

A Widening Immigrant-Native Gap: Child Income and Poverty in Sweden among Immigrants from Twenty Four Countries and Natives¹

Björn GUSTAFSSON (University of Gothenburg, Sweden)

Torun ÖSTERBERG (University of Gothenburg, Sweden)

Abstract

This paper presents new research on income and poverty among immigrant children from twenty-four countries living in Sweden. We are interested in questions like: How do child income and child poverty of immigrants from various countries differ from the corresponding of natives? How has such differences changed over a period of one generation? How can such differences be explained in a statistical sense by differences towards natives in parental education, place of residence etc? The statistical analysis is based on register data on all persons living in Sweden and we focus on the three year periods 1983 – 1985, 1995 - 1997 and 2008 - 2010.

The results indicate a rapidly increased gap in child income between on one hand immigrants and on the other hand natives between the two points of measurement. Results from regression analysis indicate that changes across years in characteristics such as parental education, age and location within Sweden contribute little to explain the widening income gap. There are many examples of most recent poverty rates for immigrant children being three or four times as high as among native children.

Keywords: Immigrants, Children, Sweden,

¹This work has been financially supported by a grant from Swedish Research Council for Health, Work Life and Welfare.