

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Emigration from the Nordic countries to Brazil 1880–1914

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The article explores the issue of Nordic emigration to Brazil in the period of global mass migration between 1880–1914, based on Brazilian immigration sources, something that has not hitherto been done. An analysis of different available figures for total Swedish emigration in 1885–1891 shows that the figures recorded in Brazilian sources should be revised upwards, with perhaps as much as 60%, which may be valid also for total Nordic emigration. A demographical, social and economic analysis against the background of the Brazilian agrarian structure shows that Nordic migration between 1880 and 1914 was dominated by young Swedish families who arrived in two major waves, 1890–1891 and 1910–1911. Structurally, the immigrants were predominantly agrarian, more specifically farmers (*agricultores*) who migrated to southern Brazil to establish family farms within the domestic sector. However, the analysis also shows that a surprisingly large proportion of total migration, including a great number of families, went to the export sector in the coffee zone in São Paulo.

Keywords: Brazil; Sweden; emigration

Introduction

Emigration from the Nordic countries to Brazil during the epoch of global mass migration has been the subject of a few scholarly studies in the past, mainly concerning Swedes (Stenbeck 1973, Eriksson and Falk 1971, Klasson and Olander 1987, Carlsson 1991), apart from a number of anecdotal accounts (Hanno 1976/1977, Carlsson 1991, Isaksson 1996, Flodell 2000, Anderzén 2000). General studies on Nordic emigration to the Americas include some observations on the topic (Nilsson 1970, Hvidt 1975, Stang 1976, Mörner 1985).

These studies have mainly been based on documentary sources in the migrants' home countries which entail some problems. For example, demographical, social and economic characteristics are rarely visible in sources of the sending country. Furthermore, it entails problems for calculating accurate total numbers. Official emigration statistics in Finland began as late as 1905 and draw on passport issuances which only reveals the intentions of emigration, not actual emigration. In addition, for overseas emigration Finnish sources do not give any specification as to which non-European country the emigrant intended to go (*Nordic Emigration* 1970: 14). In Denmark, systematic emigration statistics began already in 1868, but also here, all overseas destinations are included in the same general 'overseas' category ("*alle oversøiske Land*") and registering with the authorities was not compulsory (Hvidt 1975: 160, 403; Bender 2011: 9). In Sweden, the country of

destination of emigrants to South America is not specified until 1909 (Retsö 1996: 3; Jensen 1931: 283–285).

A survey of the available documentation in Brazil, the receiving country, should be able to shed some light on all of these aspects. No such study has hitherto been carried out. The present article therefore attempts to make an assessment of total numbers of Nordic emigration to Brazil in the period of mass migration between 1880 and 1914. A new method combining passenger statistics from the emigration ports in Europe and immigration data from Brazil will be used, thus bypassing what Frank Thistlethwaite (1960) called 'the salt-water curtain'. In addition, it will give a demographical, social and economic profile of these Nordic migrants based on Brazilian documentary sources. The result will also be related to the pattern of other immigrant groups in Brazil. No analysis of push factors, drivers or assimilation processes in the new country will be made here.

The outline of the article is as follows. First, the relevant sources are presented and a general overview of the historical context is given. Next, a comparative quantitative analysis of emigration and immigration statistics will be carried out in order to reach a more accurate number of total migrations. Thereafter, an analysis of demographical, social and economic characteristics will be made in order to characterize Nordic migration against the background of the Brazilian agrarian structure and in relation to other immigrant groups in Brazil.

The sources

The main source for immigration research in Brazil is the register books kept at the main immigrant hostel on Ilha das Flores in Rio de Janeiro, today available at the National

Archives (*Arquivo Nacional*). As São Paulo with time became the most important destination for immigrants an immigration station was built outside the city at Bom Retiro in 1881, and subsequently in Santos (1891) and in Campinas (1894) (Holloway 1977: 157–8, Holloway 1980: 35–36, Segawa 1989:27). Registers were also kept at the Pinheiros station in Rio. Three of the books kept there are found in the National Archives today and cover the period between November 1891 and September 1896. No Nordic immigrants have been registered at Pinheiros. In 1887 the Bom Retiro station in São Paulo was deemed insufficient and from February 1897 a new, larger immigrant hostel administered by the immigration society *Sociedade Promotora de Imigração*, with a capacity of 4,000 persons, began to function in Brás, a railway junction for the Santos-Rio de Janeiro track (see Petri 2010). A hostel in São Bernardo do Campo also functioned temporarily in 1893–1896 and in Cachoeira in 1892–1897, outside of the capital of the state of São Paulo due to a cholera epidemic there (Matos 2007). No register books from Cachoeira are found in the National Archives today. On the other hand, there are eight books preserved from the *Agência Central de Imigração* (ACI), which kept parallel records to the ones on Ilha das Flores and cover in total 33 months during the period 1893–1903. All Nordic citizens registered at ACI can also be found in the sources from Ilha das Flores. Since Rio was the capital at the time and Ilha das Flores was the main immigrant hostel, the books from Ilha das Flores can be considered as the main source for all migration research for the period.

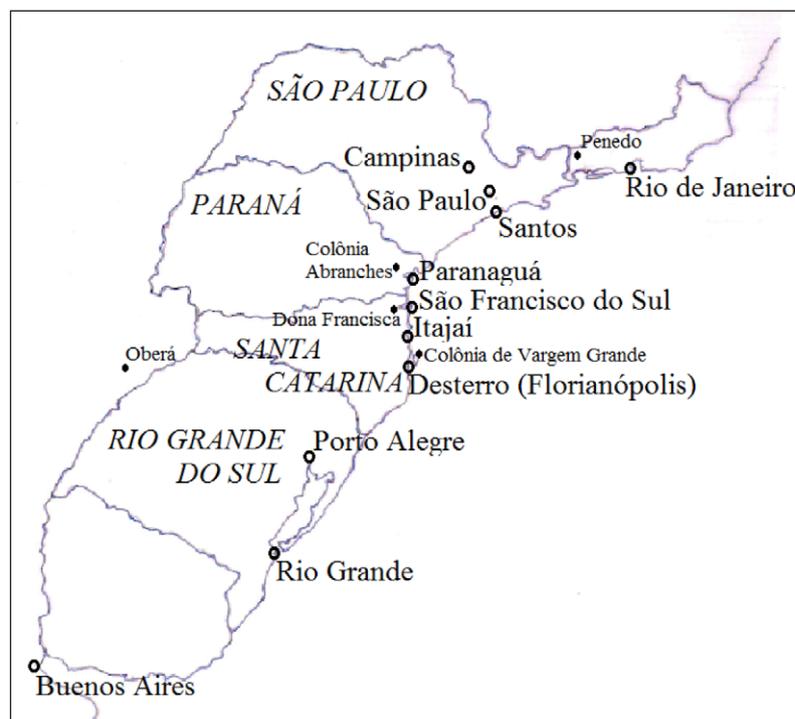
These register books provide information about each emigrant's name, age, nationality, civil status, occupation, date of arrival, the ship's name, port of departure

and emigrants' final destinations in Brazil, as well as dates of departure from Rio. In some cases information is given as to whether the migrants were contracted labor or paid for their journey themselves. Some emigrants returning to Europe have also been recorded. The primary data on Swedish and Norwegian immigrants have been published previously (Retsö 1997, Retsö 1999).

The Nordic emigration to Brazil in a historical context

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries Brazil was still overwhelmingly rural. Since colonial times, Brazilian economy had been geared towards the production of agricultural commodities – sugar, cotton, and later coffee – for the world market. At the same time, the extreme specialization of tropical plantations and the enormous supply of land created possibilities for small-scale farming and production of basic foodstuffs for the domestic market, especially in the southern provinces of Paraná, Santa Catarina and Rio Grande do Sul. The export sector with high ownership concentration, integrated in the world economy and dominated by slave labor, and a sector producing basic foodstuffs for the domestic market with free labor came to constitute the characteristic Brazilian agrarian dualism. These two sectors came to be the central points of attraction for immigration from Europe in the 19th century.

At the time of independence, a shift from the sugar-producing Northeast to the coffee-producing Southeast was under way. At the same time, there was an ideological shift away from the colonial concept of land as a royal grant and symbol of social status worked by slaves towards a concept of land as an input factor for capitalistic exploitation through free labor. Increased costs for slave labor,



Map 1: Major locations of Nordic migration in Brazil.

Source: Map elaborated by the author.

following the end of slave trade in 1850 and increased demand for coffee, accelerated the process. These phenomena resulted in the final abolition of slavery in 1888 and the political takeover of the coffee elite in 1889.

However, the basic dualistic agrarian structure remained intact. For the coffee barons of São Paulo, and to an increasing extent the national government, it was important to attract immigrants to the labour-intensive coffee plantations in São Paulo as sharecroppers or day laborers (*jornaleiros*), rather than as freeholding peasants to the South (*agricultores*). There were possibilities to attract European farmers to the coffee zone thanks to the character of coffee cultivation itself. The short cycles of the system, caused by the rapid exhaustion of the soil and repeated economic slumps, led to the gradual abandonment of the least lucrative land and the constant move westwards of the 'coffee frontier'. The marginal land left behind together with the rapid urbanization of the province of São Paulo created conditions for a market for food production and could be used as a bait for European farmers to settle in its vicinity (Holloway 1980: 13–34, Petrone 1985: 120).

The Brazilian land law of 1850 mirrored these changes and ambitions. In contrast to the US Homestead Law of 1862, which facilitated freeholdings, it stipulated purchase of land as the only way to acquire right to till it while at the same time the price was set so high that it would be unattainable for most immigrants. The purpose of the law was twofold: to direct immigration towards the coffee *fazendas* and to provide the government with funds to subsidize further immigration (Costa 1985: 146, 139–161).

However, attracting Europeans, especially North Europeans, to settle in a distant and unknown country like Brazil, required special measures. For example, immigration societies were created for the administration of recruitment, transports and contracts and in 1884 a national law was passed which stipulated government subsidies for the immigration of agricultural laborers. After

the transition to federalist republicanism in 1889 immigration policies became the responsibility of the states. In São Paulo economic growth facilitated the continuation of subsidized immigration, but a substantial flow of immigrants to the South also continued. Propaganda activities were pursued by Brazilian emigration agents in Europe, not least in Sweden, but their sometimes ruthless methods backlashed and led some European countries, from time to time, to prohibit emigration to Brazil altogether (Stenbeck 1973, Hanno 1976/1977).

Counting numbers

In the register books from *Arquivo Nacional* the names of 3,640 Nordic citizens are found between 1880 and 1914 (Table 1, Figure 1).

As can be seen, Nordic emigration to Brazil between 1880 and 1914 was an overwhelmingly Swedish affair. Together with the Finns, the second largest group, they comprise 93% of the total. The great emigration waves from Nordic countries to Brazil came in the 1890s and the 1910s (Figure 1), at a time when the periods of the highest gross emigration rates had already passed in both Sweden

Nationality	Number	Percentage
Swedes	2,984	82
Finns	390	11
Danes*	196	5
Norwegians	70	2
Total	3,640	100

Table 1: Nordic emigration to Brazil 1880–1914, by nationality.

Notes: Elaborated by the author based on Arquivo Nacional, Livros de registro de entrada de estrangeiros, vols 1–107.

* A single immigrant registered as an Icelander has been included in the Danish group.

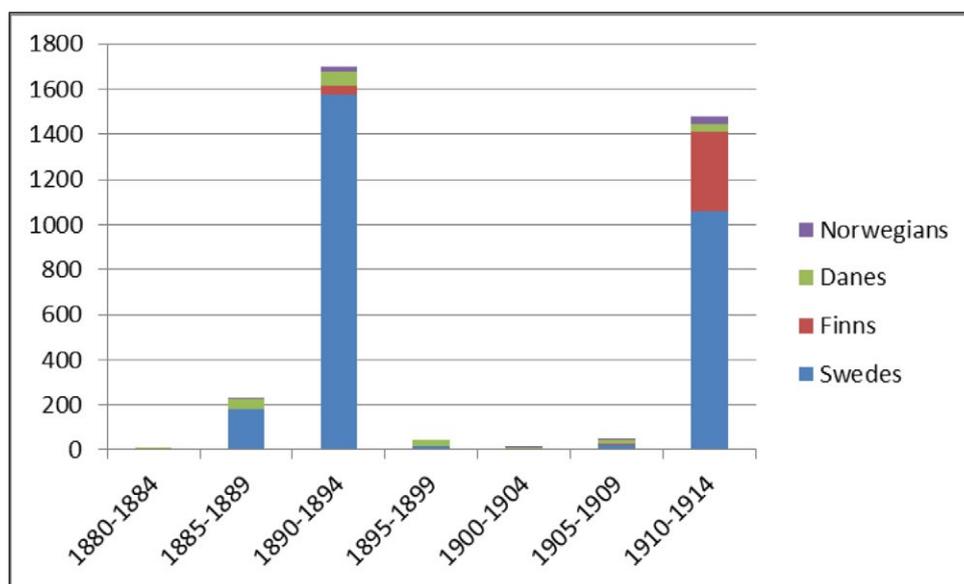


Figure 1: Nordic emigration to Brazil 1880–1914 per decade, by nationality.

Source: Elaborated by the author based on Arquivo Nacional, Livros de registro de entrada de estrangeiros, vols 1–107.

and Finland, but coincide quite well with the maximum immigration rates for Brazil and specific national groups there (Hatton and Williamson 1998, table 2.1, Barton 1994: 344, Cenni 1975: 171, Klein 1992: 508, Nugent 1997: 397). The chronology of Swedish and Finnish emigration is even more distinct. The Swedes arrived in two larger waves, 1890–1891 and 1910–1911 and the Finns in the latter. The few Danes and Norwegians are scattered over the whole period.

Most Nordic immigrants left Europe from German ports of which Bremen was the most important at the time of the first wave of Nordic emigration in 1890–1891 (Hoerder 1993), but it was gradually superseded by Hamburg; almost all Nordic emigrants in the second wave left from Hamburg. When the duration of the crossing of the Atlantic can be estimated it took on average 25 days, and the immigrants normally stayed 2–3 days at the immigrant hostel at Ilha das Flores before moving on to their final destinations. Between 1889 and 1891 a number of Swedish immigrants came as contracted immigrants by the most significant immigration companies like R. O. Lobedanz, Angelo Fiorita and José Antunes dos Santos. Others came on their own (designated as “*espontâneo*” or “*pagou passagem*” in the register books). The largest single contingent of Nordic immigrants seems to have been the 415 Swedish passengers who departed from Hamburg on 26 June 1891 on the *Paraguassu* and arrived in Rio on 20 July (Arquivo Nacional, Livros de registro de entrada de estrangeiros, vol. 59).

Nordic emigration to Brazil was small and came at a relatively late stage in the epoch of mass migration. A few immigrants arrived before mid-19th century, but in contrast to European overseas migration to the US (Erickson 1994: 143), it seems to have been a concern for only a handful of mainly single, rather well-to-do male artisans, merchants, militaries and adventurers from Sweden and Denmark. Between 1808 and 1842 a total of 237 Nordic citizens were registered as immigrants (Arquivo Nacional 1963; Arquivo Nacional 1960–1964). Only a few can be considered as immigrants in the strictest sense. Some of them became prominent in Brazilian society such as the Swedish botanist Anders Fredrik Regnell and the Swedish businessman Herman Lundgren (Oliveira 1952: 43; Dahlgren 1962; Góes 1963; Andersson and Gunnarsson 1957: 188–195).

Towards the end of the 19th century conditions had changed dramatically on both sides of the Atlantic. Government policy changes, lower transportation costs and risks, employment ratios and income patterns spurred migration to unprecedented levels (Hatton and Williamson 2005). Most importantly, there was a transition from coerced labour to free labour across the Latin American continent, especially in Brazil where slave trade ceased definitely in 1850 and slavery itself in 1888 (Holloway 1977). According to generally accepted estimations international migrations during the period of global mass migration between 1824 and 1924 amounted to 52 million persons, of which about three-quarters emigrated to the US and one fifth to Latin America (Ferenczi and Willcox 1929: 230–237). Of these, 26% (or almost

4 million, some 8% of total migration) went to Brazil. The largest immigrant group in Brazil was the Italian with 37% followed by the Portuguese (30%), the Spanish (14%) and the German (4%) (Mörner 1985, Nugent 1997).

The main reason for the dramatic change in emigration patterns in general should also be valid for Nordic emigration: cheaper and safer transatlantic transportation and the beachhead effects of pioneers. The fall in transportation costs, counted as the quota of passage fare and per capita income was indeed more dramatic in Sweden during the course of the 19th century than anywhere else (34%) (Galenson 1984: 18). In the specific case of Brazil, the increased need for free labour and the consequent government subsidies for emigration fares followed the end of the slave trade and the abolition of slavery.

Even so, Nordic emigration to Brazil after mid-19th century still constituted only a trickle in comparison with the total European emigration. Some systematic colonization efforts were carried out by Danes in Colônia de Vargem Grande in the province of Santa Catarina as early as 1837, in Colônia Abranches (Paraná) in 1872 and in São Paulo in 1873. The only Nordic colony with some longevity was that in Dona Francisca (modern Joinville, Santa Catarina), where 74 shipwrecked Norwegians on their way to California settled in 1850. The following year a number of Danes arrived there and the colony was also the main destination for 108 Swedes who emigrated there from Stockholm in 1868–1869 (Semmingen 1978, Stenbeck 1973, Stang 1976).

With World War I, Nordic emigration to Brazil ceased almost completely. In the years between 1921 and 1932 only 361 immigrants were registered at Ilha das Flores. However, some traits of mass migration can still be seen. For example, in 1923 the *Caxias* brought five Norwegian and Swedish families and a number of single immigrants, totaling 34 persons, from Hamburg, and in 1929 130 Finns, a third of all Nordic immigration in this period, arrived. The majority of the latter were followers of Toivo Uuskallio who founded a colony of vegetarians in Penedo in the state of Rio de Janeiro (Fagerlande 2007).

Counting numbers: The case of Swedish migration 1885–1891

Establishing the exact number of Nordic immigrants in Brazil is not easy. Among other things, statistics in both the Nordic countries and Brazil cover different time frames. To be sure, Nordic emigration to Latin America constituted only a fraction of total emigration at the turn of the century. Gudmund Stang (1976: 294) estimated it around 33,000 and 40,000 between 1914 and 1968. The official Swedish enquiry on emigration in 1913 estimated the total number of Swedes who had emigrated to South America between 1881 and 1900 at 3,545 (*Emigration-sutredningen* 1913: 608), and a compilation of statistics made on behalf of the International Labour Office in 1929 showed a total of 7,055 Nordic immigrants to Brazil between 1820 and 1926, of which the great majority or 5,743 were Swedes (Naylor 1931: 164). For the entire half-century 1850–1900 Axel Paulin (1951: 575) estimated the total number of Swedish emigrants to Brazil

at 4–5,000. An estimate from the Brazilian Ministry of Labor in 1968 accounted for a total of 13,159 immigrants of Nordic origin since the beginning of mass migration (7,994 Swedes since 1853, 1,136 Norwegians since 1888, and 4,029 Danes since 1886) (Basto 1999). Unfortunately, no Finns were included in the Brazilian estimate.

As an illustration of the disparate nature of migration statistics, we can take the two great Swedish migration waves to Brazil in the 1890s and the 1910s (**Tables 2** and **3**). For the first wave in 1890–1891 Paulin (1951: 572), citing a report from the Swedish consul-general, claimed that 217 Swedes had arrived in 1890 and 891 between January and June 1891. According to Karin Stenbeck (1973: 79), based on emigration statistics from the bureau of trade statistics (*Handelsstatistische Bureau*) in Hamburg, 2,362 Swedes emigrated 1885–1891. Her figures were revised by Friborg (1988: 15–16) but unfortunately he only reports numbers up to the month of September 1891, which reaches 1,805 for that year. Even if the registered Swedes in the Ilha das Flores records from October to December are added to Friborg's figure, the total number only reaches 1,995 which are close enough to Stenbeck's 2,022 for the whole year. On the other hand, both Stenbeck's and Friborg's figures are way higher than the Rio records; in fact, the double.

As can be seen, the figures also differ widely for most other years between 1885 and 1891. Especially puzzling is the low figure for 1890 in Stenbeck and Friborg, if compared to Paulin and Arquivo Nacional.

Thus, fewer Swedes were registered in the receiving country than in the port of departure for the years 1885–1891. The picture is quite the opposite for the years between 1909 – when official Swedish statistics for the first time specify Brazil as a country of destination for emigrants – and 1914 (**Table 3**). Here, a total of 520 Swedes have been reported as immigrants arriving in Brazil but not as emigrants in Swedish sources.

What accounts for these differences – a 24% deficit in Brazilian immigration statistics for 1885–1891 and a 44% deficit in Swedish emigration statistics for

Year	Paulin 1951	Stenbeck 1973	Friborg 1988	Arquivo Nacional
1885	–	33	8	18
1886	–	102	81	52
1887	–	60	54	12
1888	–	54	42	9
1889	–	59	59	86
1890	217	32	39	372
1891	891*	2,022	1,805**	1,012**
Total 1890–1891	1,108	2,054	1,844	1,384
Total 1885–1891	–	2,362	2,088	1,561

Table 2: Figures for total Swedish emigration to Brazil 1885–1891.

Notes: Elaborated by the author based on Paulin 1951, Stenbeck 1973, Friborg 1988 and Arquivo Nacional, Livros de registro de entrada de estrangeiros, vols 1–107.

* January–June.

** January–September.

	Arquivo Nacional	Sveriges officiella statistik 1917, 1929*
1909	7	19 (+12)
1910	88	275 (+187)
1911	1,072	350 (–722)
1912	23	15 (–8)
1913	2	8 (+6)
1914	4	9 (+5)
Total	1,108	676 (–520)

Table 3: Figures for total Swedish emigration to Brazil 1909–1914.

Notes: Elaborated by the author based on Arquivo Nacional, Livros de registro de entrada de estrangeiros, vols 1–107 and Sveriges officiella statistik 1917 and 1929.

* Difference in relation to Arquivo Nacional in brackets.

1909–1914? Is it possible to reach more consistent and accurate figures?

To start with, it is important to mention that this kind of discrepancy between emigration and immigration figures is not uncommon in migration research, and the same is true for different types of emigration sources such as parish registers, passport issuances and ships passenger lists. There are a number of possible explanations for this asymmetry.

Firstly, one obvious factor of error could be that Swedes on board German ships may have been registered as Germans or even Swiss, but this is easily detected through an analysis of last names and has been corrected in this study. Besides, most immigrants certainly travelled as third-class passengers, which mean that the omission of second-class passengers in Brazilian records before 1907, estimated at 5% of all passengers, should not matter much (Naylor 1931).

Secondly and more importantly, it is known that illegal or unreported emigration at times could be quite voluminous (see Nilsson 1970: 257; Bender 2011: 8–9). For

example, Adolph Jensen (1931: 286) hypothesized that the figures for emigration to the US between 1881 and 1925 should be raised by 17% for Sweden, 8% for Denmark and 3% for Norway, and Ingrid Eriksson showed that the figures for emigration to the US from two south Swedish parishes in 1874 should be increased by as much as 40% (*Nordic Emigration* 1970: 4). Until 1884, when emigration certificates became compulsory in Sweden, information was given orally to the authorities, which means that discrepancies should be less after that although illegal or unreported emigration certainly continued to some degree (*Nordic Emigration* 1970: 1). For example, the extremely high figure from Brazilian sources for the year 1911 is conspicuous. On the other hand, this explanation can obviously not account for the opposite situation in 1890–1891.

Thirdly, Swedish authorities may have counted only individual adults. Still, the discrepancy remains; at least in 1911, the number of adults registered in Brazil was 410 while Swedish statistics account for 350.

Fourthly, since Swedish emigration to Brazil went through German ports, it can also be that emigrants originally applied for emigration to the US but once in emigrant hostels in Bremen and Hamburg changed their plans and went to Brazil instead, for example through the dissemination within the emigrant community of information about the state-subsidized fares. If so, the Swedes may have made a new risk and benefit assessment and valued the subsidized fare to Brazil higher than the supply of free land in the US. This ‘contamination effect’ as well as the phenomenon of chain migration has been pointed out as an explanation for Danish emigration to Brazil which would have been to a high degree an effect of the large emigration from Germany (Hvidt 1975: 403). The general difficulty of distinguishing intra-European migration from intercontinental migration has been pointed out by Odén (1963: 273). On the other hand, as is the case with unreported migration the ‘contamination effect’ in favor of Brazil in 1911 cannot be verified for 1890–1891 by other empirical evidence.

No single factor seems able to explain the different nature of emigration and immigration statistics for 1885–1891 and 1910–1911. One possibility to assess the true number of emigrants is to analyze in detail available numbers of Swedish emigrants registered in Hamburg and Swedish immigrants registered in Rio during a specific period. Ships’ names and number of Swedish emigrants on board each ship from Hamburg between January 1885 and September 1891 are reproduced in Friborg (1988) and can be compared with the equivalent data from Arquivo Nacional (Retsö 1996: 9–11). Some ships are only registered in Hamburg, others only in Rio and yet others are registered in both places.

A first puzzling observation here is that the number of Swedish emigrants (2,027) registered as departing passengers from Hamburg with destination Brazil is greater than the number of Swedes (825) arriving from Hamburg in Rio for these years. Obviously neither the Hamburg nor the Rio records are complete. Some emigrants have been registered in Hamburg but not in Rio and vice versa. On

the other hand, the Rio records contain 701 Swedish arrivals from a number of other ports (including a few single persons re-migrating to Brazil within the periphery from ports like New York and Buenos Aires). Most of these, 601, are recorded in 1890 and 1891 as arrivals from Bremen or Antwerp – which was a port of call for ships of the Norddeutscher Lloyd from Bremen – and are of course not included in the Hamburg figures; that was the case of *Kronprinz Friedrich Wilhelm*, *Ohio*, *Baltimore* and probably also *Graf Bismarck* and *Weser* (Drechsel 1994). Stenbeck (1973: 79–80) wanted to explain the low number of emigrants from Hamburg for 1890 precisely through a greater emigrant flow through Bremen that year which of course would mean that it would not be registered in the Hamburg sources but only in the Rio records. Emigrants are also registered in Rio as arrivals from Lisbon, which was a port of call for Hamburg-based ships like *Bahia*, *Paraguassu*, *Salamanca*, *Cap Roca* and *Hohenstaufen*, and should be added to the Hamburg figures.

Still, the total sum of all passengers registered in Rio from or via Hamburg, Bremen, Amsterdam, Lisbon and Antwerp in 1885–1891, 1,012, does not match the total number in the Hamburg records. In some cases not even the data from Hamburg and Rio concerning the same ship match; sometimes the former are higher and sometimes the latter are higher. A first explanation to this is that although the Swedish passengers embarked in Hamburg not all of them disembarked in Rio to be registered in the Ilha das Flores immigration books. In twelve cases during the period, most of them before 1890, it is known that ships went directly from Hamburg to the port of Santos, near São Paulo, without calling at Rio. Furthermore, ten ships continued to Santos and Porto Alegre *after* calling at Rio or called in at other Brazilian ports *before* arriving in Rio, e. g. Recife in the Northeast. All in all, it means that some Swedish immigrants disembarked before and some after the ship’s arrival in Rio, which would explain their absence in the books at Ilha das Flores.

The trend for Santos as the most used port of entry seems to have become increasingly strong as São Paulo became the most important destination for European immigrants. In the 1920s, up to a third of them disembarked in Santos (see e. g. Lesser 1994: 178) and for Spaniards it has been found that only 31% disembarked in Rio in the period 1908–1912 (Klein 1992: 525). However, it is unclear whether this means that they also went unregistered in Rio.

Yet in seven cases, the ships went directly, and only, to Rio and still display differing figures. That must be due to another fact; that a number of emigrants have died on board during the crossing of the ocean. The death toll during the voyage on these ships was 36 out of a total of 831 passengers, which renders a death rate of 4% and must, by the way, be judged as low in comparison with earlier migration. Doubtlessly, the safer and faster steamship connections, as well as, improved diet on board and perhaps a better nutritional standard among immigrants contributed to a relatively low number of deaths. Conversely, on four ships the number of arrivals in Rio was higher than departures from Hamburg, which is simpler – and

sweeter – to explain; some emigrants have simply been born at sea.

The procedure to establish a more accurate number of migrants between 1885 and 1891 involves three steps:

1. When there are differing figures in Hamburg and Rio for the same ship on direct port-to-port travels, the latter will consistently be accepted to account for the net sum of deaths and births at sea. The figure for this is 881.
2. When there are differing figures in Hamburg and Rio for the same ship on indirect travels with calling at ports in Europe, the Rio numbers will be accepted (to account for passengers not embarking in Hamburg) and, in the case of indirect travels with calling at ports in Brazil, the Hamburg numbers will be accepted (to account for passengers not disembarking in Rio). The figures are 57 and 47, respectively.
3. These numbers are then added to the number of unique emigrants in both the Rio records (532) and the Hamburg records (945) and to the sum of immigrants in both places when they are identical for the same ship (62).

The result of this operation is 2,524 Swedes migrating to Brazil in 1885–1891, i. e. 62% higher than the Ilha das Flores figures but perfectly compatible with the figures presented by Stenbeck (1973). Hypothetically, this relationship could be used to estimate total Nordic emigration for the same period by calibration. The number of Danish and Norwegian immigrants in 1885–1891 would be raised from 120 to 192, totaling 2,716 Nordic citizens which can be compared to the 1,712 registered in the Rio records. Applying the same proportion to Nordic emigration to Brazil in the entire period 1880–1914 would render a total sum of 5,860 in comparison with the 3,640 individuals found in the Rio records. However, it should be emphasized that this is still a hypothetical minimum

and that the operation is only decidedly valid for Swedes, between 1885 and 1891.

Demographical aspects

Although the Rio records do not give by themselves an accurate total number of immigrants, they do contain important qualitative information which European sources do not provide. It is held here that the picture of the demographical, social and economic structure of Nordic migration is not altered by the revision of total numbers, and that the Ilha das Flores records still allow for such an analysis.

A little more than half of the Nordic immigrants in the period were under 20 years of age and one third was even under 10 years of age – a confirmation of the picture of family migration, especially for Swedes and Finns (**Figure 2**). However, all persons within the age group 10–19 were not children. Some very young married couples are included, especially among the Swedes. In comparison, the largest age group among Danes was those between 20 and 29, as was the case with Danish emigration in general in the last quarter of the 19th century (Hvidt 1975:73).

The age distribution for the Swedish and Finnish groups is largely identical with the aggregate whole. The largest age group among them is the younger children up to 10 years of age who constitute a little more than a third of the Swedish and Finnish immigrant groups, and together with the teenagers they constitute more than half. The dominant age group among adult Swedes was that between 20 and 29 years while the next age group is greater among the Finns. The difference between Swedes and Finns, on the one hand and the Danes and the Norwegians on the other, is explained by the larger share of single immigrants among the latter which rises the average age.

Counting all single immigrants (unmarried, divorced, widows and widowers) as one category and the number of members of all family formations (core families,

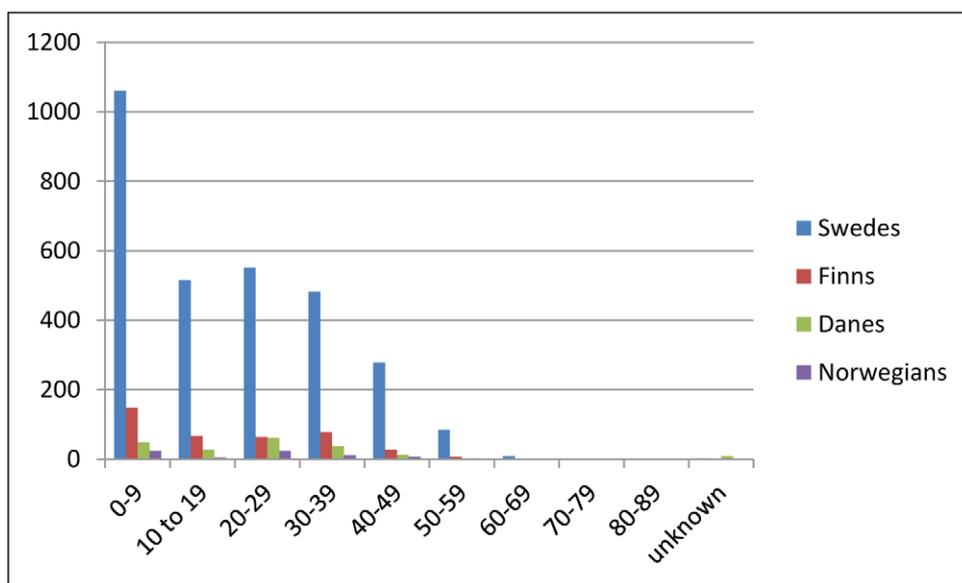


Figure 2: Age distribution of Nordic emigrants to Brazil 1880–1914.

Source: Elaborated by the author based on Arquivo Nacional, Livros de registro de entrada de estrangeiros, vols 1–107.

extended families and one-parent families) as another, a clear overweight for families is seen (**Figure 3**). Out of a total of 3,640 immigrants only 519, or 14%, came as single immigrants. Between the four nationality groups the differences are quite substantial. Family immigration clearly dominates among the numerous Swedes and Finns. Of all Finnish immigrants between 1880 and 1914 only 22 came on their own. The differences in civil status also explain variations in the age structure between the different Nordic groups. Family emigration dominated only in the main waves of 1890–1891 and 1910–1911. Before 1890 only 14 Swedish families arrived compared with 96 lone-comers. Furthermore, the Finnish family immigration was concentrated to the second wave 1910–1911. Only two of the 79 Finnish families came before 1910. An expected consequence of this is that there is no gender bias towards males among Swedes and Finns. Instead, gender equal distribution is quite significant even between men and women.

The Danish and Norwegian groups again differ from the other two. They came to a lower degree in families, especially true for the Danes, and they neither came in connection with the mentioned waves. Furthermore, single immigrants tended to be male. In this sense, Nordic emigration to Brazil is only partially typical for the general pattern of transatlantic migration from the Nordic countries which has been characterized as dominated by young male adults (Hvidt 1975, Carlsson 1976). At the same time, like Spanish and Japanese immigration, it strongly differs from the general pattern of immigration to Brazil which was dominated by males to a degree of 60%, and by adults with 92% (Klein 1992: 509, Lesser 1994: 182).

In structural demographical terms then, Nordic immigration in Brazil was composed mainly of Swedish and Finnish families. The Danes were mainly lone-comers with a high average age, while the Norwegians display a somewhat higher proportion of families and lower average age than the Danes.

Occupation

Hatton and Williamson (2005:51–76) stress the importance of labour market factors such as wages and employment opportunities to explain migration patterns. It is generally assumed that emigrants were those who were most responsive to economic incentives. Young families like those who dominated Nordic emigration were also in their most healthy and productive age. Furthermore, emigrants were to an increasing extent non-agrarian (Hatton and Williamson 2005: 17). In the case of Nordic emigrants to Brazil this seems to be especially true of the second great wave of Swedes in 1910–1911, where a majority were from the mining areas of Kiruna in the North and were unused to agriculture. When it comes to so small numbers of migrants as those of Nordic emigration to Brazil, it could well mean that labour market conditions in Brazil mattered less than the lack of job opportunities in the home country at the turn of the century, at least in the case of Sweden (Thomas 1941).

In the register books from Ilha das Flores, occupational terms like *lavrador*, *lavoura*, *jornaleiro*, *camponeiro*, *trabalhador* and *empregado* generally refer to agricultural labourers, whereas the terms *agricultor* and *agricultura* refer to farmers.

In the following, the connection between profession and final destination will be further illuminated through the distinction between single immigrants and families.

Almost 70% of the Nordic single immigrants claimed to be *agricultores* and 13% *jornaleiros* while 17% had other or unknown occupations (see **Figure 4**, **Table 4**). The proportion of *agricultores* is largest for Finns and Swedes, for the former even larger than the aggregate average. As can be seen, the Finns are markedly agrarian; no Finns stated their occupation to be anything else than *agricultor* or *jornaleiro*. On the other hand, no less than 26% and 28% respectively of the Danes and the Norwegians had other professions. It is mostly a question of craftsmen

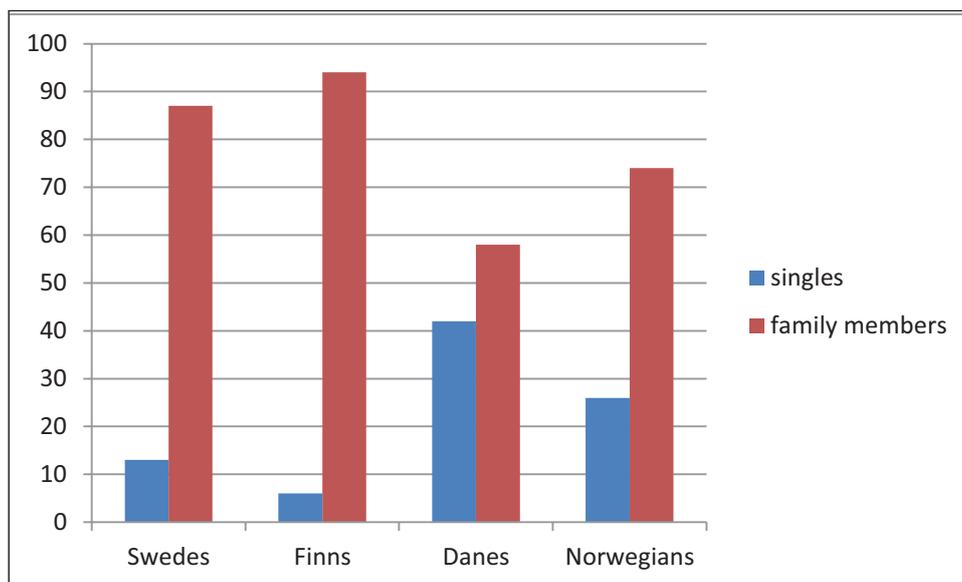


Figure 3: Civil status of Nordic emigrants to Brazil 1880–1914, percentage of national aggregates.

Source: Elaborated by the author based on Arquivo Nacional, Livros de registro de entrada de estrangeiros, vols 1–107.

and other urban professions which has been shown to be typical of at least late 19th century Danish emigration (Hvidt 1975: 113), including some highly educated persons, but also remarkably many *artistas*, whatever that may have meant.

Among the families, the number of farmers is even more overwhelming; 96% of all families claimed to be *agricultores* (Table 5). Again the proportions are largest for Swedes and Finns and once more, the Swedish and Finnish figures accompany each other with a nearly total dominance in each national group for farmers or *agricultores*.

The proportion of farmers among Nordic immigrants is found at the higher end of the general pattern, where are also found the Japanese and the Yugoslavs (after 1918) with 99% and 87% respectively, while immigrants from the Middle East (Ottoman empire citizens and Syrians) and Christian Poles were at the lower end

with 11%, 28% and 40% respectively (Lesser 1994: 181; Pietraszek 1974).

Destination

The register books from Arquivo Nacional normally give information about the Brazilian port to which the journey continued from Ilha das Flores. The ports thus mentioned are Rio Grande and Porto Alegre in Rio Grande do Sul, Florianópolis (before 1893 called Desterro), Itajaí and São Francisco do Sul in Santa Catarina, Paranaguá in Paraná and Santos in São Paulo. In the first years of the 1900s, passengers also travelled on to São Paulo by train. Here the states (before 1889 provinces) of Rio Grande do Sul, Santa Catarina and Paraná will be categorized as 'the South', identified with the domestic agrarian sector in contrast to the coffee export sector in São Paulo. Among other destinations it is found Rio itself and Minas Gerais, but there were also individual

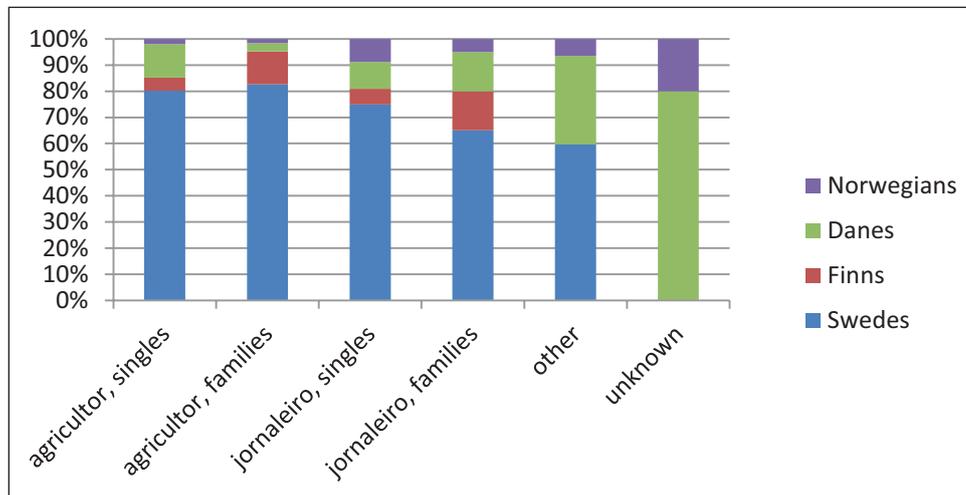


Figure 4: Nordic emigration to Brazil 1880–1914; occupation.

Source: Elaborated by the author based on Arquivo Nacional, Livros de registro de entrada de estrangeiros, vols 1–107.

Nationality	Farmer (agricultor etc.)	Agricultural labourer (jornaleiro etc.)	other	unknown
Swedes	287 (72)	51 (13)	44 (11)	14 (4)
Finns	18 (82)	4 (18)	–	–
Danes	46 (56)	7 (8)	22 (26)	8 (10)
Norwegians	7 (39)	6 (33)	5 (28)	–
Total	358 (69)	68 (13)	71 (14)	22 (4)

Table 4: Nordic emigration to Brazil 1880–1914; occupation, singles. Percentage of national totals in brackets.

Notes: Elaborated by the author based on Arquivo Nacional, Livros de registro de entrada de estrangeiros, vols 1–107.

Nationality	Farmer (agricultor etc.)	Agricultural labourer (jornaleiro etc.)	other	unknown
Swedes	503 (97)	13 (2.5)	2 (0.5)	–
Finns	77 (96)	3 (4)	–	–
Danes	19 (73)	3 (4)	4 (15)	–
Norwegians	10 (77)	1 (8)	–	2 (15)
Total	609 (96)	20 (3)	6 (1)	2 (<1)

Table 5: Nordic emigration to Brazil 1880–1914; profession, families. Percentage of national totals in brackets.

Notes: Elaborated by the author based on Arquivo Nacional, Livros de registro de entrada de estrangeiros, vols 1–107.

immigrants, who ventured into the Northeast and even to the Amazon.

A substantial part of the lone-comers, 34%, emigrated to São Paulo (**Table 6**). However, an even larger proportion, 42%, went to the South. Seventy-two percent of the families did the same (**Table 7**). The Swedish figures are close to the total, which is not strange since 80% of all families were Swedish. The Finnish and Norwegian families were also inclined to go to the South while the Danish families are divided more evenly between the two destinations but also have a higher number of unknown destinations. As many as 148 families or almost a fourth (23%) of all Nordic families aimed to São Paulo.

This broadly corresponds to the pattern of other North European immigrants, e. g. the Germans (Luebke 1987: 13–26), while there was a slight overweight for São Paulo as the final destination among immigrants in general, as well as among specific immigrant groups like the Italians (64%) and a strong overweight of others, like the Spaniards (80%) and the Japanese (Holloway 1980:40, Cenni 1975:171–172, Nugent 1997: 397, Klein 1992: 508, Tsuchida 1978: 144–146, 222).

The question arises whether these Nordic families who went to São Paulo were labour-seeking or land-seeking.

Either they sought employment as coffee-pickers on the coffee plantations or tried to establish family farming on the marginal soil left behind the moving coffee frontier. A comparison of the stated occupations of these São Paulo immigrants and that of families migrating to the South display the following picture (**Table 8**):

No less than 96% of the families who went to the South were peasants, presumably in search for land to establish family farms. Interestingly, no less than 143 families, or nearly a fourth of all Nordic *agricultor* families went to São Paulo. Since almost all Nordic family immigration in Brazil belonged to this occupational category it can be said that these São Paulo peasants constitute almost a fourth of total family immigration. Most of them also seem to be Swedes. The purpose of their migration can therefore be assumed to have been the establishment, at least eventually, of a farm of their own in the marginal lands left behind the coffee frontier.

While sharecropping no doubt constituted an important source of income, it is clear that both the preference for the South and the surprisingly high number of peasants going to São Paulo, reflects a traditional family farmstead structure in the immigrants' Nordic home countries.

Nationality	the South	São Paulo	Other	Unknown
Swedes	182 (46)	149 (38)	31 (8)	34 (8)
Finns	15 (68)	–	3 (18)	4 (18)
Danes	13 (16)	27 (34)	13 (16)	30 (38)
Norwegians	6 (33)	3 (17)	2 (11)	7 (39)
Total	216 (42)	179 (34)	49 (9)	75 (14)

Table 6: Nordic emigration to Brazil 1880–1914; destination, singles. Percentage of totals in brackets.

Notes: Elaborated by the author based on Arquivo Nacional, Livros de registro de entrada de estrangeiros, vols 1–107.

Nationality	the South	São Paulo	Other	unknown
Swedes	368 (71)	135 (26)	12 (2)	3
Finns	75 (95)	1 (8)	–	3
Danes	8 (31)	11 (42)	1	6
Norwegians	11 (84)	1 (8)	–	1
Total	462 (72)	148 (23)	13 (2)	13 (2)

Table 7: Nordic emigration to Brazil 1880–1914; destination, families. Percentage of national totals in brackets.

Notes: Elaborated by the author based on Arquivo Nacional, Livros de registro de entrada de estrangeiros, vols 1–107.

Destination	agricultor	jornaleiro	other	unknown
the South	446	15	–	1
São Paulo	143	1	3	1
other	13	–	–	–
unknown	6	4	3	–
Total	608	20	6	2

Table 8: Nordic emigration to Brazil 1880–1914; destination, families by occupation.

Notes: Elaborated by the author based on Arquivo Nacional, Livros de registro de entrada de estrangeiros, vols 1–107.

Re-emigration

The general rate of re-emigration was indeed very high among European immigrants in the Americas, perhaps as much as 40%, especially among South Europeans in Argentina and Brazil where net immigration summed up to half, or even less, of total immigration (Levy 1974: 62–67; Nugent 1997: 393, 398). For Scandinavians it has been estimated that the return ratio in general was considerably lower than for other nationalities in the Americas (Hatton and Williamson 2005: 14). However, in the case of Swedish immigrants in Brazil it is known to have been different. Their emigration turned out to be largely a failure, at least for those who arrived in the second wave in the early 1910s. The disastrous floods of the Rio Uruguai in Rio Grande do Sul in 1911 and 1912 forced most settlers to seek refuge across the border in Argentina (*Emigrationsutredningen* 1913: 650, 653). Their fate has been documented in a number of publications (Hanno 1976/1977; Friborg 1988; Isaksson 1996; Anderzén 2000). The majority returned to Sweden through the assistance of Swedish diplomats in Argentina. This repatriation is not documented in Arquivo Nacional since their re-emigration took place by way of Buenos Aires but according to official Swedish statistics a total of 432 persons returned from South America in the years 1910–1913 (*Sveriges offentliga utredningar* 1912–1914). A few of the colonists stayed in Argentina to establish the only true Swedish colony in Latin America in Oberá in the province of Misiones (Isaksson 1996, Flodell 2000).

In the sources from Arquivo Nacional there is little data on Nordic citizens who returned to Europe through Rio or resettled in other places in Brazil. For example, four Swedish families together with one unmarried man were first reported to have arrived to the northeastern state of Pernambuco but then seem to have changed their plans and proceeded to Rio Grande do Sul in June 1892. The reason for the Nordic re-emigrants registered in Rio to return to Europe – 33 Swedes and 24 Finns, in total 14 families – was probably in most cases different from the fate of the Rio Uruguai immigrants. It concerns almost exclusively widows with minor children who obviously lost their husbands shortly after arrival to their original destinations and did not manage their living. Sometimes true tragedies can be grasped, for example, the Finnish Emilia Hyvönen who returned to Rio as a widow and shortly upon her arrival there she also lost three of her four children, all under 5 years, and buried them at the children's cemetery in São Gonçalo. A total of six persons died on their way back to Rio, whereof five children and one Swedish widow. Five orphan children were repatriated and two were taken care of by Brazilian authorities.

Conclusions

In this study, an attempt has been made to reassess the total number of Nordic emigrants to Brazil in the period 1880–1914. A deep analysis of different available figures for total Swedish emigration there between 1885 and 1891 has shown that the figures as recorded in Brazilian sources should be revised upwards with per-

haps as much as 60%. Hypothetically, the figure can be applied to the total Nordic migration to Brazil in this period.

Furthermore, the study has shown that Nordic migration between 1880 and 1914 was dominated by young Swedish families who arrived in two waves, in 1890–1891 and 1910–1911. In the latter, a great number of Finns are also found. Structurally, the immigrants were predominantly agrarian, more specifically farmers (*agricultores*) who migrated to southern Brazil to establish family farms within the domestic sector. However, a surprisingly large proportion of total migration, including a great number of families, also went to the export sector and the coffee zone in São Paulo, probably with the intention of establishing family farmsteads on the marginal land left behind the moving 'coffee frontier'.

Competing Interests

The author declares that they have no competing interests.

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How to cite this article: Retsö, D. (2016). Emigration from the Nordic countries to Brazil 1880–1914. *Iberoamericana – Nordic Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies*, 45(1), pp. 6–18, DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.16993/iberoamericana.2>

Published: 12 October 2016

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