

SEMIGRA

Case Study Report: Västernorrland's County

Version 1 April 2012



This report presents a more detailed overview of the analytical approach to be applied by the project. This Applied Research Project is conducted within the framework of the ESPON 2013 Programme, partly financed by the European Regional Development Fund.

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1 Regional statistical Analysis

1.1 Case study region in the broader European context

Like many early industrialised regions in Europe the **economic structure** of this region is characterised by an ongoing process of structural transformation. As with other export-based industries and regions Västernorrland is particularly vulnerable to external factors and to international economic fluctuations. As a consequence of the capital-intensive nature of modern industrial production the industrial sector and the region more generally have high labour productivity levels even when compared to many other European regions. Like other traditional industrial regions in Europe Västernorrland has undergone a painful process of deindustrialisation while experiencing an increase of employment in the service sector. Even during periods of industrial expansion higher productivity has, in this context, resulted in “jobless growth” – a phenomenon that has hurt men more than women. This can also be seen in the unemployment figures for these types of economies where male unemployment is generally higher. This has changed the employment structure in a more female-friendly direction but has not compensated for the loss of job opportunities in the industrial sector as a consequence of the (gender) labour market segmentation. Despite this, Västernorrland seems to score relatively well with regard to competitiveness particularly in respect of the economic Lisbon indicators as they are presented in ESPON 3.3.

With regard to **demographic development** the picture is not so good. According to the “sustainable population development typology” Västernorrland was placed in the ‘type 6’ category during the period 2003-2007 signalling population decrease as a function of natural population decrease and net out-migration (for a more thorough discussion of this typology, see ESPON 1.1.4, Copus *et. al.* 2010, Johansson 2009, Copus and Johansson 2010). This is a status that Västernorrland shares with 20 per cent of the regions within the ESPON Space, regions localised primarily in the European periphery and particularly those in the Eastern and Northern parts of Europe, including the former DDR. One of the effects of the huge out-migration from Västernorrland has been an accentuated lopsided age structure – Västernorrland was, in 2008, placed in the third upper quartile with regard to the share (%) of people in the ages 65+ for all NUTS3-regions within the ESPON area (Johansson 2012).

Migratory movements have a general impact on the **sex ratio structure** among young people. In-migration areas usually have a surplus of women in the years 18-34 while the contrary is valid for out-migration areas. This is a function of the fact that the share of women is higher than that for men and this has an impact on the sex ratio balance in the in- and out-

migration areas. This is also applicable for Västernorrland as well as for other out-migration areas in Europe (Eurostat). It must, however, be borne in mind that this will not be necessary for the total population as life expectancy for women is, in general, higher than for men.

Västernorrland is – as noted previously – located in the northern European periphery. As in many other sparsely populated peripheral regions a central ingredient of the problems faced here is the low level of **accessibility**. In the Dijkstra and Poelman typology a travel time indicator was used to measure the remoteness of NUTS3-regions (Dijkstra & Poelman, 2008). A region was viewed as peripheral if more than half of the population had a travel time by car of more than 45 minutes to the nearest city with more than 50,000 inhabitants. Västernorrland was then placed in the category 'predominantly remote rural regions' also indicating low accessibility. The low accessibility of Västernorrland is also highlighted in other ESPON projects such as ESPON 1.2.1 and TRACC. With regard to almost every potential accessibility indicator it is clear that Västernorrland is in an unfavourable situation with regard to accessibility seen from a European perspective and especially when compared to the more densely populated regions in the central and southern parts of Europe (ESPON 1.2.1, 2004; TRACC 2011).

With regard to differing **ESPON typologies** it has already been noted that Västernorrland has been placed in 'type 6' – population decrease in combination with negative natural population change and net out-migration in the **ESPON 1.1.4 Demographic Typology** regarding regional sustainable population development. Out-migration – especially of young people (women) results in an declining reproduction potential which further indicates a low level of population sustainability in both the short and, more seriously, in the long term. This is a precarious situation that Västernorrland shares with many peripheral regions in Europe where out-migration (in combination with low fertility rates) results in sharp drops in the population size (for an updated version at NUTS3-level, see Johansson 2009).

With regard to the **EDORA Structural Typology** Västernorrland is localised in the category "Consumption Countryside" and not – perhaps surprisingly – in the category "Diversified with Strong Secondary Sector". "Consumption Countryside" is frequently represented in the Nordic countries by a small agrarian sector and large public service sector. The specific nature of the transformation of Västernorrland over the last four decades is probably the reason that the county is situated in this type and not in the "Diversified with Strong Secondary Sector".

In the **DEMIFER Typology** Västernorrland together with Jämtland – DEMIFER works at the NUTS2-level – is placed in category "Challenge of Decline". From a demographic point of view this category is affected by a

population decrease as a consequence of both out-migration *and* natural population decrease which has also resulted in significant and accentuated population ageing. This observation is in line with what has been observed in the Demographic Sustainable Typology in ESPON 1.1.4 and in the updated version in Johansson 2009 where Västernorrland's performance was presented separately from Jämtland's. From an analytical perspective it must however be borne in mind that Västernorrland clustered together with other European regions, e.g. Sachsen-Anhalt and Kajaani, as well as with a number of regions in the eastern part of Europe – regions that differ significantly from the economic and demographic structure of Västernorrland even if the (superficial?) similarities between them resulted in their placement in the same cluster.

1.2 Case study region in the national context

1.2.1 Population development – a short exposé

The area of Västernorrland County is 21,684 km² and the number of inhabitants was 242,155 at the end of 2011 – 2.5 per cent of the Swedish population. This means that Västernorrland is – like all of the Northern counties in Sweden – sparsely populated with only 11.2 inhabitants per km². The corresponding figure for Sweden as a whole is 22.6 inhabitants per km² which is also low in an EU context. Sweden and Västernorrland are thus each, depending on the scale used, localised in the EU-periphery which in turn has implications for population density and settlement patterns. Västernorrland County consists of seven municipalities with Härnösand as the capital and Sundsvall as the largest city with around 96,000 inhabitants at the end of 2011.

Due to early and rapid industrialisation starting in the second half of the 19th century the typical image of Västernorrland is that of an industrial region dominated by large raw-material based export-oriented industries with a large share of men in the labour force. This implies that the county is of a dual character where most of the people and activities are localised in the cities and in the municipalities along the Botnia coastline.

The major and historic companies, founded during the industrialisation process and which provided the main engines of growth, have long since been merged and concentrated but they essentially remain the backbone of the region's economy. In the course of structural transformation labour demand decreased in the basic industries and in recent decades, employment in these large companies has declined. Even during the upswings the concept "jobless growth" has increasingly become a major factor for the region's labour force and primarily for the male labour market. At the same time the public sector has also been restructuring and cutting back, hampering the growth of job opportunities for female labour. In combination these factors have had a significant influence on

population development and the settlement pattern in Västernorrland with the population now concentrated along the Botnian coast and particularly in the Sundsvall-Härnösand corridor.

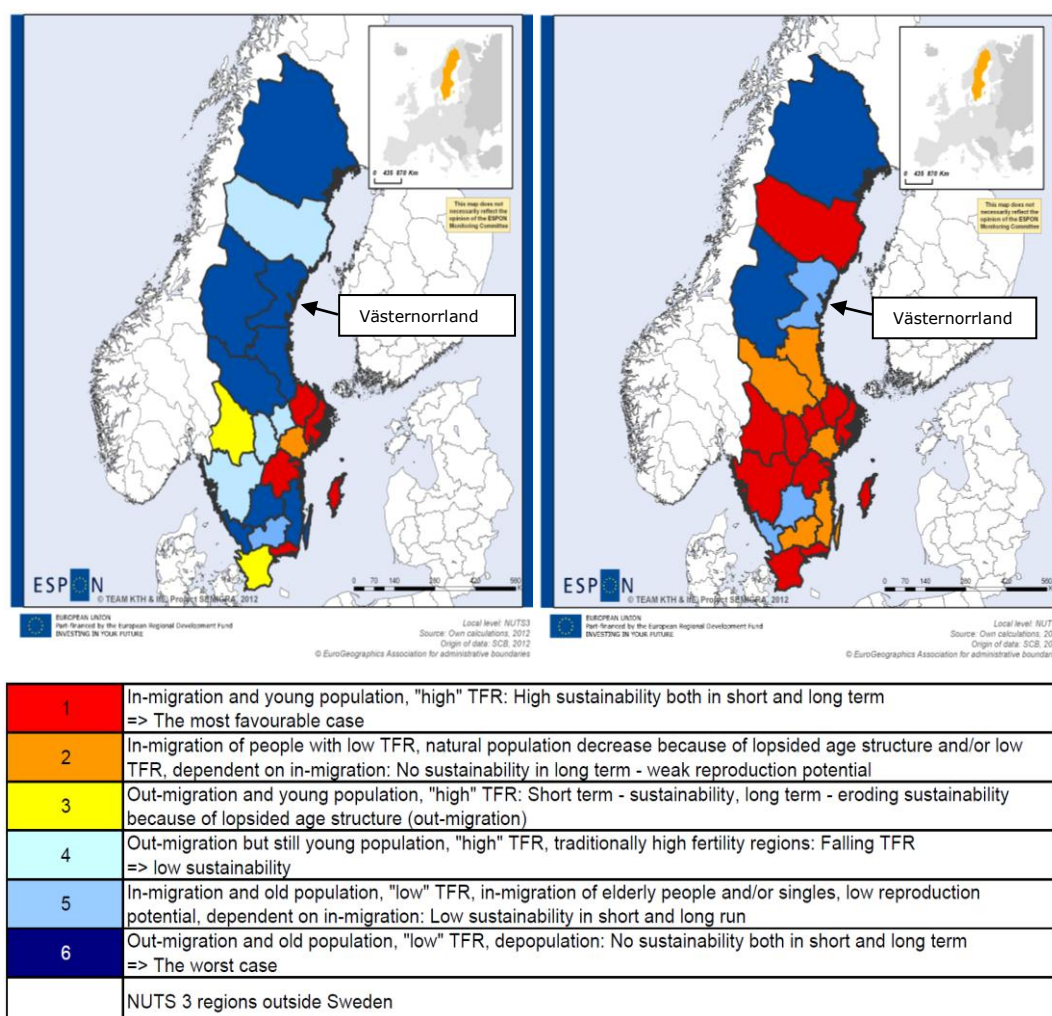
Västernorrland reached its peak in population terms in the mid- 1950s, with a little more than 280,000 inhabitants. Since then the number has decreased by some 14 per cent. During the last 20 years in particular, the rate of population decrease has been very rapid placing Västernorrland as one of the most rapidly depopulating counties in Sweden. On the other hand, with its large raw-material industries Västernorrland has among the highest productivity levels among the Swedish counties (Statistics Sweden, various years; ESPON 3.3).

Västernorrland is however in a precarious position with regard to sustainable demographic development. Map 1 shows a demographic typology based on the demographic equation – total population change is a function of net-migration and natural population change. The terminology in the typology and parts of the description are inspired by and based on ESPON 1.1.4, Copus *et. al.* (2006) and Johansson (2009) which have analysed the typology and its categories at various ESPON levels and from different points of view. The categories are shown in the table below with the characteristics and outcomes for Sweden and its counties, 2008-2011, presented in Map 1.

A schematic typology with regard to sustainable demographic development

Type	PT	PM	PN
1	PT>0	PM>0	PN>0
2	PT>0	PM>0	PN<0
3	PT>0	PM<0	PN>0
4	PT<0	PM<0	PN>0
5	PT<0	PM>0	PN<0
6	PT<0	PM<0	PN<0
PT= Total population change; PM= Net-migration; PN= Natural population change			

Map 1 Sweden: Schematic typology concerning a sustainable demographic development, 2008-2011. To the left: Excluding international migration, to the right including international migration. Source: Estimations based on data from Statistics Sweden.



Map 1 shows that Västerbotten is no longer in the same precarious situation as many other out-migration and depopulating areas in Europe's peripheral regions (Johansson 2009). The population decrease during the period 2008-2011 is a function of natural population decrease which was larger than the small net in-migration. This change in the pattern compared to the period 2000-2005 was a function – at least partly – of the international net immigration that formally increased as a consequence of the change in Swedish immigration policy in 2006. In one year, between 2005 and 2006, the immigration flow increased by almost 50 per cent. This change in the law also changed the pattern of immigration for a lot of other counties in Sweden after 2006 both in relation to total population change and net-migration which in many cases changed from negative to positive (see Map 1 and compare the two maps). Something that is clearly evident here and which emerges as central to this study is the increasing immigration of younger women,

between 2005 and 2006 the numbers of immigrants increased by 40 per cent in the ages 18-34.

The picture is, however, somewhat different if immigration and emigration are excluded with the traditional picture of an out-migration region being re-established, namely, the pattern that was valid before 2006 (see e.g. Johansson 2009). Positive net-migration is changed to negative net-migration. This is an indication of the importance that immigration has on demographic development in Sweden and its regions where Västernorrland is not particularly exceptional. Without immigration the problematic situation would be even worse than it is now.

That immigration from abroad creates internal out-migration is thus partly a function of the change in Swedish immigration and integration policy. When e.g. a refugee immigrant arrives in Sweden he or she will, in many cases, be placed in a refugee centre. When the residence permit is granted the immigrant is allowed to settle down wherever he or she likes. The cumulative result of many individual choices might then be the out-migration of immigrants to other parts of Sweden in this second phase – especially to the metropolitan areas – with this pattern being valid for younger women as well as for other migrants. The net result will nevertheless be a migration surplus for Västernorrland as a consequence of immigration and of the 2006 change in Swedish immigration policy which made it easier to gain residence permits and then settle wherever one wanted thus accentuating the redistribution of people. This phenomenon should not however be seen as a way of avoiding the consequences of the unsustainable demographic situation in these kinds of areas in the long term. This is also a phenomenon that “disturbs” the internal migration data as many immigrants are internal out- and in-migrants formally in the second phase – e.g. out-migrants from Västernorrland and in-migrants to the Stockholm region or other big city regions.

1.2.2 Young women on the run – myth or reality?

In Sweden, as in almost all other countries, migration intensities are at their highest in the ages 18-28. Out-migration intensities for younger women in particular are high in out-migration regions where women seem to be more frequent than younger men among the out-migrants. This is illustrated with regard to Västernorrland in Table 2 (Statistics Sweden). The destination for most of the out-migrants is the Stockholm region. The neighbouring counties – Västerbotten's, Gävleborg's and Jämtland's counties - take a relatively larger share of the out-movers from Västernorrland than other counties. The net balance is generally more negative relative the Stockholm region than to the neighbouring regions – the net balance with regard to Jämtland is, however, positive. The largest

element of this in-migration flow is a consequence of immigration from abroad (Statistics Sweden, rAps).

In Table 2 we can see that both sexes in the age 18-34 have experienced net out-migration in almost every year between 2000 and 2010. Another noticeable observation is that women have higher migration intensities than men with regard to out- as well as in-migration.

In Table 3 female migration intensities for the ages 18-34 for Västernorrland and Stockholm counties. The argument for comparing Västernorrland with Stockholm county rests on the stark difference in respect of economic conditions between the two regions. From Table 2 it can be seen that the in-migration intensities for Västernorrland are higher than the corresponding ones for Stockholm during all years studied. The problem is thus not one of low in-migration intensities among women in the ages 18-34 but rather that the out-migration intensities are much higher in terms of net out-migration. Ultimately this results in skewed gender and age structures and declining reproduction potentials.

When comparing the labour markets in the two counties it must be borne in mind that the labour market in Stockholm is more female-friendly than that in Västernorrland. It should also be remembered that the opportunities for study are greater and more diversified in Stockholm than in Västernorrland – a phenomenon that ought to have some impact on migratory movements especially for the youngest women, i.e. in the ages 18-24. Today, more women than men go into higher education. There are also signs that younger women more than younger men move to big cities after they have completed their studies.

Table 1 Sex ratio (%), women/men 2000 – 2010 among migrants in Västernorrland (Y) and Stockholm (AB) counties. Ages 18-34. Source. Statistics Sweden.

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
AB in	51,6	52,7	52,9	53,5	53,7	52,2	50,4	50,3	51,2	51,4	51,0
AB out	53,4	54,4	53,7	54,2	53,8	53,4	53,5	53,0	52,4	53,1	52,5
Y in	52,8	51,4	54,3	54,7	53,3	52,4	52,3	52,6	52,8	52,4	49,6
Y out	49,8	50,2	51,1	51,8	52,4	51,9	52,7	51,4	51,3	52,6	51,0

Table 2 In- and out-migration intensities (%) for Västernorrland county (Y), men and women, 2000-2010. Ages 18-34. Source. Statistics Sweden.

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Y m in	6,8	6,5	7,1	7,2	7,5	8,0	9,2	8,5	8,5	8,4	9,7
Y m out	9,7	8,6	8,7	8,0	8,1	8,6	9,0	10,0	9,5	8,9	9,8
Y w in	8,4	7,6	9,2	9,4	9,3	9,5	10,8	10,1	10,2	10,0	10,4
Y w out	10,6	9,5	9,9	9,3	9,6	10,0	10,8	11,4	10,8	10,7	11,1

Table 3 Female in- and out-migration intensities (%) for Västernorrland (Y) and Stockholm (AB) counties, 2000-2010. Ages 18-34.
Source. Statistics Sweden.

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
ABin	11,6	11,2	10,1	10,0	10,0	10,0	11,1	11,2	10,6	10,4	10,3
ABout	6,8	7,0	7,1	7,2	7,0	6,8	6,5	6,7	6,5	6,3	6,4
Yin	11,9	10,1	12,5	12,0	12,1	12,0	12,3	11,3	11,1	11,2	11,0
Yout	16,3	14,6	16,2	14,5	14,9	14,9	14,3	14,7	14,1	14,2	13,6

In order to investigate the impact of age on the migration pattern for younger women the migration intensities for the age group 18-34 have been disaggregated into three different groups according to their position in the life cycle (Tables 4-6). The categories are as follows:

- Women in studies and entering the labour market (18-24 years)
- Women after having completed their studies but at the beginning of their labour market careers (25-29 years)
- Women in the 'household creating' ages (30-34 years)

From Tables 4-6 it is obvious that migration intensities and patterns differ significantly between the three age groups. Concerning the levels in the migration intensities this is not surprising. What is perhaps more surprising and also rather interesting is the fact that the disaggregation also demonstrates quite different patterns concerning in- and out-migration with regard to Västernorrland – from out-migration during the study and youngest ages to in-migration in the household creating ages. The high migration intensities in the youngest age group will result in out-migration for the whole category 18-34 as can be seen in Table 3. It ought also to be highlighted that both intensities are higher in Västernorrland than in the Stockholm region. The high migration intensities for the youngest ages (18-24 years) are also in line with the observed fact for other regions in Sweden. It can also be shown that contrary to the expanding Stockholm region Västernorrland shows a migration deficit.

Among those in their upper teens there are also some differences between girls and boys in terms of attitudes in respect of future plans which – to some extent – confirm the results presented in the statistical analysis (Dahlin & Bostedt, 2010). Girls in the ages 17-18 are more convinced that they will move away from the county after completing high-school. For female teens 68 per cent will move to another county while the corresponding figure for the corresponding male category is only 53 per cent. If these figures are analysed at the municipal level the picture is however somewhat different.

Gender differences also exist in respect of migration motives between girls and boys. For the majority of girls (60 per cent) that have plans to move away it is further or higher education that is the main pull-factor while, for

boys, it is job opportunities (also 60 per cent). Even if the labour market is transforming in a more female-friendly way it must, however, be borne in mind that the labour market in Västernorrland has traditionally been male-dominated as indeed is the case across the whole expanse of the country's interior areas. This has undoubtedly helped to create something of a "macho" image for (the interior of) the region – a factor that may function as a push-factor with regard to the 'rural exodus' in respect of young females.

Even in respect of return migration the job argument seems to be more frequent among males (60 per cent) than among females (40 per cent). The contrary is valid for the "love and marriage" argument that is more prevalent in respect of young females than males (once again 60 vs 40 per cent) among those that have it in mind to come back sometime in the future.

Another 'incentive' to move that is found more frequently in respect of females is the "there is nothing to do here" argument. Leisure-time activities seem to be more focused on male interests than on those of females. One indication of this discrepancy is that males generally have more leisure-time activities to choose from than females. This is valid for the county as a whole as well as for the municipalities. The only local exception is, perhaps surprising, the high-school girls in Ånge – a relatively small interior municipality. It should however be noted that the level of young people satisfied with their leisure-time activities in Västernorrland is lowest in Ånge both for females and males. The highest level for females as well as for males is to be found in Sundsvall – the largest and most "metropolitan" town in Västernorrland with regard to study opportunities, a female-friendly labour market and leisure-time activities.

The gender preferences mentioned above also indicate – at least in part – why more females than males are attracted by the urban lifestyle associated with big city areas and university towns. This is perhaps an effect of the more female-friendly leisure time activities in these kinds of cities but – of course – also of the opportunities to study and the more female-friendly and diversified nature of the labour markets. Once again it must be borne in mind that females display a higher propensity to study than males in Sweden in general as well as in Västernorrland and its communities in particular (Statistics Sweden).

The picture however changes when the age group 25-29 is analysed. The out-migration intensity drops significantly for Västernorrland while the in-migration intensity remains almost the same. The result is that the out-migration surplus for the age group 18-24 years has been changed into an in-migration surplus for ages 25-29.

In the ages when entry to the labour market is most frequent mobility is lower but return migration is probably higher. There are, moreover, signs that many of the former out-migrants are coming back in order to work but also, probably, as a consequence of what can be termed "love and marriage". This phenomenon is even clearer for the cohorts in the ages 30-34 when household and family creation is at its height. For these age groups the bonds to the old and new residence region tend to be tighter given the way in which jobs, houses and two income households end to hamper migratory movements.

Table 4 Female in- and out-migration intensities (%) for Västernorrland (Y) and Stockholm (AB) counties, 2000-2010. Ages 18-24.
Source. Statistics Sweden.

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
ABin	11,6	11,2	10,1	10,0	10,0	10,0	11,1	11,2	10,6	10,4	10,3
ABout	6,8	7,0	7,1	7,2	7,0	6,8	6,5	6,7	6,5	6,3	6,4
Yin	11,9	10,1	12,5	12,0	12,1	12,0	12,3	11,3	11,1	11,2	11,0
Yout	16,3	14,6	16,2	14,5	14,9	14,9	14,3	14,7	14,1	14,2	13,6

Table 5 Female in- and out-migration intensities (%) for Västernorrland (Y) and Stockholm (AB) counties, 2000-2010. Ages 25-29.
Source. Statistics Sweden.

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
ABin	9,6	8,7	8,1	8,2	8,8	9,7	11,0	11,7	11,0	10,8	11,1
ABout	5,3	5,5	5,6	6,0	5,8	5,7	5,8	5,8	5,4	5,2	5,4
Yin	7,0	6,9	8,0	8,9	8,4	9,4	9,6	9,2	9,5	8,8	9,8
Yout	8,3	7,5	7,6	7,5	7,9	8,1	8,5	9,5	8,5	7,6	8,7

Table 6 Female in- and out-migration intensities (%) for Västernorrland (Y) and Stockholm (AB) counties, 2000-2010. Ages 30-34.
Source. Statistics Sweden.

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
ABin	4,1	4,0	3,7	3,7	3,6	4,0	4,9	5,4	5,1	5,2	5,4
ABout	3,3	3,6	3,7	3,9	4,1	3,8	4,1	4,2	3,6	3,3	3,8
Yin	3,6	3,5	4,1	4,4	4,4	4,5	6,6	6,2	6,3	6,2	6,4
Yout	4,1	3,5	2,6	2,9	2,8	3,7	4,8	4,7	4,8	4,8	5,8

1.3 Intra-regional differences and disparities and typologies – the dual nature of Västernorrland

Västernorrland is a county with a dual character. The coastal part is the more heavily populated with a more diversified economic structure while the inner part of the county is rather sparsely populated and quite traditional in the sense that rural activities are more important for incomes and employment. These areas are also the ones that have been hurt most with regard to the structural transformation of the economy

with out-migration as one result. Kramfors is an old industrial town with a traditional industrial base.

Table 8 illustrates this dual character of Västernorrland. The only municipality that has a positive net-migration for most years is Sundsvall often in combination with natural population increase. This is a city with relatively low unemployment, a university, a large hospital and a relatively female-friendly labour market with a large service sector.

The opposite situation can be found in the former military town of Sollefteå and in the old industrial municipality of Kramfors. Here unemployment is high, education opportunities are few, there is a skewed gender and age structure, a female "un-friendly" labour market and a highly standardised labour force.

Table 7 Open unemployment (%) in Västernorrland 2010.

		Labour force 16-64 years						Youth 18-24 years					
		Total		Women		Men		Total		Women		Men	
		Open unemployment	In LM programs	Open unemployment	In LM programs	Open unemployment	In LM programs	Open unemployment	In LM programs	Open unemployment	In LM programs	Open unemployment	In LM programs
2010	Stockholm	3,4	1,7	3,3	1,7	3,5	1,7	3,6	2,0	3,2	1,7	4,0	2,4
	Västernorrland	5,0	4,5	4,4	4,2	5,5	4,7	7,0	10,8	6,3	8,7	7,7	12,6
	Ånge	5,1	5,0	5,2	5,4	4,9	4,7	7,9	12,8	6,7	12,2	8,9	13,3
	Timrå	5,2	5,1	4,8	4,8	5,6	5,4	8,4	13,6	8,2	11,5	8,5	15,3
	Härnösand	4,5	4,3	3,5	3,9	5,4	4,6	8,2	7,4	7,0	5,8	9,3	9,0
	Sundsvall	4,8	4,1	4,2	3,9	5,3	4,3	6,6	9,4	5,8	7,9	7,3	10,9
	Kramfors	4,8	5,2	4,1	5,0	5,5	5,4	6,4	12,6	5,8	10,4	6,9	14,3
	Sollefteå	6,7	5,4	5,8	4,8	7,6	6,0	8,9	15,0	7,8	12,7	9,9	17,0
	Örnsköldsvik	4,9	4,3	4,6	4,1	5,2	4,5	6,4	11,7	6,0	8,7	6,7	14,5
	Sweden	3,9	3,0	3,5	2,9	4,2	3,1	4,8	6,2	4,3	5,2	5,3	7,2

Source: Swedish Public Employment Service

Table 8 Female net-migration intensities (%) for the municipalities in Västernorrland 2000-2010 Source. Ages 18-34. Statistics Sweden.

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Ånge	-3,7	-4,9	-2,5	-1,0	-2,7	-4,2	-0,8	-6,2	-5,2	-4,3	-3,1
Timrå	-2,3	-2,7	-1,5	1,4	-0,5	-3,2	2,9	0,5	1,2	-1,4	-0,2
Härnösand	-4,5	-4,1	-1,8	-0,4	-0,6	-1,6	-2,5	-4,0	-3,5	-0,8	-2,3
Sundsvall	0,1	-0,3	0,4	0,6	1,2	0,5	0,8	-0,5	1,4	1,2	0,5
Kramfors	-7,1	-5,8	-1,8	-3,5	-2,6	-1,2	-4,7	-2,6	-5,4	-5,6	-3,2
Sollefteå	-7,3	-2,5	-1,0	0,1	-3,5	-1,1	-3,6	-1,8	-6,1	-1,3	-2,7
Örnsköldsvik	-2,5	-2,2	-2,0	-0,5	-1,6	0,4	1,1	-0,6	-0,3	-1,9	-0,9

Another thing that should be highlighted here is the effects of out-migration on reproduction potentials and natural population development. Comparing the relationship between migration and natural population development and their combined impact on total development a number of interesting connections can be found for the period 2003-2007. Applying them to the ESPON Sustainable Population Typology the following relations can be observed.

Sundsvall has experienced positive population development as a consequence of net in-migration as well as natural population increase. This is the most favourable population development in the long term. Both Timrå and Örnsköldsvik have seen a net increase with regard to total population development but only as an effect of net in-migration. It should also be noted that in both Sundsvall – the closest thing to a traditional city in the county – and in Örnsköldsvik, males are more satisfied with their leisure-time activities than females (Dahlin & Bostedt, 2010). In both towns females are in the majority when it comes to out-migrants aged 18-24.

Four municipalities in the county are clearly fighting against depopulation, unfavourable population development and unfavourable structures. The capital of Västernorrland, Härnösand, shows a population decrease that is undoubtedly a consequence of negative natural population change - the figures concerning net-migration are positive. This does not seem, however, to be an effect of the in-migration of women in the ages 18-34 – instead it must be an effect of families and older persons moving in to benefit from the larger service supply sector in Härnösand though immigration from abroad may also have a positive effect on the in-migration figures. The same seems to be valid concerning the old military town of Sollefteå which shows the same migration pattern. Even in these towns the age and gender pattern among the youngest adults is the same with a majority of young adult females among the out-migrants. The discrepancy between males and females with regard to leisure-time activities is however more highly accentuated in the former military town of Sollefteå in the interior of Västernorrland than in the county capital of Härnösand (Dahlin & Bostedt, 2010).

This negative and rather problematic situation is even more pronounced in the two communities with the most unfavourable population development. Both Kramfors and Ånge fall into this category. In this case negative population change is a function of both net out-migration and natural population decrease. The result will be an even more accentuated negative spiral with regard to the preconditions for a long term positive population development. Despite the low levels of satisfaction with the leisure-time activities in both municipalities there is, nevertheless, one significant difference. In the old industrial town of Kramfors young males report that they are more satisfied than females while the contrary is the

case for the “railway hub” of Ånge – an even more rural municipality than Kramfors but one, probably, with better accessibility. Ånge also has a large refugee centre but whether this has any effect on attitudes is almost impossible to tell without further in-depth analysis. The questionnaire (Dahlin & Bostedt, 2010) alone simply cannot uncover anything more at this stage.

The dual nature of Västernorrland is thus a function of economic and labour market structures and ongoing demographic development. The out-migration of younger women simply reinforces this duality as a consequence of both direct and indirect effects. Direct effects in the sense that the population will be more skewed with regard to age and gender, indirect effects in the sense that the image will be changed in a more “male-oriented” direction, a development that will hamper future in-migration of younger women in the out-migration areas. This is a self-fulfilling process that can erode the future preconditions for a positive population development in the long term. Instead of convergence within the region the result will be divergence and declining reproduction potentials especially in the inner part of the county.

As noted previously this situation would be even more problematic from a demographic point of view without immigration from abroad which has, in some years at least, arrested the population decrease in the county’s municipalities. As this is a consequence of external factors that also creates out-migration in a later phase this means that immigration is not a long term solution to the female “population crisis” in Västernorrland or in other depopulating regions across Sweden.

Another important migratory flow is that of student in-migrants. As many of them come from other parts of Sweden they are also in-migrants in the first phase and eventually also out-migrants in the second if they move away after completing their studies. This reasoning is particular relevant for the largest the university town of Sundsvall. The size effect of this migration pattern is partly counteracted by the contrary flows of young people that move away for studies but return some years later. This outflow is, moreover, probably larger than the inflow of students to Västernorrland. It must however be borne in mind that the inflows and outflows in many cases differ between the year groups. This can perhaps help to explain some parts of the huge female net out-migration from Västernorrland in the ages 18-24 but also the smaller net in-migration in the ages 25 and over.

1.4 Young women on the run – myth or reality?

A summing-up

The migration patterns of females in Västernorrland vary significantly between differing age groups. The problematic situation with regard to the population development in Västernorrland with a focus on younger women in the ages 18-34 can be summarised in bullet points as follows:

- High in-migration in both cases – in metropolitan Stockholm as well as in the "rural" and sparsely populated industrial Västernorrland!
- A big difference is the high turnover in Västernorrland. In-migration creates out-migration? Or out-migration creates in-migration some years later?
- Without immigration out-migration would be smaller but the net out-migration rates higher. The positive effects of immigration on the net-migration rates might be accentuated after 2006.
- Young women have a higher turnover than men in Västernorrland – especially concerning out-migration.
- Out-migration creates declining reproduction potentials.
- The problem is more the high out-migration than low in-migration (which is at the same level as for Stockholm).
- For Västernorrland – the most problematic point is the high out-migration among the youngest women (18-24 years)
- As out-migration intensities for old industrial municipalities and the municipalities in the interior are high and the intensity for the big-city like Sundsvall is positive this process accentuates the duality of the county.
- Reality: huge out-migration in the ages 18-24. Result – net out-migration of younger women in the ages 18-24
- Myth: No out-migration in the ages 25 and over – instead in-migration. Result – in-migration in the family creating ages, positive for natural population change and increasing reproduction potentials.

Recommendations: stimulate in-migration in the ages 25 and over, both (female) return-migrants and newcomers. This will have income spin-offs as these are persons that are in the labour force and are both a production factor and consumers. This will also result in increasing reproduction potentials as the in-migrants are in fertile and household creating ages if they are not already in a family-based relationship.

The preconditions for success are, however, female-friendly diversified labour markets, no "macho" image, good schools, good communications, high accessibility, etc. These are the major pull-factors with regard to young women's migration decisions. These preconditions are also important in the recruitment of well educated young women (return after studies).

2 Pupil Questionnaire

The questionnaire, from which the empirical material for Västernorrland region was gathered, was set in 2009/10 by the National Youth Board in Sweden by two researchers at the University of Mid-Sweden. The response rate in the 8th year of the primary school was between 82 and 87 per cent for five of the municipalities (100 per cent in one municipality and 75 per cent in another); at the 2nd year of the secondary school the response rate was around 75 per cent in four municipalities, 97 per cent in one and 55 and 58 per cent in the other two municipalities respectively. In total, 5,512 pupils answered the questionnaire: 1,503 girls and 1,461 boys in the 8th year of primary school (in total 2,964 pupils in the 8th year) and 1,194 girls and 1,354 boys in the 2nd year of secondary school (totalling 2,548 pupils in the 2nd year of secondary school) answered questionnaire.

The survey asked questions about most aspects of the youngsters' lives with the areas of school, leisure, work, future, safety, health and society all analysed. A report was published in 2010 detailing the responses. Besides the data and analyses made in the report by Dahlin & Bostedt (2010) we have also had the possibility to utilise some of the non-published material from the questionnaire.

2.1 Way of Life

About 55 per cent of the pupils in the 2nd year of secondary school stated that they were active members in at least one club or association; for pupils in the 8th year of primary school a little more than 70 per cent were active members. The gender differences here were only marginal. When the answers in respect of obstacles to being an active member due to belonging to a certain sex showed a gender difference: more girls than boys refrained from doing some activities. The most common reasons for being unable to be an active member of a desired club or association related to the fact that the club/association concerned did not conduct any activities where the respondent lived or that they (respondents) simply did not have enough time to participate.

The dominant leisure activity is related to sports. In the 8th year of primary school about 55 per cent of pupils do some sports in an association or club; by the 2nd year of secondary school however this figure has declined to around 35 per cent doing sport on their leisure time. Being active in cultural associations, school associations, hobby associations, religious associations or "other" associations is stated by ca 15 per cent of pupils in the 8th year of primary school, but only by ca 10 per cent of pupils in the 2nd year of secondary school. Supporters' clubs,

hiking associations and computer clubs attract approximately 10 per cent of pupils in both the 8th year of primary school and the 2nd year of secondary school. Political youth organisations and societal questions concern about 5 per cent of the pupils in the 8th year of primary school and the 2nd year of secondary school. The level of engagement in such issues does however rise slightly when surveyed again at the 2nd year of secondary school.

About one of 10, irrespective of age, state that they do not know how to fill their free time; 5-6 out of 10 state that they have enough free time and that it is filled with stimulating activities. The report assumes that the first group may face a general lack of resources (not only monetary). A larger share of girls than boys (10-20 percentage units) complain that they have too little time. One explanation for this may be that girls, to a larger extent than boys, help in the domestic work at home as well as engaging in temporary and/or part time work at the weekends or in the evenings.

The most common place to meet friends is at home or at a friends' home; just more than 80 per cent of all pupils state this. This result is the same for the surveyed pupils in primary and secondary school. The second most common place to meet friends is outdoors. Just less than 40 per cent of the primary school pupils surveyed state that they meet their friends outdoors while for secondary school pupils this figure drops to 20 per cent. Slightly more boys than girls meet outdoors. The major difference is found between pupils with non-Nordic and native/Nordic origin: 44 per cent of the pupils with non-Nordic origin usually meet their friends outdoors. Pupils with non-Nordic¹ origin also meet their friends to a lesser extent in their own or in their friends' homes.

Just less than 20 per cent of the pupils in both the primary and secondary school classes surveyed meet their friends in sports halls; no significant gender differences are noted. Additionally, just under 20 per cent of the primary school pupils surveyed meet their friends in youth centres. This drops to less than 10 per cent for surveyed secondary school pupils however.

Cafés show interesting gender differences. Of the primary school pupils surveyed about 5 per cent meet their friends in cafés, increasing to 15 per cent when secondary school pupils were surveyed. Only 5 per cent of the boys surveyed meet their friends in cafés, while 25 per cent of the girls actually mention cafés as the second most important place to meet their friends.

¹ NORDIC origin means Danish, Finnish, Norwegian and Icelandic; NON-NORDIC refers to all other nationalities.

With one exception, meeting ones friends in youth clubs, other places and in restaurants/pubs is not very common for either the primary or secondary school pupils surveyed; though in the 2nd year of the secondary school almost 10 per cent of pupils stated that they met their friends in restaurants or pubs.

The general pattern in terms of meeting friends is that more boys than girls meet in sport halls/fields or outdoors, while more girls than boys meet at each others' homes or in cafés. The differences are however small with one exception – the café culture amongst girls.

Access to the internet and social media is very high in Sweden for youngsters in the 7th-9th classes of primary school as well as in secondary school. Internet access at home is very common and most schools give pupils computer access during school hours (and even pc's to do their homework with).²

Almost half of the secondary school pupils surveyed had been abroad for at least one week during the last 12 months. For pupils with non-Nordic origin this was 49 per cent; for natives and Nordic pupils only about 35 per cent. Travelling abroad for the primary school pupils surveyed was just as common as for those at secondary school, but the difference between natives and Nordics was smaller. No gender differences were identified.

These youngsters do not only travel abroad, they travel to a significant extent without their parents. About 25 per cent of the secondary school pupils and 19 per cent of the primary school pupils with non-Nordic origins have travelled without their parents abroad at least three times. For pupils with native and Nordic origins the share of pupils travelling abroad without their parents is about half of the non-Nordic pupils. The reasons for travelling abroad were primarily for vacation, but pupils with non-Nordic origins also stated that they were visiting friends and family. About 10 per cent of the pupils surveyed have also been on language courses abroad. The results are interpreted as those who have travelled abroad more often are also more open to migrate to other places on a permanent basis.

The level of political interest increases with age with gender differences here remaining marginal. The difference is however very marked when origin is analysed: interest in politics is significantly higher amongst pupils with non-Nordic origins compared to pupils with native and Nordic origins.

² With regard to this, question 6 (access and usage of internet and social media) is somewhat obsolete in a Swedish context.

Table 9 Interest in politics (per cent). Source: Dahlin & Bostedt (2010)

	8 th class of primary school	2 nd year in secondary school
TOTAL	13	24
Boys	14	26
Girls	12	23

The pupils surveyed apparently separate politics from societal questions more generally, which may be related to the fact that the word “politics” is closely associated with the adult world. If this semantic aspect is included, more girls than boys have an interest in societal questions; the over-representation is small at the primary school level (29 to 25 per cent), but more marked at the secondary school level (51 to 38 per cent).

Table 10 Interest in societal questions (per cent). Source: Dahlin & Bostedt (2010)

	8 th class of primary school	2 nd year in secondary school
TOTAL	27	44
Boys	25	38
Girls	29	51

Slightly more surveyed girls than boys at the primary school level want to influence political decisions in the region; the share increases somewhat for both groups when we move to the secondary school level. The differences are however relatively small, especially when the results from the interest in politics and societal questions showed more marked differences.

Table 11 Want to influence politics (per cent). Source: Dahlin & Bostedt (2010)

	8 th class of primary school	2 nd year in secondary school
TOTAL	37	41
Boys	34	37
Girls	40	46

The results regarding the possibilities of making ones voice heard showed that between 8 and 14 per cent of the pupils surveyed thought they had good opportunities to make their voices heard in their municipality. There are however two important additional aspects here: (1) 40 per cent of the primary school pupils surveyed did not know that they *had* a voice; while for the secondary school pupils surveyed this share was 35 per cent. (2) On average, 21 per cent of the pupils of non-Nordic origin thought that they had good opportunities to make their voices heard, which is a significantly higher share than that amongst pupils with native and Nordic origins. The positive view of pupils from non-Nordic origins improves the total values for both boys and girls at both the primary and the secondary school levels surveyed.

Table 12 Opportunities to make ones voice heard (per cent). Source: Dahlin & Bostedt (2010)

	8 th class of primary school	2 nd year in secondary school
TOTAL	12	9
Boys	14	10
Girls	10	8

The general conclusion here then is that the youth of Västernorrland has a greater interest in politics and societal questions than can be offered in the region. The level of political activity amongst those at both the primary and the secondary school levels surveyed in Västernorrland is higher than the national average activity for youth in the same ages.

2.2 Intentions to migrate

Of the primary school children surveyed almost 20 per cent more girls than boys intend to migrate, while at the secondary school level about 28 per cent more girls than boys intend to leave! This is a significant gender difference. The greater proclivity to migrate among girls relative to boys can be assumed to be connected with the intention to study. In a sparsely populated region such as Västernorrland all types of education at the secondary school level are simply not available in every municipality, i.e. moving to another town may be a necessity in order to get the desired education. The situation is partly similar when it comes to university studies: although there is a university in the region, it can only offer a limited number of courses.

Table 13 Intentions to migrate (per cent). Source: Dahlin & Bostedt (2010)

	8 th class primary school (2 nd last year)	2 nd year at secondary school
TOTAL	47	60
Boys	43	53
Girls	51	68

In the unpublished material of the questionnaire those of non-Nordic origin show a significantly higher proclivity to leave the region than those of native and Nordic region origin.

The unpublished material of the questionnaire contains information on whom the youngsters listen to for advice regarding migration decisions. For the secondary school pupils surveyed friends have a huge impact on decision making, as does the media. Parents, school teachers and other adults however have relatively less influence on e.g. the migration decision than expected.

2.3 Future plans/expectations

More boys than girls would like to work after primary school (see table 14). The desire to work is 7 percentage units higher among 16 year old boys leaving primary school than among the same age group for girls. In relative term the difference is however 44 per cent. The situation is however reversed when studying the desire to continue education at secondary school: 37 per cent of the girls surveyed wish to do so, but only 35 per cent of the boys. To desire study at secondary school is 16 per cent higher among the girls surveyed than the boys. The gender difference in terms of studying in one's home town is very small, but the girls have a much higher level of desire to study in another town, indeed it is 46 per cent higher among girls than boys at the age of 16.

Table 14 What to do after primary school (per cent). Source: Dahlin & Bostedt (2010)

	Undecided	Working /other	Secondary school in other town	Secondary school in home town
TOTAL	13	20	32	36
Boys	14	23	26	37
Girls	11	16	38	35

The most marked gender differences in respect of what to do after secondary school are found in relation to studies and work. Almost 36 per cent more girls than boys would like to study after they have completed secondary school while around 21 per cent more boys than girls want to work after secondary school (see table 2.7).

Table 15 What to do after secondary school (per cent). Source: Dahlin & Bostedt (2010)

	Study	Work	Other	Undecided
TOTAL	33	36	20	11
Boys	28	39	21	12
Girls	38	32	20	9

More boys than girls are considering the possibility of starting a company in the future. In 8th year (the second last year) of primary school 55 per cent of the boys and 52 per cent of the girls surveyed say that they are willing to start a company in the future; for both genders the share of persons willing to start a company is 54 per cent. In the second year of secondary school (the second last year at secondary school) the gender differences are marginal: 48 per cent of the girls surveyed and 49 per cent of the boys are willing to start a company in the future. For both sexes, 49 per cent of the persons asked are willing to start up their own company. Unfortunately, the questionnaire contains no information on

what kind of companies these youngsters would like to start: is it innovative high-tech companies with high productivity or is it low-productivity and labour-intensive companies that will allow the owner to simply manage to meet their monthly bills?

2.4 Evaluation of the local living situation

The survey by Dahlin & Bostedt (2010) did not include questions on evaluating one's local living situation.

2.5 Conclusions for policy recommendations

The major conclusion to be drawn from the survey is that gender-specific differences do exist which may potentially influence the willingness to migrate from Västernorrland. In some cases the sex gender-specific differences show remarkable results,

Young women in 2nd year of secondary school are significantly more interested in societal questions than young men: 51 per cent of the young women express such an interest while only 38 per cent of the young men do. The underlying reasons for this are not however revealed in the report by Dahlin & Bostedt (2010). The same can also be said about the significantly higher level of desire shown by young women, compared to that of young men, to start a tertiary education. Young women tend to be more interested in going to university, but we do not have any information on why this is the case.

With one exception, the differences in social behaviour are relatively small; the different social behaviour is related to a marked café culture among young women. It is highly unlikely however that merely having access to more cafés is the primary cause of the desire to leave home. Instead, the café culture among young women is probably an indicator of a desired life style in which young women perceive their futures to be in the major metropolitan areas in Sweden.

The major difference is apparently not however related to gender, but to origin. In the presentation above the pupils of non-Nordic origin stand out in several ways. The size of this group is 10.9 per cent of the primary school respondents and 8.1 per cent of secondary school respondents. The group of pupils of non-Nordic origin show e.g. more willingness to undertake tertiary studies, a higher level of political activity and a greater willingness to migrate.

Several questions in the survey underline the marked difference between pupils with non-Nordic and native/Nordic origins. In several of the municipalities the results of questions on being a victim of sexual harassment, assault, robbery or being threatened/bullied are published

and the picture given for these questions makes rather sad reading: pupils of non-Nordic origin are to a far greater extent victims of sexual harassment, assault, robbery and threats/bullying than native/Nordic pupils. They are also being bullied in school to a greater degree than pupils with native and/or Nordic origins. As such, the 'push' factor for leaving the region as soon as possible ought to be higher for the group of youngsters with non-Nordic origin than for youngsters with native or Nordic origin.

3 Expert interviews

3.1 Methodological considerations

The selection of the respondents was undertaken in close cooperation with the national stakeholder of the SEMIGRA project, *Länsstyrelsen i Västernorrlands län*. Nine respondents accepted the request to be interviewed.³ Three of the respondents were mayors, one worked at the *Länsstyrelsen i Västernorrlands län*, one at the National Labour Board (*Arbetsförmedlingen*), one researcher at the Mid-Swedish University who has done extensive research on youth in Västernorrland, one representative for the Swedish Enterprise sector, one representative for the Chamber of Commerce in Västernorrland and one representative from the Confederation of Swedish Trade Unions (LO).

Table 16 Profile of experts

Expert #	Name	Organisation
1	Lars Gunnar Rönnqvist	County Administrative Board
2	Peter Nylander	Swedish Confederation of Labour Unions
3	Michael Persson	Swedish Public Employment Service
4	Malin Sjölander	Swedish Enterprises
5	Dick Jansson	Mid-Swedish Chamber of Commerce
6	Göran Bostedt	University of Mid-Sweden
7	Elvy Söderström	Örnsköldsvik (mayor)
8	Ewa Lindström	Timrå (mayor)
9	Sten-Ove Danielsson	Ånge (mayor)

One of the interviews took place at the Royal Institute of Technology (KTH) in Stockholm, three of the interviews were conducted over the telephone and five interviews were held at the work place of the individual respondents. After the interviews were transcribed each respondent was sent a copy of their interview for review.

The questions asked followed a semi-structured interview guide format, which was the same for all case study regions in the SEMIGRA project. In line with the standards of qualitative methodology regarding semi-structured interviews, the validity can be considered good while reliability is non-existent.⁴

³ One additional mayor, one director of local development and one director of a Social Office (*Socialtjänsten*) declined the invitation to participate.

⁴ The possibility of replicating the individual interviews is limited as the results are, to some extent, dependent on the interviewer. Furthermore, it is scientifically impossible to generalise the results of qualitative interviews into a general "truth" (Robson 2002).

3.2 Main results with regard to the specific needs of young adults

There is a clear gender-based difference in the willingness to migrate. The general opinion of the respondents is that young women are more willing to migrate than young men. Two major explanations were given for this: (1) young women wish, to larger extent than young men, to enter into higher education studies, which, in some cases, requires migration; (2) young women are willing to pick up jobs outside the municipality or region to a larger extent than young men.

Several of the respondents did, however, point out reasons for moving, which are not, primarily, related to either education or labour market factors: (a) the media communicates a view that city life and urban lifestyles are both superior and desirable; (b) by tradition, many young adults are encouraged to travel after they have left secondary school "to see the world". They are told that "they can always return when they want to settle down". These two lifestyle aspects do not, however, provide an explanation *per se* of why there are more young women than young men migrating from Västernorrland.

Recently, as some of the respondents indeed noted, the **labour market** appears to have opened up somewhat for young men, so they are now increasing their share of out-migrants. It is however still too early to tell whether this is a significant break in the trend.

In general, the labour market situation for young adults is described in terms of "bad", "terrible" and "disastrous"; only one respondent held the view that the labour market situation for the school leavers is good in Västernorrland.

Västernorrland has experienced a prolonged period of structural economic change since the early 1990s (one respondent indeed dates it back to the late 1960s), which has affected the labour market and the demand for labour. Previously, e.g. before the structural change, manufacturing and industry processing products from forestry dominated the economy; today the post-industrial economy is about to establish itself in Västernorrland. The post-industrial society requires more specified competence and generally a higher level of education, which has affected the entrants to the labour market: young adults and immigrants. Both these groups face significant problems in entering today's labour market.

During the last economic slump in Sweden, in 2008-2009, Västernorrland entered the period with a high level of unemployment and when the economy turned upwards again during 2010 the region fell further behind. Taken as a whole, both long and short term economic factors have made

it more difficult for young adults to enter the labour market and thus to find a job in Västernorrland.

The labour market in Västernorrland is effectively segregated by gender; women are over-represented in education as well as in the health and care sectors, while men are over-represented in forestry, industry and manufacturing. None of them offer any great career possibilities. Many of the experts stressed that their opinion is that employers work actively with gender equality; the problem lies rather in the structure of the labour market. The tendency is that women are more likely to enter professions previously dominated by men; men entering professions previously dominated by women are however far fewer.

Generally, the labour market is more diversified in Sundsvall and, to some extent, in Örnsköldsvik, which makes it, relatively speaking, easier to find a career path there than in the rest of the region.

Two respondents said that gender may have some impact on career possibilities; four respondents stressed however that what really matters is age – i.e. labour market experience – and ethnicity.

Nearly all experts underlined the importance of having contacts if you want to enter the labour market; you simply need someone to vouch for you. “No contacts? No job!”, as one of the respondents expressed it. It was also stated that the possibility of getting a job is the determinant behind the decision whether to stay or move; with more jobs, more people would stay.

As far as public opinion is concerned it is often perceived that if only there were more jobs in the rural and peripheral parts of the country people would not so readily move away. This view was not however confirmed by the respondents; the picture is far more nuanced than simply being a question of jobs and access to higher education.

Many of the experts argued that as **lifestyle and image factors** are the prime drivers of out-migration people would move anyway; indeed, the number of vacancies in the region is relatively good and there is a university which offers a wide range of educational opportunities, but people still move away from Västernorrland. Some respondents mentioned that there is a deeply rooted lack of belief in the future of Västernorrland. The ongoing process of structural change has seen the region leave industrialism behind without yet managing to coherently embrace the post-industrial era at the head of the local people; the image of being “a loser” thus still lingers like a bad smell.

Most municipalities in Västernorrland are considered anything but ‘cool’ to live in, they are regarded as rural, peripheral, industrial and declining. The

two cities, Sundsvall and Örnsköldsvik, are 'cool' in a regional perspective; but taken as a whole the region is not regarded as 'cool' by young adults.

The regional experts had many theories and explanations for this. The region has an expanding IT- and service sector, the coastal municipalities have a relatively well diversified labour market, there are good facilities for higher education, housing is not scarce, the quality of life is high etc. The preconditions for being 'cool' are undoubtedly there, but the region has not managed to market itself as a 'cool' place to live in and thus its image is coloured by false presumptions.

According to the experts women find it stigmatising to live in the countryside to a greater extent than men; young adults find it more stigmatising than middle aged people and pensioners to live in the countryside.

Several experts (6) noted that youngsters start discussing the need to move away from the region already at an early age (14-16 years old). The impression the respondents have is that the youngsters mostly talk to their friends about this; an ongoing dialogue on this issue with their parents is not always entered into.

One respondent argued that the region has been declining, in one way or another, for the last 30 years, so there is a deeply rooted lack of belief in the possibility of a bright future for this region; to 'become something' you simply have to move somewhere else. Another respondent underlined the fact that all decisions regarding young adults are taken by middle aged administrators and politicians; there is no forum for young adults to voice their needs, desires or ambitions. The respondent characterised the situation as follows: "We must let them in, we must learn to listen to what they have to say and let them take responsibility – and they want to take that responsibility!" And then we are surprised that they move?

The view of those who remain, often characterised as 'lazy losers' without ambition, is often given by media. While some respondents rejected this as a downgrading myth (3), others gave more nuanced explanations (3).

If you grow up in a community where a significant share of the young adults are unemployed the risk is that an emerging subculture of hopelessness and 'benefit dependence' will slowly establish itself. In some of the municipalities in Västernorrland the share of unemployed youngsters is very high indeed. Even worse, most of them also have parents who are unemployed or have experienced long-term unemployment; long-term sickness leave and early retirement is also high in Västernorrland.

About 15 per cent of the young adults in Västernorrland have more or less negligible political resources and this group has shown itself to be the least willing to migrate. Simultaneously, this group also shows the highest frustration and has the lowest stock of social capital. In short, this group simply lacks the resources and indeed the wherewithal to leave; migration requires the search for information – on vacancies, accommodation, educational facilities etc. These young adults are on the edge of social exclusion. This is why they stay.

Others who remain can have various reasons for their decision to stay: some study at the university in the region, some get a job in the region and some start companies. So, the view of those who remain as being 'lazy losers' is something of a myth. An overwhelming majority of those who remain are anything but 'lazy', though some of those who remain are, unfortunately, 'losers' in every sense of the word.

Those who leave, in general, head for cities with good higher education opportunities (e.g. Uppsala, Stockholm, Umeå, Luleå) and cities with a good labour market (usually Stockholm and around Lake Mälaren). Quite a few of these young adults also go to Norway for work, both seasonal (usually in the fishing industry), but also for permanent positions (usually in the health and care sectors).

Statistically, there is a small shortage of women in fertile ages in Västernorrland; in the inland municipalities this shortage is marked. If single villages and small communities are analysed, the shortage is in some cases highly significant. All but one of the respondents claimed that they neither perceive nor recognise this shortage.

For 8 out of 9 respondents the question of whether a shortage of women was something negative was considered to be hypothetical. Nevertheless, the general perception is that a shortage of women will have negative consequences, both for the remaining inhabitants and for society as a whole. But, as one of the respondents pointed out, an unbalanced gender ratio with a shortage of men is just as devastating as a shortage of women!

A shortage of women affects the quality of life in a region, its attractiveness, labour market, reproduction potential, associations, social capital, social life etc. In a longer perspective society will ultimately face great difficulty in providing services to these areas. All respondents expressed the fears that if women start leaving rural and peripheral areas, these areas will slowly die out. Consequently, young adults will leave these areas as they are not attractive.

The shortage of women will, in the long run, generate social problems of various kinds. The respondents are convinced that the self-perception of

the men left behind will be crippled, various kinds of drug problems will most likely appear and a non-sustainable social situation will emerge.

In some areas in Västernorrland, where the gender ratio is severely biased with a shortage of women, such tendencies are already. In these areas xenophobia rules and the hunting and fishing culture is played out to its extreme; nobody benefits from this as it just makes the vicious circle spin even faster.

When asked about the image of the men in Västernorrland as being obsessed with hunting and fishing, a little 'unpolished' and with a tendency to drink excessively, the respondents really opened up. While 3 respondents emphatically rejected this image as 'a myth', with the only aim being to ridicule the people from the north of Sweden, 2 respondents confirmed it. The remaining 4 respondents gave more nuanced views on this general image of men from Västernorrland.

The use of alcohol here is, according to these 4 respondents, not exceptional for the vast majority of the population in Sweden; sure, in rural and peripheral areas, with a surplus of men, language may be harsher, brasher or fouler than in areas with a more balanced gender ratio, but it does not differ markedly from similar areas in other parts of Sweden.

These 4 respondents also argued that the hunting and fishing tradition must be put into an appropriate context. A number of observations were then made in this context. Traditionally, the north of Sweden has a culture closely connected to the pursuit of outdoor leisure activities, be it hunting, fishing, hiking, trekking or skiing; the abundant nature provides natural leisure activities which are widely accepted and esteemed in these areas. So, while men traditionally went hunting or fishing, women collected berries or mushrooms etc., instead. Furthermore, these outdoor activities are actually very important parts of social life and act as the formation of these areas' stock of social capital. If we just simply pull this out of context its importance will be lost. Hence, these outdoor leisure activities should not be seen as inferior to urban leisure activities – they are just different. Still they serve the same purpose as they bring people together.

The share of men in Västernorrland who are obsessed with hunting and fishing, who are a little 'unpolished' and who perhaps drink more than they should be, moreover, not representative of the men in general living there. Such men do exist, but they exist in all Swedish regions; if you look for them you will find them everywhere.

With one exception, the respondents stressed that the young adults with an immigrant background have an even more difficult time than natives of the same age in getting a job. Many employers talk about poor language

skills, but in fact a foreign surname is enough to get rejected in the recruitment process. Several of the respondents talked openly about widespread discrimination against immigrants in the region. At the same time, they were convinced that more immigrants are needed in Västernorrland. Some employers would like to employ immigrants, but far more employers do not wish to even if they say they do.

Young adults with an immigrant background differ from the natives as they are far more willing to leave the region and they are far more interested in starting university studies. One perception could be that these youngsters may actually bias the statistics on the migration of young adults from Västernorrland.

One of the respondents argued that immigrants are only good for jobs at e.g. McDonalds and hard physical labour and these jobs are becoming fewer and fewer in the region.

3.3 Conclusions for policy recommendations

Some respondents wanted to highlight the need for the continued expansion of higher education in the region; also the matching process at the labour market urgently needs to be improved. One of the key aspects of a better matching process is a better secondary school system which educates pupils so that they will be employable when they leave school. More (government) jobs should be placed in regions such as Västernorrland.

Also investments in infrastructure leading to better opportunities for commuting were mentioned together with more IT-infrastructure. Some respondents asked for more effort to be given to strengthening entrepreneurship. Others argued that more regionalised policies, especially in terms of the labour market and education, were necessary so that the specific advantages of the region could be turned into a comparative advantage; today these policy areas are perceived to be designed for the metropolitan areas and not for areas outside the regions of Stockholm, Göteborg and Malmö.

Furthermore, some of the respondents argued that institutions, particularly those associated with the labour market and the educational sector are still designed for the needs of an industrial society – they need to be adjusted or updated to take account of the new post-industrial realities. One respondent described these institutions as a “slack sticky mass which is difficult to change”.

As the old cures obviously do not help anymore, some respondents argued that we should try new paths: the regions ought to have the right to use tax money in areas other than medical care, perhaps social taxes

should be regionally differentiated, and even have the right to buy back the study debts of persons with key competences as an incentive to induce them move back to the region (as is the case in Finnmark in northern Norway).

A majority of the respondents also mentioned another important issue, the marketing of the region must improve dramatically. The self-esteem of the region is low – the image of the region must be improved so that the population – and not just the young adults – can be more easily made aware of all the good things and all possibilities that actually exist.

Should the strategies focus on enticing these young adults to stay or on attracting newcomers and/or returnees? On this point the respondents were anything but clear. The former was advocated by 2 respondents, while the latter was advocated by another 2 respondents; 5 respondents argued that both strategies were required.

Such an inflow is needed to attract key competences and population; if the region is unable to attract newcomers, it will actually be very difficult to retain the present population in the region.

None of the respondents thought that schools currently do a good job in preparing young adults for the step into the labour market. This is alarming and here the potential for improvement is huge.

The general criticism is related to three things: (1) the type of education produced does not match the current demand of labour – and this mismatch is devastating since youngsters have to move to get a job; (2) the school system and its leadership is stuck in the industrial economy – several of the respondents mentioned this. One example given was that the majority of schools appear to think that the jobs of the future still exist in forestry, heavy industry and manufacturing. Consequently, the leadership in schools can be questioned. (3) Several of the respondents were not convinced that the liberalisation of the school system in the late 1990s actually improved the quality in education; several schools offer education that may attract pupils, but they will be unemployable when they graduate. Here, an acute need for appraisal and review is needed.

What will happen in the future is not really clear when analysing the answers made by the respondents. All but two respondents expressed concern and doubts about the future for the young adults in the region; some even expressed great concern. Some believe that the future labour shortage and competence shortage will lead to a significantly improved situation for young adults. Other respondents express doubts: the problems in the matching process today may actually lead to a substitution of labour for capital or, even worse, that companies leave the

region or outsource activities to other regions (examples were given)⁵. If this happens the situation will not improve; indeed it may actually get worse.

Some respondents thought parents have too great an influence on young adults while others rejected this by saying that parents and children do not talk about these things; some argued that the media has a very strong influence on these youngsters while others, again, rejected this. A majority did, however, believe that school and teachers do have an impact (though not always a positive one...) and so do friends.

When the respondents were asked what advice they would give to an 18-22 year old person who came up to them and asked for advice on whether they should stay or move to get a job only one respondent put move as the first option; two respondents wanted to know the background and dreams of the person who asked for the advice before giving any themselves.

The remaining 6 respondents favoured the advice to stay, but with the additional advice to study. At the same time several of the respondents giving this advice also acknowledged that it was far more difficult to find a job for them in the region than to find one elsewhere.

⁵ We chose not to list the examples given as we are convinced that the persons who gave them can be identified if we do so.

4 In-depth interviews with young women

4.1 Methodological considerations

Nine women in the ages 25-34 were interviewed. Two are out-movers, one is a permanent stayer, one is an in-migrant with no prior attachment to the region and five are return migrants. The selection of these respondents was not randomised: we put a notice on *Facebook* that we were looking for respondents to interview for this project. Three interviews with young women took place at their workplaces and the remaining six took place in cafés where it was possible to have a conversation on private and personal matters; two of the interviews were in Stockholm and the remaining seven in Västernorrland.

4.2 Main results

Most respondents moved immediately after they finished secondary school. In this age most of their friends also moved. For the returnees only some of their friends actually left Västernorrland. The possibility of getting a marketable education, which in most cases was not even available in Västernorrland, or better opportunities of getting a job were highlighted as the main drivers of their migratory decision. Two women mentioned the lure of an urban lifestyle as a pull-factor.

Among the areas of destination for the out-migrants, towns with universities or university colleges were mentioned (Umeå, Luleå, Östersund, Göteborg, Uppsala, Norrköping, Skara, Karlskrona) as well as Stockholm (better job opportunities), but also an intra-regional migration towards the coastal towns of Västernorrland. Luleå and Umeå are the towns mentioned most often by the respondents as destinations for out-migrants, not Stockholm as expected.

The motives for returning also vary. One woman, who has had a very successful international career, suddenly faced a situation where Västernorrland was the only place she could get a job. She misses the urban lifestyle, but is not sure that she will move back to a bigger city again. The other four returnees only left the region to study, with the intention of returning. During their stay outside Västernorrland they actively maintained their social networks and ties to the region. One of the returnees was not accepted for the 2nd year of her studies and she became unemployed. She experienced psychological problems due to this and decided to return to Västernorrland after one year of unemployment. In total, two of the five returnees did not return happily, but through necessity.

The respondent who moved to Sundsvall with no prior attachment to the region did so because she was offered a job. She originates from the interior of an area further north in Sweden and Sundsvall was thus relatively close to home. One respondent had always lived in Västernorrland; she has all her friends and family there. On several occasions she had considered moving to get an education or a job. For the time being she has a temporary job in the elderly care sector.

Four of the five returnees mention the importance of being close to friends and family as a motive for returning. The natural beauty of the area and the fact that Västernorrland is a safe place for children to grow up in were also mentioned. The other respondents did not say much about their motives in respect of the advantages associated with returning.

Table 17 Personal profile of the respondents

	Age	Employment	Contract form	Why move?	Why return?	Leisure activities	Social networks in the region
1	33	Student	--	Studies	Unemployment	Out-doors, shooting	Very strong
2	30	Municipal	Permanent	Studies	Got a job	?	Very strong
3	31	Government	Temporary	Studies	Got a job	?	Very strong
4	30	Municipal	Permanent	Studies	Unemployment	Cultural activities	Some
5	33	Municipal	Permanent	Studies	Got a job	?	Very strong
6	34	Region	Permanent	(This respondent is not from Västernorrland)	She moved in because she was offered a job	Carpeting, loves to build things for the house	Few
7	25	Private	Temporary	To see the world, then studies	Will not return	Cultural activities	None
8	25	Private	Temporary	To get away from Väster-norrland, to see the world, then studies	Will not return	?	None
9	29	Municipal	Temporary	Consider moving to get a job or studies	Has never left the region	Seeing the family	Very strong

In one way or another, all respondents asked for more and better communications to other major cities in Sweden, by rail and by air. Some of them also highlighted the need for better educational facilities and more jobs in the region; then there would be no need for them to move. One respondent would like major investments in culture, schools and the care sector. Another respondent would like Västernorrland to be more international and open-minded while yet another regrets that most people in the region complain about almost everything without doing anything themselves to improve the situation.

Three respondents mention the racism and discrimination against immigrants in Västernorrland. One of the respondents proffers an excuse for this by saying that it is probably not different in other parts of Sweden. Open racism and *White Power*-music are also mentioned. One of the respondents describes a situation where her work colleague, who was married to a non-European immigrant, had a husband who felt so insecure because of the racism in Sundsvall that he refused to move there.

The mentality in Västernorrland is described in quite a colourful way by five of the respondents. There is a strong regional identity. The respondents from Örnsköldsvik in particular are proud of their ice hockey team. As a Swedish in-migrant to Västernorrland it is difficult – but not impossible – to be accepted. One basically needs someone local to “let you in” to the region’s social life. Students from other parts of Sweden only get in touch with other in-migrants. Two respondents argued that it is far easier to get accepted if you enjoy fishing, hunting and driving snow-scooters; this is described as the ‘macho-culture’ in the region by one of the respondents. One respondent tells a story that she experienced herself: a friend of a friend who was from Stockholm became the target of malicious gossip with everybody talking behind her back. When she met the perpetrator of the rumour she turned out to be a very sociable and outgoing person. The respondent nevertheless complains about this and concludes that this is not a very welcoming way to meet in-migrants from other parts of Sweden.

Few of the respondents have a clear picture of whether there is a surplus of men in the region or not. They referred to the fact that this *might* be the case in the smaller communities in the region, but not in the town in which they lived in. The main causes for an eventual surplus of young men are explained simply by women having the ambition to get an education; one respondent claims that women are more adventurous than men. Although the respondents only have a vague idea of the causes of this surplus of men, previously in the interview they had already commented on the fact that a lot of their friends, usually women according to them, have already moved away. They have also commented on the impact of their friend’s choices – if many of their friends moved so would they. Two of the respondents also mentioned the city lifestyle as something desirable. Two of the returnees emphasised that they considered themselves lucky since they actually had the opportunity not only to return back home again after their studies, but also to get a job within their area of education.

4.3 Conclusions for policy recommendations

The women interviewed asked for better tertiary educational options and facilities within the region of Västernorrland to be provided; they asked for more jobs in the region, better communications between the region and the rest of Sweden as well as abroad. Investments in culture and social services of general interest (e.g. elderly care and schools) were also mentioned by the respondents.

To what extent more resources should be allocated to the university in Västernorrland is a question for the national level. Already today the Mid-Sweden University offer a relatively wide range of educational options. Umeå University also has a campus in Västernorrland. It should also be noted that the respondents who asked for more educational options in the region did study subjects already provided by the Mid-Sweden University – but still they chose to enlist at a university outside Västernorrland.

A key issue here is, without doubt, related to the available jobs in the region. Three of the five returnees were offered jobs in the public sector; the in-migrant with no former attachment to the region was also offered a job in the public sector. Two of the three returnees who got job offers stressed that they were lucky to get a job in the region which matched their competence. One respondent alternates between unemployment and temporary jobs in the public sector and is currently considering the option of leaving the region. One of the two involuntary returnees, i.e. they had to return due to unemployment, now has a job in the public sector but one that is well below her level of competence. The two respondents who have no plans to return both work in the modern and expansive private sector in Stockholm.

Although the private sector is expanding in the region, the demand for highly educated (women) in the private sector is relatively small. Västernorrland effectively has a dual labour market, where men work in the private sector and women in the public sector. Although adjustments have been made and the situation has improved, room for further gains in this area undoubtedly remains.

Alas, this is nothing new. What we see today is a process which has been ongoing for the last 20 years. The employment changes that took place after the economic crisis in the early 1990s show three distinct patterns according to Persson *et al.* (2004). (1) The three metropolitan areas around Stockholm, Göteborg and Malmö, but also Jönköping, show significant increases in employment; (2) coastal towns and university towns show a small increase in employment; and (3) rural and peripheral municipalities, and especially those in the north of Sweden, show decreasing employment. Furthermore, the mismatch appears to have

been accentuated during the structural transformation after the economic crisis in the early 1990s. The labour required in the metropolitan areas is very knowledge-based and 'post-Fordist', while rural and peripheral areas function around a much more traditional and 'Fordist'-based model of production. Johansson & Persson (2001) argue that this has accentuated regional polarisation over time. Bengtsson & Johansson (1993) argue that the declining economic base in northern Sweden, together with high birth rates and cut-backs in the female dominated public sector may generate a future migration flow to the south.

The need for further investment in some services of general interest was highlighted by the respondents. High-speed trains and motorways were asked for as well as better air communications both domestic and internationally. Investments in these three transport areas are however beyond the governance of the region of Västernorrland. Furthermore, investments in social services of general interest such as elderly care and better schools were also high-lightened. The need for improvements in schools was also highlighted in the expert interviews. Both elderly care and schools are predominantly financed by the municipalities and predominantly produced and organised by the municipalities. The municipalities in Västernorrland do not however have access to unlimited resources thus they are able only to make relatively small investments in these sectors. Finally, the further investments in culture asked for predominantly relate to what is usually termed an urban lifestyle: more theatres, operas, art exhibitions etc.

There are, moreover, a number of additional aspects to consider when talking about policy implications. Some of the respondents brought up the issue of discrimination in respect of immigrants and, even, racism in Västernorrland. This was also clearly evident in the youth survey and in the expert interviews. How is the region going to attract immigrants and the needed labour when they are subject to discrimination and racism? Without doubt this question has significant implications for policy.

The young women also mention a rather distant attitude towards newcomers. You basically need to know a local who can open the 'social doors' for you. If you do not have such person and you do not share an interest in skiing, outdoors activities, hunting and fishing etc., you run the risk of being socially excluded. This also gives persons with no prior attachment to the region significant pause when considering relocating to the area. This aspect is, however, difficult to address by means of public policy intervention.

5 Results of the SWOT

The SWOT-analysis reported in this section will focus on Västernorrland's socio-economic status with regard to the purpose of the SEMIGRA-Project – migratory movements of young women. The main aim of the SWOT analyses in the context of SEMIGRA is then to assess the regional push and pull factors, to build on regional strengths, eliminate weaknesses, exploit opportunities and to mitigate the effect of external threats. The SWOT-analysis with regard to the migration pattern of young women in Västernorrland is summarised in Table 18.

When analysing the SWOT it must be borne in mind that the economy and the labour market in Västernorrland are currently undergoing a prolonged phase of rapid transformation where some segments expand while others retract. These processes have significant effects on migration patterns for men as well as for women. With regard to the migration pattern of young women the development in a more female-friendly direction is of the utmost importance for the in- and out-migration of young women. Here it is clear that how the (public) service sector develops and changes will be key. Expansion creates increased demand for women while cut-backs and the loss of employment opportunities have the opposite effect.

Västernorrland has large deposits of renewable resources and this provides the basis for the process industries in the region and is also a precondition for its dominance in the paper and pulp industry with its high value added and export value. The industrial tradition with large capital-intensive factories in the region can be seen as strength and even if the level of employment has declined in this sector it is still very important. From an economic point of view this is a strength for the region but the industrial sector remains dominated by 'male' jobs. Development is also more dependent on higher productivity than on increased demand for labour, resulting, in recent decades in what is usually referred to as "jobless growth", a situation that has not helped to accentuate the entrance of women into the industrial sector. The raw-material based process industry is, however, no longer characterised by standardised methods and competence. Instead relatively high level R&D activities occur in the process and engineering industries both in Sweden more generally and in Västernorrland. This transformation of the industrial structure has increased the demand for highly educated labour and this is valid both for men and women, a process that can be seen as presenting both a strength and an opportunity. The overall effect produced may be increased segmentation in the labour market where the unemployed, both men and women, simply lack the competences for the new industrial jobs available. This can be seen as a weakness and in the worst cases also a threat in the SWOT-analysis for young women's migration patterns.

As in many other regions growth in the IT-sector is one of the most pronounced characteristics in the transformation process. As an old factory area this is deemed to be of the utmost importance and indeed, the transformation of the region's old industrial society with standardised production has already been ongoing for some time. This process provides both a strength and an opportunity in relation to the region's future development. This has also resulted in a situation where, in some industrial sectors at least, the level of education is higher than the national average. Highly-skilled labour is a prerequisite for the introduction of new methods and new products even within traditional branches. This will perhaps also eventually help to change the labour market forcing it to function in a more female-friendly manner.





The prerequisites for endogenous economic growth are connected to population development and to the strength of the service sector. In Västernorrland, as in other parts of Sweden, there is now a closer connection between service production and employment and thus also greater importance is now being placed on endogenous growth than ever before. The growth of the service sector, especially the public service sector, has reduced the region's dependence on export-based industry and increased the number of female jobs but the opportunities for endogenous growth are still limited even if they are not totally absent. One prerequisite for successful endogenous growth is further investments in human capital and a higher educational level in the labour force. Access to a pool of highly educated labour has increasingly become an important locational factor with respect to firms involved in the 'new economy'. In this case the Mid Sweden University has a central role to play in ensuring that relevant competences are offered to students and, in this case, particularly in relation to the regional labour market's needs to limit out-migration after students have completed their studies. This is relevant for young men as well as for young women and for young people born in Västernorrland as well as students from other parts of Sweden.

The sharp expansion of the public sector in previous times had a significant impact on enabling women to stay and/or to return. The forced shrinkage of the public sector has in recent years however undoubtedly had a negative impact here and also hampered the general development towards a more female-friendly labour market. This has been compensated in part by an expansion within the private service sector and by the continuous transformation in a post-industrial direction which partly seems to be a way of getting rid of the problem with a huge net out-migration of young women and the stimulation of in-migration aimed at young women and families.

Table 18 SWOT-analysis for Västernorrland based on the SEMIGRA scheme

<i>Indicators with impact on (female) migration, facts</i>	<i>Strengths, internal factor, what makes women stay in the regions</i>	<i>Weaknesses, internal factors, what is driving young women to move away from the region?</i>	<i>Opportunities, influenced by external impacts (economy, policy)</i>	<i>Threats, influenced by external impacts (economy, policy)</i>
Economic structure	<p>More balanced, diversified, flexible, Invulnerable to external shocks.</p> <p>Female-friendly labour market, large public sector.</p> <p>Tradition of (female) entrepreneurship.</p> <p>The "new rurality" is established in the coastal areas</p>	<p>Still unbalanced, inflexible, rigid, vulnerable to external shocks. Intra-regional dual economic structure.</p> <p>Male dominated industrial labour market, segmented (gender) labour markets.</p> <p>No tradition of (female) entrepreneurship</p> <p>Dependent on the old agricultural/industrial sector in the interior</p>	<p>Diversification of the regional economy. Decreasing geographic dualism.</p> <p>Labour market opens up to women even in traditional male dominated jobs. Rising possibilities and incentives for (female) entrepreneurship.</p> <p>Develop the "new rurality", rural revival, attractive for families and new entrepreneurs</p>	<p>No growth factors economic structure still rigid. Accentuated dual structure – coast-interior.</p> <p>Even more male dominated labour market. Cut-backs.</p> <p>Diminishing opportunities and incentives for (female) entrepreneurship</p> <p>Still dependent on the agricultural/industrial sector, rural retardation, unemployment, increasing social benefits</p>
Social and educational structures	Good educational structure, highly skilled population, open milieus	Unbalanced educational structure, low skilled population, isolated milieus	Attractive university. In-migration for studies, regional spin-offs. Brain gain,	Non-attractive university, out-migration for studies. Brain drain, no regional spin-offs.
Gender-specific sharing of roles	Tradition of employed women and mothers	Traditional gender roles, no working mothers	Increasing reconciliation of family and employment	Reactionary trends
Quality of environment	Relatively good	Relatively bad	Improving	Worsening
Image, has to be considered with regard to different target groups (age, gender)	Positive	Negative, "no future"	Rising	Worsening
Settlement patterns, housing situation	Good living conditions, cheap housing prices	Bad living conditions especially for young adults and families (in the interior)	Upgrading, pull-factors for families	Downgrading, pauperisation, "drop-outs"
Cultural and social activities	Lots of socio-cultural facilities (clubs, restaurants, associations)	"Nothing to do", especially for young people, alienation (in comparison to the big city areas)	Diversified culture, rising cultural and social involvement, voluntary work	No cultural activities, deeper alienation, apathy, isolated milieus
Social/educational infrastructure for women (young families)	Dense net and good quality (e.g. child care, schools), "everybody knows each other"	Insufficient infrastructure, prejudices, exclusion of in-movers	Expanding, improving quality, new, flexible and adjusted solutions, openness, tolerance	Cutting back on infrastructure projects without replacement, scepticism towards new ideas and new people

Outcomes: influence on demography/female migration

			
In-migration of women over 25 and families	Accentuated out-migration of young women (especially under 25) and an even more unbalanced population structure (age and gender)	Stimulate in-migration of especially (young) families but a higher share of stayers. Decreased out-migration of young women (even under 15)	Accentuated out-migration of young people especially young women in the ages 18-24, accentuated "rural exodus"
Relatively high fertility rates. Young population, a pull-factor.	Relatively high fertility rates but hampered by the huge out-migration. Skewed age structure – a push-factor.	Childbearing is increasing. Great expectations, higher fertility. Family in-migration. Increased return migration. More stayers.	Not attractive for any population groups. Worsening reproduction potentials. Bad expectations, lower fertility. Dying-out municipalities. Only "oldies" stay.

6 Scenarios: possible futures for the region

EUROPE 2020 sets out a vision of Europe's social market economy for the 21st century. This vision is described by means of three types of 'growth strategies' which jointly support each other. They are: smart growth (economy based on knowledge and innovation), sustainable growth (resource efficient, greener and competitive economy) and inclusive growth (high employment economy delivering economic, social and territorial cohesion). This vision is supposed to be reached by attaining specific targets with regard to population ageing, investments in R&D, climate/energy targets, education and poverty. The ***Territorial Agenda of the European Union 2020*** (TA2020) aims to fulfil the EUROPE 2020 Strategy taking into consideration territorial cohesion principles.

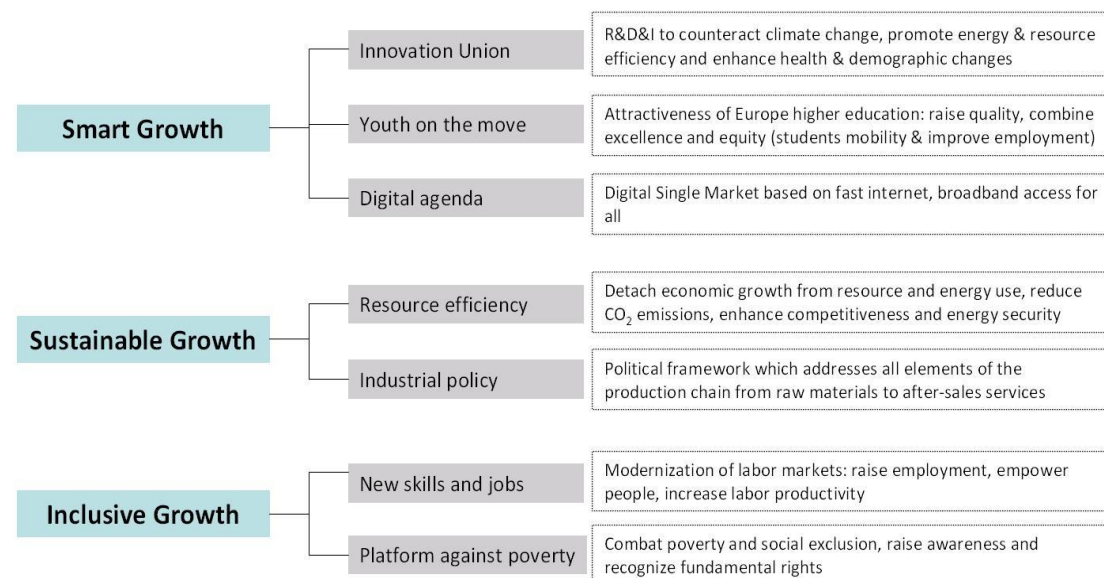


Figure 1 EUROPE 2020 framework

Changes in demography, migration patterns and education levels are important targets for EU policies due to their importance for smart, inclusive and sustainable growth. Territorial cohesion has a strong gender dimension as young women choose to migrate from rural areas to a larger extent than do men. Educational facilities and job prospects are also better in the metropolitan areas for young adults in general and in particular for young women. The main policy documents such as Europe 2020 and the Territorial Agenda focus on the territorial dimension of many policy areas, primarily education, employment, innovation and growth. The policy aims of smart growth and inclusive growth are therefore strongly related to the selective migration of young women in rural areas.

Three exploratory scenarios for Västernorrland will be outlined here: (1) **status quo scenario** in which the current processes are allowed to continue without policy intervention; (2) a **smart growth scenario** in which the policy aims of enhanced health and demographic changes are counteracted while student mobility is increased and employment prospects are improved; and, finally, (3) an **inclusive growth scenario** in which further modernisation of the labour markets results in new skills and jobs, empowering people to fight poverty and social exclusion.

The ESPON/SeGI project has identified the major driving forces for services of general interest as predominantly related to demography, economy, politics and environment/climate issues. Technological aspects/questions here are subsumed under economic aspects (ESPON 2011). The same driving forces will be used for the outlined scenarios here.

6.1 A status quo scenario

The economic structure is segmented in a gender perspective: men work in the private sector and women in the public. This is also reflected in the demand for labour. The tradition of female entrepreneurship will continue to be relatively weak. Furthermore, dependence on the public sector for employment will remain high.

As the population level in the region will continue to decline as will the number of students at the Mid-Sweden University, the likelihood of being able to do one's preferred degree subject will decrease due to cutbacks in the university budget. This will force more women to leave Västernorrland to undertake university-level studies than is currently the case.

The current social structure will prevail as described by the women in the interviews, i.e. it will be exclusive rather than inclusive. The gender roles will also prevail.

The quality of the environment remains good. The region has a rich nature, which is excellent for outdoor activities such as skiing, trekking, picking mushrooms and berries, hunting, fishing etc. Furthermore, the natural environment is both clean and unpolluted. The social structure will however remain – as described in the interviews with young women – exclusive rather than inclusive in respect of incomers.

The image of Västernorrland in the status quo scenario is a mere extrapolation of the present one. The image is negative – no jobs, no future, far from the rest of Sweden and indeed from the rest of the world. This opinion is reflected across most groups.

The living conditions remain good in the major cities along the coast but are worsening in the region's interior. The provision of services of general

interest, particularly in respect of social services of general interest, is decreasing. Longer distances to e.g. schools, healthcare facilities, shops etc., are to be expected in the interior as the population declines. The housing situation will however be good: due to an over-supply of houses in the interior prices will remain relatively low. In the coastal areas house prices can be expected to be somewhat higher, but still low in a national context.

Cultural activities are dependent on the level of demand and on the financing model available to them. The demand for e.g. theatres and art exhibitions is after all relatively limited in Västernorrland. The prerequisite for an urban lifestyle is hampered by the relatively small nature of the towns in the region. Social activities continue to be related primarily to outdoor activities in relation to the rich natural heritage of the region. Although this undoubtedly strengthens the level of affinity among the residents of Västernorrland, those with other interests are effectively excluded from most forms of social activity.

6.2 A smart growth scenario

The aim of the Smart Growth vision is to strengthen the EU economy, to make it more productive and to maintain or, even better, increase its global market share. The international companies in the process industries will increase their investment ratio and R&D efforts to remain competitive on the international market. In the public sector investments to enhance health and meet the demographic changes are needed, but such investments need to be financed which will be difficult as the tax base is weakening. The demand for highly qualified labour in the process industries will remain high; in the public sector the demand for labour will decrease for financial reasons.

It is not seen as something negative that young adults move to get an education; if and when they return they bring with them investments in human capital and vital experiences gained while living outside the region. In the smart growth scenario the emphasis is on giving *employment* to young adults, not *employment in a specific geographical area*. If young adults obtain employment outside Västernorrland after their period of tertiary education this is seen as being better than them being unemployed in the region. Viewed from this perspective more young women than men are likely to move away from Västernorrland.

With the weakening of the public finances likely to continue, a decreasing population and the ongoing out-migration of presumptive university students, the educational facilities tertiary education in particular may become increasingly limited in Västernorrland. Again, this will most likely be a trigger for more young women to leave. The weakened state of the

public finances will lead to a decline in the robustness of the social infrastructure (i.e. the network of kindergartens, schools, day care facilities etc). Again, this will most likely provide an additional trigger for young women to leave the region.

Just as in the status quo scenario the environment can be assumed to be good, with continued access available to the region's rich natural heritage and excellent opportunities for outdoor activities. The development of living conditions and the housing situation can also be assumed to be similar to that in the status quo scenario: good in the coastal areas, but decreasing in the interior. The provision of services will most likely also follow this development as in the status quo scenario.

As the Smart Growth vision is very market-oriented cultural and social activities financed by public means will decrease. Since women consume relatively more culture than men this will affect them to a higher degree.

The image of Västernorrland in the Smart Growth scenario will probably not diverge much from that in the status quo scenario. The image remains negative and will be reflected by most groups. As the number of young women declines the gender roles for those women who remain will probably however change for the better – if not they are likely to leave as well.

6.3 An inclusive growth scenario

The political aim of the Inclusive Growth vision is to increase employment rates and the quality of jobs, especially for women, young persons and older workers. It also aims at improving the situation for immigrants; making more people invest in skills and training as well as modernising the labour market and welfare system. The political documents says nothing however about how to finance this vision.

Increasing employment and the quality of jobs would probably mean an expansion of the public sector in the region. Västernorrland has one of the highest rates for long term sickness leave and early retirement in Sweden, which indicates that the labour market is not working properly. If more persons became employed in e.g. schools and elderly care, which are traditionally female professions, fewer young women would have to leave the region to find a job. An expansion of the tertiary education sector in Västernorrland would further strengthen the educational infrastructure for women. The downside of this is however that this would probably segment traditional gender roles still further in the already highly gender-segmented labour market.

Just as in the previous scenarios the environment can be assumed to remain good, with a rich natural environment and excellent opportunities

for outdoor activities. Contrary to the previous scenarios however the development of living conditions and the housing situation can be assumed to be improving – both in the coastal areas and in the interior – due to the expansive nature of the development forecast in the context of this scenario. The provision of services will most likely also follow this development and improve, especially in the interior.

As the Inclusive Growth vision is oriented towards social and cultural aspects thus the cultural and social activities financed by public means will increase. As women consume relatively more culture than men, they will benefit from this. It is, moreover, likely to be the case that more women than men will be employed in these sectors. It can also be assumed that the social infrastructure stemming from such social and cultural investment would strengthen the social infrastructure of the region, especially for young women.

The expansion of the public sector in this Inclusive Growth scenario could, in the context of a 10-15 year perspective, change the image of Västernorrland. As such, a place where its inhabitants are well provided with most services, a good environment, jobs, low sickness leave and unemployment, a good housing situation etc., cannot be considered a stagnant region full of 'losers'. On the contrary it would be an attractive region for young people and in for young women in particular.

6.4 Conclusion: A rocky road

The status quo scenario is an undesired scenario; there is nothing positive in this scenario. The Smart Growth scenario is very focused on the market, which in the case of Västernorrland may be problematic as the region is relatively dependent on a large public sector; the Inclusive Growth scenario appears to be the most attractive scenario for the region, but it has to be financed from outside the region – others will have to pay for it. The scenario with the best potential to change the image of Västernorrland is undoubtedly the Inclusive Growth scenario. The Smart Growth scenario may also do that, but only in the context of a far longer timeframe (when the private sector and the market displace the public sector as the dominant economic force in the region). In either case, the road will be rocky no matter which growth scenario is followed.

7 Summary and policy recommendations

As has been shown in the statistical analyses the migration patterns of young women in Västernorrland vary between differing age groups. The problematic situation pertains more to the high level of out-migration than to low in-migration. The problem is particularly concerning in respect of the huge level of out-migration in the age group 18-24 that results in net out-migration for the whole age group 18-34. Among women aged 25 and over there is, however, a net surplus with regard to migratory movements.

Another interesting observation is the high level of turnover among migrants in and from Västernorrland. In many regions and places like Västernorrland in-migration eventually creates out-migration often as a consequence of student movements to commence and after completing their studies. For this category the creation of a diversified labour market is of the utmost importance. It is, thus, of great importance that incoming students stay and do not automatically return to their places of origin or move to other parts of the world. This is particularly important in respect of newcomers who have no previous connection to the region. But the contrary is also applicable in relation to this kind of analysis – out-migration creates in-migration some years later and even here a diversified labour market is of great importance though the existence of attractive settlement areas are also a central ingredient in terms of pull-factors.

Another problem here is that the out-migration of young women significantly impacts future reproduction potentials. As the highest migration intensities are in the age group 18-24 with net out-migration as a result, net in-migration in the age group 25+ can compensate for these negative effects on the reproduction potential, at least in part.

Recommendations: Stimulate in-migration in the ages 25 and over, both (female) return-migrants and newcomers. This will have income spin-offs as such people are likely to be in the labour force and thus they will be both producers and consumers. This will also result in increasing reproduction potentials as the in-migrants are in the fertile and household creating ages if they are not already in a family relationship.

A continued expansion of higher education in the region would favour young women. In addition, the matching process in the labour market urgently needs to be improved. One of the key aspects of a better matching process is a better secondary school system which educates pupils such that they will be employable in the current economy when they leave school. More (public) jobs should also be relocated to regions such as Västernorrland.

Investments in infrastructure leading to better opportunities for commuting are also needed together with a stronger IT-infrastructure. In addition, more effort needs to be made to strengthen entrepreneurship as this would improve the situation for young adults in general and especially for young women.

The marketing of the region must also become better. The image of the region must be improved so that the population – and not just young adults in general and young women in particular – can better appreciate all of the opportunities that actually exist in Västernorrland.

To sum up, the preconditions for success are, thus, primarily female-friendly diversified labour markets, no “macho” image, good schools, better higher education opportunities that also help to create jobs, a closer relationship between educational institutions and labour market developments, the provision of more and better amenities and attractive settlement areas, good communications, increased accessibility, more cultural activities, etc. These are factors that can all be seen as ‘pull-factors’ with regard to young women’s migration decisions. Such issues are clearly also important in respect of the recruitment of well educated young women.

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The ESPON 2013 Programme is part-financed by the European Regional Development Fund, the EU Member States and the Partner States Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland. It shall support policy development in relation to the aim of territorial cohesion and a harmonious development of the European territory.

ISBN