Immigrant Child Poverty in an Emerging Country of Destination: the Evidence from Finland

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to analyze the patterns of poverty and housing overcrowding among immigrant children in Finland, with a particular focus on the standard of living in the first years of settlement. We also seek to explore whether and to what degree foreign-born children are disadvantaged relative to native children in terms of income poverty and housing conditions. We use data from a compilation of Finnish registers. The registers are of longitudinal nature and contain yearly information on all individuals who resided in Finland at any point between 1995 and 2014. We distinguish between four different types of poverty trajectories in the first five years after arrival in Finland: 1) no experience of poverty, 2) not poor in at least three out of five years, 3) poor in at least three out of five years, and 4) poor in all five years. An analogous classification is applied when looking at housing overcrowding. The relative disadvantage of immigrant children relative to native children is more pronounced in terms of income poverty than in terms of housing. The most frequent outcome in terms of income poverty in the first years of settlement is no experience of poverty, followed by persistent poverty, i.e. poverty in all five years after arrival. The same patterns are found for overcrowding. The multivariate analysis, based on the ordered logistic regression, shows a substantial heterogeneity across immigrant groups defined by country of birth.

Keywords: Child poverty; Child migrants; Immigrant housing; Overcrowding; Finland

Résumé

Ce document de travail porte sur les conditions de vie des enfants immigrés en Finlande. Se concentrant sur le niveau de vie dans les premières années du séjour en Finlande, cette étude met en évidence l'évolution de la pauvreté des familles et du surpeuplement des logements. Il s'agit également de déterminer dans quelle mesure les enfants nés à l'étranger sont désavantagés par rapport aux enfants natifs en termes de pauvreté et de conditions de logement. Pour répondre à ces questions, les données d'une compilation de registres finlandais sont mobilisées. Ces registres contiennent des informations annuelles et longitudinales sur toutes les personnes ayant résidé en Finlande entre 1995 et 2014. Quatre types de trajectoires de pauvreté au cours des cinq premières années suivant l'arrivée en Finlande sont distinguées : 1) aucune expérience de pauvreté, 2) pas de pauvreté pendant au moins trois années sur cinq, 3) pauvreté pendant au moins trois années sur cinq, 4) pauvreté pendant l'ensemble des cinq premières années. Une classification analogue est appliquée pour le surpeuplement des logements. Il apparaît que le désavantage relatif des enfants immigrés par rapport aux enfants natifs est plus prononcé en termes de pauvreté monétaire qu'en matière de logement. Le résultat le plus fréquent relatif à la pauvreté monétaire au cours des premières années de séjour en Finlande est l'absence de pauvreté, suivie de la pauvreté persistante (c'est-à-dire la pauvreté dans les cinq années suivant l'arrivée). Les mêmes tendances se retrouvent pour les logements surpeuplés. L'analyse multivariée (régression logistique ordonnée) montre une hétérogénéité substantielle entre les groupes d'immigrants selon le pays de naissance.

Mots-clés: Pauvreté des enfants; Enfants migrants; Logement des immigrants; Surpeuplement; Finlande

1. Introduction

Finland has been a multi-ethnic society for centuries, mainly due to the strong presence of a Swedish-speaking community on its southern and western shores. However, with the exception of the Sami community in the north of the country, the presence of other ethnic groups has been marginal until the mid-1990s. However, an increase in immigrant inflows since the mid-1990s suggests that, similar to some Southern European countries, Finland is experiencing a migration transition (Katila and Wahlbeck, 2012; Castles et al., 2014). In other words, what until recently was a land of substantial emigration has become a land of immigration. According to Statistics Finland, there were 357,000 foreign-born residents in Finland at the end of 2016, accounting for more than 6% of the population. According to the same source, there were around ten times more people with foreign backgrounds in 2016 than in 1990. Initial migration flows were dominated by Estonians and Russian-speaking immigrants from the former USSR, but the origins of more recent arrivals are more varied. Currently, the five most common languages in Finland's population with foreign origins are Russian, Estonian, Arabic, Somali, and English (Statistics Finland, 2017).

Immigrant integration has become one of the principal concerns of contemporary European societies. Although immigration to Finland is fairly recent and the foreign-born population is still clearly smaller than in other Nordic countries, immigration and integration policies have played prominent roles in political debates in Finland. The challenges of foreign-born residents' integration in Finland are mainly associated with the country's lack of institutional and societal experience. To some extent, this difficulty should be offset by the presence of a strong welfare state in Finland, which features all of the principal characteristics of the generous Nordic model (Wessel et al., 2017). Finnish studies on immigrant integration largely confirm the patterns of integration typical of other European destination countries. In particular, the foreign born on average have less favourable socio-economic outcomes than natives, with the immigrant disadvantage being especially pronounced among immigrants from less developed countries (Sarvimäki, 2011; Busk et al., 2016).

The aim of this paper is to analyse the patterns of income poverty and housing overcrowding among immigrant children in Finland, with a particular focus on the standard of living in the first years of settlement. We also seek to explore whether and to what degree immigrant children are disadvantaged relative to native children in terms of income poverty and housing conditions. There is ample literature showing that poverty can have adverse effects on children's health and academic achievement, as well as on a wide range of socio-economic outcomes as an adult (e.g. Lichter, 1997; Duncan and Brooks-Gunn, 2000; Seccombe, 2000). Childhood poverty also has a particular resonance because deprivation in childhood can have adverse, long-term consequences (Gornick and Jäntti, 2011). Additionally, concern for children's well-being may to some degree be driven by "innate feelings of protection towards the young and assumptions of their blamelessness for the situation in which they find themselves" (Bradbury et al., 2001). The interest in housing conditions is guided by the assumption that a living environment can contribute to the intergenerational transmission of social inequalities. The empirical evidence shows that children's academic achievement, behaviour, and health are negatively affected by growing up in crowded housing, even after controlling for income and other socio-economic characteristics (e.g. Evans and Saegert, 2001; Leventhal and Newman, 2010; Solari and Mare, 2012). Finally, given that Finland's population is becoming increasingly multi-ethnic, adverse living conditions of immigrant children can also lead to substantial and persistent ethnic stratification in the long term. In other words, the differences in the well-being among children of different origin in contemporary Finland are already shaping the extent and the patterns of ethnic stratification in Finland in the decades to come.

2. Social context of the research – standard of living and housing in Finland

2.1. Economic trends, income inequality, and poverty

Finland is one of the most prosperous societies in Europe, even though its economy experienced several shocks over the last three decades. A serious economic crisis took place at the beginning of the 1990s, which resulted in a cumulative drop in the country's real GDP by 12.6% (Gulan et al., 2014). This crisis was followed by an economic recovery and growth that lasted until the Great Recession. After the economic recession of the early 1990s, the income poverty rate and income inequality increased in Finland. The increases in poverty and inequality observed during the 1990s were among the highest of the OECD countries (OECD, 2011). While the level of income inequality was relatively stable in the early 2000s, the income poverty rate continued rising – although at a somewhat slower pace than in the previous decade – until the 2008 recession (Kuivalainen and Niemelä, 2010; Blomgren et al., 2012; Moisio et al., 2016). A sharp economic downturn in 2009 has been followed by a relatively slow recovery (OECD, 2018). During the 1990s recession and its aftermath, the Finnish welfare state experienced changes that can be mainly described as welfare state retrenchments (Kuivalainen and Nelson, 2012; Blomgren et al., 2012). For instance, particularly in the 1990s, benefits were cut (including child benefits), and their compensation levels were reduced. Income taxes were reduced after the mid-1990s to boost economic growth. Although earlier benefit cuts were compensated by increases during the 2000s, the level of social benefits has not followed the development of average earnings (Moisio et al., 2016).

Poverty prevalence and poverty persistence among children are determined by general economic trends, income distribution, female labour market participation rate, as well as the strength of the welfare state in the country of destination (Jenkins and Schluter, 2003; Lichter et al., 2005). Despite fluctuations in general child poverty trends over the last 20 years, Finland and other Nordic countries are among the countries with the lowest child poverty rates in the world (Bradbury and Jäntti, 2011; Corak, 2006; Gornick and Jäntti, 2012). Finland is also among the few countries where the child poverty rate is lower than the overall poverty rate (UNICEF, 2012), which may at least be partly ascribed to universal child benefits and other benefits that households with children are entitled to (TARKI, 2010). As elsewhere in Europe, the characteristics associated with child poverty in Finland are single parenthood (especially single motherhood), a large family, low education, and lack of employment (Jäntti, 2010; TARKI, 2010; Gornick & Jäntti, 2012; Karvonen & Salmi, 2016). These relatively positive results in Nordic countries are, however, somewhat undermined by the evidence for the persistence of child poverty – it has, namely, been shown that the rates of exit from child poverty are similar or even lower than in some other developed countries (Vaalavuo, 2015). Apart from factors affecting general child poverty trends, the well-being of immigrant children is also affected by a number of immigrant-specific determinants that together reflect the level of (socio-) economic integration of immigrant groups in the destination country. As far as Nordic countries are concerned, the evidence suggests that immigrant children in Sweden, Denmark, and Norway are clearly disadvantaged in terms of poverty risks. In their analysis of child poverty in Sweden, Lindquist and Lindquist (2012) identify immigrant child poverty as one of the big challenges for the Swedish family policy. Galloway et al. (2015) show that at the turn of the 21st century, around one third of all poor children in Norway had an immigrant background, whereas this was the case with around a half of impoverished children in Denmark and Sweden. These findings even prompt the authors to consider immigrant child poverty "the Achilles heel of the Scandinavian welfare state". A recent study by Gustafsson and Österberg (2018) illustrated that while 17 percent of children who experienced poverty between 1983 and 1985 had an immigrant background, the share was as high as 57 percent in the period between 2008 and 2010. As these studies did not include Finland in their analysis, our study will complement our knowledge of the well-being of immigrant children in the Nordics.

2.2. Housing

The quality of housing in Finland is high and above the EU average (Eurostat, 2017). Our analysis (results not reported here) shows that only a marginal share of housing units, among both natives and immigrants, have poor amenities. Therefore, as housing amenities do not seem to be an important source of disadvantage for immigrant children in Finland, we do not look at this indicator of well-being. On the other hand, the average size of a housing unit in Finland (88.6 square meters) is lower than that in other Nordic countries. In addition, with an average size of around 55 square meters, the average size of a rented housing unit is smaller than that in most other EU countries (Eurostat, 2012). Finland is characterized by a high level of home ownership, but the social housing sector plays an important role as well. The housing costs of low-income households are alleviated with a housing allowance, and the costs are taken into account in the last-resort, means-tested social assistance paid to the households. However, there are substantial differences in tenure status between natives and immigrants in Finland. In 2010, 72 percent of natives lived in owner-occupied housing, while this was the case for only 31 percent of immigrants. On the other hand, 43 percent of immigrants lived in social/public housing, as compared to 13 percent of natives. Immigrants were also overrepresented in the private renting market (Andersen et al., 2013).

3. Data and methodology

We use data from a compilation of Finnish registers – the Population register, the Family register, the Migration register, as well as the Finnish Longitudinal Employer-Employee Data (FLEED). The Population register, the Family register, and the FLEED contain annual information on all individuals who resided in Finland at any point between 1995 and 2014, which is also the time span of this study. The Migration register contains information on the month and the year of immigration to and emigration from Finland. The information in different registers can be merged via an anonymized personal ID. Apart from a wide array of socio-demographic and contextual characteristics of the general population, we also have access to detailed immigrant-specific information, such as the country of birth, native language, and date of immigration. We focus on the well-being of children, i.e. individuals aged 17 or younger. Two dimensions of well-being are addressed in this paper. First, we look at relative income poverty. Consistent with the dominant approach in European literature, the poverty line is equal to 60% of the median household income. The reference population for determining the poverty threshold is the entire population residing in Finland. The modified OECD-scale is used to adjust for the household size (1 for the first adult, 0.5. for each additional adult and 0.3 for each child). The second dimension of well-being we look at is housing overcrowding. Here we use the definition of overcrowding adopted by the European Union. According to this definition, a person was in an overcrowded household if the household does not have at its disposal a minimum number of rooms equal to: one room for the household; one room per couple in the household; one room for each single person aged 18 or more; one room per pair of single people of the same gender between 12 and 17 years of age; one room for each single person between 12 and 17 years of age and not included in the previous category; one room per pair of children under 12 years of age.

The empirical analysis of both indicators is divided into two parts. In the first part, performing separate regressions for each year between 1995 and 2014, we compare poverty and overcrowding rates among immigrant children with those of Finnish-born children. Dependent variables are being poor (when looking at income poverty), and residing in an overcrowded living space (in the analysis of overcrowding). The multivariate analysis is based on logistic regression. The main variable of interest is an indicator variable for the foreign-born children. All independent variables refer to the year of the analysis.

In the second part of the empirical analysis, we focus only on immigrant children and explore the patterns of poverty and housing overcrowding in the first five full years after arrival in Finland.[1] This analysis includes foreign-born individuals who arrived in Finland as children between 1994 and 2009 and who were 12 years old or younger in the year of arrival (hence younger than 18 at the end of their fifth full year in Finland). The descriptive analysis of poverty and overcrowding after arrival is based on sequence analysis. When analysing poverty, the dependent variable has the following outcomes: 1) not poor in any of the first five years after arrival; 2) not poor in at least three out of five years following arrival; 3) poor in at least three years following arrival, and 4) poor in all five years after arrival. Similarly, when looking at overcrowding, the dependent variable has the following outcomes: 1) adequate housing (no overcrowding) in any of the first five years after arrival in Finland; 2) adequate housing (no overcrowding) in at least three out of five years after arrival; 3) overcrowding in at least three out of five years following arrival, and 4) overcrowding in all five years after arrival. Since there is a hierarchical relationship between the outcomes, we employ ordered logistic regression for the purpose of multivariate analysis. It is important to emphasize that, unlike in the first part of the analysis, all independent variables in the second part refer to the year of the child's arrival in Finland. Around 2,000 immigrant children are omitted from the analysis of overcrowding. These are children who, during any of the first five full years in Finland, lived in a housing unit inhabited by two or more families, or for whom the structure of the housing was unknown.

The sets of independent variables used in the first and second part of the multivariate analysis overlap considerably. In both analyses, we control for a wide range of family characteristics and contextual factors. Starting with demographic characteristics, the model controls for the age of the child. We distinguish between the following categories: age 6 or younger; 7–12; and (only in the first part of the analysis) 13 or older. We also control for the age of the older parent, or the age of the only parent if the child lives in a single parent family. This variable is categorized as follows: age 30 or younger; 31–40; 41–50, and older than 50. The analysis also takes into account the family type, where we distinguish between: married couple with child(ren) (reference category); mother with child(ren); father with child(ren); cohabiting couple with common child(ren); and cohabiting couple with non-common child(ren). The model also includes a continuous variable indicating the number of other children in the family. We further control for the highest education level of parents, using the classification of Statistics Finland: less than upper secondary education or missing[2] (reference group); upper secondary; lowest level tertiary; lower-degree level tertiary; higher-degree level tertiary, and doctorate or equivalent level. The labour market attachment among the adults in the family is measured as the percentage of adults in the family who are employed. The type of residential community is one of the contextual variables in the model. We distinguish between: inner urban area (reference category); outer urban area; peri-urban area, and rural area. Another categorical variable takes into account a possible impact of regional differences on poverty trajectories and housing conditions. This variable has nineteen categories, one for each Finnish region[3].

As the second part of the analysis includes only foreign-born children, in addition to the variables mentioned above, it also includes several immigrant-specific variables. The heterogeneity of the Finnish immigrant population makes it necessary to control for immigrant group. A non-negligible share of foreign-born children has at least one parent of the Finnish background, and they are also registered as children of Finnish background in our data. These are mostly foreign-born children of return migrants and they constitute a separate group, regardless of their country of birth, with the

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[1] We only include foreign-born children who stayed in Finland for at least five full consecutive years. The outcomes for the children who leave Finland before that are on average slightly less favorable than those of children who stay in Finland. However, the difference is not large enough to affect the main conclusions of this study.

[2] One shortcoming of information on education in Finnish registers is that it is not possible to distinguish between individuals with less than upper secondary school and individuals for whom the education level is unknown. This is why they are considered a single group in this study.

[3] For the detailed regional classification, see: http://tilastokeskus.fi/meta/luokitukset/maakunta/001-2017/index_en.html

exception of those born in the former USSR[4]. A non-negligible share of children, especially from earlier immigrant cohorts, is registered as born in countries that no longer exist, such as the USSR or Yugoslavia. Therefore, instead of simultaneously including former and newly emerged countries in our model, in these two cases we assign the former country as the country of birth, but combine this information with that of native language when identifying immigrant groups[5]. For Iran and Iraq, we also combine information about country of birth and native language to account for a pronounced ethnic heterogeneity in immigrant inflows from these countries. We identify as many as 17 immigrant groups, classified as follows: foreign-born children of Finnish background (reference group); former USSR, Estonian language; former USSR, Russian language; former USSR, Finnish language; former USSR, other languages; Nordic countries; former Yugoslavia, Serbo-Croatian language; former Yugoslavia, Albanian and other languages; other European countries; Iran, Farsi language; Iran, Kurdish and other languages; Iraq, Arabic language; Iraq, Kurdish and other languages; Somalia; Thailand; China, and other non-European countries. As the period of arrival can affect initial housing and poverty trajectories, it is introduced in our model as another immigrant-specific variable, categorized as follows: 2000 or before (reference group); 2001–2005, and 2006–2009. Since immigrant children enter the study in their first full year in Finland, it may be that those who arrive in Finland in earlier months have better outcomes, as their parents have more time to adapt in the new country. This especially concerns income poverty, which takes annual income into account. The model thus also controls for the month of immigration to Finland. Finally, we control for differences in children's migration experiences by including a dummy variable for children with at least one parent already living in Finland at the time of immigration.
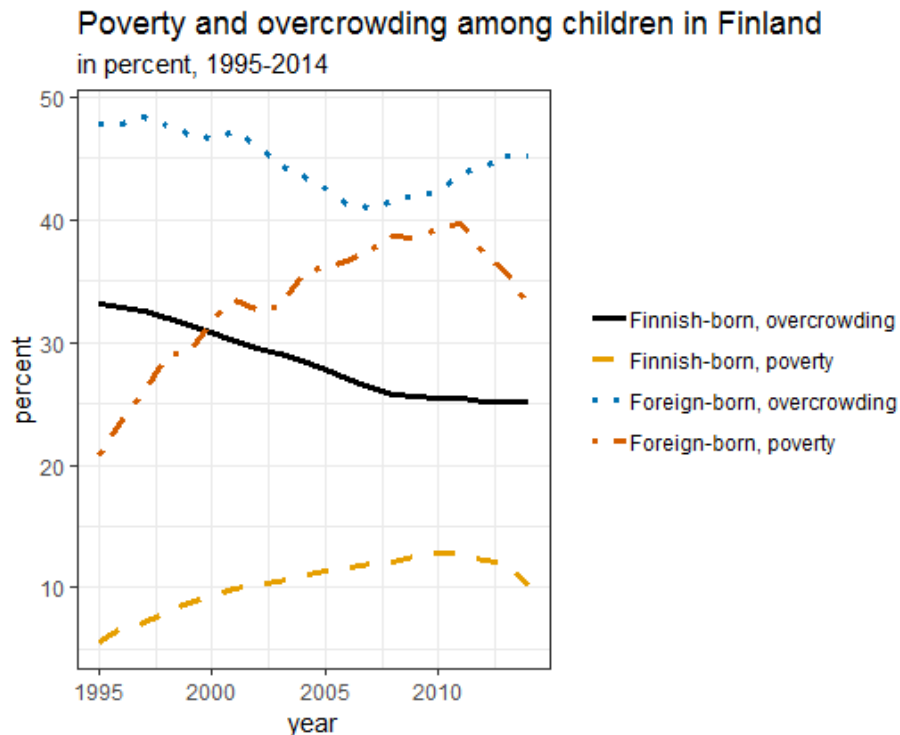
4. Immigrant children's disadvantage

The general trends in poverty and overcrowding among native and immigrant children are shown in Figure 1. Over the entire observed period, immigrant children were faced with substantially higher poverty risks than native children, although the trends within both groups were fairly similar. For both groups, the poverty rate was lowest in 1995, when it stood at 5.5 percent for native children, and 20.8 percent for immigrant children. The trend was largely negative in subsequent years, with poverty rates peaking in 2011, reaching 12.8 and 39.8 for native children and immigrant children, respectively. In the following three years, poverty rates decreased somewhat in both groups. The overcrowding rates surpass poverty rates in each year among both native and immigrant children. For native children, there has been an almost steady decline, with the overcrowding rates ranging between 33.2 percent in 1995 and around 25 percent in the last three years of the observed period. The immigrant children's disadvantage is also evident when looking at housing conditions - the overcrowding rates among foreign-born children ranged between 40.9 and 48.3 percent. The trends in this group followed a somewhat more complex pattern than among native children, as the initial modest decrease in overcrowding rates was followed by an increase in overcrowding after 2007.

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[4] Foreign-born individuals of Finnish ancestry born in the former USSR belong primarily to the Ingrian-Finnish community. Although officially considered returnees (Liebkind and Lasinskaja-Lahti, 2000), the parents of most of these children never lived in the area defined by present-day borders of Finland. This is an important distinction from the children of Finnish-born return migrants from Sweden or other Western countries. For this reason, the children with Finnish backgrounds born in the former USSR are in this paper, depending on the reported native language, assigned to the groups "former USSR, Finnish language" or "former USSR, Russian language".
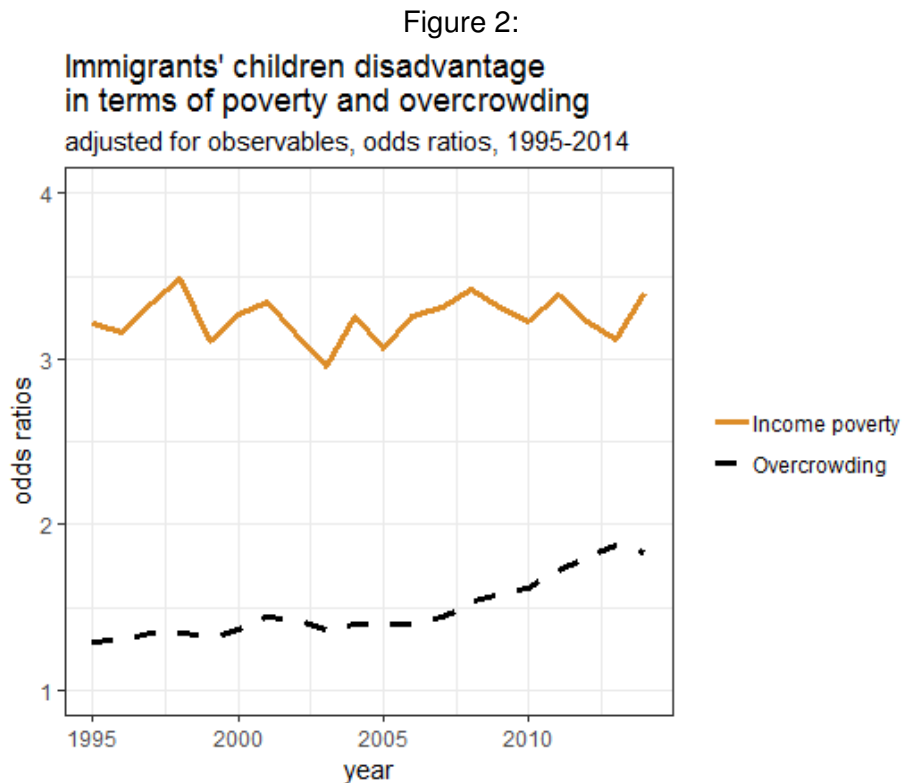
[5] In order to avoid the collinearity between arrival cohorts and immigrant groups, children born in the countries that gained independence in the 1990s will also be assigned to the group defined by the borders of former countries, i.e. the USSR or Yugoslavia. For instance, an Estonian-speaking child born in Estonia in 1995 will be classified as "former USSR, Estonian language".

Figure 1:

Poverty and overcrowding among children in Finland

in percent, 1995-2014

- Finnish-born, overcrowding
- Finnish-born, poverty
- Foreign-born, overcrowding
- Foreign-born, poverty

Source: Finnish register data, own calculations

To what degree can the less favourable outcomes for immigrant children be explained by family and contextual characteristics? Figure 2 indicates that, controlling for observable characteristics, the odds of living in poverty were between three (in 2003) and three and a half (in 1997) times higher for immigrant children than for native children. There is no clear trend over the observed period though. In contrast, when it comes to overcrowding, Figure 2 indicates some negative trends for foreign-born children. More precisely, controlling for observable characteristics, the odds of living in overcrowded housing at the beginning of the observation period were 29 percent higher for immigrant children. The gap between native and immigrant children has increased substantially since then, such that in 2014 the odds of living in overcrowded housing were 83 percent higher for the foreign-born children. When interpreting these trends, we should bear in mind that the size of the immigrant population (and, consequently, the number of immigrant children) was increasing on a yearly basis over the observed period. In addition, the composition of new arrivals as well as that of the entire foreign-born population changed substantially between 1995 and 2014. The initial inflows were dominated by migrants from the Baltic countries and Russia, whereas more economically vulnerable non-European immigrants are more represented in recent years. It is very likely that the relatively fast increase in the number of foreign-born residents, coupled with the changing composition of the immigrant population, impeded a convergence in poverty and overcrowding levels between the two groups.

Figure 2:

Immigrants' children disadvantage
in terms of poverty and overcrowding
adjusted for observables, odds ratios, 1995-2014

Source: Finnish register data, own calculations

5. Poverty and overcrowding after arrival in Finland

The results of the sequence analysis of poverty and overcrowding among newly arrived immigrant children are shown in Figure 3. The trajectories are ordered by frequency, in descending order. The panel on the left shows that the most common outcome was the absence of poverty in each of the first five years after arrival, which was the case with just over 40 percent of immigrant children. In contrast, the second most common outcome was to be exposed to poverty in all of the first five years in Finland. This outcome, however, was more than three times less frequent than the absence of poverty. The next most frequent outcomes were transitions from poverty after (ordered by frequency) three, two, one and four years in poverty after arrival. Negative transitions, that is, transitions into poverty after arrival, are more rare, which implies that the average socio-economic conditions of immigrant children do generally improve after arrival. Furthermore, as can be seen in the lower part of the panel, a considerable share of immigrant children experience unstable poverty trajectories. Almost 20 percent experience two or more poverty transitions in the first years of settlement in Finland.

Figure 3:
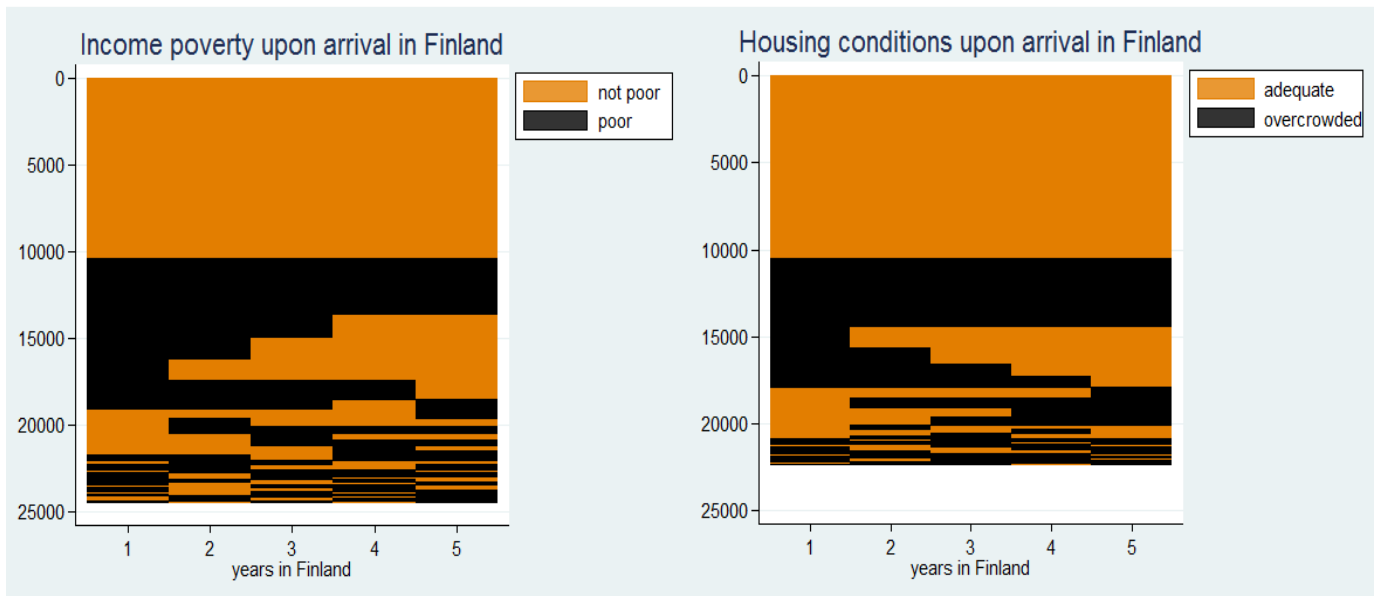
The right panel in Figure 3 shows overcrowding patterns. Despite substantial differences in the rates and trends in poverty and overcrowding seen in Figure 1, the two panels are remarkably similar. The most common outcome, found among just under half of immigrant children, was living in adequate housing conditions in each of the first five years in Finland. Another similarity with income poverty is that the second most common outcome was living in overcrowded housing during each of the first five years, followed by positive transitions after one, two, three and four years in Finland. As a result, there is a positive association between average housing conditions and years of stay in Finland. Finally, a non-negligible share of immigrant children had unstable housing conditions in the years after arrival.

Table 1 displays the results of the multivariate analysis of poverty and overcrowding among immigrant children in the first five years in Finland. A number of strong associations between family characteristics in the year of arrival and the subsequent poverty and housing trajectories indicates that the initial conditions just after arrival are very important for the well-being of immigrant children in the new country of residence. Older children are somewhat less likely to experience unfavourable poverty outcomes, but are also more likely than children arriving at a younger age to live in overcrowded housing. Children arriving with parents aged 30 or younger are the most vulnerable in terms of both income poverty and overcrowding. Children who arrive with married couples have the most favourable poverty outcomes after arrival, although the difference relative to children of cohabiting couples is modest. On the other hand, children who arrive with single mothers and even more so those with single fathers are substantially disadvantaged relative to children of married couples. Children who arrive with a single father are also the most vulnerable group with respect to overcrowding, whereas, somewhat surprisingly, children who live with a single mother are the least likely of all groups to be exposed to housing overcrowding. As expected, having more siblings increases family needs and thus increases the likelihood of negative outcomes, especially in terms of overcrowding. The differences by the type of residential community are modest, but immigrant children who live in rural areas upon arrival have somewhat worse poverty and housing outcomes than children from peri-urban and urban areas. Parental labour market participation in the year of arrival and parental education both considerably reduce the risk of negative outcomes. Living with employed and highly educated adults protects the children from negative outcomes, and more so when it comes to income poverty. Whereas this is an expected finding, somewhat more surprising is that having a parent in Finland who migrated before the child is not a statistically significant predictor

Table 1: Poverty and overcrowding among immigrant children after arrival in Finland, 1995-2014, ordered logistic regression (odds ratios, higher coefficients correspond to less favorable outcomes)

	Income poverty		Overcrowding	
	Odds ratio	z-value	Odds ratio	z-value
Child's age at arrival (ref.: 6 or younger)				
12-16	0.91***	-3.35	1.26***	7.99
Older parent's age at arrival (ref: 30 or younger)				
31-40	0.87***	-3.78	0.90***	-2.84
41-50	0.79***	-5.52	0.80***	-5.06
Older than 50	0.82***	-2.95	0.67***	-5.92
Family type (ref.: married couple with children)				
Mother with child(ren)	1.84***	16.44	0.49***	-18.78
Father with child(ren)	2.43***	8.98	2.26***	8.95
Cohabiting couple with common child(ren)	1.18***	2.83	1.21***	3.26
Cohabiting couple with non-common child(ren)	1.29***	3.24	0.97	-0.37
Number of other children in the family	1.15***	12.81	1.63***	42.46
Type of settlement (ref.: inner urban area)				
Outer urban area	0.97	-0.88	0.91***	-3.06
Peri-urban area	1.01	0.17	0.83***	-3.12
Rural area	1.23***	4.89	1.20***	4.37
Share of employed adults in the family	0.97***	-55.35	0.99***	-8.32
Highest educational level of a parent (ref.: less than secondary or missing)				
Upper secondary	0.84***	-5.03	0.79***	-7.19
Lowest level tertiary	0.53***	-12.78	0.60***	-10.41
Lower-degree level tertiary	0.50***	-11.88	0.57***	-10.14
Higher-degree level tertiary	0.32***	-22.24	0.48***	-15.60
Doctorate or equivalent	0.26***	-9.87	0.37***	-8.51
At least one parent immigrated before	1.03	1.05	1.08**	2.52
Period of immigration (ref.: 1999 or before)				
2000 - 2004	1.78***	16.41	0.90***	-3.33
2005 - 2009	2.12***	21.54	0.92**	-2.27
Immigrant group (ref.: foreign-born of Finnish origin)				
Nordic	1.70***	4.11	1.62***	3.96
Ex-USSR, Estonian	2.03***	12.61	2.75***	18.60
Ex-USSR, Russian	2.58***	21.30	2.42***	19.90
Ex-USSR, Finnish	1.46***	3.72	1.20*	1.90
Ex-USSR, other languages	3.21***	12.13	2.87***	11.47
Ex-Yugoslavia, Serbocroat	2.33***	8.11	4.13***	13.44
Ex-Yugoslavia, Albanian and other	3.07***	11.62	4.54***	15.42
Other European	1.90***	8.32	3.05***	14.65
Iraq, Arabic	3.94***	14.09	4.07***	13.68
Iraq, Kurdish and others	3.29***	14.08	3.45***	14.19
Iran, Farsi	5.26***	12.88	3.81***	10.62
Iran, Kurdish and others	4.08***	11.42	3.39***	10.09
China	1.15	1.41	1.24**	2.53
Thailand	3.16***	14.50	4.65***	20.03
Somalia	4.32***	17.35	3.60***	14.91
All other groups	4.36***	29.82	3.92***	28.19
Control for month of immigration	YES		YES	
Control for region of residence	YES		YES	
N	24,358		22,297	

*Source: Finnish register data; * p < 0.10; ** p < 0.05; *** p < 0.01*

of poverty outcomes. In addition, having a parent who migrated before is actually negatively associated with housing overcrowding upon settlement, although the magnitude of the association is small. Earlier cohorts of immigrant children had clearly more favourable poverty outcomes, but slightly less favourable outcomes in terms of housing overcrowding.

A child's origin is an important predictor of the patterns of well-being in the first years of settlement. Foreign-born children of Finnish background (also the reference group in this analysis) and Chinese-born children are two groups that are the least likely to experience negative outcomes in terms of both poverty and overcrowding. With a notable exception of immigrant children from China, immigrant children born in Europe have, all else equal, better outcomes than children born outside the continent. Among European-born children, the disadvantage relative to the reference group is the least pronounced among Finnish-speaking children from the former USSR (almost all of them from Russia) and among children born in other Nordic countries. The least favourable poverty outcomes among European groups are among children who were born in the former USSR with a native language other than Russian, Estonian and Finnish. The odds for experiencing unfavourable poverty outcomes were three times higher among these children compared to foreign-born children of Finnish background. The most vulnerable European group in terms of housing overcrowding are the children born in former Yugoslavia, who, depending on native language, have four and a half to five times higher odds of experiencing unfavourable housing outcomes in comparison to the reference group. Non-Chinese immigrant children born outside Europe have between three and over five times higher odds of experiencing unfavourable poverty and overcrowding outcomes, as compared to the reference group. Iranian-born children with Farsi as their native language are the single most vulnerable group in terms of exposure to poverty, whereas Thai-born children experience the most negative outcomes in terms of housing overcrowding. It should also be noted that, whereas the distinction by native language is important among children originating from the former USSR, the difference by native language is modest among children born in former Yugoslavia, Iran and Iraq.

6. The levels of deprivation by family characteristics

The previous results of this study clearly show that family and contextual characteristics can be a significant source of disadvantage for immigrant children in Finland. In this section, we conduct additional analyses to explore how the actual frequency of four outcomes after arrival varies by some socio-demographic characteristics and the timing of arrival. For the sake of clarity, we use less sophisticated classifications for some variables. With respect to family characteristics, we aggregate all the groups into two groups: children living in a single parent household and children living with a couple. When looking at geographical origin of the family, we group immigrant children into only three groups: foreign-born with Finnish background, European, and non-European. When it comes to employment, we distinguish between families with at least one employed adult and those with no employed adults. The period of arrival corresponds to the classification used in the multivariate analysis.

These additional analyses for income poverty can be found in Table A1 in the Appendix. In line with the results of our ordered logistic regression, the analysis shows that immigrant children arriving with a single parent (most commonly with a single mother) are more exposed to income poverty, and that later cohorts of children have less favourable outcomes. Differences across immigrant groups are sizeable, with foreign-born children of Finnish background being the most privileged group, followed by children of other European immigrants. However, employment seems to matter more than any other characteristic and can more than offset disadvantages associated with geographical origin or family type. To illustrate, children of non-European origin who arrive with a single parent who enters the labour market upon arrival have somewhat better poverty outcomes than children of Finnish origin who arrive with two non-employed parents. The cumulative impact of family characteristics on

poverty trajectories can lead to enormous differences between immigrant children of with advantaged backgrounds and those with disadvantaged backgrounds. When looking at children with Finnish origins who live with both parents (or in stepfamilies), at least one of whom is employed, Table A1 shows that more than four fifths of them do not experience poverty in the first five years in Finland. On the other side of the spectrum are the non-European children who arrive with a single, non-employed parent. Within this group, the share of those who do not experience poverty is less than ten percent in the earliest arrival cohort, and less than five percent in more recent cohorts.

Table A2 in the Appendix shows corresponding results for overcrowding. The most pronounced difference relative to poverty trends in Table A1 is that overcrowding is somewhat more common among children who arrive with two parents. Geographical origin and employment also matter, but it should be noted that the positive impact of parental employment on housing conditions is less significant than it is for poverty, especially among children with Finnish and other European backgrounds. Recent cohorts of immigrant children of Finnish background have more favourable housing trajectories, whereas no clear trends are found in the other two groups. Similar to what we find for poverty, the cumulative impact of disadvantaged family backgrounds can be very large. The most privileged group in terms of housing conditions are immigrant children of Finnish background who arrive with an employed single parent. Three out of four children from this group do not experience overcrowding in any of the first five years in Finland, whereas only around 4 percent of these children spend all of the first five years in overcrowded conditions. The most disadvantaged group are non-European children arriving with two parents, neither of which is employed in the year of arrival. More than four out of five of children in this group lived in overcrowded conditions for at least a year during the first five years in Finland, and between 35 and 41 percent of children from this group lived in overcrowded housing in each of the first five years after arrival.

7. Conclusion

The goal of this study was to analyse the well-being of child migrants in Finland in the first years of settlement in Finland from a multi-dimensional perspective. Rather than recommend specific policies, our aim was to identify the most vulnerable groups of foreign-born children towards whom policies should be directed. We focused on two important measures of living conditions: income poverty and overcrowding. Similar to the patterns found in other Nordic countries (Galloway et al., 2015), the analysis clearly shows that foreign-born children have a higher frequency of poverty experiences than native children. In addition, the results of this study highlight that for many migrant children, the experiences of poverty and overcrowding are typical after arrival in Finland. There is no clear trend in the poverty gap between 1995 and 2014, yet its magnitude is considerable. After controlling for observables, the odds of living in a poor family were between three and more three and a half times higher for immigrant children. The lack of a clear trend of immigrant children's disadvantage is likely due to poverty being the result of multiple determinants being at play simultaneously, and these determinants themselves varied substantially over the observed period. In particular, Finland experienced a period of economic growth after the economic crisis of early 1990s until the Great Recession. The period of economic growth was, however, also characterized by increased income inequality, another important determinant of relative poverty. There are good reasons to believe that the migration dynamics themselves shaped our results. As Finland had a small foreign-born population at the beginning of the observation period, subsequent flows of newly arrived (and often economically vulnerable) immigrants had a considerable negative impact on poverty rates of the total population of foreign-born adults and children. The relative disadvantage of immigrant children with respect to overcrowding is smaller in magnitude, but the results we obtain suggest a negative trend. The odds of living in overcrowded housing are around 30 percent higher at the start and more than 80 percent higher at the end of the observation period.

Although the prevalence of and trends in income poverty and overcrowding among immigrant children clearly differ, the trajectories in terms of these two measures of well-being are fairly similar in the first years of settlement. In terms of poverty, the single most common outcome is its absence in each of the first five years. However, the second most common outcome is being poor in all five years. In addition, most immigrant children do experience poverty at some point after arrival and a non-negligible share of them experience two or more poverty transitions. Exactly the same patterns emerge when looking at overcrowding. This similarity may appear surprising since, in theory, housing trajectories may be expected to be more stable. A substantial change in the life of a family is a necessary condition for a transition from overcrowded to adequate housing, or vice versa. In particular, the family has to either move to another dwelling or experience a change in its composition in order to experience the transition. This is not the case with poverty transitions – under certain circumstances shaped by general economic trends and policies, a family can become poor or leave poverty even in the absence of intra-family changes.

Turning to multivariate results, a child's age is negatively associated with poverty, but positively associated with overcrowding. Children whose parents are 30 or younger at arrival have the least favourable outcomes with respect to both indicators of well-being. It comes as no surprise that we find that having highly educated parents as well as parents who are attached to the labour market in the year of arrival protects children from negative outcomes after arrival in Finland. Children arriving with a single parent have less favourable poverty trajectories as compared to children arriving with two parents. Although they constitute a small share of the population under the study, it is interesting to note that immigrant children who arrive with a single father are even more exposed to poverty than those who arrive with a single mother. A supplementary analysis we carried out (results not reported) suggests that this is not due to single mothers marrying more often than single fathers in the first years of settlement in Finland. Actually, those who arrived as single fathers are more likely than single mothers to be partnered in the sixth year (of the fifth full year) in Finland. However, single fathers partner with economically inactive women more often than single mothers partner with inactive men. At the same time, due to the nature of the two measures of well-being, children arriving with a single parent (especially with a single mother) generally have more favourable outcomes in terms of housing. Somewhat contrary to our expectations, having at least one parent who already lived in Finland at the time of migration does not imply more favourable outcomes. Differences among children from different immigrant groups are substantial. Along with the results on the disadvantage of immigrant children relative to native children, this unfortunately suggests that ethnic stratification may be an important part of social inequalities in Finland in the decades to come. Foreign-born children of Finnish background have the most favourable outcomes in terms of both indicators. In general, children of European origin have better outcomes than children born outside Europe. However, there is also substantial heterogeneity within these two groups, just as there are some exceptions to this pattern. The results also show that there is a moderate, yet non-negligible within-group heterogeneity in terms of poverty and overcrowding. Although children born in Iran and Iraq are heavily disadvantaged relative to some other groups, Kurdish-speaking children from Iraq and Iran have somewhat better outcomes, as compared to the majority-group children from each country. Future integration efforts should thus consider multiple dimensions of social affiliation. Furthermore, our results, and especially those concerning relatively favourable outcomes of Chinese-born children, suggest that the socio-economic characteristics of the country of origin are not perfect predictors of the social integration and well-being of immigrants in general, and of immigrant children in particular. Some immigrant groups in Finland may not differ much from non-migrants at origin with respect to their observed and unobserved characteristics, but others may differ substantially. The selection processes of migration into the countries of origin should thus be taken into account when designing future policies that promote equality of opportunity.

As with the multivariate analysis, the closing analysis of the actual levels of poverty and overcrowding shows that a difference in only one characteristic can lead to considerable differences

in the trajectories of well-being after arrival. In addition, this analysis also shows, possibly in a more intuitive manner than the multivariate model, that living in families with several unfavourable characteristics can result in extremely unfavourable outcomes. Looking at non-European children who arrived between 2004 and 2009, two thirds of those living with two low-educated parents and three quarters of those living with a low-educated single parent were poor in at least three out of the first five years in Finland.

Acknowledgements

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Appendix

Table A1: Frequency of different poverty trajectories among immigrant children, by origin, family characteristics and timing of arrival

Group	Family type	Employment	Period of arrival	Never poor	Some poverty	Mostly poor	Poor all 5 years
Finn. backgr.	Couple	No	1994-1999	46.50	32.17	13.69	7.64
Finn. backgr.	Couple	No	2000-2004	34.31	31.75	18.25	25.69
Finn. backgr.	Couple	No	2005-2009	38.53	30.00	19.41	12.06
Finn. backgr.	Couple	Yes	1994-1999	86.19	9.91	3.01	0.89
Finn. backgr.	Couple	Yes	2000-2004	84.17	10.32	4.88	0.63
Finn. backgr.	Couple	Yes	2005-2009	82.73	10.83	4.62	1.82
Finn. backgr.	Single parent	No	1994-1999	37.50	33.82	19.36	9.31
Finn. backgr.	Single parent	No	2000-2004	29.12	22.35	28.53	20.00
Finn. backgr.	Single parent	No	2005-2009	22.62	23.21	27.68	26.49
Finn. backgr.	Single parent	Yes	1994-1999	65.78	24.60	5.35	4.28
Finn. backgr.	Single parent	Yes	2000-2004	70.91	20.00	5.82	3.27
Finn. backgr.	Single parent	Yes	2005-2009	69.63	18.71	8.90	2.76
European	Couple	No	1994-1999	23.67	41.50	26.65	8.19
European	Couple	No	2000-2004	13.44	34.14	33.85	18.57
European	Couple	No	2005-2009	9.45	30.46	32.23	27.86
European	Couple	Yes	1994-1999	65.63	20.98	9.09	4.30
European	Couple	Yes	2000-2004	59.48	23.65	11.73	5.15
European	Couple	Yes	2005-2009	56.22	23.60	14.29	5.89
European	Single parent	No	1994-1999	18.20	35.66	34.41	11.72
European	Single parent	No	2000-2004	8.55	29.74	40.15	21.56
European	Single parent	No	2005-2009	11.23	25.61	32.63	30.53
European	Single parent	Yes	1994-1999	60.00	24.62	12.31	3.08
European	Single parent	Yes	2000-2004	55.56	26.19	15.08	3.17
European	Single parent	Yes	2005-2009	44.94	28.74	20.85	5.47
Non-European	Couple	No	1994-1999	11.80	39.35	37.04	11.80
Non-European	Couple	No	2000-2004	4.27	16.39	46.27	33.08
Non-European	Couple	No	2005-2009	2.57	12.73	41.09	43.60
Non-European	Couple	Yes	1994-1999	53.66	20.91	16.38	9.06
Non-European	Couple	Yes	2000-2004	63.75	13.26	14.72	8.27
Non-European	Couple	Yes	2005-2009	56.13	18.12	16.44	9.30
Non-European	Single parent	No	1994-1999	8.84	32.04	41.44	17.68
Non-European	Single parent	No	2000-2004	4.28	18.04	44.95	32.72
Non-European	Single parent	No	2005-2009	2.96	17.36	46.94	32.74
Non-European	Single parent	Yes	1994-1999	46.88	28.13	21.88	3.13
Non-European	Single parent	Yes	2000-2004	60.44	16.48	13.19	9.89
Non-European	Single parent	Yes	2005-2009	43.56	20.79	24.75	10.89

Source: Finnish register data, own calculations

Table A2: Frequency of different housing trajectories among immigrant children, by origin, family characteristics and timing of arrival

Group	Family type	Employment	Period of arrival	Adequate 5 years	Mostly adequate	Mostly overcr.	Overcr. 5 years
Finn. backgr.	Couple	No	1994-1999	47.77	24.52	13.06	14.65
Finn. backgr.	Couple	No	2000-2004	59.12	16.42	12.41	12.04
Finn. backgr.	Couple	No	2005-2009	69.41	14.41	3.53	12.65
Finn. backgr.	Couple	Yes	1994-1999	69.82	15.26	7.02	7.91
Finn. backgr.	Couple	Yes	2000-2004	74.55	12.34	7.60	5.51
Finn. backgr.	Couple	Yes	2005-2009	75.31	12.09	5.02	7.58
Finn. backgr.	Single parent	No	1994-1999	68.87	17.89	10.54	2.70
Finn. backgr.	Single parent	No	2000-2004	67.35	19.41	7.94	5.29
Finn. backgr.	Single parent	No	2005-2009	72.92	17.56	7.44	2.08
Finn. backgr.	Single parent	Yes	1994-1999	69.52	20.86	5.35	4.28
Finn. backgr.	Single parent	Yes	2000-2004	77.09	13.09	5.82	4.00
Finn. backgr.	Single parent	Yes	2005-2009	77.30	12.27	7.06	3.37
European	Couple	No	1994-1999	34.90	30.27	18.91	15.93
European	Couple	No	2000-2004	32.50	29.88	19.73	17.89
European	Couple	No	2005-2009	43.09	26.45	18.18	12.28
European	Couple	Yes	1994-1999	53.75	20.08	12.19	13.99
European	Couple	Yes	2000-2004	50.10	22.61	15.44	11.86
European	Couple	Yes	2005-2009	40.89	23.06	16.92	19.13
European	Single parent	No	1994-1999	52.87	28.93	11.47	6.73
European	Single parent	No	2000-2004	57.25	27.88	5.95	8.92
European	Single parent	No	2005-2009	51.58	22.46	13.33	12.63
European	Single parent	Yes	1994-1999	47.69	36.92	9.23	6.15
European	Single parent	Yes	2000-2004	57.14	20.63	17.46	4.76
European	Single parent	Yes	2005-2009	53.64	21.86	15.99	8.50
Non-European	Couple	No	1994-1999	11.32	20.06	27.93	40.69
Non-European	Couple	No	2000-2004	15.55	24.47	24.62	35.37
Non-European	Couple	No	2005-2009	14.78	19.53	25.26	40.44
Non-European	Couple	Yes	1994-1999	41.11	21.60	21.25	16.03
Non-European	Couple	Yes	2000-2004	51.09	18.49	14.72	15.69
Non-European	Couple	Yes	2005-2009	41.22	24.54	13.95	20.29
Non-European	Single parent	No	1994-1999	19.34	21.55	22.65	36.46
Non-European	Single parent	No	2000-2004	28.13	33.03	21.10	17.74
Non-European	Single parent	No	2005-2009	32.15	25.44	25.05	17.36
Non-European	Single parent	Yes	1994-1999	59.38	15.63	15.63	9.38
Non-European	Single parent	Yes	2000-2004	69.23	13.19	7.69	9.89
Non-European	Single parent	Yes	2005-2009	56.44	23.76	14.85	4.95

Source: Finnish register data, own calculations