

From Rural to Urban Living

A survey among internal migrants from Sami core areas to cities in Norway

Marita Melhus^{*1}, Bent Martin Eliassen², Ann Ragnhild Broderstad¹

¹ Centre for Sami Health Research, UiT The Arctic University of Norway, Tromsø, Norway
² Faculty of Nursing and Health Sciences, Nord University, Bodø, Norway

Corresponding author: Centre for Sami Health Research, Department of Community Medicine, Faculty of Health Sciences, UiT The Arctic University of Norway, P.O. Box 6050 Langnes, NO-9037 Tromsø, Norway
Email: marita.melhus@uit.no

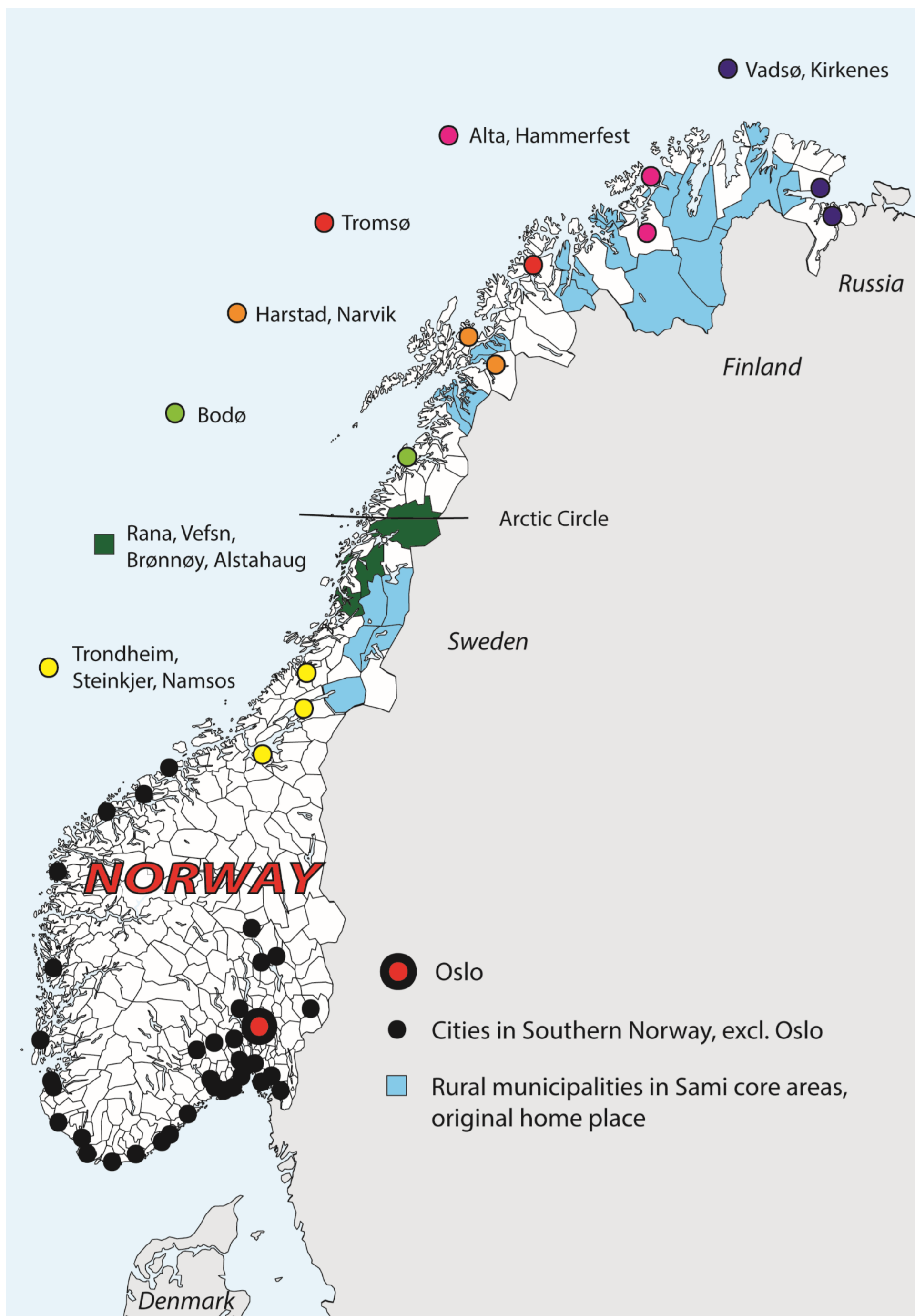
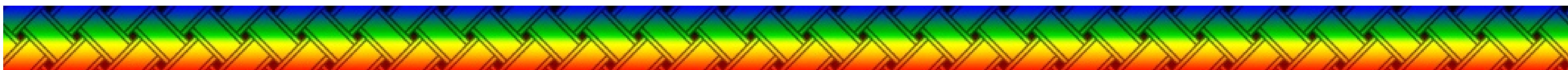


Figure 1. Map of study area of the survey “From Rural to Urban Living”

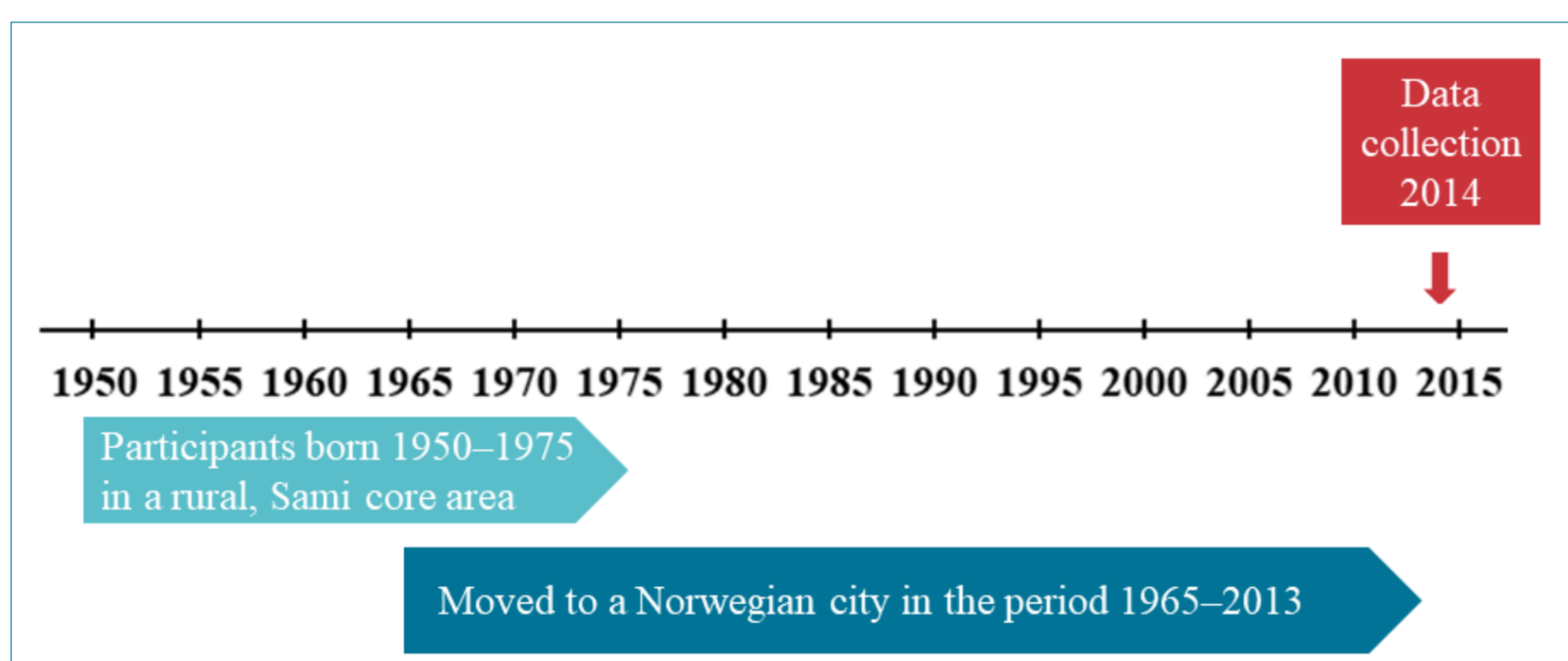
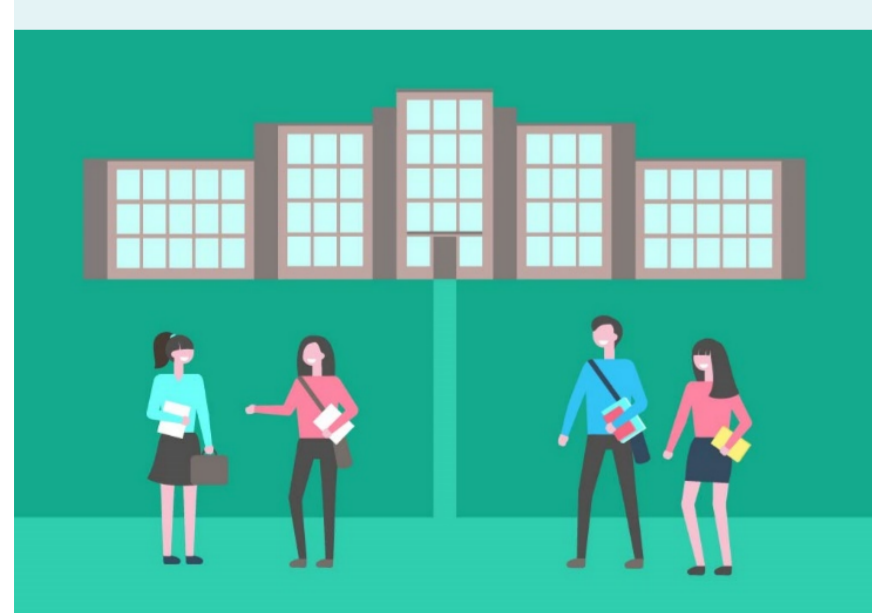


Figure 2. Time frame

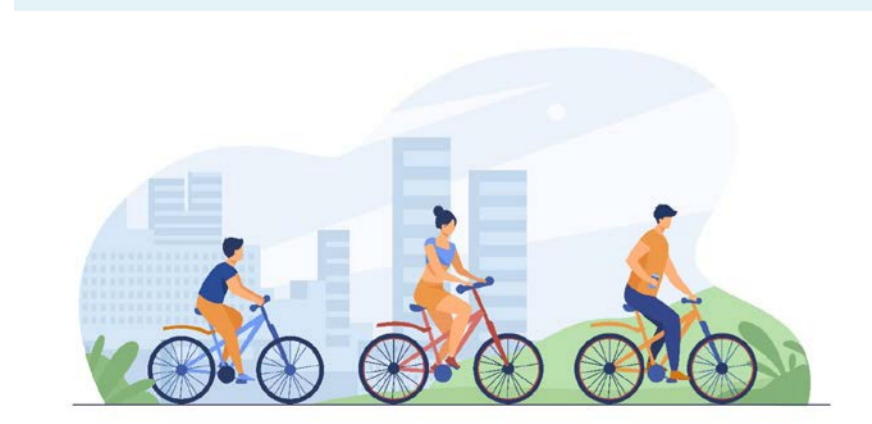
Highlights



More women than men have moved from rural, Sami core areas to cities in Norway



Among both first- and second-generation internal migrants, the education level was higher for women than for men



“From Rural to Urban Living” enables studies on the health and life of Sami and non-Sami who have moved to cities in Norway

Illustrations: www.mostphotos.com

Background

After the Second World War, there has been a substantial urbanisation in Norway. This also applies for the Indigenous Sami population, a people that for thousands of years has inhabited northern, mainly rural, areas of Norway, Sweden, Finland and the Kola Peninsula in Russia. Although many Sami today live in cities, most of the research on Sami health has been done among residents in rural areas. No large quantitative studies have investigated the health and life of urban Sami in Norway. This was the motivation for initiating the survey “From Rural to Urban living” (in Norwegian “Fra bygd til by”).

Methods

The survey was conducted in 2014 by the Centre for Sami Health Research at UiT The Arctic University of Norway, in collaboration with the Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research, and the Sami University of Applied Sciences. The survey had a unique sampling design, based on internal migration records from the Norwegian Population Registry. Since its establishment in 1964, the register has recorded all reported changes of address within the country. Hence, each person’s internal migration history can be tracked. The survey included all citizens of 51 cities that were born 1950–1975 and at the age of 15 years had lived in one of 23 rural municipalities, all with a considerable Sami population (figure 1). This means that they had moved to the city during 1965–2013 (figure 2). Their children above the age of 18 were also invited. A total of 6033 (55% women) first-generation and 6197 (49% women) second-generation internal migrants were invited. All data were collected through self-administered questionnaires, which also included questions about ethnic affiliation.

Results

Details of the samples are outlined in table 1. The response rate was lower for men than for women and especially low for young men. Geographic variation in response rates was also observed (figure 3). Almost 60%

Table 1. Sample details of the survey “From Rural to Urban Living”

	First generation	Second generation
Age	39–64 years	19–46 years
Invitees	6033	6197
Participants	2058 (34%)	1168 (19%)
Sami	730 (37%)	376 (33%)
Women	1227 (61%)	744 (65%)

of first-generation invitees lived in cities within Northern Norway (Nordland, Troms and Finnmark counties) and more than eight out of ten reported that they had lived in their current municipality/city for more than 10 years. A high education level was observed for both first- and second-generation respondents, and long university education was more common among women than men (figure 4). A large proportion of participants reported to live alone, especially in the younger age groups. One out of three reported Sami background. In total, the first- and second-generation samples included 1018 urban Sami participants.

Discussion

The survey had a relatively low response rate, especially among young men. However, we suppose some of the non-response is due to invitees regarding themselves outside the target population. The fact that the sample characteristics correspond well with national numbers and trends, indicates that the samples are fairly representative with regard to these characteristics.

Conclusion

“From Rural to Urban Living” enables numerous research possibilities within health and social sciences, and may contribute to new insight into the health, culture and identity of the growing Sami population in urban areas of Norway. As far as we know, this is the largest sample ever collected to investigate the health and life of Sami residing in urban areas of Norway.

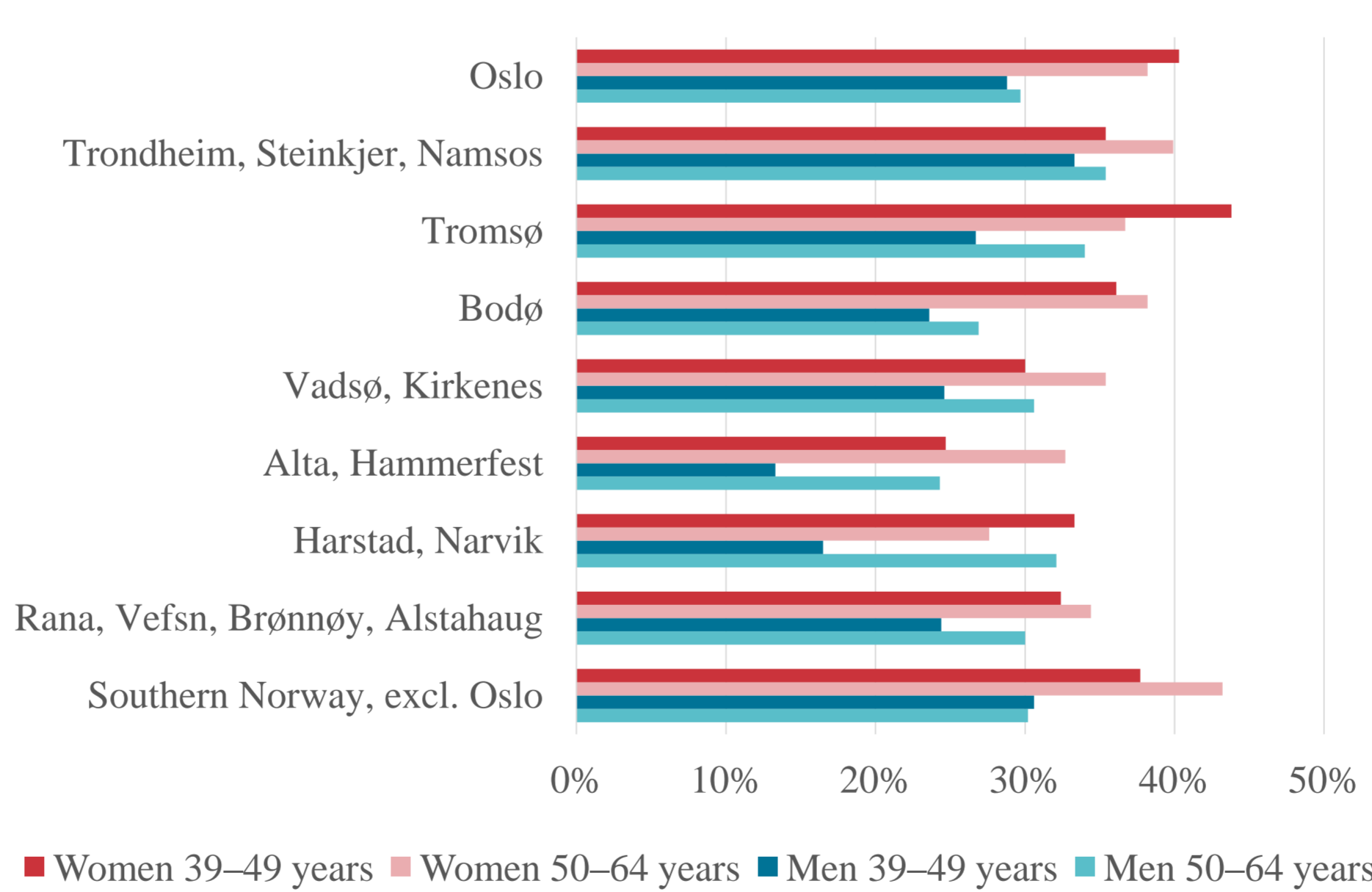


Figure 3. Response rates according to age, sex, and city region among first generation internal migrants

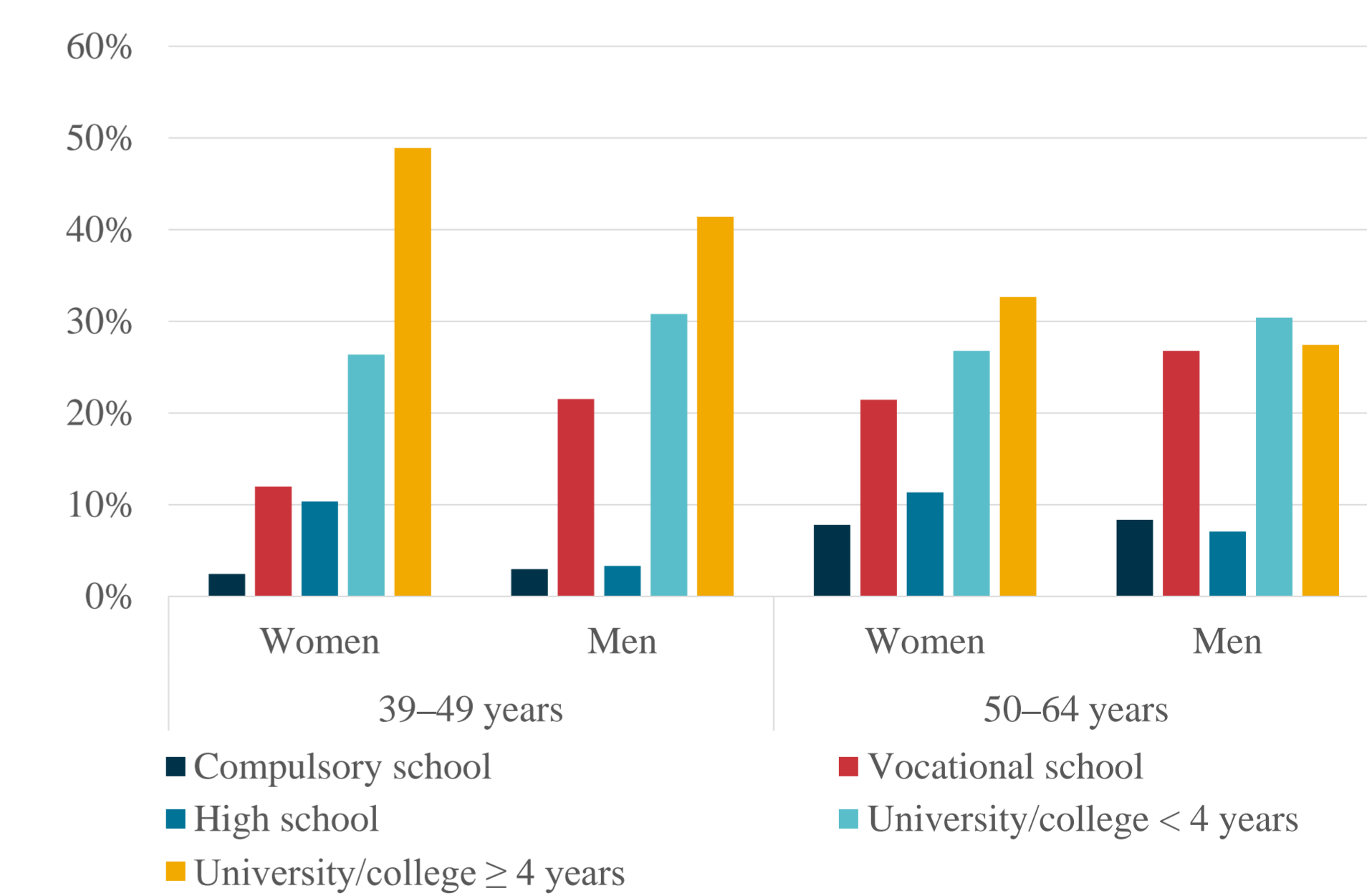


Figure 4. Education level of first generation internal migrants from rural, Sami core areas who have moved to cities in Norway

Reference

Melhus M, Eliassen B, Broderstad ARB. From rural to urban living – migration from Sami core areas to cities in Norway. Study design and sample characteristics. International Journal of Circumpolar Health 2020;79(1).

