

Unaccompanied refugee minors in Sweden: education and wellbeing in the labor market

Aycan Çelikaksoy and Eskil Wadensjö

Abstract

Sweden has been one of the largest receiving country of unaccompanied minors over recent years, compared to other EU member states. This population is considered ‘vulnerable’ due to their young age during the fleeing process combined with the fact that they are unaccompanied by their parents or legal guardians. However, recent studies have increasingly stressed the strength, resilience, and agency of unaccompanied minors, despite the traumatic experiences and challenges they have been facing. In this paper we study the unaccompanied minors in education and the labor market using register 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 wellbeing in the labor market. We find that the unaccompanied minors have problem in completing secondary school but given that do well in the labor market with regard to finding employment. However, our results draw attention to the multifaceted processes that facilitate and/or hinder their wellbeing in the labor market.

Keywords: Unaccompanied minors, separated children, refugee youth, labor market wellbeing.

Introduction

Unaccompanied minors or separated children are defined as children under the age of 18 who are outside of their country of origin and came to Sweden unaccompanied by a parent or other legal guardian. This type of migratory flow has been increasing around the world and is identified as the most fragile type of flow of migration. Sweden has been one of the largest receiving countries of unaccompanied minors (UM) over recent years, compared to other EU member states. This population is considered ‘vulnerable’ due to their young age during the fleeing process combined with the fact that they are unaccompanied by their parents or legal guardians (Derluyn and Vervliet, 2012). These children face heightened

vulnerability due to exploitation, and violations of their rights by virtue of their age and status (CRC, 2016). The global movement of unaccompanied and separated children presents challenges for children's rights and wellbeing. Thus, research on UM has often focused on the vulnerabilities of this group, which reflects itself especially with regard to mental health (see e.g. Derluyn et al., 2008). However, recent studies have increasingly stressed the strength, resilience, and agency of UM, despite the traumatic experiences and challenges (see e.g. Luster et al., 2010). The majority of the studies in this line of research focus on their situation and experiences during different stages of the migration, asylum, reception and introduction into the new destination country. There are only very few large scale studies focusing on their situation in the labor market after they have received their permits to stay in the destination country. In this paper, we investigate the wellbeing of UM in the labor market. The question of how wellbeing should be defined still remains largely unresolved although there are common guidelines used in most definitions, such as agency (Dodge et al., 2012). Thus, the discourse on UM in relation to vulnerability versus resilience and agency is directly linked to the wellbeing of this group. Some of the aspects identified by Ryff (1989) as main constituents of wellbeing are autonomy, environmental mastery and realization of potential, which boils down to the ability of directing ones' work/life conditions by how one responds to challenges. As discussed earlier UM minors is a group facing several challenges before, during and after the migration process. Thus, their situation in the labor market is an indicator of, among other factors, how they respond to the challenges in the destination country. From an immigration perspective, labor-market incorporation can be seen as a key indicator of wellbeing, since it leads to access to money, possessions, networks, knowledge and practice on how the society and the labor market functions, as well as language proficiency. Thus, employment status can be an indicator of wellbeing in the labor market. However, young workers, like migrants and women, are particularly affected by precarious work although there are no studies on UM utilizing large scale data sets to our knowledge. Thus, we investigate labor market wellbeing in two stages, that is, in terms of employment status and types of jobs. Insecure/precarious jobs lack predictability of living conditions and foreseeable upward mobility and continued career paths. Thus, we investigate their risk of being in a precarious job by utilizing a comprehensive large data set including the whole population of interest

over a period of eleven years. We do this by comparing UM with accompanied minors (AM), who also arrived as minors from the same countries of origin but with their parents. UM could exhibit vulnerabilities due to their unique migration experience, but also due to their status in the destination country, where they lack a familial system. However, on the other hand, they could be possessing extra strengths, abilities and agency, since this is a group who managed to complete a very difficult migration process on their own. In addition, since this group is defined and recognized as a group in need of special protection, the care and reception practices for this group differ from AM. These differences are related to the legal and practical procedures that are reflected mainly in the networks, asylum procedures as well as living conditions, which intend to provide extra support for UM¹.

There are three reasons why Sweden is an important case study with regard to this issue. Firstly, UM have been coming in greater numbers to Sweden to seek asylum than to other countries in Europe. Secondly, in Sweden, UM arrive predominantly as asylum seekers instead of other channels, which means that we can observe most of those who enter the country. Thirdly, these facts, combined with high-quality data facilities, provide a unique opportunity to analyze data on a wide range of characteristics for the whole population of this group.

In this paper we give an overview of this type of migratory flow into Sweden as well as discussing their situation in terms of educational attainment and in the labor market by descriptive analyses and a discussion of the literature. While doing this we also compare UM to AM as well as native youth (NY). Our empirical analyses deals with three main questions. The three main questions investigated in the paper are; what are the factors that influence the likelihood of being in precarious employment?, is there a difference with regard to arrival status, UM versus AM, and what are the direction and potential mechanisms behind this difference?, and finally, do the results vary by gender and why?

The results indicate that UM finish their studies at later ages as well as using alternative educational paths such as adult education compared to the native population. They are

¹ For a detailed description of these procedures see Çelikaksoy and Wadensjö (2017b).

more likely to be in employment once the controls are added, thus implying their willingness and agency in terms of finding jobs, which in some cases lead to combining employment and studies.

Previous research has clearly shown that labor market wellbeing is strongly related to overall wellbeing in the areas of mental and physical health, and thus to overall functional and psycho-social wellbeing. Thus, the types of jobs that they work in are very important. As a result, we investigate labor market wellbeing in two stages, namely, employment status and type of jobs. We do this by analyzing the risk of being in precarious work. Our results show that the UM are less likely to be in such employment compared to the AM. However, both groups of refugee youth are more likely to be in such employment compared to the native born population.

Our results point to a more complicated structure than the one proposed in our initial questions highlighting a multifaceted set of processes, where a dualistic approach is insufficient to explain the situation of UM in the labor market in relation to their wellbeing.

Unaccompanied refugee minors in Sweden

The number of unaccompanied minors seeking asylum in Sweden increased from 2005 each year through 2015. See table 1. Highest increases were in 2014 and 2015 with almost a doubling in 2014 compared with 2013, while the number was five times higher in 2015 than in 2014. Year 2016, the number of asylum-seeking unaccompanied minors was down at about the same level as 2009. This decline continued in 2017. This is primarily a result of the introduction of various restrictions at borders to and within Europe including at Sweden's borders. There is a decline in 2016 and 2017 for all in Table 1 separately reported citizenship countries.

Table 1. The number of unaccompanied minors who applied for asylum in Sweden; total and from the six countries according to citizenship 2000–2016

Year	Afghanistan	Eritrea	Ethiopia	Iraq	Somalia	Syria	Total
2000	20	9	62	126	40	3	350
2001	34	6	91	187	48	4	461
2002	34	17	72	144	87	4	550
2003	64	14	184	67	107	4	561
2004	35	8	120	36	62	2	388
2005	27	15	96	69	33	1	398
2006	98	22	83	337	101	4	820
2007	160	38	113	621	189	5	1264
2008	347	32	127	464	345	15	1510
2009	780	49	192	110	913	18	2250
2010	1153	78	194	93	533	11	2393
2011	1693	64	269	64	251	18	2657
2012	1940	105	339	50	452	120	3578
2013	1247	345	383	48	576	364	3852
2014	1547	1456	608	84	1118	1233	7049
2015	23480	1939	1716	1097	2058	3777	35369
2016	665	74	133	93	421	180	2199
2017	222	52	53	52	159	159	1336

Note. Quota refugees are not included.

Source: Swedish Migration Agency.

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 unaccompanied minors have stayed a shorter or longer period in another country before the flight to Sweden; many Afghan children have been living in Iran.

The major part of the unaccompanied minors arrives as teenagers, but there are also some younger children. Most of the unaccompanied minors are boys. Table 2 shows the composition by age and gender of the unaccompanied minors seeking asylum in 2015 and 2016. Among the youngest ones, the number of girls and boys are about the same. Among the older children, the number of boys is significantly larger than the number of girls. The share of the unaccompanied minors who were girls increased between 2015 and 2016. Some of the youngest children come with a parent who also is an unaccompanied minor (i.e. under 18 years).

Table 2. Unaccompanied minors according to age and gender 2015 and 2016

Age	Girls		Boys		Total		Proportion girls (%)	
	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016
0–6	157	30	155	31	312	61	50	49
7–12	421	64	1830	126	2251	180	19	36
13–15	1057	179	14181	753	15238	932	7	19
16–17	1212	162	16356	854	17568	1016	7	16
Total	2847	435	32522	1764	35369	2199	8	20

Source: Swedish Migration Agency.

After an asylum application has been made, the child is for a short period accommodated in Arrival Residences which the Swedish Migration Agency is responsible for. Later during the period of asylum testing, they are either located in a residential dwelling (ABO) or in an accommodation that the asylum seeker has arranged on his or her own, called own accommodation (EBO). On arrival, a person is appointed as a “good man” for the asylum seeking unaccompanied minor. It is done by the municipality where the unaccompanied minor has been placed. The good man should take care of the child's interest. The asylum phase is a time of uncertainty. It is often a lot of stress for the children, as they do not know what the outcome will be from their asylum application. It is a time of great mental strain, as demonstrated in many studies in Sweden and other countries.

The unaccompanied minors who have been granted a residence permit are placed in a municipality. The location of the municipality is important for their future prospects on the Swedish labor market, as the labor market situation varies greatly across different parts of Sweden. There are also major differences in how the reception is organized in different municipalities.

When the child has been granted a residence permit, a specially appointed guardian is assigned until the child reaches the age of 18 and becomes adult. Parents take over custody if they come to Sweden and unite with the child before it reaches the age of 18.

Literature Overview

Several studies on refugee children as well as UM have dealt with the notion of resilience versus vulnerability, especially in the area of mental health (Wallin and Ahlström, 2005; Derluyn et al., 2008; Luster et al., 2010; Eide and Hjern, 2013; Nardone and Correa-Velez, 2015). It is shown that the introductory stage, namely how these children are received and how the asylum process takes place, have a very important impact for the wellbeing of these children (Söderqvist et al., 2014; Wimelius et al., 2016; Çelikaksoy and Wadensjö, 2017b). Some of the identified important influences of the introductory stage are related to close contacts with persons from the society of the destination country: UM are placed in special housing, where they have daily contact with the personnel. In addition, they are assigned a guardian to help them with legal as well as several official matters. It is found that these contacts are very important for the adjustment process of this group, where they learn how to navigate in the new society as well as learning about the culture, language and the system of the destination country (Fälldin and Strand, 2010; Stretmo and Melander, 2013; Söderqvist et al., 2014; Iveroth, 2015; Ombudsman for Children in Sweden, 2016).

The situation of youth in the labor market is a well-established literature for native-born individuals, where, there are only few studies that focus on refugee youth with large scale data while decomposing this group. It is shown for the refugee youth that similar characteristics as in the case of other migrants impact their outcomes in the labor market such as the level of education, time spent in the destination country, language proficiency, etc., whereas they also have unique challenges when compared to other migrant groups (Chiswick, 1978; Portes and Rumbaut, 2001; Wilkinson, 2002; Boyle et al., 2006; Çelikaksoy and Wadensjö, 2017a). However, there is a lack of studies that focus on the labor market situation of refugee youth from a wellbeing perspective with large-scale analyses.

Youth, migrants and refugees are particularly affected by precarious work (Walther, 2006; Furlong, 2009; Nolan, 2009). 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 UM is very important for their wellbeing in the labor market.

It is 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 (Wilkinson, 2002; Taylor and Kaur Sidhu, 2012; Niemeyer, 2015; Oppedal and Idsoe, 2015). Thus, we begin our analyses by looking at the situation of UM in the educational system.

Data

In our study, we have access to data for the whole population of UM who have been granted residence permits and have been registered in Sweden during the period 2003–2014. A few unaccompanied minors have emigrated from Sweden or died during the period and therefore we do not have data for them for all years after being granted a residence permit until 2014 (173 have emigrated or died during the period).

The number of boys is significantly greater than the number of girls every year. About a quarter of the UM who have been granted a residence permit and remain in Sweden are girls.

We cannot separately report for all countries UM have come from for ethical reasons set by Statistics Sweden, so for some countries we have only information for groups of countries. For UM 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: accompanied minors (AM), and 2) children and adolescents of the same age who have Swedish backgrounds (born in Sweden and with parents born in Sweden): native youth (NY). The data presented in this study is based on individual register data from Statistics Sweden and includes 23 122 observations for UM who are 19 years and older.

In the following two sections we will discuss the educational attainment and labor market situation of UM by providing descriptive analyses and a discussion of the previous literature. The data set utilized comes from register data of Statistics Sweden for the period 2003-2014 including the whole population of UM registered in Sweden during this period who are between the ages 19-27.

In the third section we will further restrict the data set. We have limited the empirical section of our study to mainly include the children 22-29 years of age since after age 21 majority of the male UM are in employment and being in precarious employment is a meaningful outcome variable for this age group. We do not have UM who are older than 29 in our data set, thus we use the same age group for all groups of youth. We have 7,077 observations for UM within this age group. We have 3,672 observations for UM who are employed and within this age range and 27,504 and 1,231,339 observations for AM and the native population respectively. Our data for the native population comes from a 10 percent random sample.

Education

A person's education strongly influences his or her opportunities in the labor market. The education offered to UM in Sweden depends among other things on the education they have on arrival. It depends, in turn, on the country from which they come from, their family and the conditions they had in their home country and on their way to Sweden. It also depends on how the fleeing process to Sweden has been. If they have been on their way for a long period of time and have been without teaching then, it is even more difficult to take part in education in Sweden. Unfortunately, there are no records of children's education prior to arrival in Sweden.

Most unaccompanied minors are teenagers; many 16 or 17 years old when they arrive to Sweden. It takes time for them to learn Swedish. The first part of the teaching in Swedish is language introduction (“språkintröduktion”), which is a form of education open for young people who have come to Sweden for up to four years after getting a residence permit. The municipality has a responsibility for UM who have a residence permit. This means that the municipality will provide education and employment for young people who do not study at a national program in secondary school. The education focuses on the Swedish language in order for the student to proceed to other programs in secondary school or to other education.

The general literature on youth mobility acknowledge the mobile nature of youth in terms of different dimensions such as geographic mobility, 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 UM their unique geographic mobility means that their school to work transitions will not follow the general norm in terms of timing as well as different paths. Thus,

their wellbeing in the labor market depends more to their opportunities of combining work and studies in a more flexible and goal oriented manner when compared other groups, since they are still not ready in terms of their studies at an age where they also have a need to work.

Table 3 shows the percentages taking part in education measured as participation in education during the fall each year. Most of the unaccompanied minors are when aged 19–21 in education. For those aged 19–20 years, men are more often than women in education. On the other hand, women are more often than men in education among UM when they are 21 years of age or older. This finding complies with the general pattern in Sweden; women are more often than men in education in the years after secondary school age. The table also contains information on AM.

Table 3. Share (%) of those aged 19–27 years who studies among unaccompanied minors, accompanied minors and those who are born in Sweden with parents born in Sweden

Age	Unaccompanied minors		Accompanied minors		Born in Sweden	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
19	83	91	68	69	36	34
20	75	79	63	59	38	31
21	63	60	58	49	44	33
22	49	39	54	42	46	33
23	48	31	49	37	44	32
24	41	27	42	33	40	30
25	38	26	36	28	34	25
26	29	26	31	23	27	20
27	23	19	26	19	22	17

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

The age distribution within the age range of our study and the education already achieved are very different for the three groups: UM, other refugee children and the Swedish comparison group. Previous studies find that UM are much more often are in education when compared to the native born population as well as the AM once age, level of education as well as other characteristics are controlled for (Çelikaksoy and Wadensjö, 2015a). Part of the explanation is that many UM have arrived when they are 16 and 17 years old and therefore undergo different forms of education at a higher age than those born in Sweden or AM.

Education takes place at different levels varying with age and as well as with education level at arrival. Most UM who are 16 years old study in secondary school but every fourth in elementary school. Those who are 17–19 years study in most cases in secondary school. Among the UM

who are 20–21 years many remain in secondary school, but it is also common to study in municipal education for adults, “komvux”. For those who are 22 years of age, komvux is the most common form of education, but other forms of education are also important as basic university education, folk high school, Swedish for Immigrants, “SFI”, and labor market education (for men).

Education is of great importance for young people’s possibilities to establish themselves in the labor market – to get a job and if so, what types of jobs. Many unaccompanied minors have primary education as their highest education, and not so few have an education that is shorter than nine years despite being between 20 and 30 years old. Some but relatively few have completed post-secondary education.

Up to the age of 19, many unaccompanied minors have not completed any education in Sweden. Among those who are 22 years of age or older, most have secondary school as their highest school form. 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 education only a few have completed a three-year secondary education. It points out that there is a huge need for different types of supplementary education for unaccompanied minors (Çelikaksoy and Wadensjö, 2015a; 2015b).

Some of the UM both study and work during the same year and get their first work experience this way. This can be a way of early entry into the labor market. See Table 4 for information for those who are 19–27 years old. It is between 10 and 20 percent in the different year classes. The differences between the three groups (UM, AM and NY) are small. However, we can see that for men a slightly higher proportion of UM are combining studies and work compared to men in other groups. Previous studies show that male UM’s employment rate increase drastically from age 21 (Çelikaksoy and Wadensjö, 2015a). However, the proportion of females in each group who combine work and studies are higher than that of men in each group especially after age 21 which is mainly due to the fact that females stay in education longer than males.

Table 4. Share (%) among those 19–27 years who both work and study among unaccompanied minors, accompanied minors and those who are born in Sweden with parents born in Sweden

Age	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 data base; observations in 2003–2014.

Furthermore, it is shown that UM compared to AM, more often combine work and study. The difference is about the same for women as for men. UM are also found to considerably 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 and Wadensjö, 2015a). This can be interpreted as a sign of agency since studying and working at the same time is clearly a way one responds to his/her current situation while at the same time investing in the future. The difference is slightly larger for men than for women.

Labor market

UM arrive to Sweden at an age when most of the people in Sweden not yet work. But after a few years in Sweden they are at an age when many living in Sweden have started their working lives. We have studied the percentage of UM working at different ages and their income from work. It is done separately for girls and boys.

We start by looking at the percentage who work from the age of 19. See Table 5. We should remember that those of a certain age may have been in Sweden for a different number of years and, for example, have spent different number of years in school in Sweden. Few unaccompanied minors work when they are 19 or 20 years old. Then the percentage who works gradually increases to be about two thirds for men when they are over 25 years old, but lower for women of the same age. We should remember that some of those who do not work are studying.

Also, the demographic characteristics across these groups are quite different, thus they should be controlled for.

Table 5. Share (%) among those aged 19–27 years who work among unaccompanied minors, accompanied minors and those who are born in Sweden with parents born in Sweden

Age	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 data base; observations from 2003–2014.

Previous studies find that females who came as an UM are less likely to be employed than males after controlling for age, gender, civil status, education, time in Sweden, county of residence and country of origin, which are found to be important factors influencing their labor market situation (Çelikaksoy and Wadensjö, 2015a). It is also shown that UM are more likely to be employed compared to AM once the same set of variables have been taken into account. The effect is for both men and women, but is slightly greater for men than for women. Furthermore, it is also shown that male UM more often work than those with Swedish backgrounds. For women, on the other hand, those who arrived as an UM work less often than the native born. Thus, these results point to the agency of UM especially in the case of males in terms of their willingness and ability of finding jobs.

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 which all are included in Statistics Sweden's selection. For the public employees, it is a total survey. Previous studies show that female UM predominantly work in service, care and sales. A closer division shows that the majority of them work as health and care personnel. Male UM are mainly concentrated on four occupational fields namely: 1) service e, 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 and Wadensjö, 2015b).

Table 6 shows annual wage income for unaccompanied minors in 2014 by age, gender and after whether or not those who work and study in the same year. The results are as we expect with regard to the situation of the Swedish labor market. Wage income gradually increases with age. Wage income is higher for men than for women. And they are higher for those who do not combine work with studies during the year than for those who do. Combining work and studies seem to be a strategy for especially UM as a resilient response to their unique situation. However, there is a clear wage penalty for doing so as it can be seen in Table 6.

Table 6. Average annual wage income (thousand SEK) for unaccompanied minors in 2014 according to age

Age	Male			Female		
	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

*Too few observation.

Source: Calculations on our data base.

Previous research has compared UM with AM. It is found that when age, gender, civil status, education, combining work and studies, county of residence and country of origin are taken into account the UM have a higher wage income. The difference exists for both men and women, but it is slightly larger for men than it is for women (Çelikaksoy and Wadensjö, 2017a). A similar result is found in comparison to the native population. However, the analysis refers to wage income and not hourly wage rate. The difference in wage income may be due to the fact that the

unaccompanied employees work more hours, e.g. more often work overtime. Thus, the results need to be interpreted with caution with regard to wellbeing in the labor market.

Precarious employment

Analytic strategy

In the next section, to begin with, we investigate the factors that influence the likelihood of being in precarious employment for refugee youth. We also compare UM with AM to investigate whether these two groups differ with regard to the risk of being in precarious employment. These two groups are assumed to share the challenges related to structural constraints in the labor 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, as well as with regard to the challenges they face in the destination country due to 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 important implications (Heino and Veistilä, 2015) Thus, we investigate whether these two groups differ with regard to their prospects in the labor market. As we have discussed throughout the paper, our second measure of wellbeing in the labor market is related to the types of jobs they have. Insecure work lack predictability of living conditions and foreseeable upward mobility and continued career paths. Thus, we use the likelihood of being in these jobs as a measure of wellbeing in the labor market and we test whether the group of UM are more likely to be in this group.

In this paper we define precarious employment as being a part of the insecure workforce. This category is defined as those who are employed but earn less than 3.5 PBA (price base amounts) following previous studies on precarious employment. To begin with a number of individual characteristics are controlled for such as gender, whether they are studying or not as well as the level of education. 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 especially UM. We investigate the importance of education, which is done by taking account of whether 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 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, that is, whether this type of employment is just a temporary option for refugee youth during their initial years, where their employment careers progress with time or time spent in Sweden does not 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 whether the individual is single versus married and whether the individual has moved to another county after her/his initial municipality of placement. Other variables included in estimation are county of residence and country of origin. In addition, age is divided into three categorical variables, where the youngest age group 22-23 is the reference group. The probability of working in a precarious job is estimated via probit models, where marginal effects are presented in Table 7.

Results

An important part of wellbeing in the labor market is related to progress and upward mobility. It is crucial to distinguish working conditions and situation for the different groups. Thus, we investigate the likelihood of being in insecure workforce for refugee youth. We define insecure workforce as those who are employed but earn less than 3.5 PBA (price base amounts)² following previous studies on precarious employment. The difficulty of refugees to establish themselves in the labor market have been documented in numerous studies (e.g. Ager and Strang, 2008; Alden and Hammarstedt, 2014). Thus, we investigate the factors that influence the likelihood of refugee youth being employed in precarious jobs. We can see that females are more likely to be in these types of jobs compared to 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 decline with age as expected. Those who belong to the oldest age group, which is 27-29, are 16.1 percentage points less likely to be in insecure jobs when compared to the youngest age group. This indicates that these types of jobs are likely to be temporary and there is upward mobility for some with age. It can be seen that those who combine work and studies are more likely to be in

² A price base amount was 44 400 SEK in 2014.

such jobs, which is also a common finding. Level of education is negatively associated with the likelihood of having a precarious job as expected. Those who have a university education are less likely to be in insecure jobs compared to those who have completed only compulsory education by 12.4 percentage points. If time spent in Sweden leads to progress in labor market careers due to language proficiency, networks as well as knowledge on the labor market and society then we would expect this variable to be negatively associated with the outcome variable. Table 7 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 refugee women to be employed in precarious employment given that they are employed. 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 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 the previous studies where it is shown that UM are more likely to be employed compared to AM once other factors influencing employment are controlled for. This mainly points to the willingness, ability and agency of UM to find employment. However, an important question is whether employment is a path for simply being overcrowded in precarious employment or whether it can lead to upward mobility. Thus, we investigate whether the likelihood of being in insecure work is significantly different for UM compared to AM. The first column in Table 7 shows that there is no significant difference between the two groups. However, once we control for age and gender we can see that UM are less likely to be in insecure jobs compared to AM by 3.6 percentage points. This result implies that not only they are able to find jobs but also they are less likely to be in the category of jobs defined as insecure and undesirable. Thus, these findings are in line with the arguments in relation to the ability of directing ones' work/life conditions by how one responds to challenges. Furthermore, we can see that UM are less likely to be in this group by 8.1 percentage points once we control for factors that influence labor market outcomes. However, we do not have hourly wages, thus these results could be reflecting that they work more hours and double shifts and in more than one job. This would not challenge the argument in relation to their agency and how they respond to challenges but it would challenge the argument on their wellbeing in the labor

market. The issue of mobility and progress in the labor market especially for this group needs to be investigated further especially in the case of UM. This points to the important issue of whether the commonly used categories to measure precarious employment are suitable in the case of UM. As a result, we interpret our results carefully.

In the next step we compare the refugee youth with the native youth by decomposing the refugee youth into two groups. Table 8 shows that the factors influencing labor market outcomes are in line with the previous results, where age and education are negatively associated with the likelihood of having insecure work. On the other hand, being a female as well as being under education is positively associated with the likelihood of having insecure work. We find that overall refugee youth is in higher risk of being in such jobs compared to the native population, but this result is driven by male refugee youth. The results are significant only in the case of male AM and male UM when we include the control variables into the estimation. We can see that the likelihood of females are not significantly different in the case of the three different groups that are included in the study. Thus, these results show that, although to different degrees, both groups of refugee youth are in a disadvantageous position in the labor market. There might be several factors that lead to this result such as language proficiency and network effects, where we are not able to control for in our current study. However, by decomposing the refugee youth into different groups we have seen evidence of differences in patterns of agency and resilience rather than simply comparing foreign born to native-born individuals.

Table 7. Estimation of a Probit Model for Insecure Workforce for Youth Who Arrived as Unaccompanied and Accompanied Minors from the Same Countries: Marginal Effects

Variables	All (1)	All (2)	All (4)	Male	Female
Accompanied	Reference group				
Unaccompanied	-0.004 (0.008)	-0.036 (0.008)**	-0.081 (0.009)**	-0.074 (0.010)**	-0.072 (0.020)**
Female		0.142 (0.005)**	0.139 (0.006)**		
Age 22-23	Reference group				
Age 24-26		-0.132 (0.006)**	-0.103 (0.007)**	-0.105 (0.008)**	-0.092 (0.011)**
Age 27-29		-0.219 (0.006)**	-0.161 (0.007)**	-0.168 (0.009)**	-0.145 (0.012)**
Under education			0.260 (0.007)**	0.268 (0.010)**	0.245 (0.010)**
Compulsory edu	Reference group				
High School			-0.090 (0.008)**	-0.078 (0.009)**	-0.122 (0.014)**
Short tertiary edu			0.029 (0.012)*	0.053 (0.016)**	-0.015 (0.019)
Long tertiary edu			-0.124 (0.009)**	-0.068 (0.011)**	-0.189 (0.014)**
Missing edu			-0.074 (0.021)**	-0.099 (0.021)**	0.016 (0.048)
Days registered in Sweden/100			-0.001 (0.000)**	-0.001 (0.000)**	-0.001 (0.000)**
Single			-0.036 (0.007)**	0.014 (0.009)	-0.083 (0.010)**
Moving across counties			0.012 (0.006)	0.030 (0.009)**	-0.004 (0.010)
Stockholm county	Reference group				
Skåne			0.053 (0.010)**	0.032 (0.013)*	0.082 (0.015)**
Västra Götaland			0.016 (0.008)*	0.003 (0.010)	0.035 (0.012)**
Other counties			0.052 (0.007)**	0.045 (0.008)**	0.067 (0.010)**
Afghanistan	Reference group				
Iraq			0.053 (0.014)**	0.062 (0.016)**	0.010 (0.029)
Somalia			0.053 (0.017)**	0.034 (0.019)	0.036 (0.032)
Other countries in the M.E.			0.063 (0.015)**	0.074 (0.017)**	0.011 (0.028)
Other countries in Africa			0.033 (0.016)*	0.055 (0.019)**	heet1 (0.029)
Other countries in Asia			0.049 (0.015)**	0.032 (0.017)	0.032 (0.029)
Number of observations	31,176	31,176	31,176	17,131	14,045

* indicates significance at the 5-% level, and ** at the 1-% level.

Table 8. Estimation of a Probit Model for Insecure Workforce for Refugee and Native Youth: Marginal Effects

Variables	All (1)	All (4)	Male	Female
Native youth	Reference group			
Unaccompanied	0.059 (0.008)**	0.011 (0.007)	0.025 (0.007)**	-0.027 (0.017)
Accompanied	0.063 (0.003)**	0.046 (0.003)**	0.077 (0.004)**	0.006 (0.004)
Female		0.174 (0.001)**		
Age 22-23	Reference group			
Age 24-26		-0.066 (0.001)**	-0.067 (0.001)**	-0.054 (0.002)**
Age 27-29		-0.119 (0.001)**	-0.126 (0.001)**	-0.096 (0.002)**
Under education		0.352 (0.001)**	0.373 (0.002)**	0.323 (0.002)**
Compulsory edu	Reference group			
High School		-0.103 (0.002)**	-0.087 (0.002)**	-0.124 (0.003)**
Short tertiary edu		0.034 (0.002)**	0.060 (0.003)**	-0.010 (0.003)**
Long tertiary edu		-0.083 (0.001)**	-0.008 (0.002)**	-0.168 (0.003)**
Missing edu		-0.043 (0.008)**	-0.026 (0.007)**	-0.062 (0.016)**
Single		-0.070 (0.001)**	0.017 (0.002)**	-0.119 (0.002)**
Moving across counties		0.018 (0.001)**	0.036 (0.001)**	-0.004 (0.002)*
Stockholm county	Reference group			
Skåne		0.037 (0.002)**	0.013 (0.002)**	0.061 (0.002)**
Västra Götaland		0.024 (0.001)**	-0.001 (0.001)	0.053 (0.002)**
Other counties		0.042 (0.001)**	0.008 (0.001)**	0.082 (0.002)**
Number of observations	1,262,515	1,262,515	658,448	604,067

* indicates significance at the 5-% level, and ** at the 1-% level.

Summary

It is not easy for young people with a foreign background to settle in the Swedish labor market. This applies, in particular, to those who come as refugees, either as unaccompanied or accompanied.

Here we investigate the situation for UM who have been granted a residence permit during 2003-2014 and compare with AM and also with NY.

The number of asylum seekers who were unaccompanied minors increased sharply up to 2015. Most of the unaccompanied minors came when they were teenagers, often when they were 16 or 17 years old; an age when young people in Sweden usually study in secondary school.

The UM are to a high extent in education even when they left their teens. It takes time to learn Swedish and time to complete secondary education. Many of those who begin secondary education leave it before they have completed their final grade. It is more common among unaccompanied women than among unaccompanied men to study when they are 21 years or older. In addition, combining work and studies is a strategy especially for UM as a resilient response to their unique situation. However, they are penalized by lower wages in this case.

As they grow older (up to 27 years of age), around two thirds of the men who came as UM work, while the rate is lower among women (slightly over half). It is lower than for those with Swedish background.

In this paper we revisit the discourse on vulnerability versus resilience of UM. However, different from previous studies we investigate their labor market wellbeing with a large data set for the whole population of the group of interest. From the perspective of general definitions of wellbeing, agency, which is related to autonomy, realization of potential, the ability to respond resourcefully to challenges, is an integral part of wellbeing. Thus, we investigate this in terms of their labor market wellbeing. We do this in two stages mainly by investigating employment status and types of jobs they have once they are employed. Our results reveal that UM exhibit agency in terms of their labor market wellbeing. UM are more likely to be employed and less likely to be in insecure work compared to AM once we control for factors influencing labor market outcomes. We are able to observe this since we look at the refugee youth in detailed categories. UM could exhibit certain strengths and capacities that are also reflected in the labor market. In addition, the different treatment of this group during the different processes due to

their status at arrival could be a facilitating factor that leads to better labor market outcomes for this group as discussed in the previous sections. On the other hand, this group might be under more pressure to work, thus be working more hours and in more jobs compared to AM. However, our results also show that in comparison to the NY they are more likely to be in insecure jobs. This suggests that there are additional barriers for refugee youth in the labor market compared to the native youth that risks their labor market wellbeing by being overcrowded in precarious jobs. Our results also show that there are important gender differences for all groups, but especially for UM, where females are more likely to be in this type of employment. There are several factor that facilitate and hinder the wellbeing of UM in the labor market simultaneously. Thus, there is a need for a more comprehensive research in terms of mechanisms in this area for formulating better policies for UM but for refugee youth in general.

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