

# How do immigrants use parental leave in Sweden?

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# Outline



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- Introduction:
    - *Immigrants in Sweden*
    - *Parental Leave*
    - *Immigrants & Parental leave*
    - *Theory of disadvantage*
  - Projects:
    - *Immigrant women who gave birth in Sweden*
    - *Women immigrating with child/ren*
    - *Immigrant Fathers*

# Immigrants in Sweden



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- Foreign-born 15% of the population but a larger share of the population in childbearing ages
  - Immigrant women have higher fertility, partly because of the migration effect of newly arrived immigrants but also higher risk of third and fourth child
    - TFR 2.2 for foreign-born and 1.8 for Swedish-born
  - Poor labour market situation, especially for immigrant women
  - How does parental leave system affect the situation; incentive to work or obstacle?

# Parental Leave in Sweden



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- Sweden has residence-based, universal social policies directed towards working individuals
  - Individual policies with emphasis on gender equality
  - Parental-leave benefit is based on prior earnings and a flat rate for parents not active in the labor market.
  - Parental leave is 8 months to each parent, but parents can transfer days (except quotas)
  - Can be used until the child is 8 years old (since 2014 to 12 years)

# Immigrants & Parental leave



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- Differences in labor market situation and fertility behavior lead to the expectation that parental leave use will vary.
  - As family policy is closely connected to labour market participation, parental leave use becomes a reflection of labour market integration.
  - The question of immigrants' parental leave use is of major policy relevance, and is emerging on the agenda in Swedish politics.
  - *Do Sweden need to restrict the generous and flexible policy?*

# Theory of disadvantage



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- Immigrant-> disadvantage in the labour market
  - Women -> double disadvantage
  - Particular geo-cultural groups -> triple disadvantage
  
  - A job before childbearing may be seen as impossible
  - In turn, no job before childbearing results in a low benefit during parental leave
  - After leave, even harder to get a job?

# Theory of disadvantage



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- Earnings-related benefits and job protection during leave normally serve as **protection** and an **incentive** to combine work and children.
  - However, the same policy may have a negative impact for immigrants, resulting in **low benefit level** during parental leave and a more **disadvantaged situation** after leave.
  - **No easy solution:** generous benefits to non-working parents provide incentives for women to stay out of the labour market.

# Data



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- SWEDISH POPULATION REGISTERS (yearly information on demographic , socio-economic, migratory... characteristics)
    - Country of birth & Citizenship
    - Net days of parental leave
    - Labor market participation
    - Parity
    - Migration date (year)





# **Immigrant women who gave birth in Sweden**

# Aims

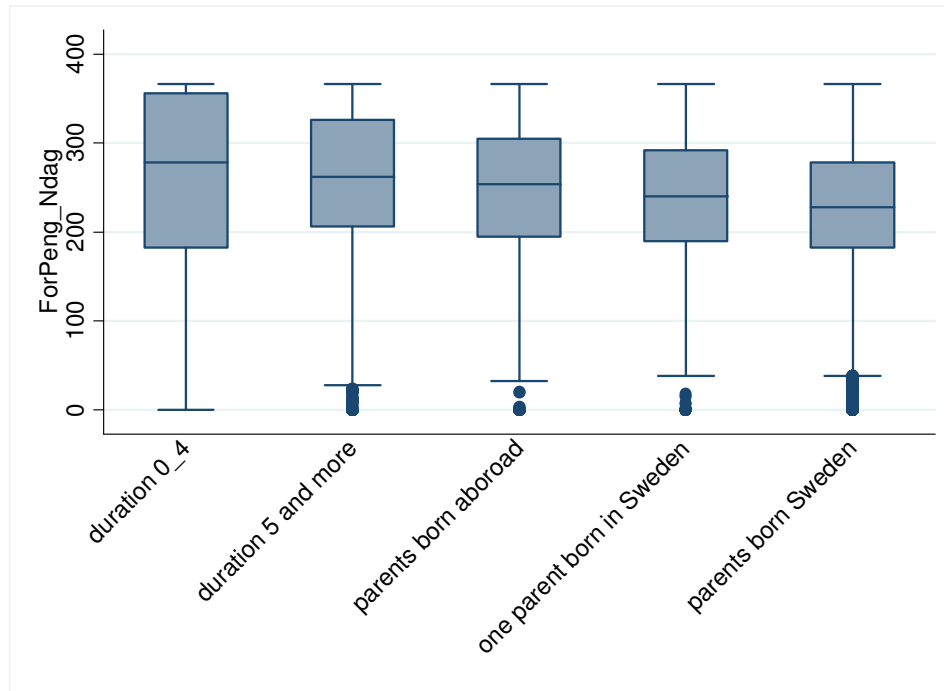


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- This study investigates:
    - whether there are differences in use of the parental leave between **immigrant** and **Swedish-born** women.
    - whether there are differences in the use by **timing** and **duration**

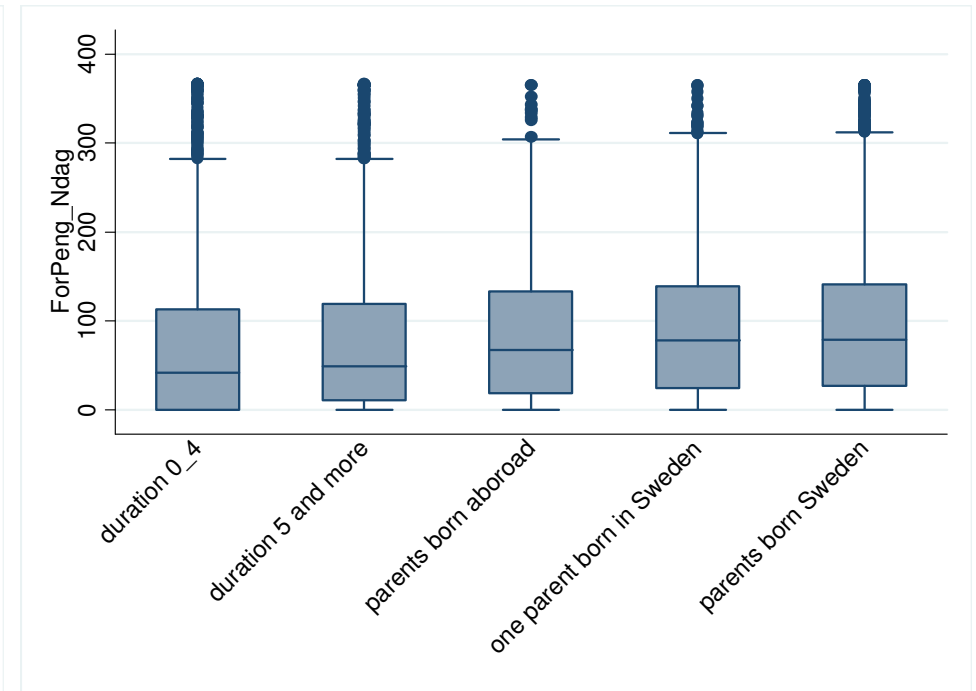
# Results

## Number of Parental leave days one and two year after birth by immigrant background

a) Year 1



b) Year 2



# Conclusions

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- Immigrant mothers use parental leave more intensively than Swedish-born mothers.
  - Longer time in Sweden leads to pattern similar to Swedish-born mothers.
  - Labor market status explain part of differences, especially for newly arrived immigrants.
  - Immigrant women are less able to exploit the flexibility of leave, perhaps caused by un-observed characteristics on labor market and/or lack of knowledge of parental leave regulations.

# Women migrating with children



## Women migrating with children

- During the first years immigrants have lower employment rates and lower earnings
- In Sweden, parental leave benefits are based on residency and leave can be used until the child is 12 years old.
- **Newly arrived immigrant parents get access to whole leave.**

## Research Questions

- 1) Do immigrants use parental leave to different degree during their first year in Sweden?
- 2) Will parental leave use restrict or facilitate the entrance to the labor market?

Aim: shed light on how parental leave policy affects the integration of immigrants; Parental leave as obstacle or facilitator?

## First Conclusions

- Use of parental leave varies extensively between mothers of different origins
- It seems that parental leave is associated with labor market participation rather than limits it
- What happens after leave?



# Immigrant fathers' use of parental leave in Sweden



## Research questions

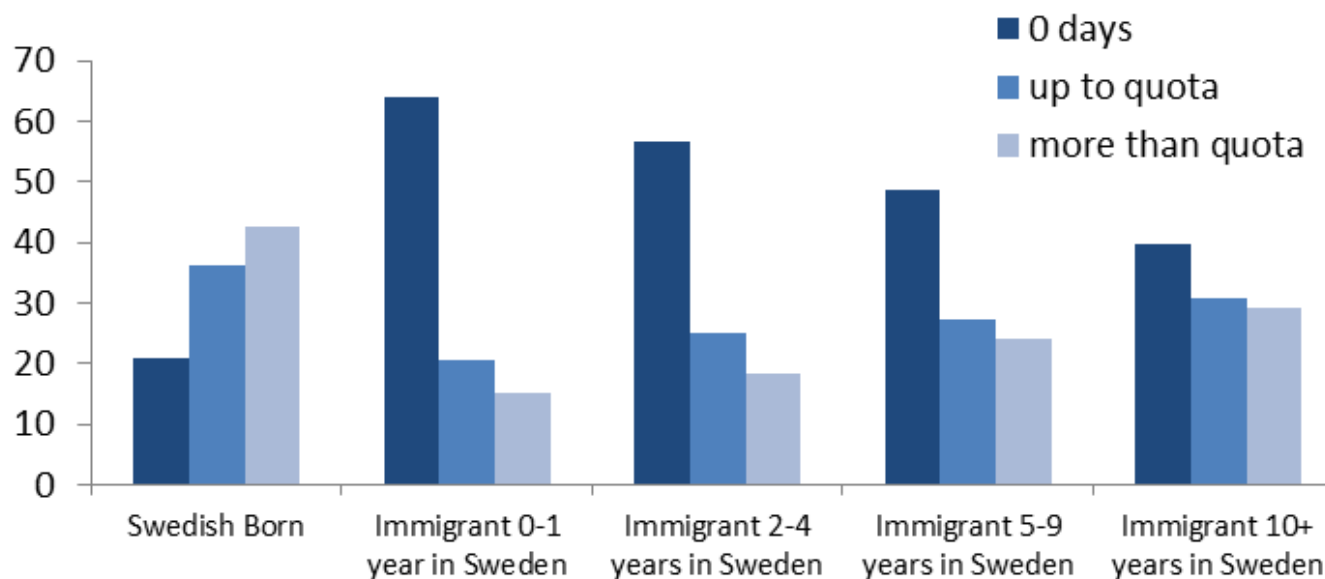
- Are immigrant fathers less able to use leave because of their more precarious situation?
  - Do they “adapt” with time in Sweden?
  - Do they follow same development of increasing leave use?

## Outcome

- Fathers’ parental leave days during the child’s first two years:
  - 0 days
  - up to the quota
  - more than the quota

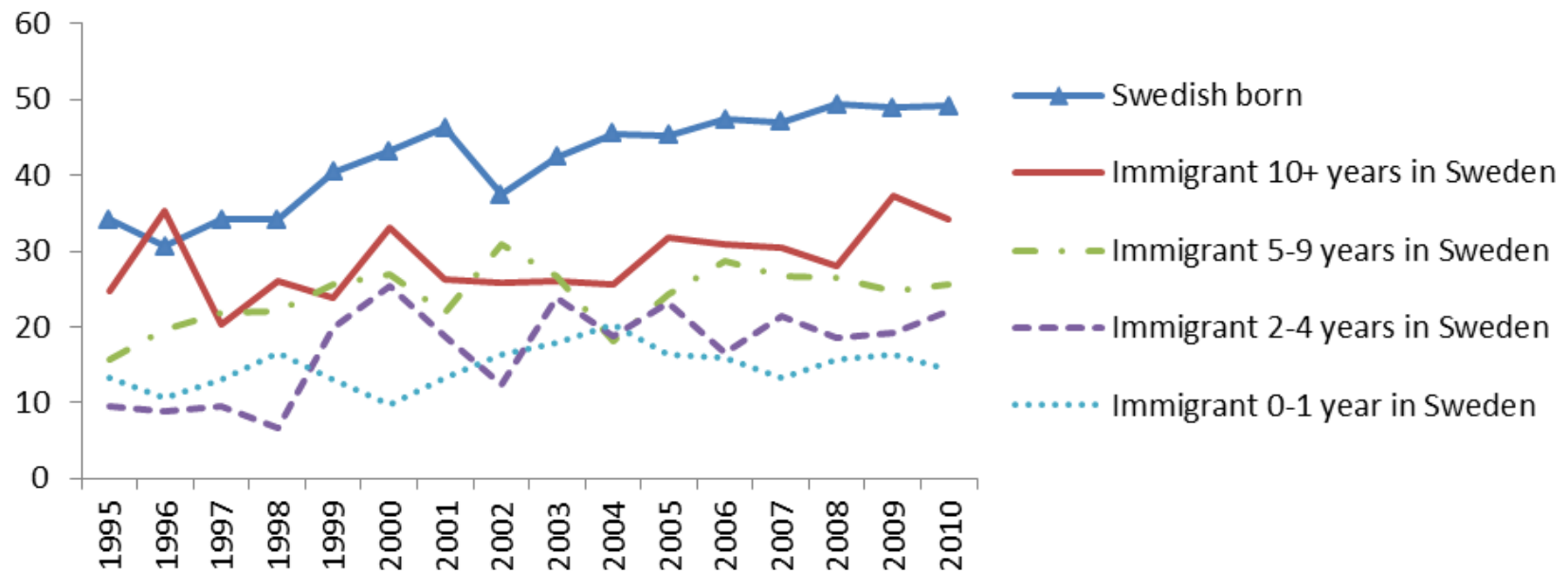
## Do immigrant fathers increase leave use with time in Sweden?

Distribution of fathers, by time since migration and length of parental leave use, 1995-2010



# Do immigrant fathers' leave use change over the period 1995 to 2010?

Distribution over time of fathers who took more than the quota, 1995-2010



# Conclusions



- Immigrant fathers use parental leave
- Immigrant fathers do increase leave use with time in Sweden
- Over time, Swedish-born fathers increased their leave-use more than immigrant fathers
- Differences in leave use between immigrant and Swedish-born fathers persist, even when socio-economic and demographic characteristics considered

# Implications



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- Need of interventions with **information** regarding rights and benefits to all parents in Sweden.
  - **Labour market conditions** are crucial for leave use, attention needed to the interaction between these two policy areas.