sciendo

Special Issue Article • DOI: 10.2478/njmr-2019-0020 NJMR • 9(2) • 2019 • 179-200

NORDIC JOURNAL OF MIGRATION RESEARCH

REFUGEE YOUTH WHO ARRIVED IN SWEDEN AS UNACCOMPANIED MINORS AND SEPARATED CHILDREN: *Education and Labour Market Well-being*

Aycan Çelikaksoy*, Eskil Wadensjö**
Swedish Institute for Social Research (SOFI), Stockholm University, Stockholm, Sweden
* E-mail: aycan.celikaksoy@sofi.su.se
**E-mail: eskil.wadensjo@sofi.su.se

Received 17 May 2018; Accepted 17 April 2019

Abstract

In recent years, Sweden has been one of the largest receiving countries of unaccompanied minors, compared to other EU member states. Recent studies have increasingly stressed the strength, resilience and agency of unaccompanied minors, despite the traumatic experiences and challenges they face. In this article, we study unaccompanied minors in the Swedish education system and the labour market using register-based data covering the period 2003–2014. We compare this group with accompanied minors and persons of the same age born in Sweden to investigate the mechanisms that facilitate and/or hinder their labour market well-being. We find that unaccompanied minors have problems in completing secondary school but do well in the labour market with regard to finding employment. Our results draw attention to the multifaceted processes that facilitate and/or hinder their labour market well-being.

Keywords

Unaccompanied minors • Separated children • Refugee youth • Labour market • Sweden

Introduction

Unaccompanied minors (UMs) are defined as children of age <18 years who are outside their country of origin and have come to Sweden unaccompanied by a parent or other legal guardian. This type of migratory flow has been increasing around the world, and the migrants are identified as the most fragile type. Over the years, Sweden has been one of the largest receiving countries of UMs, compared to other EU member states. This population is considered 'vulnerable' due to the migrants' young age during the process of flight from their country of origin, combined with the fact that they are unaccompanied by their parents

or legal guardians (Derluyn & Vervliet 2012). These children face heightened vulnerability due to exploitation and violation of their rights by virtue of their age and status (Convention on the Rights of the Child 2016). The global movement of unaccompanied and separated children presents challenges for children's rights and well-being. Thus, research on UMs has often focussed on the vulnerabilities of this group, especially with regard to mental health (e.g. Derluyn, Broekaert & Schuyten 2008). However, recent studies have increasingly stressed the strength, resilience and agency of UMs, despite their traumatic experiences and challenges (e.g. Luster *et al.* 2010). The majority of studies in this line of research focus on these young people's situation and experiences during the different stages of migration, asylum, reception and introduction into the new destination country. There are only a few studies focussing on their situation in the labour market after they have received their permits to stay in the destination country. In this article, we investigate the well-being of UMs in terms of their success in the labour market.

The question of how well-being should be defined still remains largely unresolved, although there are common guidelines, such as the role of agency, purpose in life, ability to fulfil goals and self-acceptance used in most definitions (Dodge *et al.* 2012; Ryff 1989). Thus, the discourse on UMs in relation to vulnerability versus resilience and agency is directly linked to the well-being of this group. Some of the aspects identified by Ryff (1989) as the main constituents of well-being are autonomy, environmental mastery and realisation of potential, which boil down to people's ability to direct their work/life conditions by how they respond to challenges. UMs are a group facing several challenges before, during and after the migration process. Thus, their situation in the labour market is an indicator of, among other factors, how they respond to the manifold challenges in the destination country. From an immigration perspective, incorporation into the labour market can be seen as an indicator of well-being, since it leads to access to financial resources, possessions, networks, knowledge of how the society and the labour market function and, finally, language proficiency. Thus, employment status can be an indicator of well-being, both in the labour market and, more broadly, in society (de Vroome & Hooghe 2014). However, the dynamic nature of well-being, as discussed by Dodge *et al.* (2012), requires analyses of not only the employment status but also the types of jobs over the lifetime. Young workers, such as migrants and women, are particularly affected by precarious work although, to our knowledge, no studies on UMs have utilised large datasets for investigating this type of employment. In this article, we define labour market well-being by two measures, namely, labour market status and type of job.

We investigate labour market well-being in two stages, i.e. in terms of employment status and types of jobs. Insecure/precarious jobs lower the predictability of living conditions and prevent upward mobility and continued career paths. Thus, we investigate the risk of UMs being in a precarious job by utilising a comprehensive dataset that includes the whole population of interest over a period of 12 years. We do this by comparing UMs with accompanied minors (AMs), who also have arrived as minors from the same countries of origin but with their parents. UMs could exhibit vulnerabilities due to not only their unique migration experience but also their status in the destination country, where they lack a familial system. However, on the other hand, they could be possessing extra strengths and

abilities, since this is a group of young people who have managed to complete a very difficult migration process on their own. In addition, since this group is defined and recognised as one in need of special protection, the care and reception practices for this group differ from those for AMs. These differences are related to the legal and practical procedures that are reflected mainly in the networks, asylum procedures and living conditions intended to provide extra support for UMs (see Çelikaksoy & Wadensjö 2017a). Thus, a comparison of refugee youth who arrived alone versus those who arrived with their families will reveal whether or not their unique circumstances lead to different outcomes and in which direction. In this article, we define agency as the relations between young adults and the structures and conditions that continue to be catalysts taking part in shaping and reshaping their lives in a process of interplay (Coffey & Farrugia 2013).

In this article, we first give an overview of this type of migratory flow into Sweden and discuss the situation of UMs in terms of educational attainment and position in the labour market by descriptive analyses and a discussion of the literature. While doing this, we also compare UMs with both AMs and native youth (NY). Our empirical analysis deals with three main questions. What are the factors that influence the likelihood of being in precarious employment? Is there a difference between UMs and AMs? Finally, do the results vary by gender and, if so, why?

In synthesis, the results indicate that UMs finish their studies at later ages, as well as using alternative educational paths such as adult education, compared with the native population. This reflects how their unique situation and previous experiences, compared with the NY, combined with the Swedish educational system, unfolds as their unique outcomes. They are more likely to be in employment once the controls are added, thus implying their willingness and ability in terms of finding jobs, which, in some cases, leads to them combining employment and studies. We also discuss how their high employment rates is a reflection of their unique situation compared with the other groups and what this means in terms of agency.

Previous research has clearly shown that labour market well-being is strongly related to overall happiness (Gerdtham & Johannesson 2001). Thus, the types of jobs that UMs work in is very important. As a result, we investigate labour market well-being in two stages, namely, employment status and type of job. We do this by analysing the risk of being in precarious work. We define precarious work as being part of the insecure workforce, which is discussed further in the empirical analyses section. Our results show that UMs are less likely to be in such employment compared with AMs. However, both groups of refugee youth are more likely to be in such employment compared with the NY population.

Background and literature review

Unaccompanied refugee minors in Sweden

The number of UMs seeking asylum in Sweden has increased each year between 2005 and 2015 (Table 1). The highest increases were in 2014 and 2015, with almost a doubling in 2014

Table 1. The number of unaccompanied minors who applied for asylum in Sweden: total and from the six main countries according to citizenship, 2000–2017

Year	Afghanistan	Eritrea	Ethiopia	Iraq	Somalia	Syria	Total
2000	20	9	3	126	40	3	350
2001	34	6	7	187	48	4	461
2002	34	17	7	144	87	4	550
2003	64	14	7	67	107	4	561
2004	35	8	4	36	62	2	388
2005	27	15	4	69	33	1	398
2006	98	22	7	337	101	4	820
2007	160	38	6	621	189	5	1264
2008	347	32	8	464	345	15	1,510
2009	780	49	13	110	913	18	2,250
2010	1,153	78	11	93	533	11	2,393
2011	1,693	64	31	64	251	18	2,657
2012	1,940	105	37	50	452	120	3,578
2013	1,247	345	48	48	576	364	3,852
2014	1,547	1,456	114	84	1,118	1,233	7,049
2015	23,480	1,939	891	1,097	2,058	3,777	35,369
2016	665	74	133	93	421	180	2,199
2017	222	52	53	52	159	159	1,336

Note: Quota refugees are not included.
Source: Swedish Migration Agency.

compared with 2013, while the number was five times higher in 2015 than in 2014. In 2016, the number of asylum-seeking UMs was down at about the same level as in 2009. This decline continued in 2017. This is primarily a result of the introduction of various restrictions at the borders to and within Europe, including at Sweden's borders. There is a decline in 2016 and 2017 for all separately reported citizenship countries.

The table shows, among other things, the rapidly increasing number of asylum seekers from Syria from 2012 onwards and the large variations in the number of applicants from Iraq – changes that reflect political events in these two countries. Many UMs have stayed a shorter or longer period in another country before the flight to Sweden; for instance, many Afghan children have been living in Iran. Most UMs arrive as teenagers and most of the UMs are boys.

The asylum phase is a time of uncertainty, with a lot of stress for the minors, as they do not know what the outcome of their asylum application will be. It is a time of great mental

strain (Ramel *et al*. 2015). The Migration Agency in Sweden has not been able to respond appropriately to the increased numbers of UMs applying for asylum during 2015. Thus, many UMs have turned 18 while they were waiting for their answers, where the processing times were very long and they were no longer minors at the end of the asylum decision process. In addition, the political and public debates in Sweden regarding UMs have gone through several shifts during the period 2000–2018. The public debate during the period 2000–2012 is mainly characterised by increasing public awareness on the specific needs of this group as separated children. The policy response to these debates has been in the form of taking steps on focussing on the 'best interests of the child' and by dividing the control and regulative functions versus the care functions among the Migration Board, the National Board of Health and Welfare and the municipal social services (Stretmo & Melander 2013). The public debate during the period of 2012–2018 has mainly focussed on the increased numbers of this type of migratory flow from a problematising lens. The policy response to these debates has been in the form of sharp restrictions to the refugee flows into Sweden, including UMs, as well as restrictions on the right to permanent residence and family reunification. Age determination and deportation have been the main focuses of the recent public and political debates in Sweden on UMs, whereby the overall well-being of this group, especially in the long run, has been far from the discussions. This article deals with the labour market well-being of this group after they have received their residence permits in order to investigate their opportunities and life chances in the longer run.

Literature overview

Several studies on refugee children and UMs have dealt with the notion of resilience versus vulnerability (Derluyn, Broekaert & Schuyten 2008; Eide & Hjern 2013; Luster *et al*. 2010; Nardone & Correa-Velez 2015; Wallin & Ahlström 2005). It has been shown that the introductory stage, namely, how these children are received and how the asylum process takes place, has a very important impact on the well-being of these children (Çelikaksoy & Wadensjö 2017a; Söderqvist, Sjöblom & Bulow 2014; Wimelius, Joakim & Mehdi 2016). Some of the important influences identified in the Nordic countries are related to close contacts with persons from the society of the destination country and the time of waiting (Honkasalo 2017). It is found that these contacts are very important for the adjustment process of this group, whereby they learn how to navigate the new society (Iveroth 2015; Ombudsman for Children in Sweden 2016; Söderqvist, Sjöblom & Bulow 2014; Stretmo & Melander 2013).

The situation of youth in the labour market is thoroughly covered in a well-established literature for native-born individuals, while only a few studies focus on refugee youth with large-scale data that enable the decomposition of this group. It is shown for refugee youth that characteristics similar to those of other migrants – such as the level of education, time spent in the destination country, language proficiency, and so on – affect their outcome in the labour market, while simultaneously they also have unique challenges when compared with other migrant groups (Boyle, Smith & Guenther 2006; Çelikaksoy & Wadensjö 2017b;

Chiswick 1978; Portes & Rumbaut 2001; Wilkinson 2002). However, there is a lack of studies that focus on the labour market situation of refugee youth from the perspective of their well-being.

Youth, migrants and refugees are particularly affected by precarious work (Nolan 2009; Walther 2006). Underemployment, insecurity and exclusion are some of the consequences of this type of employment (Dahlstedt 2015). Thus, not only the employment status but also the type and prospects of employment of UMs are very important for their labour market well-being.

It is discussed in previous research that UMs have more access to networks with individuals from the destination country when compared with AMs, which is expected to facilitate their job-finding process (Çelikaksoy & Wadensjö 2017b; Iveroth 2015). On the other hand, they lack a familial system in the destination country and they have relatively more financial responsibility compared with AMs (Çelikaksoy & Wadensjö 2017b; Stretmo & Melander 2013). Previous research shows that these factors are positively associated with employment (Çelikaksoy & Wadensjö 2017b). However, we do not know how these factors influence the labour market well-being of this group, which is specifically measured by employment status and precarity. This article contributes to the literature by analysing the whole population of UMs over a period of 12 years with regard to their labour market well-being from the perspective of agency and resilience versus vulnerability. It adds to the previous literature by discussing how their unique situation and outcomes can reflect resilience and vulnerability simultaneously.

It is frequently argued, in the case of refugee youth and children, that schools play a crucial role in facilitating the adjustment and success of this group in the new society (Niemeyer 2015; Oppedal & Idsoe 2015; Taylor & Kaur Sidhu 2012; Wilkinson 2002). Thus, we begin our analyses by looking at the situation of UMs in the education system.

Theoretical overview

Traditionally, agency can refer to how one responds to challenging situations, revealing strength and ability (Ryff 1989). However, the dualistic approaches of vulnerability versus agency are criticised by Coffey & Farrugia (2013) opening the way to a more inclusive discussion of the real-life circumstances of different groups, where agency and vulnerability coexist. In other words, without the international and national political, social and economic conditions, UMs would not have existed as a group. Even though they are in a destination country, their state and actions reflect the whole of their past and present, shaped and reshaped by both themselves and their conditions simultaneously as one. The disruptions that they have experienced with regard to schooling are, to some extent, similar to those of other refugee youth but different from those of NY. They are exposed to the same educational system and the labour market, although, clearly, these systems cannot be experienced in the same manner by the different groups. Thus, their identities continue to be shaped within the destination country by these systems as well as in relation to their

networks in the countries of origin and destination. One of the main differences between UMs and AMs is the lack of a familial system for UMs at a crucial stage in their lives. Thus, this intervention in their process of evolving in the destination country can manifest in different forms in their lives.

As discussed earlier from an immigration perspective, incorporation into the labour market is seen as a key indicator of both adjustment to the destination country and well-being, since it leads to access to financial resources, possessions, networks and knowledge about how the society and the labour market work. Although participation in employment is important for youth to become established in the labour market and achieve self-sufficiency, the fact whether UMs work or not and their working conditions are simultaneously determined by the choices, opportunities and specific conditions that this group has. Thus, we discuss our results from different perspectives.

Data

The data used in the analysis stems from register-based information at Statistics Sweden (Statistiska centralbyrån or SCB). On receiving a permit to stay, every person is registered in Sweden and receives a personal identification number. This high-quality register-based data, where every person has a record, is the by-product of registers held for administrative purposes. The Population Registry, which includes detailed demographic, educational and labour market information, is administered by the Swedish Tax Agency. The personal identification numbers are anonymised for ethical reasons when used for research purposes. For our purposes, we use data on the entire population of UMs for the period 2003–2014. Since this is a register-based dataset, there are no subjective questions; thus, we are not able to analyse individuals' personal experiences and subjective interpretations of their well-being.

We cannot report separately for all countries that UMs have come from for ethical reasons set by Statistics Sweden; so, for some countries, we only have information for groups of countries. For UMs who come from Asia, we can do the following breakdown: Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Other Middle East and Other Asia. For children who come from Africa, we can do the following breakdown: Somalia, Eritrea, Morocco, Algeria, Ethiopia, Gambia, Uganda, Other North Africa and Other Africa. We have two comparison groups: 1) children and adolescents from the same countries who came with parents or other legal guardians: AMs; and 2) children and adolescents of the same age who have Swedish backgrounds (born in Sweden and with parents born in Sweden): NY. The data in the following section includes 22,803 observations for UMs, 63,240 for AMs and 2,124,856 for NY who are aged 19–27 years, which are 10% and 1% random samples from the AM and NY populations. In the case of both UMs and AMs, we refer to them as such since it is easier to read and takes up less space even though they are no longer minors during the observation period.

In the following two sections, we discuss the educational attainment and labour market situation of UMs by providing descriptive analyses and a discussion of the previous literature.

In the third section, we further restrict the dataset. We have limited the empirical section of our study to mainly include the youth of 22–29 years of age since, after the age of 21 years, the majority of the male UMs are in employment, and being in precarious employment is a meaningful outcome variable for this age group. The majority of male UMs of age <21 years are still undergoing education, as are the female UMs. We do not have UMs who are older than 29 years in our dataset; thus, we use the same age group for all groups of youth. We have 7,077 observations for UMs within this age group. We have 3,672 observations for UMs who are employed and within this age range and 27,504 and 1,231,339 observations for AMs and the NY, respectively.

Education

A person's education strongly influences his or her opportunities in the labour market. The education offered to UMs in Sweden depends, among other things, on the education they have on arrival. Unfortunately, there are no records of children's education prior to arrival in Sweden.

Most UMs are teenagers; many are 16 or 17 years old when they arrive in Sweden. It takes time for them to learn Swedish. The first part of the teaching in Swedish is language introduction ('*språkintroduktion*'), which is a form of education open to young people who have come to Sweden for up to 4 years after getting a residence permit.

The general literature on youth mobility acknowledges the mobile nature of youth in terms of different dimensions such as geographic mobility and school-to-work transitions, as well as from youth to adulthood, where there is a dynamic relationship across each dimension (King *et al*. 2016). In the case of UMs, their unique geographic mobility means that their school-to-work transitions do not follow the general norm in terms of timing and different paths. Thus, their labour market well-being depends more on their opportunities for combining work and studies in a more flexible and goal-oriented manner when compared with other groups, since they are still not ready in terms of their studies at an age where they also have a need to work. Their situation in terms of education and work in the destination country is a very good example of the interplay of their changing circumstances and their unique experiences, past and present. Although this type of data does not allow us to observe their subjective evaluations of their schooling experiences, we observe global trends for this group. Our descriptive results show that they study until later ages and they combine studies and employment to a larger extent when compared with the other groups.

Table 2 shows the percentages of young people taking part in education, measured as participation in education during the autumn of each year. Most of the UMs aged 19–21 years are still undergoing education. For those UMs aged 19–20 years, men are more often in education than are women. On the other hand, UM women are more often in

Table 2. Share (%) of those aged 19–27 years in education among UMs, AMs and those who are born in Sweden with parents born in Sweden

Age, years	Unaccompanied minors		Accompanied minors		Born in Sweden	
	Female, %	Male, %	Female, %	Male, %	Female, %	Male, %
19	83.0	91.0	68.0	69.0	36.0	34.0
20	75.0	79.0	63.0	59.0	38.0	31.0
21	63.0	60.0	58.0	49.0	44.0	33.0
22	49.0	39.0	54.0	42.0	46.0	33.0
23	48.0	31.0	49.0	37.0	44.0	32.0
24	41.0	27.0	42.0	33.0	40.0	30.0
25	38.0	26.0	36.0	28.0	34.0	25.0
26	29.0	26.0	31.0	23.0	27.0	20.0
27	23.0	19.0	26.0	19.0	22.0	17.0

Source: Calculations on our database; observations in 2003–2014.

education than UM men when they are 21 years of age or older. This finding complies with the general pattern in Sweden: women are more often in education than men in the years after secondary school age.

The age distribution within the age range of our descriptive analyses and the education already achieved are very different for the three groups, namely, UMs, other refugee children (AMs) and the Swedish comparison group (NY). Previous studies have found that UMs are much more often in education when compared with both the native-born population and the AMs once age, level of education and other characteristics are controlled for (Çelikaksoy & Wadensjö 2015a). Part of the explanation is that many UMs arrive when they are 16 and 17 years old and, therefore, undergo different forms of education at a later age than those born in Sweden or AMs.

Among those who are 22 years of age or older, most have secondary school as their highest school level. It is, therefore, of special interest to see how they have completed their high school studies. Previous analyses show that, among those with secondary education as their highest level, only a few have completed a 3-year secondary education. This reveals that there is a huge need for different types of supplementary education for UMs (Çelikaksoy & Wadensjö 2015a, 2015b).

Some of the UMs both study and work during the same year and thus get their first work experience. This can be a way of early entry into the labour market: see Table 3 for information for those who are 19–27 years old. It is between 10% and 20% in the different year classes. The differences between the three groups (UMs, AMs and NY) are small. However, we can see that, for men, a slightly higher proportion of UMs are combining studies and work compared to men in other groups. Previous studies show that male UMs' employment

Table 3. Share (%) of those aged 19–27 years among UMs, AMs and those who are born in Sweden with parents born in Sweden who both work and study

Age, years	Unaccompanied minors		Accompanied minors		Born in Sweden	
	Female, %	Male, %	Female, %	Male, %	Female, %	Male, %
19	8	11	13	11	13	9
20	8	11	12	10	15	8
21	15	16	14	11	18	10
22	15	15	16	13	19	11
23	16	14	17	13	19	12
24	15	13	16	14	19	13
25	13	12	12	10	14	10
26	10	14	12	10	13	9
27	10	12	11	9	12	8

Source: Calculations on our database; observations in 2003–2014.

rate increases drastically from the age of 21 years (Çelikaksoy & Wadensjö 2015a). However, the proportion of females in each group who combine work and studies is higher than that of men in each group, especially after the age of 21 years, mainly due to the fact that females stay in education longer than males.

Furthermore, it is shown that UMs, compared with both AMs and NY, more often combine work and study in the case of men but not in the case of women. UMs are also found to more often combine work and studies than those with a native background when age, gender, civil status, education and some other variables are controlled for (Çelikaksoy & Wadensjö 2015a). These results draw our attention to their ability to mobilise their situation, since studying and working at the same time is clearly a way in which to respond to one's current situation while, at the same time, investing in the future. These results also draw attention to the fact that UMs complete their studies at later ages and, at the same time, they need financial resources. Thus, it is important that they are supported during this stage, which is a potentially demanding stage with dual responsibilities.

Labour market participation

We have studied the percentage of UMs working at different ages and their income from work separately for girls and for boys.

We start by looking at the percentage who work from the age of 19 years (Table 4). We should remember that those of a given age may have been in Sweden for a different number of years. Few UMs work when they are 19 or 20 years old. Then, the percentage who

Table 4. Share (%) of those aged 19–27 years who work among UMs, AMs and those born in Sweden of parents born in Sweden

Age, years	Unaccompanied minors		Accompanied minors		Born in Sweden	
	Female, %	Male, %	Female, %	Male, %	Female, %	Male, %
19	10	14	24	22	56	50
20	11	18	25	27	58	55
21	24	35	32	37	59	62
22	34	50	38	45	60	65
23	40	59	44	51	63	68
24	43	64	49	57	67	72
25	43	62	51	57	68	73
26	51	65	56	61	73	77
27	56	66	60	64	77	81

Source: Calculations on our database; observations from 2003–2014.

works gradually increases to about two-thirds for men when they are >25 years old, but the percentage is lower for women of the same age. We should remember that some of those who do not work are studying. Moreover, the demographic characteristics, such as time spent in Sweden, level of education, and so on, across these groups are quite different; thus, they should be controlled for.

Previous studies have found that females who came as UMs are less likely to be employed than males after controlling for age, civil status, education, time in Sweden, county of residence and country of origin, which are found to be important factors influencing their labour market situation (Çelikaksoy & Wadensjö 2015a). It is also shown that UMs are more likely to be employed compared with AMs once the same set of variables has been taken into account. The effect is true for both men and women but is slightly greater for men than for women. Furthermore, it is also shown that male UMs work more often than those with a native background. For women, on the other hand, those who arrived as UMs work less often than the native-born ones. These results point to the autonomy and resilience of UMs, especially in the case of males, in terms of their willingness and ability to get jobs. However, the results also reflect their unique situation and circumstances, where they lack a familial system and are potentially under more pressure to support themselves.

Unfortunately, there is no information on occupation for all employees and self-employed persons in Sweden. For employees, information on occupation is only collected by Statistics Sweden from a selection of private employers, except for the largest companies, all of which are included in Statistics Sweden's selection. For public employees, it is a total survey. Previous studies show that female UMs predominantly work in service, care and sales. A closer division shows that the majority of them work as health and care personnel.

Table 5. Average annual wage income (thousand SEK) for UMs in 2014 according to age

Age, years	Male, thousand SEK			Female, thousand SEK		
	All	Combine work and studies	Do not combine work and studies	All	Combine work and studies	Do not combine work and studies
19	82.4	75.6	134.9	64.9	63.2	*
20	122.7	112.6	151.4	137.8	142.8	*
21	143.9	124.3	164.7	122.7	115.0	137.9
22	192.9	178.1	200.6	155.9	143.4	165.8
23	198.1	162.8	212.8	175.9	133.1	218.8
24	227.1	183.2	236.7	155.5	*	170.3
25	227.2	*	233.7	187.5	*	182.1
26	286.5	*	305.8	184.2	*	186.7
27	255.8	*	264.1	226.7	*	212.1

*Note: *Too few observations.*
Source: Calculations on our database.

Male UMs are mainly concentrated in four occupational fields: 1) service, care and sales, 2) construction and manufacturing, 3) manufacturing and transport and 4) other occupations requiring short training or introduction. A closer occupational division shows that many of them work as kitchen and restaurant assistants, as retailers and in healthcare (Çelikaksoy & Wadensjö 2015b).

Table 5 shows the annual wage income for UMs in 2014 by age, gender and whether or not those who work also study in the same year. The results are as we expect with regard to the general situation of the Swedish labour market. Wage income gradually increases with age and is higher for men than for women. It is also higher for those who do not combine work with studies during the year than for those who do. Combining work and studies seems to be a strategy, especially for UMs, as a resilient response to their unique situation. However, there is a clear income penalty for doing so, as can be seen in Table 5. It can be seen that those who combine work and studies have a lower average annual wage income compared with those who only work, since they probably work less hours. However, it could also be due to different types of jobs and hourly wages. We cannot distinguish these factors since we do not have information on hourly wages.

Precarious employment: analytic strategy

As discussed earlier in our article, we investigate how the interplay of the unique conditions of UMs and their unique characteristics shape their labour market well-being, as measured

by employment status and precarity. Thus, as a next step, we investigate the factors that influence the likelihood of being in precarious employment for refugee youth. We also compare UMs with AMs to see whether these two groups differ. The two groups are assumed to share the challenges related to structural constraints in the labour market, such as validation of their qualifications, transferability of their skills from country of origin, as well as discrimination by employers. However, they differ with regard to their migration experience, the legal and practical procedures that govern their arrival and adaption, and the challenges they face in the destination country due to the lack of a familial system at a critical developmental stage of their life. The issue of a familial system during the adaption stage in a new country has particularly important implications (Heino & Veistilä 2015). Thus, we investigate whether these two groups differ with regard to their prospects in the labour market. As we have discussed throughout the article, our second measure of labour market well-being is related to the types of job they have. Insecure work reduces the predictability of living conditions and blocks upward mobility in career paths. Thus, we use the likelihood of being in precarious jobs as a measure of labour market well-being and we test whether UMs are more likely to be in this group.

We define precarious employment as being part of the insecure workforce. This latter category is defined as those who are employed but earn less than 3.5 PBA (price base amounts – equivalent to 44,000 SEK in 2014) following previous studies on precarious employment (Bäckman & Nilsson 2016). In our analyses, we mainly utilise the factors that have been used to investigate the labour market outcomes of UMs and refugee youth (Çelikaksoy & Wadensjö 2017b). To begin with, a number of individual characteristics, such as gender, whether they are studying or not and the level of education, are controlled for. These are dichotomous variables that take the value one if the individual is female and zero otherwise. It is a common finding that females are more likely to be in this type of employment, but we do not know the situation in the case of refugee youth and especially UMs. We investigate the importance of education by taking account of whether or not the individual is studying during the observation year. It is expected that those who are combining work and studies would be more likely to be in these types of employment. Furthermore, how the level of education influences employment outcomes is also investigated, where the reference category is compulsory education. It is also important to investigate how length of stay in Sweden influences the likelihood of being in precarious employment, i.e. whether this type of employment is just a temporary option for refugee youth during their initial years and whether their experience in Sweden play a role in the case of this type of employment. Time in Sweden is measured by the number of days since registration in Sweden. The dichotomous variables 'single' and 'internal migration' measure 1) whether the individual is single versus married and 2) whether the individual has moved to another county after her/his initial municipality of placement, respectively. Other variables included in the analysis are county of residence and country of origin. In addition, age is divided into three categorical variables, where the youngest age group (22–23 years) is the reference group. The probability of working in a precarious job is estimated via probit models, and the marginal effects are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Estimation of the probability of being in precarious employment in the context of youth who arrived as UMs and AMs from the same countries

Variables	All (1)	All (2)	All (3)	Male	Female
Accompanied minors	Reference group				
Unaccompanied minors	−0.004	−0.036	−0.081	−0.074	−0.072
	(0.008)	(0.008)**	(0.009)**	(0.010)**	(0.020)**
Female		0.142	0.139		
		(0.005)**	(0.006)**		
Age 22–23 years	Reference group				
Age 24–26 years		−0.132	00.103	−0.105	−0.092
		(0.006)**	(0.007)**	(0.008)**	(0.011)**
Age 27–29 years		−0.219	−0.161	−0.168	−0.145
		(0.006)**	(0.007)**	(0.009)**	(0.012)**
Undergoing education			0.260	0.268	0.245
			(0.007)**	(0.010)**	(0.010)**
Compulsory education	Reference group				
High school			−0.090	−0.078	−0.122
			(0.008)**	(0.009)**	(0.014)**
Short tertiary education			0.029	0.053	−0.015
			(0.012)*	(0.016)**	(0.019)
Long tertiary education			−0.124	−0.068	−0.189
			(0.009)**	(0.011)**	(0.014)**
Missing education			−0.074	−0.099	0.016
			(0.021)**	(0.021)**	(0.048)
Days registered in Sweden/100			−0.001	−0.001	−0.001
			(0.000)**	(0.000)**	(0.000)**
Single			−0.036	0.014	−0.083
			(0.007)**	(0.009)	(0.010)**

Continued *Table 6. Estimation of the probability of being in precarious employment in the context of youth who arrived as UMs and AMs from the same countries*

Variables	All (1)	All (2)	All (3)	Male	Female
Moving across counties			0.012	0.030	−0.004
			(0.006)	(0.009)**	(0.010)
Stockholm County	Reference group				
Skåne			0.053	0.032	0.082
			(0.010)**	(0.013)*	(0.015)**
Västra Götaland			0.016	0.003	0.035
			(0.008)*	(0.010)	(0.012)**
Other counties			0.052	0.045	0.067
			(0.007)**	(0.008)**	(0.010)**
Afghanistan	Reference group				
Iraq			0.053	0.062	0.010
			(0.014)**	(0.016)**	(0.029)
Somalia			0.053	0.034	0.036
			(0.017)**	(0.019)	(0.032)
Other countries in the Middle East			0.063	0.074	0.011
			(0.015)**	(0.017)**	(0.028)
Other countries in Africa			0.033	0.055	-0.026
			(0.016)*	(0.019)**	(0.029)
Other countries in Asia			0.049	0.032	0.032
			(0.015)**	(0.017)	(0.029)
Number of observations	31,176	31,176	31,176	17,131	14,045

*Note: *indicates significance at the 5% level and ** at the 1% level.*
Standard errors are reported in parentheses.

Results

An important part of labour market well-being is related to progress and upward mobility. It is crucial to distinguish the working conditions and situations for the different groups. Thus, we investigate the likelihood of being in insecure work for refugee youth. We define the insecure workforce as those who are employed but earn less than 3.5 PBA, as noted above. The difficulty faced by refugees to establish themselves in the labour market has been documented in numerous studies (e.g. Ager & Strang 2008; Alden & Hammarstedt 2014). Table 6 presents the marginal effects from a probit model estimating the likelihood of being in precarious employment, where the first column presents a comparison of UMs with AMs without controls, the second column presents a model where only gender and age are introduced as controls and, finally, the last model includes all the variables mentioned in the previous section. We introduce the variables in a stepwise manner to see the influence of the different demographic factors in more detail. We can see that females are more likely to be in these types of job compared with men. This is a common finding in the literature for all migrant groups as well as natives. The likelihood of being employed in precarious jobs declines with age, as expected. Those UMs and AMs who belong to the oldest age group, which is 27–29 years, are 16.1 percentage points less likely to be in insecure jobs when compared with the youngest age group. This indicates that these types of jobs are likely to be temporary and there is upward mobility with increasing age. It can be seen that those who combine work and studies are more likely to be in such insecure jobs, which is also a common finding. Level of education is negatively associated with the likelihood of having a precarious job, as again expected. Those who have a university education are less likely to be in insecure jobs compared with those who have completed only compulsory education, by 12.4 percentage points. If time spent in Sweden leads to progress in labour market careers due to language proficiency, social networks and knowledge about the labour market, then we would expect this variable to be negatively associated with the outcome variable. Table 6 shows that this is the case; however, the size of the coefficient is quite small. We also find that civil status matters, where the results vary by gender. Single females are less likely to be in such jobs compared to married females, which indicates that household responsibilities increase the likelihood of young, employed refugee women being in precarious employment. This is not the case for men. While internal migration is positively associated with the likelihood of having precarious employment, those who live in Stockholm are less likely to have this type of employment compared to those living in other regions in Sweden. Those coming from Afghanistan less often belong to the insecure workforce.

In the previous sections, we have discussed the findings of prior studies where it is shown that UMs are more likely to be employed compared with AMs, once other factors influencing employment are controlled for. This reflects how the unique situation of UMs manifests in the labour market differently from that of AMs. The results mainly point to the willingness and ability of UMs to find employment as well as their unique circumstance of lacking a familial system, whereby they need to support themselves and potentially send remittances to their families. However, the important questions are whether employment of

Table 7. Estimation of the probability of being in precarious employment in the context of refugees and native youth

Variables	All (1)	All (2)	Male	Female
Native youth	Reference group			
Unaccompanied minors	0.059	0.011	0.025	−0.027
	(0.008)**	(0.007)	(0.007)**	(0.017)
Accompanied minors	0.063	0.046	0.077	0.006
	(0.003)**	(0.003)**	(0.004)**	(0.004)
Female		0.174		
		(0.001)**		
Age 22–23 years	Reference group			
Age 24–26 years		−0.066	−0.067	−0.054
		(0.001)**	(0.001)**	(0.002)**
Age 27–29 years		−0.119	−0.126	−0.096
		(0.001)**	(0.001)**	(0.002)**
Undergoing education		0.352	0.373	0.323
		(0.001)**	(0.002)**	(0.002)**
Compulsory education	Reference group			
High school		−0.103	−0.087	−0.124
		(0.002)**	(0.002)**	(0.003)**
Short tertiary education		0.034	0.060	−0.010
		(0.002)**	(0.003)**	(0.003)**
Long tertiary education		−0.083	−0.008	−0.168
		(0.001)**	(0.002)**	(0.003)**
Missing education		−0.043	−0.026	−0.062
		(0.008)**	(0.007)**	(0.016)**
Single		−0.070	0.017	−0.119
		(0.001)**	(0.002)**	(0.002)**
Moving across counties		0.018	0.036	−0.004
		(0.001)**	(0.001)**	(0.002)*
Stockholm County	Reference group			
Skåne		0.037	0.013	0.061
		(0.002)**	(0.002)**	(0.002)**
Västra Götaland		0.024	−0.001	0.053
		(0.001)**	(0.001)	(0.002)**
Other counties		0.042	0.008	0.082
		(0.001)**	(0.001)**	(0.002)**
Number of observations	1,262,515	1,262,515	658,448	604,067

*Note: *indicates significance at the 5% level and ** at the 1% level.*
Standard errors are reported in parentheses.

UMs is a path for simply being confined to precarious jobs and how they are doing in terms of type of employment compared with AMs. Thus, we investigate whether the likelihood of being in insecure work is significantly different for UMs compared with that for AMs. The first column in Table 6 shows that there is no significant difference between the two groups. However, once we control for age and gender, we can see that UMs are less likely to be in insecure jobs compared with AMs by 3.6 percentage points. This result implies that not only are they more able to find jobs but they are also less likely to be in the category of jobs defined as insecure and undesirable. Furthermore, we can see that UMs are less likely to be in this group by 8.1 percentage points, once we control for the aforementioned factors that influence labour market outcomes. However, we do not have data on hourly wages, so these results could be reflecting that they work either more hours, double shifts or in more than one job. This would not challenge the argument in relation to their resilience and how they respond to challenges, but it would challenge the argument on their labour market well-being. The issue of mobility and progress in the labour market, especially for the UM group, needs to be investigated further. This points to the important issue of whether the commonly used categories to measure precarious employment are suitable in the case of UMs. As a result, we must interpret our results carefully.

In the next step, we compare refugee youth with NY, decomposing refugee youth into two groups; Table 7 shows that the factors influencing labour market outcomes are in accordance with the previous results. We find that, overall, refugee youth are at higher risk of being in such jobs compared with the native population, but this result is mainly driven by male refugee youth. Thus, these results show that, although to different degrees, both groups of male refugee youth are in a disadvantageous position in the labour market. There might be several factors that lead to this result, such as language proficiency, network effects as well as discrimination, which we are not able to control for in our current study. However, by decomposing the refugee youth into different groups, rather than simply comparing foreign-born to native-born individuals, we have seen evidence of differences in patterns of labour market well-being as defined within our study.

Summary and conclusions

It is not easy for young people with a foreign background to settle in the regulated Swedish labour market. This applies, in particular, to those who come as refugees, either unaccompanied (UMs) or accompanied (AMs). In this article, we have investigated the situation for UMs who have been granted a residence permit between 2003 and 2014 and compared it with that of both AMs and native-born youth (NY).

We find that it is more common among UM women than among UM men to study when they are 21 years or older. In addition, combining work and studies is a strategy, especially for UMs, as a resilient response to their unique situation. However, they are penalised by lower wage income in this case.

In this article, we have investigated UMs' labour market well-being with a large dataset for the whole population of the group of interest. From the perspective of the definition of general well-being, both resilience and agency – which are related to autonomy, the realisation of potential and the ability to respond resourcefully to challenges – are an integral part of well-being, drawing our attention to the relations between UMs and the unique circumstances that shape their outcomes. We have investigated this in terms of their labour market well-being. We have done this in two stages, mainly by investigating employment status and the types of job they have once they are employed. UMs are more likely to be employed and less likely to be in insecure work compared with AMs, once we control for factors influencing labour market outcomes. We interpret these results as an indication that UMs exhibit resilience and agency in terms of their labour market well-being. We are able to observe this since we look at refugee youth in detailed categories. UMs exhibit certain strengths and capacities that are also reflected in the labour market. In addition, the special treatment of this group during the different processes due to their status at arrival could be a facilitating factor that leads to better labour market outcomes for this group. On the other hand, this group might be under more pressure to work, as discussed earlier, and may thus be working more hours and in more jobs compared with AMs, reflecting their vulnerable situation. Thus, our results draw attention to the coexistence of resilience and vulnerability within the framework of labour market well-being for this group. In addition, our results also show that, in comparison to the NY, they are more likely to be in precarious employment. This suggests that there are additional barriers in the labour market for refugee youth compared with NY, which puts at risk their labour market well-being by constraining them to being concentrated in precarious jobs. Our results also show that there are important gender differences for all groups, but especially for UMs, whereby females are more likely to be in precarious employment. There are several factors that facilitate and hinder the labour market well-being of UMs simultaneously. There is, therefore, a need for more comprehensive research in terms of mechanisms in this area for formulating better policies for UMs and for refugee youth in general.

References

Ager, A & Strang, A 2008, 'Understanding integration: a conceptual framework', *Journal of Refugee Studies*, vol. 21, no. 2, pp. 166-191.

Alden, L & Hammarstedt, M 2014, 'Utrikes födda på den svenska arbetsmarknaden-en översikt och en internationell jämförelse', *Linneaus University Working Papers no. 5*, Kalmar.

Bäckman, O & Nilsson, A 2016, 'Long-term consequences of being not in employment, education or training as a young adult. Stability and change in three Swedish birth cohorts', *European Societies*, vol. 18, no. 2, pp. 136-157.

Boyle, EH, Smith, T & Guenther, K 2006, 'The rise of the child as an individual in global society', in *Youth, globalization and the law*, eds. SA Venkatesh & R Kassimir, Stanford University Press, Stanford, pp. 255-283.

Çelikaksoy, A & Wadensjö, E 2015a, 'Unaccompanied minors and separated refugee children in Sweden: An outlook on demography, education and employment', *IZA Discussion Paper No: 8963*, Bonn.

Çelikaksoy, A & Wadensjö, E 2015b, 'The unaccompanied refugee minors and the Swedish labour market', *IZA Discussion Paper No: 9306*, Bonn.

Çelikaksoy, A & Wadensjö, E 2017a, 'Policies, practices and prospects: the unaccompanied minors in Sweden', *Social Work & Society*, vol. 15, no. 1, pp. 1-16.

Çelikaksoy, A & Wadensjö, E 2017b, 'Refugee youth in Sweden who arrived as unaccompanied minors and separated children', *Journal of Refugee Studies*, vol. 30, no. 4, pp. 530-553.

Chiswick, B 1978, 'The effect of Americanization on the earnings of foreign-born men', *Journal of Political Economy*, vol. 86, no. 3, pp. 897-921.

Convention on the Rights of the Child 2016, 'Treatment of Unaccompanied and Separated Children Outside their Country of Origin', *United Nations, Geneva, Working Paper CRC/GC/2005/6*.

Coffey J & Farrugia, D 2013, "Unpacking the black box: the problem of agency in the sociology of youth", *Journal of Youth Studies*, vol. 17, no. 4, pp. 461-474.

Dahlstedt, I 2015, 'Over-education amongst the children of immigrants in Sweden', *Nordic Journal of Migration Research*, vol. 5, no. 1, pp. 36-46.

Derluyn, I, Broekaert, E & Schuyten, G 2008, 'Emotional and behavioural problems in migrant adolescents in Belgium', *European Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, vol. 17, no. 1, pp. 54-62.

Derluyn, I & Vervliet, M 2012, 'The wellbeing of unaccompanied refugee minors', in *Health inequalities and risk factors among migrants and ethnic minorities*, Vol. 1, eds. D Ingleby, A Krasnik, V Lorant & O Razum, Garant, Antwerp/Apeldoorn, pp. 95-109.

De Vroome, T & Hooghe, M 2014, 'Life satisfaction among ethnic minorities in the Netherlands: immigration experience or adverse living conditions?' *Journal of Happiness Studies*, vol. 15, no. 4, pp. 1389-1406.

Dodge, R, Daly, AP, Huyton, J & Sanders, LD 2012, 'The challenge of defining wellbeing', *International Journal of Wellbeing*, vol. 2, no. 3, pp. 222-235.

Eide, K & Hjern, A 2013, 'Unaccompanied refugee children: vulnerability and agency', *Acta Paediatrica*, vol. 102, no. 7, pp. 666-668.

Gerdtham, UG & Johannesson, M 2001, 'The relationship between happiness, health, and socio-economic factors: results based on Swedish microdata', *The Journal of Socio-Economics*, vol. 30, no. 6, pp. 553-557.

Heino, E & Veistilä, M 2015, 'Integration, recognition and security: discourses on social support by families with a Russian background living in Finland', *Nordic Journal of Migration Research*, vol. 5, no. 2, pp. 91-98.

Honkasalo, V 2017, 'Participation requires safety, real listening, friendship networks and knowledge', in *Young people in reception centers*, eds. V Honkasalo, K Maiche, H Onodera, M Peltola & L Suurpää, Finnish Youth Research Society, Helsinki, pp. 9-13.

Iveroth, K 2015, *Ett segregerat mottagande?: En explorativ studie om flyktingbarns integration på den svenska arbetsmarknaden*, Göteborgs Universitets Publikation, Göteborgs.

King, R, Lulle, A, Moroşanu, L & Williams, A 2016, 'International Youth Mobility and Life Transitions in Europe: Questions, Definitions, Typologies and Theoretical Approaches', *University of Sussex, Sussex Centre for Migration Research Working Paper Series, No. 86*, Brighton.

Luster, T, Qin, D, Bates, L, Rana, M & Lee, JA 2010, 'Successful adaption among Sudanese unaccompanied minors: perspectives of youth and foster parents', *Childhood*, vol. 17, no. 2, pp. 197-211.

Nardone, M & Correa-Velez, I 2015, 'Unpredictability, invisibility and vulnerability: unaccompanied asylum-seeking minors' journeys to Australia', *Journal of Refugee Studies*, vol. 29, no. 3, pp. 295-314.

Niemeyer, M 2015, *The cultural and social capital of unaccompanied refugee children: a policy study of the education of unaccompanied refugee children in Sweden and Germany*, Institute of International Education, Department of Education, Stockholm University, Stockholm.

Nolan, B 2009, 'Promoting the Well-Being of Immigrant Youth', *University College Dublin, UCD Working Paper Series, WP09/09*, Dublin.

Ombudsman for Children in Sweden 2016, *Safety and fundamental rights at stake for children on the move*, ENOC Task Force Report, Stockholm.

Oppedal, B & Idsoe, T 2015, 'The role of social support in the acculturation and mental health of unaccompanied minor asylum seekers', *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology*, vol. 56, no. 2, pp. 203-211.

Portes, A & Rumbaut, RG 2001, *Legacies: the story of the immigrant second generation*, Russell Sage Foundation, New York.

Ramel, B, Taljemark, J, Lindgren, A & Johansson, AB 2015, 'Overrepresentation of unaccompanied refugee minors in inpatient psychiatric care', *SpringerPlus*, vol. 4, no. 131, pp. 1-6.

Ryff, CD 1989, 'Happiness is everything, or is it? Explorations on the meaning of psychological well-being', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, vol. 57, no. 6, pp. 1069-1081.

Söderqvist, Å, Sjöblom, Y & Bulow, P 2014, 'Home sweet home? Professionals' understanding of home within residential care for unaccompanied youths in Sweden', *Child and Family Social Work*, vol. 21, no. 4, pp. 591-599.

Stretmo, L & Melander, C 2013, 'Får jag vara med? Erfarenheter från ensamkommande barn och ungdomar i Göteborgsregionen och arbetet med denna grupp', *FoU i Väst, Rapportserie, 2:2013*, Gothenburg.

Taylor, S & Kaur Sidhu, R 2012, 'Supporting refugee students in schools: what constitutes inclusive education?' *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, vol. 16, no. 1, pp. 39-56.

Wallin, AM & Ahlström, GI 2005, 'Unaccompanied young adult refugees in Sweden. Experiences of their life situation and well-being: a qualitative follow-up study', *Ethnicity & Health*, vol. 10, no. 2, pp. 129-144.

Walther, A 2006, 'Regimes of youth transitions: choice, flexibility and security in young people's experiences across different European contexts', *Young*, vol. 14, no. 2, pp. 119-139.

Wilkinson, L 2002, 'Factors influencing the academic success of refugee youth in Canada', *Journal of Youth Studies*, vol. 5, no. 2, pp. 173-193.

Wimelius, M, Joakim, I & Mehdi, G 2016, 'Swedish reception of unaccompanied refugee children: promoting integration?' *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, vol. 18, no. 1, pp. 143-157.