



COUNTER-URBANISATION AND DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

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ESPON Roundtable on Post-COVID settlement patterns across
urban and rural areas in Sweden, December 16th 2021



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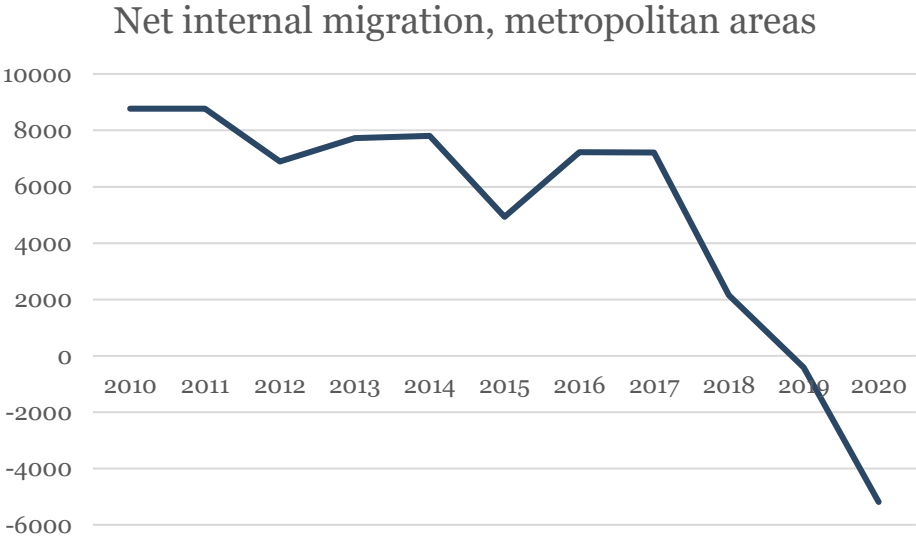
COUNTER-URBANISATION



Så vart flyttar man när man lämnar Stockholm? Inte så långt bort, enligt SCB:s statistik.
Foto: Henrik Holmberg / TT

Trenden i Sverige
 The trend continues: More people
 are moving from Stockholm than
 they are to

Source: SVT



Source: Statistics Sweden

Out-migration from metropolitan areas accelerating during pandemic

- mainly families with children

New challenges and possibilities for rural areas



WHO ARE THESE COUNTER-URBAN MOVERS?

- Families with young children overrepresented
- From big cities to smaller cities and towns
- Mainly highly educated
- Work in public sector rather than in creative and knowledge-based occupations
- A large group (40%) had possibilities to work from home before the pandemic

Post-COVID 19:

- “New” professions with possibilities for remote work
- Increased ‘hybrid-working’ (combining office and remote work)



Photo: iStock



WHERE? DESTINATION CHOICES

- Middle-sized cities and small towns
- Many are return migrants
- Family network important
- Previous residential experiences important – not necessarily place of origin
- Non return movers
 - overrepresented in commuting municipalities and attractive rural areas (ex Åre)
 - 43 % previous experience of stay in second home at destination



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Photo: Emma Lundholm

MOTIVES FOR A LIFE OUTSIDE THE BIG CITY

- *Accessibility* – work, school, service, leisure activities, daily transport
 - *Place and space* – environment and housing
 - *Safety* – environmental and social context
 - *Time for each other in the family* – less stress and less time on transportation
- Basis for good everyday life

The move is related to phase in the life-course

- Children in focus
- Children's needs and activities prior the adults
- Safety from a child perspective → Freedom to move on their own



Photo: Ulrika Åkerlund



DAILY MOBILITY

After the move:

- Around half experience less stress in the logistics of everyday activities (54 %)
 - To rural areas – less daily stress
 - To commuting municipalities near larger cities – increased stress (and longer commuting times)
- Children access school and leisure activities by themselves
- Many bought an extra car
 - 63 % uses care more often after the move
- Shorter commutes (time)

- Commutes less stressful (mainly in rural areas)



Foto: Johan Gunseus



HOUSING

Pre-pandemic

- 73 % price level on housing market “quite important” or “very important”

During pandemic:

- Increased demand for bigger housing
- Increased housing prices
- How will this affect
 - urban areas? rural areas?



TO CONSIDER IN DEVELOPMENT PLANNING



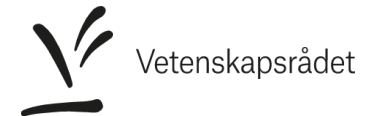
- Accelerated outmigration from metropolitan areas?
 - Vital for smaller and more rural municipalities - counteracting the trend of population ageing, highly skilled workers boosting the local economy
 - Increased sub-urbanisation or counter-urbanisation?
- Increased remote work & changing commuting patterns?
 - Who can work from home?
 - development of co-working spaces or improvements to telecommunication infrastructure
- What can municipalities outside the metropolitan areas offer families searching for a sustainable every-day life?
 - Searching for greater time and place flexibility, enhanced job autonomy, improved work-life balance and reduced commuting time



THANK YOU!

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A good life outside the city? Relocation as a strategy for families in search of a socially sustainable everyday life outside the metropolitan areas



Moving out from the city – a study on families' migration strategies for social sustainable living outside metropolitan areas



Forskningsrådet för
hälsa, arbetsliv och välfärd

BEYOND CITY LIFE

A research project on experiences of everyday life for families with children who have moved out of the big city

www.kau.se/livetutanforstorstaden

FORMAS 



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