

# Immigrants' Dependence on Economic Assistance in Sweden 1950-1968

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## **Abstract**

Today immigrants, and especially refugees, are dependent on economic assistance to a relatively higher extent than natives in Sweden as well as in many other countries. There is a nostalgic perception that this was not the case in Sweden during the 1950's and 1960's when the demand for labour was huge and anyone who wanted a job could get one. Hence the immigrants' dependence on economic assistance in Sweden should then be relatively low.

The aim of this paper is to discuss the immigrants' dependency on economic assistance in Sweden for the years 1950, 1959, 1964 and 1968. The immigrants will be analysed in two groups: Nordic citizens, who were labour immigrants, and non-Nordic citizens, in which the share of refugees was huge. The results of these two groups will be contrasted against the results for all recipients of economic assistance in Sweden during the same period. Not only the duration of dependence, but also to what extent the economic assistance was an income supplement or the only source of income will be analysed.

The empirical material consists of the annual reports on poverty and economic assistance (SOS Fattigvård, SOS Socialvård, SOS Socialhjälpen), a special examination 1950 by the Royal Board of Social Welfare (Kungliga Socialstyrelsen), two major investigations on social help made in 1959 and 1968 by the Royal Board of Social Welfare. The theories used in the analysis are the New Economics of Migration and the Dual Labour Market Theory.

JEL codes: Z13, N34, J15

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# 1 Introduction

The general perception of immigration to Sweden after the WW2 to the late 1960s is that the immigrants were well-integrated into the Swedish community (Norborg 1988, p. 273). At the same time refugees, especially from the Baltic countries and Poland, began to isolate themselves from the Swedish society (Svanberg & Tydén 1992, p. 326). Many immigrants, of various nationalities, found it difficult to 'enter' the Swedish society or become a part of it during the 1960s (Arnstberg & Ehn 1976, p. 134). Despite the good economic situation, Wadensjö (1972) noticed that immigrants experienced a higher unemployment than natives during the 1960s. While immigrants in 1950 in general had an employment rate 20 per cent higher than the natives (Ekberg 2006, p. 148), the employment rate of refugees was only 75 per cent of the natives' employment rate (Rauhut 2012, p. 14). It appears as if the performance of labour immigrants on the Swedish labour market around 1950 disguised a relatively bad performance of refugees at the Swedish labour market at the same time.

In a literature review covering the period 1945-1975 by Rauhut (2010, p. 119) the conclusion is that although immigrants in general had higher employment rates than natives, as well as relative incomes, they were not as well-integrated as generally perceived. Immigrants and natives worked in different economic sectors, immigrants enjoyed a lower housing standard, had a higher rate of work injuries compared to natives, the unemployment was higher among immigrants than natives etc. (Rauhut 2010, p. 117f.). Compared with the situation today, the integration has not developed from good to bad, but from bad to worse. Hence, no distinction between labour immigrants and refugees were made by Rauhut (2010). In a later study by Rauhut (2012, p. 13f.), the findings suggest that poor relief and social assistance were the only available safety net for the refugees when sick or unemployed, which made them statistically overrepresented amongst the recipients of poor relief and social assistance 1945-1965.

The results of Gustafsson *et al.* (1990, p. 120) suggest that there are significant differences in the dependency of economic assistance in Sweden depending on nationality in 1988. Nationals from South America, Vietnam and Poland show about 10 times as high dependency rate compared to the native population, while nationals from West Germany and Austria show almost a similar dependence rate as the natives. The same result is found regarding the factor income 1978-1985. The index value of the factor income of natives is 100 and 96 for foreign nationals. A further breakdown of the foreign nationals shows that Nordic nationals have an index value of 105, (non-Nordic) European nationals 90 and non-European nationals 67 (Gustafsson *et al.* 1990, p. 128). Similar findings are made in a later study on income by Ekberg and Gustafsson (1995), in which the group of foreigners are analysed by nationality.

From a theoretical perspective, both the theories of New Economics of Migration (Stark 1991) and the dual labour market theory (Piore 1979) argue that immigrants will work in low paid and insecure jobs, have lower wages than natives and higher unemployment than natives. This weak attachment to the labour market will lead to a higher dependency on welfare benefits according to both these theories (Rauhut & Blomberg 2003, p. 34f.). Theoretically, immigrants can be assumed to be over-represented among the recipients of economic assistance.

Three overall conclusions can be made: (1) *immigrants* do not constitute a homogeneous group as huge variations exist, and (2) this heterogeneity can be assumed to be valid not only for the late 1970s and 1980s but also for the 1950s and 1960s. (3) Previous research suggests that *labour immigrants* and *refugees* have performed differently on the Swedish labour market during the 1950a and 1960s. Still, the knowledge on the dependency on economic assistance for different immigrant groups is limited for the period between the Second World War and the late 1960s.

This paper aims to discuss the immigrants' dependency on economic assistance in Sweden for the years 1950, 1959, 1964 and 1968. The selection of years is determined by

accessibility of relevant data. The immigrants will be analysed in two groups: Nordic citizens, who were labour immigrants, and non-Nordic citizens, in which the share of refugees was significant. The results of these two groups will be contrasted against the results for all recipients of economic assistance in Sweden and Swedish recipients during the same period. A unique data material from public authorities will be used for the analysis.

Four questions are proposed to be answered in this paper: (1) Are immigrants overrepresented among the recipients of economic assistance? (2) Is there a difference in the duration of dependence of economic assistance for immigrants and natives? (3) Is the need for economic assistance as the only source of income higher among immigrants than natives? (4) Can a difference in the average expenditure on economic assistance paid out to immigrants and natives be observed?

The paper starts with constructing a theoretical framework and from this a number of hypotheses will be generated. In the third chapter methodological aspects and data will be described and in following chapter the empirical material will be presented. In chapter five the empirical material will be analysed and the hypotheses will be tested. The results and findings will be discussed in the final chapter.

## 2 A Theoretical Framework

### 2.1 The New Economics of Migration

The New Economics of Migration theory argues that with the exception of refugees it is lowly educated who are most likely to emigrate (Stark 1991, p. 180). Due to a lacking competitiveness in the host country this labour will work fewer hours per year and have longer spells of unemployment relative native labour (Stark 1991, p.393). Furthermore, the immigrants will pick up low-paid jobs as a consequence of asymmetrical information on their productivity by employers' (Stark 1991, p. 190-93). Furthermore, as little as possible is of the immigrant's income is used for consumption in the host country; the money is either saved to be used when returning home or sent home immediately as remittances (Stark & Taylor 1989, p. 11; Schoorl 1995, p. 4).

Given these cornerstones in the theory of New Economics of Migration it can be assumed that if the immigrants work in the informal sector the social security offered will be at a very low level; if they work in the formal economic sectors, the low salaries and social security schemes offered to them will only provide a weak protection when unemployed, sick etc.<sup>1</sup>

In line with the New Economics of Migration theory, it can be assumed that immigrants will be overrepresented among the recipients of economic assistance as well as the duration of help will be shorter; living on welfare schemes will not enable them to send money home. It can also be assumed that the need of economic assistance is not an income supplement but as the only source of income.

### 2.2 The Dual Labour Market Theory

According to the Dual Labour Market theory immigrants pick up work in the lower segment of the labour market. This segment is characterised by low incomes and insecure positions (Piore 1979, p. 93-95, 105, Massey et al. 1993, p. 40, 42). Furthermore, immigrants are involved in

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<sup>1</sup> Indirect discussions and analyses on the sector of employment, incomes levels and standard of living in the host country are made by Katz and Stark (1986, 1987, 1989) as well as Stark and Yitzhaki (1988). Although the social security offered to immigrants in the host country is never explicitly mentioned in the abovementioned studies it is very clear that such social insurance protection offers a poor protection for immigrants.

the ‘informal’ sector to a higher degree than natives, i.e. immigrants may officially be considered as unemployed but are in fact occupied in the informal sector (Piore 1979, p. 102).

Piore (1979) argues that migrant labour will return to their native country when unemployed and then return to the industrial country when the job market opens up again. For long-distance labour and refugees this may not be a realistic option. Hence, the low wages and insecure positions can be assumed to generate a need for public allowances and subsidies for these groups of immigrants.

Furthermore, as immigrants are relatively more numerous in the lower labour market segment it can be assumed that the share of immigrants will be relatively more numerous amongst the recipients of economic assistance.

### 2.3 A theoretical synthesis and hypotheses

Both the New Economics of Migration and the Dual Labour Market Theory argue that immigrants are generally found in low income jobs and in insecure positions. Both theories also argue that immigrants to a large extent are involved in activities in the ‘informal sector’. In case of unemployment or sickness the social security offered to them will be low. In most cases economic assistance will be the only social security system available for them. Hence, it can be assumed that immigrants are overrepresented among the recipients of economic assistance.

*Hypothesis 1: immigrants are overrepresented among the recipients of economic assistance.*

As immigrants find employment in low income jobs and in insecure positions it can be assumed that the duration of dependence on economic assistance will be relatively short. If you are not so picky with what job you could consider taking, there are plenty of them – at least when talking about low paid jobs with insecure positions.

*Hypothesis 2: the duration of dependence of economic assistance will be shorter for immigrants than for natives.*

The New Economics of Migration theory and the Dual Labour Market theory primarily focus on labour immigrants. Piore (1979) does not say much about how refugees will perform in his dual labour market scheme. Hence, it can be assumed that they will be overrepresented in the lower segment they have not moved voluntarily and their labour is not asked for. In line with the reasoning in New Economic of Migration we can deduce some predictions on their labour market performance. Refugees can be assumed to have an even more exposed situation compared to the labour immigrants: they have not moved voluntarily and their labour is not asked for. If employers have poor information on the productivity of labour immigrants, the information may be even poorer with refugees (they may not even have diplomas or other documents showing their competence).<sup>2</sup> Consequently, we can expect the duration of dependence of economic assistance to be longer for refugees than for labour immigrants.<sup>3</sup>

A person with insufficient coverage in the social insurance system will be very exposed to poverty when unemployed or sick. Hence it can be assumed that persons with an insufficient coverage in the social security system will have a greater need for full support when claiming economic assistance, i.e. the need for economic assistance as the only source of income will be

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<sup>2</sup> Stark (1991, p. 371-378) discuss how and why migrants fare the way they do. One assumption he makes is that there is a selection of the labour migrants: they are younger, more enterprising, and more aggressive, less risk averse and have a higher human capital than the natives. These facts pave the way for their success in the host country. Refugees do not have this self-selection; the composition of this group with regard to age, enterprising skills, human capital and risk aversion may not differ from the natives or even be to their disadvantage.

<sup>3</sup> Unfortunately, the empirical material is not detailed enough to check if this is true during this period.

higher with insufficient social insurance coverage. Furthermore, refugees have not qualified for any social insurance schemes.

*Hypothesis 3: the need for economic assistance as the only source of income will be higher among immigrants due to their insufficient social insurance coverage.*

In line with hypotheses 1-3 we can assume that the expenditures per recipient for labour immigrants will be lower than for the natives. The situation for refugees is different. Their labour is not demanded; they may want to work with a similar job they had in their home country, which could make it difficult for them to find a new job. Furthermore, they have no coverage in the social insurance system except economic assistance. They can also be assumed to have longer duration of dependence on economic assistance and a higher need for economic assistance as the only source of income. Hence, the expenditure per recipient, when talking about refugees, can be assumed to be higher than for natives and for labour immigrants.

*Hypothesis 4a: The average cost per person for economic assistance will be lower for labour immigrants than for natives.*

*Hypothesis 4b: The average cost per person for economic assistance will be higher for refugees than for natives.*

The hypotheses formulated here will be tested in chapter five.

## 3 Material and methodological considerations

### 3.1 Methodological considerations

The aim and questions of this study will be operationalised by a hypothetic-deductive method. This means that a hypothesis – deduced from a theoretical framework – is constructed and tested in the empirical material (Djurfeldt et al. 2010, p. 140). The tested hypothesis consists of a statement on the relationship between two variables and in what direction the causality goes. This is the so called alternative hypothesis,  $H_1$ ; the zero hypothesis,  $H_0$ , claims that there is no relation between the two tested variables (Holme & Solvang 2010, s. 309).

The deductive method is used in several disciplines, but the hypothetic-deductive method is primarily used in quantitative research (Hempel 1967, p. 25; Johansson 1987, p. 14-33). There is however nothing that restricts or disqualifies the use of quantitative methods in areas commonly addressed by qualitative methods and vice versa (Bryman 2010, p. 202-4; Grømo 1996, p. 105-107; Allwood 2000, p. 40).

### 3.2 Material

The empirical material consists of the annual reports on poverty and economic assistance (SOS Fattigvård, SOS Socialvård, SOS Socialhjälp), a special examination 1950 on poverty and economic assistance by the Royal Board of Social Welfare (Kungliga Socialstyrelsen 1952), two major investigations on social help made by the Royal Board of Social Welfare in 1959 (Kungliga Socialstyrelsen 1961) and by Statistics Sweden in 1968 (SCB 1974). The empirical material contains information on the number of recipients, the duration of economic assistance dependency, and the expenditure of economic assistance. Information on the poverty norm during the investigated period is given by Rauhut (2002). To what extent the recipients needed the economic assistance as an income complement or to what extent it was the only source of income can be estimated by a model presented in Rauhut (2002).

The immigrants will be analysed in two groups: Nordic citizens, who were labour immigrants, and non-Nordic citizens, in which the share of refugees was significant. The results of these two groups will be contrasted against the results for all recipients of economic assistance in Sweden during the same period. Not only the duration of dependence, but also to what extent the economic assistance was an income supplement or the only source of income will be analysed.

Some approximations have been done regarding the data. There is no published information on the number of Swedish citizens among the recipients of economic assistance. There is however information on the total number and the foreign citizens, either as all foreigners or by citizenship. An approximation of the number of Swedish citizens can be made by subtracting the foreign citizens from the total number of recipients.

A second approximation is made regarding the number of recipients of economic assistance. The official statistics contain information on the share of foreign *households*, not the share of individual recipients. Given the assumption that the household structure is similar an approximation for individuals based on households can be made.<sup>4</sup>

The official statistics for 1959 and 1964 do not contain any information about the number of immigrants to Sweden by citizenship. Approximations for 1959 and 1964 have been made based upon the census in 1960. As a consequence, the share of recipients of economic assistance by nationality is an estimation based upon approximations.

Information for the three groups of recipients – Nordic citizens, non-Nordic citizens and the total number of recipients – is available for an analysis not only for the number of recipients but also for the duration of dependency of economic assistance and to what extent the support was needed as an income complement or was the only source of income. The native population can be estimated for each variable as the total number minus foreign nationals.

During the period 1945-1970 about 450,000 persons immigrated to Sweden. A majority of them came from the Nordic countries (Statistics Sweden Population Database, accessed on 21<sup>st</sup> October 2011). The contemporary sources claim that about 43,000 refugees arrived to Sweden 1945-1949 (Olsson 1952, p. 230); later estimations point at approximately 45,000 refugees for the same period (SIV 1997, p. 11; Svanberg & Tydén 1992, p. 330). The refugees came from the Baltic countries, the Soviet Union, Poland, Czech Republic, Germany and Austria. Lundh & Ohlsson (1994, p. 34) argue that only 30,000 refugees came to Sweden during this time. One reason for this significantly lower number relates to the fact that they do not include the Sudeten Germans as refugees although they were transferred to Sweden via refugee camps in Germany and Austria (Cf. Tempsch 1997).

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<sup>4</sup> One major change of importance regarding the family structure of the recipients of economic assistance during the analysed period took place: the share of single women without children amongst the recipients of economic assistance in Sweden dropped from 38.5 % in 1945 to 21 % in 1970. Simultaneously, the share of single men without children increased from 19.5 % in 1945 to 34 % in 1970 (SOS Fattigvård, SOS Socialvård). The decrease in the number of single women is related to the fact that the elderly care was removed from the local authorities in charge for poor relief as well as the improvement of the pensions made it possible for elderly widows to live on their pensions without economic assistance as an income complement. The increase of single men without children is related to the immigrated men working in Sweden (SCB 1974). The share of the (native) women dropped 17.5 percentage units and the share of (immigrated) men increased by 14.5 percentage units during the analysed period in this paper. In both cases we are analysing single-person households, i.e. the family structure has not changed.

According to Olsson (1957, p. 231) received about 70,000 refugees. Later sources claim that only 24-26,000 refugees came to Sweden during the period 1950-1965. Again, how the Sudeten German refugees are accounted for is one explanation for the differing numbers in the case of Lundh & Ohlsson (1994). Svanberg & Tydén (1992) list 26,000 refugees for this period, but are very clear on that their list is not complete. Only from Hungary, about 13,000 refugees arrived to Sweden in 1956, 8,000 came from Yugoslavia during the period 1950-1967 and 5,000 from Czechoslovakia in 1968. Beside these groups of refugees a steady flow of individual refugees came from Eastern Europe (Svanberg & Tydén 1992, p. 342).

In average 60 per cent of the immigrants to Sweden during the 1950s and 1960s came from the Nordic countries and they were labour immigrants. An overwhelming majority of the Nordic immigrants came from Finland (Lundh & Ohlsson 1994, p. 25-27). About 500 worker were recruited from Hungary in 1946 with guest-worker contracts for two years, but after the communist siege for power in 1948 they refused to return. No further labour was recruited from Hungary after this. The small group of Belgians, recruited in 1951 returned after a short period of stay only as they found Sweden too expensive to live in. Also some Dutch labour was recruited after the flooding catastrophe in 1952 (Svanberg & Tydén 1992, p. 328-329).<sup>5</sup> The major immigrant flows from Southern Europe were Italians in the 1950s and Greek, Turks and Yugoslavians in the 1960s. During the 1950s the labour immigrants from Southern Europe counted for a few per cent of the total immigration an in the 1960 for 8 per cent (Lundh & Ohlsson 1994, p. 31-33.)

The conclusion is that the share of refugees amongst the non-Nordics in 1950 and 1959 was relative high, while the labour immigrants dominated the group of non-Nordics in 1968. In 1964 the share of former refugees were still notable but the share of refugees were definitely relatively smaller than for 1950 and 1959.

## 4 Poverty among foreign and Swedish citizens – an overview

### 4.1 The number of recipients

The number of supported persons is complete for the national level for the studied years. No direct information on citizenship is given on the official statistics on poor relief and social assistance. It is, however, possible to estimate the citizenship of the recipients.

[Table 1 about here]

A special survey on the economic assistance given to foreign citizens 1950 was published in *Sociala Medelanden* in 1952 and it shows that 5,274 households, headed by a foreign citizen, received economic assistance in 1950. The households headed by a non-Nordic citizen counted for 3,560 households and those headed by a Nordic citizen counted for the remaining 1,714 household (Kungl. Socialstyrelsen 1952, p. 260). According to the official statistics 106,700 households received economic assistance in 1950 (SOS Fattigvård 1950, p. 31).

[Table 2 about here]

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<sup>5</sup> According to Lundh & Ohlsson (1994, p. 30) the number of Dutch immigrants to Sweden during the 1950s and 1960s was in average 260 persons per year.

The number of households with economic assistance can be used as a proxy variable. The households headed by foreign citizens receiving economic assistance accounted for 4.9 per cent of all households receiving economic assistance. Based on the assumption that the foreign households are relatively similar to the native households, an approximation on the number of foreign citizens receiving economic assistance can be made by multiplying their share of households with support with the number of supported persons. The number of foreign citizens receiving economic assistance in 1950 would then be 14,369, of which 4,670 are Nordic citizens and 9,699 are non-Nordic citizens. The remaining 278,870 are the, consequently, Swedish citizens.

The share of foreign head of households among the recipients of economic assistance in 1959 was 4.1 per cent (SCB 1974, p. 154). Hence, 4.1 per cent of the total number of recipients in 1959 can be estimated to 11,611 persons. The statistics on the recipients of economic assistance in 1959 does not allowed a more detailed decomposition of citizenship of the recipients. The remaining 271,589 persons are hence assumed to be Swedish citizens.

For both 1964 and 1968 the share of households headed by a foreign citizen who received economic assistance has been used to estimate the number of foreign citizens receiving economic assistance. About 3.2 per cent of the households receiving economic assistance in 1964 were headed by a Nordic citizen; 1.7 per cent of the households were headed by a non-Nordic citizen. Consequently, the remaining 95.1 per cent of the households receiving economic assistance were headed by a Swedish citizen (SOS Socialvård 1964, p.47). Given this distribution by citizenship, the recipients of economic assistance with a Nordic citizenship can be assumed to be 8,519 persons and the recipients with a non-Nordic citizenship 4,532 persons. The remaining 253,711 persons are assumed to be Swedish citizens.

In 1968 6.2 per cent of the households receiving economic assistance were headed by a Nordic citizen and 3.9 per cent by a non-Nordic citizen (SOS Socialvården 1968, p. 40). The number of Nordic citizens receiving economic assistance can then be estimated to 22,241 persons (i.e. 6.2 per cent of the total number of recipients) and the non-Nordic citizens to 14,107 persons (i.e. 3.9 per cent of the total number of recipients). The number of Swedish citizens is then assumed to be 322,380.

#### 4.2 The number of foreigners in Sweden by citizenship

The number of foreign citizens in Sweden in 1959 and 1964 is not listed in the official statistics. The census in 1965 does not contain any information on the population in Sweden by citizenship (Folk- och Bostadsräkningen 1965 Vol I, p. 7). For 1959 and 1964 the foreign citizens in Sweden has to be estimated by using the relative share of different nationalities in the Swedish population in 1960. The census in 1960 contains this kind of information.

[Table 3 about here]

#### 4.3 The share of population on economic assistance by citizenship

As the official statistics at this time only cover households the share of foreign citizens is significantly lower than in the estimated values on foreign individuals, see table 4. According to Kungl. Socialstyrelsen (1952, p. 260) the share of foreigners is 5.2 per cent of all households receiving economic assistance in 1950; 2.1 per cent for Danish households, 4.4 per cent for Norwegian households, 5.5 per cent and 6.3 for other nationalities.

This indirect method of estimating the number of foreign citizens among the recipients of economic assistance also generates a higher share of individuals who are foreign citizens – 6.1 per cent (see table 4) – than the share of foreign households – 4.1 per cent (SCB 1974, p. 154).

One possible explanation for a higher share of foreign individuals than foreign households may be that the official statistics only cover foreigners with a work in 1950 ('arbetsanmälda utlänningar'). The higher share of foreign individuals in 1959 may be related to the fact that the share of foreigners in the 1960 census has been used as there is no data for 1959. If the share of foreign citizens was lower in 1960 compared to 1959 the lower figures for 1960 would make the share of foreigners receiving economic assistance in 1960 higher. Again, there is no data to support this reasoning.

[Table 4 about here]

For 1964 there is no official statistics to compare the estimations obtained here with. The 1968 Social Survey notices that 8.5 per cent of the households receiving economic assistance were headed by a foreign citizen, which is slightly lower than the estimations at an individual level done here.

#### 4.4 Duration of economic assistance

The official statistics on economic assistance present information on the duration of economic assistance for the whole country as well as for towns and countryside. It is however important to bear in mind the limitations of this data. If a person received economic assistance during two months during year 1, November and December, and then during three months in year 2, January to March, the official statistics will report two respectively three months duration of economic assistance for the two years. In reality the person received economic assistance during five months without interruption.

[Table 5 about here]

There is no official statistics on the duration of economic assistance by citizenship. It is however possible to estimate the number of months with economic assistance. The 1968 Social Survey discusses the high need of economic assistance by foreign citizens in the Swedish towns and cities. In 1964 only 31.1 per cent of the foreign citizens receiving economic assistance lived on the countryside; the rest lived in towns and cities. The share of foreign citizens supported by economic assistance on the countryside had decreased to 22.2 per cent in 1968 (SCB 1974, p. 113).

More than 60 per cent of the foreign citizens receiving economic assistance in 1950 lived in the four counties Stockholm, Göteborg- and Bohuslän, Malmöhus län and Älvsborgs län (Kungl. Socialstyrelsen 1952, p. 260). All major industrial towns and cities (except two) were located in these four countries. For 1959 there is no information on where foreign citizens receiving economic support resided in Sweden.

In the study by Johansson and Rauhut (2008, pp. 47-49), covering the years 1950, 1967, 1975, 1990 and 2005, it is shown that both the flow and stock of immigrants have been headed for the three metropolitan areas around Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö. An unproportionally big share of the immigrants has always resided in and around these three areas in Sweden.

It is therefore assumed in this study that the overwhelming majority of the immigrants have lived in towns and cities and, consequently, the official statistics on duration of economic assistance for towns and cities can be used as a proxy for the duration of economic assistance to foreign citizens in Sweden during the analysed period. For Swedish citizens and all recipients the national average will be used.

#### 4.5 The expenditures on economic assistance

The total cost for economic assistance in Sweden 1950 was SEK 89 million, of which SEK 277,000 was paid out to Nordic citizens and SEK 2,673,000 to non-Nordic citizens (Kungl. Socialstyrelsen 1952, p. 260). The cost for foreigners receiving economic assistance in 1959 is not accounted for. Lundh and Ohlsson (1994, p. 65) claim that the value of the economic assistance paid out to foreign citizens in 1958 was about 3 per cent of the total cost for economic assistance. Given that the value of the support to foreign citizens receiving economic assistance in 1959 also was about 3 per cent of the total cost for economic assistance, the value of the given support to foreign citizens would then be SEK 3,378,000.

The economic assistance in 1964 to Nordic citizens was SEK 2,756,977 and to non-Nordic citizens SEK 3,073,731 (SOS Socialvården 1964, p. 47). In 1968 the Nordic citizens received economic assistance worth SEK 9,892,133 and non-Nordic citizens SEK 8,549,596.

[Table 6 about here]

Table 6 shows that the estimated average expenditure per recipient was significantly higher for non-Swedish nationals than for the average expenditure per recipient in 1950 and 1959. The figures for 1964 and 1968 are from the official statistics. While the average expenditure per recipient was SEK 1,001 foreign nationals received in average SEK 917. Labour immigrants from Finland received in average SEK 616 while other Nordic labour immigrants in average received SEK 793. Non-Nordic citizens, a group which contained both labour immigrants and refugees, received in average SEK 1,393. The same pattern, but at a higher level, is found for 1968.

#### 4.6 The poverty norm

During the analysed period in this study *the inter-municipal compensation rate* ('den interkommunala ersättningstaxan') was used as a poverty norm in Sweden. The municipals were not allowed to offer residents from other municipals in economic need a lower economic assistance than its own residents. A municipal which paid economic assistance to a non-resident could claim the same amount back from the municipal in which the recipient resided. This compensation was regulated by the inter-municipal compensation rate. In the 1950s this compensation rate was a de fact poverty norm in Sweden (Lundequist 1976, Rauhut 2002). Between 1934 and 1960 the compensation rate was divided in different groups of municipals; the rural municipals with a low living costs had the lowest compensation rate, while the municipals around the three metropolitan areas all had the highest compensation rate due to higher living costs. After 1960 there was only one national inter-municipal compensation rate (Rauhut 2002, p. 39ff, 163).

[Table 7 about here]

In this study the mid-group of five cost of living groups has been chosen as norm setting for 1950 and 1959. In 1950 the inter-municipal compensation rate for group 3 was SEK 140 and in

1959 SEK 225. Since an unproportionally high share of foreign citizens resided in the metropolitan areas the highest inter-municipal compensation rate will be used for estimating the poverty norm for foreign citizens. In 1950 the highest inter-municipal compensation rate was SEK 165 and in 1959 SEK 240.

#### 4.7 Economic assistance as income complement or only income source

Economic assistance can be used as an income complement or it may be the only source of income. The official statistics does not include this information. An attempt to estimate the share of recipients with economic assistance was made by Rauhut (2002, pp. 30-34). The share of recipients in need of economic assistance as only source of income,  $k$ , can be estimated by dividing the expenditures for economic assistance,  $E$ , with the multiplied number of recipients,  $N$ , the poverty norm,  $P$  and months of duration,  $V$ . The model is formalised in equation 1:

$$\hat{k} = \frac{E}{(N \cdot P \cdot V)} \quad (1)$$

The study by Rauhut (2002) focused on single adults without children and what need of economic assistance as only source of income they had. Some of the years in that study – 1948, 1959, 1964 and 1968 – overlap the analysed years in this study. About 7 per cent of the single adults without children who received economic assistance in 1948 used economic assistance as the only source of income. In 1959 this group has increased to approximately 30 per cent. The estimation for 1964 suggest that a bit more than 40 per cent of the recipients needed economic assistance as the only source of income and in 1968 it had increased to just less than 45 per cent. The precision in the model appears good when the outcome is discussed in relation to qualitative information in other sources (Rauhut 2002, p. 32-33).

The available official statistics allow a similar estimation to be undertaken for recipients of economic assistance by citizenship. The number of Nordic, non-Nordic and Swedish citizens can be estimated and a proxy variable for the duration of economic assistance can be used; the poverty norm is known and so are the expenditures on economic assistance for different countries of citizenship.

[Table 8 about here]

In table 8 the estimated need for full support of economic assistance by nationality for the years 1950, 1959, 1964 and 1968 is shown. In 1950 about 37 per cent of all recipients of economic assistance needed full support, but for Nordic citizens only about 18 per cent and for non-Nordic citizens 33 per cent needed economic assistance as only source of income. For Swedish citizens about 37 per cent had economic assistance as only source of income.

The need by Swedish citizens for economic assistance as the only source of income was about 36 per cent while about 35 per cent of all recipients needed full support in 1959. The share of foreign citizens with economic assistance as only source of income was about 20 per cent the same year.

In 1964 the difference between the average for all recipients, Swedish citizens and Nordic citizens is marginal: all three categories needed economic assistance as the only source of income to approximately 21-22 per cent. The need of economic assistance as only source of income for non-Nordic citizens however differ significantly – more than 43 per cent needed economic assistance as only source of income in 1964.

The two shares all recipients in Sweden and Swedish citizens show a similar need for economic assistance as only source of income in 1968 with roughly 27 per cent. The share of

Nordic citizens has a somewhat lower need and the non-Nordic citizens a somewhat higher need of economic assistance as the only source of income, about 23 per cent respectively about 31 per cent.

## 5 Analysis and discussion

The first hypothesis stated that immigrants are overrepresented among the recipients of economic assistance; the zero hypothesis will then be that immigrants are not overrepresented. In table 4 it is shown that the zero hypothesis must be rejected. For all analysed years the share of foreign, Nordic and non-Nordic citizens on economic assistance is higher than for the total share of population and the share of Swedish citizens on economic assistance. Hypothesis 1 is confirmed as true.

It must however be noted that there is a significant difference between the Nordic citizens, who were labour immigrants, and the non-Nordic citizens, a group of which the share of refugees was high. The years 1950 and 1968 show significant differences between these two groups (see table 4). While 8.15 per cent of the Nordic citizens were on economic assistance in 1950, the share of non-Nordic citizens on economic assistance was 14.60. This should be compared to 4.06 per cent of the Swedish citizens. While 4.24 per cent of the Swedish citizens were on economic assistance in 1968, 10.64 per cent of the Nordic citizens and 12.64 per cent of the non-Nordic citizens were in 1968. This finding indicate that the group of immigrants is not a homogeneous group.

In the second hypothesis the duration of dependence of economic assistance is assumed to be shorter for immigrants than for natives. The zero hypothesis is then that the duration will not differ between immigrants and natives. At a first glance, the information in table 5 gives support for a rejection of the zero hypothesis: the immigrants have shorter duration of economic assistance than natives. We must however also pay attention to the fact that for three of the four analysed years (1959, 1964 and 1968) the difference is very small – 0.2 months in average per year. Furthermore, proxy variable was used as no direct information on the duration on economic assistance by nationality is available in the official statistics. For 1959, 1964 and 1968 the results are inconclusive; the zero hypothesis cannot be confirmed, neither rejected. For 1950 the zero hypothesis is, given that the proxy variable used is true, rejected and hence the hypothesis 2 is true – immigrants have shorter duration of dependence on economic assistance than immigrants.

The information regarding the duration of economic assistance does not allow for any breakdown per nationality or even by Nordic and non-Nordic citizens. Consequently it is not possible to say anything about differences in performance by labour immigrants and refugees.

The third hypothesis states that the need for economic assistance as the only source of income will be higher among immigrants due to their insufficient social insurance coverage; consequently, the zero hypothesis is then that such difference does not exist. The empirical material for this part of the analysis is found in table 8. The two groups of Nordic and non-Nordic citizens behave very different. The Nordic citizens, who were labour immigrants, do not have a higher share of its population in need of full support of economic assistance than the Swedish citizens or the total share of population in need of full support of economic assistance for the years 1950, 1964 and 1968. In fact, the Nordic citizens display half of the share the natives do in 1950 and has a slightly lower share than natives in 1964 and 1968. Notwithstanding this, the Nordics perform better than the natives and hence the hypothesis three is rejected.

The story is partly different for the non-Nordic citizens. In 1950 the non-Nordic citizens also show a lower share of population in need of economic assistance as the only source of income. This result confirms the zero hypothesis and rejects hypothesis three. It is thus worth

remembering that the refugees coming to Sweden at that time were assigned to jobs. These jobs were generally found in the agriculture and heavy industry for men and the lighter industry and domestic work for women (Byström 2012, p. 57, 67-70; Olsson 1995, p. 158f, 2003, p. 19f.; Ohlsson 1978, p. 182ff.). Although it was a low-paid job the refugees were assigned to, it still meant that they had a source of income, which reduced the need for economic assistance as the only source of income.

In the 1960s the share of refugees among the Non-Nordics is smaller (see chapter 3.2 above). The share of unqualified labour immigrants were however high. During the 1960s the (non-Nordic) imported labour came from Yugoslavia, Greece and Turkey (Lundh & Ohlsson 1994, p. 33, 36; Svanberg & Tydén 1992, p. 330). They picked up '3D'-jobs (dirty, dangerous and degrading) the natives rejected. For the analysed years during the 1960s the share of non-Nordic population in need of economic assistance as the only source of income was roughly, up to 50 per cent higher than for the Swedish citizens. Consequently, the zero hypothesis must be rejected and hence hypothesis three is confirmed.

The empirical material for 1959 only allows an analysis between Swedish and foreign citizens. For 1959 the share of foreign citizens in Sweden in need of economic assistance as the only source of income was lower than for the Swedish citizens. This result supports the zero hypothesis and hence rejects hypothesis three.

The general conclusion, with one exception, is that immigrants in general does not appear to be in need of economic assistance as the only source of income relative the native population. On the contrary, they appear to have a lower need. For non-Nordic citizens during the two years 1964 and 1968 show a different result. In 1964 the need was about 50 per cent higher among non-Nordics than Swedish citizens and in 1968 the need was 10 per cent higher. One explanation may be that the labour immigrants from Yugoslavia, Greece and Turkey picked up the jobs no one else wanted, and these jobs were firmly situated in the lower labour market segment, they were insecure and dangerous. When unemployed or sick these immigrants had little or no security from the social insurance system (Nasenius 1970, p. 24; SCB 1974, p. 154).

The theoretical discussion concluded that on theoretical grounds the labour immigrants and refugees would perform differently with regard to the average expenditure on economic assistance. The labour immigrants have come for work as their labour is demanded for, while the refugees' labour is not demanded for. This will have an impact on the average expenditure on economic assistance paid out to labour immigrants and refugees. Hypothesis four was therefore split into two hypotheses, of which *Hypothesis 4a* stated that the average cost per person for economic assistance will be lower for labour immigrants than for natives, and *Hypothesis 4b* that the average cost per person for economic assistance will be higher for refugees than for natives. The zero hypothesis is that the average expenditures do not differ. The empirical data does not cover information on the average expenditure on economic assistance for Swedish citizens, so the average expenditure on economic assistance per recipient in general will be used in the analysis.

In 1950 the average expenditure on economic assistance for Nordic citizens, i.e. labour immigrants, was about twice as high as the average expenditure on economic assistance per recipient in general in Sweden and the average expenditure on economic assistance for non-Nordic citizens was about three times as high. For the Nordic citizens the zero hypothesis is true but for the non-Nordics the zero hypothesis is rejected and hence the hypothesis 4b is true.

As mentioned previously, the data for 1959 does not allow a differentiation between different nationalities. The data available only contain information on foreign citizens in general. In table 6 it is shown that the average expenditure on economic assistance for foreign citizens is significantly higher than average expenditure on economic assistance per recipient in general. Alas, it is not possible to test the hypotheses 4a and 4b for the year 1959 as the group of foreigners contain both labour immigrants and refugees.

In 1964 the average expenditure on economic assistance for foreign citizens in Sweden was well below the average expenditure on economic assistance per recipient in general. For the labour immigrants from Finland and the other Nordic countries the average expenditure on economic assistance per recipient was also significantly below the average expenditure on economic assistance per recipient. The zero hypothesis is then rejected and hence hypothesis 4a true. The average expenditure on economic assistance per recipient with a non-Nordic citizenship is about 40 per cent higher than average expenditure on economic assistance per recipient in general in 1964. Again, the zero hypothesis is rejected and hence hypothesis 4b is true.

For the labour immigrants from the Nordics countries and foreigners in general the pattern is the same in 1968. The zero hypothesis is rejected and hence hypothesis 4a is true. The average expenditure on economic assistance for non-Nordics is SEK 1,422 and the average expenditure on economic assistance per recipient in general is SEK 1,420. The difference between them is marginal and therefore the zero hypothesis cannot be rejected. Consequently, hypothesis 4b is false. The group of non-Nordic citizens was dominated by labour immigrants from southern Europe at this time, and only few refugee groups.

[Table 9 about here]

A summary of the hypotheses tests is given in table 9 above. The results obtained here suggest a differentiation depending on origin by nationality among the foreigners in need of economic assistance for the years 1950 to 1968. This is not a sensational finding as Gustafsson et al. (1990) found similar results for the 1980s. The findings here – that immigrants were in greater relative need of economic assistance than natives – also support the findings by Rauhut (2010, 2012).

## 6 Concluding remarks

This paper aims to discuss the immigrants' dependency on economic assistance in Sweden for the years 1950, 1959, 1964 and 1968. Four questions were proposed to be answered in this paper: (1) Are immigrants overrepresented among the recipients of economic assistance? For all the analysed years the answer is: yes, immigrants are overrepresented amongst the recipients of economic assistance regardless we analyse foreign citizens in general or Nordic and non-Nordic citizens.

(2) Is there a difference in the duration of dependence of economic assistance for immigrants and natives? Yes, there is a difference in the duration of support. The second hypothesis predicted that the duration of dependence of economic assistance will be shorter for immigrants than for natives. This was confirmed for all analysed years. For three of the years – 1959, 1964 and 1968 – the difference was so small, only 0.2 months, which does not allow any sharp conclusions. Notwithstanding this the result for the hypothesis test should be considered inconclusive. For 1950 the differences in duration was big enough to enable a conclusion that immigrants had a shorter duration of support for that specific year. Furthermore, the available data does not allow any analysis by nationality with the regard to the duration of support.

(3) Is the need for economic assistance as the only source of income higher among immigrants than natives? For 1950 and 1959 there was no empirical evidence that the need for economic assistance as the only source of income will be higher among immigrants than natives. On the contrary, it was lower both for Nordic and non-Nordic citizens as well as foreign citizens in general. Furthermore, it was not possible to find any empirical evidence in this study to support this for Nordic citizens in 1964 and 1968. The non-Nordic citizens had however a higher need for economic assistance as the only source of income than Swedish citizens and the

recipients of economic assistance in general. Since the group of non-Nordic citizens actually contained few refugee groups in 1964 and 1968 it is not possible to argue that this divergent result is caused by refugees who are unable to enter the labour market. The non-Nordic citizens in Sweden at that time were predominantly labour immigrants from Yugoslavia, Turkey and Greece. They picked up the jobs at the lower segment of the labour market no one else wanted to have. When sick or unemployed they had an insufficient social insurance coverage (Nasenius 1970, p. 24).

(4) Can a difference in the average expenditure on economic assistance paid out to immigrants and natives be observed? According to the hypotheses generated in the theoretical framework, the average expenditure on economic assistance paid out to labour immigrants would be lower than for natives, while it would be higher for refugee immigrants than for natives. For 1950 no evidence to support this was found for the group of Nordic labour immigrants but for the group of non-Nordic immigrants of which a large share was refugees. The data for 1959 did not allow any empirical test of the hypotheses 4a and 4b. The average expenditure on economic assistance paid out to labour immigrants was lower than for natives in both 1964 and 1968, which confirmed the tested hypothesis 4a. For the non-Nordics, partly constituted by refugees, the average expenditure on economic assistance paid was higher than for natives in 1964. The result for 1968 was inconclusive for the non-Nordics

Some general conclusions can be made regarding the immigrants' dependency on economic assistance in Sweden for the years 1950, 1959, 1964 and 1968. (1) Immigrants are overrepresented amongst the recipients of economic assistance. The overrepresentation today by immigrants among the recipients of economic assistance which caused much concern and debate is, surprisingly, no novelty at all. (2) Refugees and labour immigrants picking up the 3D-jobs at the bottom on the lower labour market segment appear to have a larger need for economic assistance as the only source of income higher than natives 1964 and 1968. These groups of immigrants also have, in general, a higher average expenditure on economic assistance than the natives. These findings are similar to the situation today. (3) A marginal position at the labour market resulted is a marginal position in the social insurance system when unemployed or sick. For immigrants in general and refugees in particular economic assistance was – and still is – the only safety net. (4) A theoretical framework, based upon the *New Economics of Migration* and the *Dual Labour Market Theory*, can provide an explanation on the need of economic assistance for labour immigrants and refugees.

Just because immigrants in general displayed a higher average employment rate and higher relative incomes than natives during the studied period it is easy to be misled to the conclusion that this is also valid for refugees. The findings here suggest that labour immigrants and refugees performed differently when it comes to economic assistance. This is in line with the findings of Gustafsson et al (1990). With regard to the need of economic assistance, this study indicate that the situation for immigrants in general and refugees in particular has not developed from good to bad when comparing the 1950s and 1960s with today; the situation has gone from bad to worse (*cf.* Rauhut 2010).

**Table 1:** The number of recipients of economic assistance 1950-1968

	1950	1959	1964	1968
Total number of recipients	293,239	283,200	266,783	358,321

Source: *SOS Fattigvård 1950, SOS Socialhjälpen 1959, SOS Socialvården 1964, 1968*

**Table 2:** The household receiving economic assistance by the citizenship of the of household 1950, 1959, 1964 and 1968

	Total number of supported households	Household headed by a Swedish citizen	Household headed by a Nordic citizen	Household headed by a non-Nordic citizen	Household headed by a non-Swedish citizen
1950	106,700	<i>101,426</i>	1,714	3,560	--
1959	127,580	<i>122,349</i>	n/a	n/a	5,231*
1964	129,907	<i>123,552</i>	4,148	2,207	--
1968	152,728	<i>137,152</i>	9,563	6,013	--

*Italics:* The number of households headed by a Swedish citizen is a residual of the total number of supported households minus all households headed by a foreign citizen.

\* SCB 1974, p. 154

Source: *SOS Fattigvård 1950, SOS Socialhjälpen 1959, SOS Socialvården 1964, 1968*

**Table 3:** Total population and population by citizenship in Sweden 1950-1968

	Total population	Swedish citizens	Nordic citizens	Non-Nordic citizens
1950	6,986,181	6,862,461	57,287	66,433
1959	7,436,066	7,245,445	125,337*	65,284*
1964	7,695,200	7,464,344	151,811*	79,045*
1968	7,931,659	7,611,079	208,933	111,647

\* Based on the relative share of Nordic and non-Nordic citizens in the Swedish population according to the census in 1960 (*SOS Folkräkningen 1960 Vol IV, p. 106*). The share of Swedish citizens is a residual of the total population minus all foreign citizens.

Source: *SOS Folkräkningen 1950 vol IV, p. 106; Statistisk Årsbok 1960, p. 35; Statistisk Årsbok 1965, p. 5; SM Be 1969:8, p. 22-23, 40.*

**Table 4:** The share of population (per cent) on economic assistance by citizenship 1950-1968.

	All	Swedish	Foreign	Nordic	Non-Nordic
1950	4.19	4.06	--	8.15	14.60
1959	3.81	3.75	6.09	n/a	n/a
1964	3.47	3.39	--	5.61	5.74
1968	4.52	4.24	--	10.64	12.64

Source: *Tables 1, 2 and 3.*

**Table 5:** The average number of months with economic assistance 1950-1968

	1950	1959	1964	1968
Countryside	6.9	5.5	5.1	4.7
Towns	5.1	4.8	4.1	4.1
Total	5.9	5.0	4.3	4.3

Source: *SOS Fattigvård 1950, p. 35; SOS Socialhjälpen 1959, p. 32; SOS Socialvården 1964, p. 45; SOS Socialvården 1968, p. 38.*

**Table 6:** The average expenditure per recipients by nationality 1950, 1959, 1964 and 1968 in SEK.

	All recipients	Foreign	Finnish	Other Nordic	Non-Nordic
1950	86	n/a	n/a	154.60 <sup>a</sup>	275.60 <sup>b</sup>
1959	176	290.93 <sup>c</sup>	n/a	n/a	n/a
1964	1,001	917	616	793	1,393
1968	1,420	1,184	999	1,156	1,422

a. Including Finnish, Danish and Norwegian citizens (no Icelanders). Data on expenditure by nationality from Kungl. Socialstyrelsen (1952, p. 260) is divided by the estimated number of Nordic citizens receiving economic assistance (chapter 4.1 above).

b. Data on expenditure by nationality from Kungl. Socialstyrelsen (1952, p. 260) is divided by the estimated number of non-Nordic citizens receiving economic assistance (chapter 4.1 above).

c. The estimated total expenditure on SEK 3,378,000 for economic assistance for foreign citizens (see text above) divided by the estimated number of recipients of economic assistance to foreign nationals (see chapter 4.1 above)  
*Source: SOS Fattigvård 1950, p. 36; SOS Socialhjälpen 1959, p. 33; SOS Socialvården 1964, p. 47; SOS Socialvården 1968, p. 40.*

**Table 7:** The inter-municipal compensation rate 1950, 1959, 1964 and 1968, in SEK.

	1950	1959	1964	1968
Poverty norm for single adults without children	115-165	215-240	365	475

*Source: Tjänstemanna PM, 25th September 1953, Socialstyrelsen; Socialdepartementet 1969, pp. 154-171; SCB 1974, pp. 137-141.*

**Table 8:** The share of population in need of full support of economic assistance by nationality 1950, 1959, 1964 and 1968. Percentage.

	All	Swedish	Foreign	Nordic	Non-Nordic
1950	36.74	37.16	--	18.37	32.75
1959	35.34	35.75	20.62	n/a	n/a
1964	22.21	21.98	--	20.61	43.21
1968	27.20	27.44	--	22.84	31.12

*Source: Own estimations*

**Table 9:** A summary of the hypotheses tests.

	1950	1959	1964	1968
Hypothesis 1	True	True	True	True
Hypothesis 2	True	Inconclusive	Inconclusive	Inconclusive
Hypothesis 3	False	False	False – Nordics True – Non Nordics	False – Nordics True – Non Nordics
Hypothesis 4a	False	*	True – Nordics	True – Nordics
Hypothesis 4b	True	*	True – Non Nordics	False – Non Nordics

\* Cannot be tested

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