, albeit at the larger regional NUTS 2 level only (see box for further information).

## Comparability issues

Comparability of migration and integration data for the Nordic Region is a concern, particularly for data on citizenship, asylum seekers and unaccompanied minors. Even for rather "basic" statistical data relating to migration and integration such as foreign-born inhabitants, the definitions differ between the Nordic countries. In most Nordic countries, foreign-born excludes those with native parents, but full comparability cannot be achieved, as Sweden and Iceland are the only countries which

## Labour market data in relation to migration and integration

Generally speaking, the only labour market data that is useful for making international comparisons is from the labour force survey (LFS). The LFS is a monthly standardised survey that is designed to be comparable between countries. Therefore, the same definitions and methods are used for all included countries. The LFS is also the official method to measure employment and unemployment rates (e.g. for monitoring labour market developments). The problem with the LFS is that it is based on a survey which means that it is not possible to break it down to the lowest geographical levels (e.g. municipalities) and that there are uncertainties in the data. The survey is generally made for the NUTS 2 level, although breakdowns on NUTS 3 level are available for some countries. Regarding foreign-born persons it is possible to access LFS data at national level on employment, unemployment and inactivity rates by country of birth.

The other source of labour market data is national registers. The register data is more detailed, allowing more detailed breakdowns, including breakdowns on regional and municipal level. By combining registers, it is also possible to, for example, analyse employment rates based on the amount of time someone has been in the country (see chapter 8). The problem with the register data is that it is not comparable between countries, making international comparisons difficult to make. Even between the Nordic countries, there are differences in definitions of employment and unemployment, age groups and measurement periods. Greater consistency with respect to definitions and methods of gathering this data between the countries would increase the possibility to make valid comparisons.

**Annex table: Data availability for selected migration and integration indicators, indicating the most detailed spatial available level.**

	Migration						
	Immigration	Emmigration	Domestic in-migration	Domestic out-migration	International net migration	Domestic net migration	Net migration
DK	Municipal	Municipal	Municipal	Municipal	Municipal	Municipal	Municipal
FI	Municipal	Municipal	Municipal	Municipal	Municipal	Municipal	Municipal
IS	Municipal	Municipal	Municipal	Municipal	Municipal	Municipal	Municipal
NO	Municipal	Municipal	Municipal	Municipal	Municipal	Municipal	Municipal
SE	Municipal	Municipal	Municipal	Municipal	Municipal	Municipal	Municipal
FO	Municipal	Municipal	Municipal	Municipal	Municipal	Municipal	Municipal
GL	Municipal	Municipal	Municipal	Municipal	Municipal	Municipal	Municipal
	Heritage				Citizenship		
	Foreign born	Foreign back-ground	Foreign born + foreign background	Country of origin	Aquired citizenship	"National" citizenship	Foreign citizenship
DK	Municipal	Municipal	Municipal	National	Municipal	Municipal	Municipal
FI	Municipal	Municipal	Municipal	National	Municipal	Municipal	Municipal
IS	Municipal		Municipal	National	National	National	National
NO	Municipal	Municipal	Municipal	National	Municipal	Municipal	Municipal
SE	Municipal	Municipal	Municipal	National	Municipal	Municipal	Municipal
FO	Municipal			National		National	National
GL	Municipal			National		National	National
	Asylum seekers and refugees				Languages	Labour market (selection)	
	Unaccompanied minors	Asylum seekers by location	Asylum seekers (by citizenship)	Onward domestic migration (e.g. in Swedish "vida-reflyttning")	National vs. other languages	Employment, natives and non-natives	Employment, natives and non-natives, by education levels
DK	Municipal	Municipal	National			NUTS 2	NUTS 2
FI	Municipal	Municipal	National			NUTS 2	NUTS 2
IS	Municipal	Municipal	National		Municipal	NUTS 2	NUTS 2
NO	Municipal	Municipal	National	Municipal	Municipal	NUTS 2	NUTS 2
SE	Municipal	Municipal	National	Municipal		NUTS 2	NUTS 2
FO							
GL							

Source: Nordregio. Note: Finland includes Åland. Other regional level (NUTS 2) labour market indicators from Eurostat are available, however generally not at a more detailed regional level, and with no data for the Faroe Islands and Greenland.

don't make this distinction (see chapter 4, page 36, text box on definitions). Similarly, definitions of "foreign background" differ between the countries, and even the definition of what in statistical terms is an "immigrant". A more precise distinction between humanitarian migration and other types of migration is necessary in many cases to define the scope of inquiry. It is, for example, not fruitful to compare employment rates for foreign-born persons between countries given the heterogeneous nature of the foreign-born population.

## Regional and municipal level data

The challenge of finding and identifying regional and municipal level data on migration and integration could constitute a chapter in and of itself, and would benefit from exploration beyond that covered here. The coverage of data included in this report, or data which might have been available for this report, is presented in the adjacent table. While this is not an exhaustive table, it gives an overview of data availability in the first half of 2017. Blue shading shows data which was available up to one year prior to the first half of 2017 (i.e. up to the end of 2016), while

yellow shading indicates that data was available up to two years prior or longer (i.e. at best up to the end of 2015). White spaces show that no data was available. The text in each cell indicates the most detailed available spatial level.

## Recommendations regarding migration and integration data at regional and municipal level

The work undertaken to collect and harmonise statistical data on migration and integration for this report, suggests a strong need to develop common Nordic principles on data collection. Consistency with respect to definitions would be particularly useful in allowing for comparison between countries. In addition, data collection could be simplified by allocating the responsibility for the availability and dissemination of statistical data to a single authority (e.g. the NSI). Furthermore, a Nordic framework or cooperation for the collection of municipal-level data within the field of migration and integration would improve the accessibility of much of the data included in this.



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