

“Young People of Migrant Origin in Sweden”

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Published 2003

International Migration Review. Vol. 37 (Winter, No. 4), The Future of the Second Generation: The
Integration of Migrant Youth in Six European Countries: 987 – 1010

Themes: Child Wellbeing

Regions: West Europe

Age Ranges: <6, 6- 11, 12, 17, 18+

Keywords: Education/Cognitive Skills, Work and Employment, Economic Status

Abstract: This article surveys immigration during the second part of the twentieth century with the aim of determining the origins of the immigrant population and the socioeconomic position of the second generation. It focuses on migration from Turkey from the 1960s onward. Originally, migration from Turkey was within the framework of labor recruitment. These migrants were predominantly ethnic Turks of rural origin. A second wave of migrants from Turkey was composed of Syriani/Assyrians, a Christian minority from eastern Turkey seeking asylum in the 1970s on the grounds of religious persecution. Since the 1980s, the main intake of migrants from Turkey has been Kurds seeking protection on the grounds of political persecution. Immigration of ethnic Turks and Syriani/Assyrians is restricted to family reunification and family formation; the numbers are low. Kurds, on the other hand, are accepted both on the grounds of refugee claims and family reunification/family formation. The article looks at conditions of growing up in Sweden, with a particular focus on education, mother-tongue classes and instruction in Swedish. Second-generation youth distinguish themselves by an overrepresentation among dropouts from school, but also by an overrepresentation among those who do well academically in comparison with native Swedes. This applies to second-generation youth with family roots in Turkey. Though very few under the age of 18 hold regular employment, the article also discusses the prospects of entering the labor market, based on information from the regular labor market surveys. Unemployment rates are consistently higher for second-generation migrants than for native-born Swedish youth. The article closes with a discussion about the developing multi-cultural society in Sweden and the niches that second-generation youth tend to occupy.