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## Culture as regional attraction - migration decisions of highly educated in a Swedish context.

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**Culture as Regional Attraction:  
Migration Decisions of Highly Educated in a Swedish context.**

Preliminary version

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Recent research shows that labour market related factors are becoming less important as reasons behind migration in Sweden. Factors that relate to the regional milieu are on the other hand becoming more important. This, together with the fact that culturally active groups in the population (e.g. people with higher education and retirees) are growing, has given rise to the notion that culture might be an increasingly important part of the regional infrastructure. Cultural infrastructure is in different political contexts assumed to attract residents, tourists and firms, and thus increase economic activity and employment. There are however processes that complicates this line of reasoning. People are becoming more mobile; they commute over longer distances, they travel more and some reside in more than one place. Culture on the other hand is becoming more easily accessible through different electronic media thus bridging over geographical distances. Both these processes challenge the role of the regional.

The objectives of the paper are 1) to investigate the importance of the cultural infrastructure in relation to other regional and individual conditions when people choose home region and 2) to study the complexity of this choice, not only considering individual preferences but also exploring the importance of work, mobility and recreational activities.

The paper presents a theoretical model of what factors are of importance when people choose home region. The theoretical framework is in part based on Pierre Bourdieu's concepts of economic, social and symbolic (cultural) capital. The nature and magnitude of these individual assets are thought to be of importance when choosing home region. The paper furthermore recognizes that these forms of capital can be more or less geographically embedded. Geographically embedded assets has in migration literature been called insider advantages, a concept discussed and developed in the paper. Insider advantages are assets that are difficult or costly to bring, replace or make use of in another region, e.g. real estate property, friends, work colleagues, the local choir or knowledge about a place. The larger insider advantages a person has got, the larger the cost of moving.

The study is based on a questionnaire sent to 3,000 persons, 30 to 35 years old residing in Sweden 2001. The study involves people with degrees in civil engineering, arts, media-communication, specialist teaching and an additional group of people with upper secondary education as highest education.

The paper argues that the capacity to attract people by offering a good quality of life is of crucial importance for regional competitiveness. In studying regional attractiveness, it's important not only to consider what makes people move to a certain region but also what makes people want to stay. It furthermore argues that the explanations should be sought in a mix of individual and regional factors as well as in the social and geographical context of the individual.

## Introduction

Recent research shows that labour market related factors are becoming less important as reasons behind migration in Sweden (Garvill et al. 2000). Factors that relate to the regional milieu are on the other hand becoming more important. This, together with the fact that culturally active groups in the population (e.g. people with higher education and retirees) are growing, has given rise to the notion that culture might be an increasingly important part of the regional infrastructure. Cultural infrastructure is in different political contexts assumed to attract residents, tourists and firms, and thus increase economic activity and employment. There are however processes that complicates this line of reasoning. People are becoming more mobile; they commute over longer distances, they travel more and some reside in more than one place. Culture on the other hand is becoming more easily accessible through different electronic and other media. Both these processes challenge the role of the regional.

The objectives of the paper are 1) to investigate the importance of the cultural infrastructure in relation to other regional and individual conditions when people choose home region and 2) to study the complexity of this choice, not only considering individual preferences but also exploring the importance of work, mobility and recreational activities.

Many previous studies concerning the regional role of culture have got a limited geographical scope, a fact that makes the result difficult to generalize to a wider system of regions. Previous studies also often overlook the importance of individual assets and thus loose an important cause of explanation. This paper presents a theoretical model of how people choose home region, involving Pierre Bourdieu's concepts of economic, social and symbolic capital. It furthermore recognizes that capital can be more or less geographically embedded, a fact that carries implications for the migration decision.

The organization of the remainder of this paper is as follows. Next section briefly discusses the growing importance of culture. The subsequent section presents a theory of how people choose home region. After a brief discussion of methodology and data, the empirical section investigates the geographical distribution of different groups of highly educated and discusses the meaning of the concept of "home region". Thereafter it passes on to analyse which factors are of importance in the choice of home region and what characterise people that prefer culture.

## Culture in the knowledge-based society

The concept of culture does in a wide respect refer to common experiences, knowledge and values people pass on through communication, or produce and reproduce through their actions (Nilsson 1999). The discussion of culture from a growth perspective however often takes the cultural sector as a starting point. The cultural sector has got arts, i.e. theatre, music, dance, visual and literary arts and design, in focus but usually also includes different kinds of communication, i.e. production, distribution/management and consumption of culture (Cavallin 2001). The notion of cultural as infrastructure includes the conception of culture as relatively constant in time and space and as being of collective use and therefore open and accessible for all or at least many (Söderlind & Dahlrot 2002).

There are various trends indicating that the cultural sector is of growing importance. Groups in the population that traditionally are high-consumers of culture, e.g. retirees and highly educated, constitute a growing share of the population. The time for leisure is increasing as work hours are shortened, unemployment is growing and people are being retired at earlier ages (Williams & Hall 1993).

There are also those arguing that culture is of increasing importance as an integrated part of all sectors of the economy. Stories, emotions, spirituality, fantasy, tradition and experiences are becoming important components in goods and services that traditionally have not been regarded as “cultural products”. An obvious example is the computer game industry, where graphics, music and stories are being efficiently integrated.

Culture is also growing in a conceptual way. New forms of cultural phenomena's or leisure activities are emerging within the area of recreation and entertainment. In the book *The Dream Society* the Danish futurist Rolf Jensen (1999) distinguish six growing markets for emotions: “Adventures for Sale”, “The Market for Togetherness, Friendship and Love”, “The Market for Care”, “The Who-Am-I Market”, “The Market for Peace of Mind” and “The Market for Convictions”.

Culture has also become an important political strategy. An interesting example is Denmark where a new joint agenda for cultural, trade and industry politics recently was introduced. The politics was formulated in two white papers “Denmarks Kreative potentiale” (2000) and “Den Kreative Alliance” (2000) where the integration of art and industry are expected to further the creativity and innovativity of the economy.

### *Culture as a regional and urban strategy*

At a local and regional level politicians expect that a well-developed local cultural supply will attract firms, households and visitors to the region and make the young want to stay in the environment where they grew up; i.e. culture act as a force of attraction (Dahlrot, Snickars & Söderlind 2000). But culture is ascribed many different roles in the urban and regional context. Cultural investments can also be a way of creating a positive image or constructing a myth around a region or a way of enhancing the social cohesion by providing forum for integrating marginalized groups in society (Arnestad 1993). It's also believed that culture can stimulate creativity within other sectors of the industry as well as the urban environment in general. Based on a row of studies of culture as an urban strategy in a number of Western-European cities Franco Bianchini (1993) concludes that the greatest impact of the 1980's cultural polices have been creating attractive regions rather than generating direct economic effects.

*...the direct impact of 1980s cultural policies on the generation of employment and wealth was relatively modest, in comparison with the role of culture in constructing positive urban images, developing the tourism industry, attracting inward investment, and strengthening the competitive position of cities. (Bianchini 1993, page 2):*

The overall conclusion from an overview of studies in cultural politics suggests that it's difficult to distinguish general impacts of cultural investments (Arnestad 1993, Myerscough 1988, Bille-Hansen 1993, Bianchini 1993). Impacts differ depending on the cultural strategy as well as on the regional context. This indicates that it might be wise to regard the statements above as more or less empirically confirmed hypothesis, rather than facts. In the following we will take a closer look at one of these hypothesis namely the role of culture as a force of attraction when people chose home region. But in order to do this, it's important first to acknowledge the complexity of the matter. The choice of home region is determined by many different driving forces and conditions related to the individual and to the surrounding society.

### A theory of how people choose home region

People could be expected to choose home region based on a combination of individual factors and conditions in the local, regional, national and international surrounding. It seems

reasonable to assume that people will act on their preferences, i.e. that they will strive to accomplish what they perceive as desirable and valuable, whether this is money, an interesting work, good housing, a life with their family and friends or a culturally active life. The preferences manifest in the lifestyle of the individual, but the lifestyle cannot be considered to be the full manifest of the preferences. Human action, as well as the lifestyle, is rather a result of what is possible for the individuals to realize within a given set of opportunities and restrictions.

### *Individual assets and social context*

The French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu argues that differences in the amount and nature of personal assets, or capital, give rise to differences in the way people value and perceive the world. Bourdieu distinguishes between three kinds of capital: economic, social and symbolic capital (Bourdieu 1999). Economic capital is capital in the traditional meaning of the world, e.g. money, but it can also be capital transformed into a more material form, e.g. a private company or real estate. Social capital is embedded in the relations between people. It can be constituted of relations to relatives, friends, acquaintances as well as work related contacts. Capital can also be of a more symbolic nature, i.e. more related to the skills and knowledge of a person. The value of symbolic capital is to a greater extent than other capital depending on being acknowledged as valuable by groups in the society. Symbolic capital can be divided into sub categories, e.g. cultural, political and educational capital. The amount and nature of the capital produce similar actions, thoughts and values in different areas, e.g. in leisure activities, political engagement, taste in cloths, participation in voluntary non-profit organizations, taste in music and art, choice of newspaper, choice of education and cultural consumption (Broady 1989).

The economic, social and symbolic capital of an individual is to a great extent determined by the social context of the individual. The social background is important since capital often is transferred between generations. Parents generally perceive it as important to invest time and money to transfer capital to their children. But later in life habitus, i.e. the set of dispositions that amongst other things forms the basis for the preferences, also is shaped by other social contexts, e.g. the school, the family, the university or the work place.

Individuals with a certain amount of e.g. cultural capital could be inclined to choose lifestyle and housing, that makes it easier for them to accumulate further cultural capital or that furthers turning the cultural capital into other forms of capital, e.g. economic capital.

### *Insider advantages and geographical background*

Assets can be more or less embedded in places. Peter A. Fischer et al. (1998) use the concept of insider advantages to explain why immobility makes sense from a utility point of view. This is explained by the fact that “much of [the] knowledge, information and abilities that grant [people] high productivity in work and an optimal use of leisure time are location-specific” (Fisher et al. 1998, page VI). Insider advantages are difficult for the individual to transfer to another region, or they can even be non-existent outside a certain region. People accumulate insider advantages by living or working in a specific region during a longer time. The importance of insider advantages is illustrated by the well-known migrational fact that the more often an individual move, and the less time that passed since the last move, the more likely it is that he or she will move again.

Fisher et al. (1998) divide between work and leisure related insider advantages, which in turn are divided into place, society and firm location-specific insider advantages. In the following however the concept of insider advantages is discussed in relation to Bourdieu’s categories of capital, i.e. economic/material, social and symbolic capital, each of which can be divided into work- and leisure oriented insider advantages (see table 1).

Money is generally easy to bring to another place while economic capital in its material form, e.g. real estate, is much less mobile or transferable. Social capital is generally more place specific than other capital, since it implies relations to other individuals that in turn have got insider advantages. Social insider advantages emerge when the people make or maintain relations with relatives, friends and acquaintances or when they form relations of importance in their line of work. The family might be less place-specific than other forms of social capital, since the decision to move more often than not involves all household members. But the family can on the other hand also prove to be the most place specific insider advantage if the family members do not want to move. Social relations of course can be kept over long physical distances but it’s likely that the dept and intensity in the relations diminish over time.

The symbolic insider advantages concern knowledge about the region. It can be knowledge about leisure or work oriented conditions in the vicinity, e.g. about consumption, culture, sports or knowledge about a specific workplace. Having location-specific knowledge can reduce transaction costs, i.e. the costs of looking and finding the best alternative, both from a leisure and work perspective.

Table 1. The spatial embeddedness of capital.

		Less location-specific	Location-specific
Economic/material	<i>Leisure</i>	Money, share capital	House, real-estate
	<i>Work</i>	Knowledge about financial systems	Real-estate and other facilities related to a private firm
Social	<i>Leisure</i>	Family	Family, friends, relatives.
	<i>Work</i>	Social competence	Work colleagues, business contacts, business clientele/regular costumers
Symbolic	<i>Leisure</i>	Formal education, knowledge about art and culture or about political systems	Local knowledge, knowledge of consumer, culture, organisational, sports related conditions
	<i>Work</i>	Work related knowledge	Knowledge about the local labour market, profession specific knowledge

The insider advantage approach of course also implies that the geographical background is of importance. A person that has been living in the same region for a longer time tend to have greater insider advantages and therefore is more inclined to stay. Insider advantages could also imply that a person is more inclined to move back to region where he or she once lived.

The transferability of capital is also depending on the geographical scope. A formal education can e.g. prove impossible to transfer between countries that lack a proper agreement of accreditation.

#### *Surrounding opportunities*

Individuals with their goals, aspirations and assets, are facing a great number of opportunities as well as restrictions in the local, regional, national and international surrounding. The perception and knowledge of these conditions vary with the knowledge and interests of the individual. A person is more likely to observe, to like or dislike or to understand that which he or she has got knowledge about. Perception thus is of importance. Restrictions however can be of a more or less obvious character.

Regional labour market conditions have traditionally been an important explanation to migration. According to the neo-classical migration theory, regional differences in wages and work opportunities are important causes of migration (Björklund et al. 1996). More recent migration theory argues that labour market oriented migration increasingly is being replaced by residence-oriented migration depending on lifestyle preferences and specific micro-regional characteristics (Persson & Westholm 1996).



A Swedish study shows that labour market related factors provide a modest and declining part of the motives behind migration. Only between 13 and 20 per cent of those answering the questionnaire stated work related motives, a share that declined in importance between the 1970's and 1990's. Between 30 and 40 per cent stated social motives behind their last move. Every fifth person stated that they wanted to change environment, and the share was growing. The study does not reveal which features of the regional milieu that were of importance (Garvill et al. 2000).

Another study based on a questionnaire to 5 000 Swedish inhabitants 15 years or older gives some indications of what aspects of the local environment that are important in the choice of home region. Nature and beautiful fresh environment was the most important motive behind the preferred home region. Other important environmentally oriented motives were proximity to the sea or to a larger city. The supply of culture and entertainment was the eight highest ranked motive (Stjernström 1998).

Support for the hypothesis of a lifestyle and residence oriented migration is usually drawn from studies of urban to rural migration (Kåks & Westholm 1994, Forsberg & Carlbrand 1993). An inquiry into the immigration to some municipalities in the county of Dalarna shows that proximity to work and public service were less important than highly individual and lifestyle related motives. The most important motives was summarised as a search for roots, a pursuit of real or imagined ways of life in Dalarna as a Swedish ideal and a wish to cultivate a fellowship and a common lifestyle predominantly within the New Age and anthroposophy movement (Kåks & Westholm 1994).

But the increasing importance of lifestyle migration does not mean that work related migration has been rendered obsolete. Work and leisure can be more or less integrated. Futurists believe that work in the future will be an increasingly important part of the lifestyle. This will particularly be the case for people with jobs where the work effort are measured in responsibility rather than time, where the work is a goal in itself rather than a means for reward, where the work is boundless rather than well-defined and where work has the character of play rather than sacrifice (Copenhagen Institute for Future studies 1996). People with lifestyle jobs will probably be inclined to move to places where attractive jobs are offered, where they can further their competence by working together with other specialists in their area, but also where their competence is rightly valued. These places are observed as geographical clusters of similar or complementary competence. Robert B. Reich (1994) calls these areas symbol analytic zones.

There are also more direct socio-economic effects attached to the choice of work region. Some regions more than others function as escalator-regions, i.e. regions that enhance social and economic upward mobility (Fielding 1991). In a study of those graduating at Swedish universities in the academic year of 1975/76 the likelihood of having an income in the upper income quartile fifteen years after graduation was significantly larger for those working in the Stockholm region than for those working in other regions in Sweden. This was the case for economists, civil engineers and for those with a social scientist or science degree (Wikhall 2001).

There are but a few studies focusing the role of the cultural infrastructure. In a study concerning the inhabitants in five Swedish medium sized towns only two per cent of the immigrants stated that the cultural infrastructure affected their decision to move there. On the other hand 30 per cent of those being interviewed stated that theatre visits, concerts, exhibitions etc. to a great extent contributed to increase their personal satisfaction (Rubenowitz & Rubenowitz 1990). One reflection is that the study implicitly indicates that people can move to a place for one reason and stay for totally different reasons. The decision to stay thus can be as important to study as the causes behind actual migration. Another reflection is that the geographical scope of the study makes it impossible to draw conclusions that are applicable on the greater system of regions. It's unlikely that the result of the study would have been the same if it had focused migration to the nearby municipality of Gothenburg or another metropolitan region.

A similar investigation concerning 1 200 inhabitants in the age of 15-75 years in four towns in Mellersta Österbotten in Finland 1991 shows that peace and quiet, safety, idyll and nature were high priorities. But so were service, short distances and good communications. Slightly more than every tenth person valued culture highly (Ilmonen 1993). The study has got the same limitations in terms of geographical generalization as the one previously cited.

#### *Individual characteristics and the migration decision as a process*

Individual characteristics as age, sex and physics' can also be of importance in the choice of home region, directly or indirectly, through the individual assets. Females tend to have lower salaries than men and therefore greater economic restrictions in the choice of housing. Physically disabled persons also tend to be restricted in their housing decisions. Retirees could be either freer in their migration decision, due to good economy or lack of labour market related restrictions, or more restrained depending on amongst other things age and

physical status. In the US an important group of migrants is retirees seeking better living conditions and often oriented towards leisure, culture and nicer climate (Wolf 1999).

Previous studies of decision making indicates that the choices people make often are a result from a longer process where preferences and preconditions have been shaped in a row of previous choices. The choice of entering higher education is e.g. often based on decisions on previous levels of the educational system as well as on the aspirations of parents and the individual itself in earlier ages (Hammarström 1996, Kim 1998). The choice of home region therefore rather should be regarded as part of a process than as an isolated decision.

## Data and methodology

The decision of where to live can be studied in a variety of ways. It could focus on the active choice of moving to a certain region or the seemingly more passive choice to stay where one always has lived. Studying migrants involves the problem of stating motives retroactively. The longer time that passed by after the move, the more likely it is that the motives behind the move are complemented, or even replaced, by new motives based on the current situation. The choice to stay on the other hand might involve unconsciousness; people stay because they always lived there. This investigation strives to highlight why people live where they live a certain point in time, independently of whether this involves recently moving there or whether it means having lived in the region for some time.

### *Data*

The study is based on two data sets: 1) a questionnaire sent to 3,000 persons in the age of 30-35 nationally registered in Sweden in the autumn of 2001 and 2) data from the national registers of the Statistical board of Sweden (SCB). The questionnaire was sent to five different educational groups and deals with housing preferences, motives behind migration, work situation, mobility, social and geographical background and leisure activities now and in younger ages. But it's not necessarily the person's own preferences that directs the choice of home or work region. The questionnaire also takes into consideration that a migration decision involves the whole family. The empirical section below, due to the scope of the article, only dwells on a limited amount of the questionnaire data.

To avoid making the questionnaire even bigger and to be able to control the reliability, some statistical data have been collected from Statistics Sweden (SCB). For each individual

answering the questionnaire, data about sex, age, marital status, county and municipality code, country of birth, citizenship and income were collected.

### *Selection*

The questionnaire was sent to a number of randomly picked persons in five groups of educated. The selection includes those with; three-year upper-secondary education as highest education, civil engineer degree, specialist teachers' degree, media-communication education and those with an artistic education. There are several reasons behind stratifying the sample by education. The most important is that the approach provides an opportunity to make a more refined study of the interplay between the educational system, the labour market and the life style of the individual. All groups are of strategic interest in the knowledge-based society although facing rather different labour market conditions.

The questionnaire was sent to persons in the age of 30-35. It's in these ages that the migration frequency declines and many make decisions about work and family life that affect settlement patterns for a long time ahead.

### *Response rate*

The first questionnaires were distributed in November 2001. After two additional circular the response rate varied between 40 and 60 per cent in the studied groups (se table 2). The data includes some skewness in the response rate concerning gender, foreign background and income. The response rate was lower for men than for women, somewhat lower for those with foreign citizenship or foreign birth country and slightly lower for those earning less than 84 000 SEK. Those with foreign background and low incomes however were few. There where no major regional differences in the response rate.

Table 2. Population, selection and response rate.

Groups of selection	Selection	Response	Response rate, per cent
Upper secondary education	800	321	40
Civil engineering	700	398	57
Specialist teacher	700	422	60
Arts education	500	238	48
Media-communication education	300	180	60

## Settlement patterns in the knowledge-based society

The regional settlement patterns differ significantly between different groups of professionals. Data from the national population register shows that the share of population with no more than upper-secondary education, is highest in the more sparsely populated regions of the inland of Norrland (see figure 1). The regions with universities or university colleges are easily distinguishable by their low share of inhabitants with upper-secondary education. Those with higher education forms a different pattern in that they are more concentrated to the metropolitan regions. 76 per cent of those with artistic education, 70 per cent of those with civil engineer education, 66 per cent of those with media-communication and 48 per cent of the special teachers are living in the three metropolitan regions of Malmö, Gothenburg and Stockholm, compared to 38 per cent of those with upper-secondary education and 44 per cent of the total population in the age group. The question is which factors determine these settlement patterns. Why do the metropolitan regions attract so many highly skilled persons? The specialisation of the labour market is an obvious answer. But what role do milieu related motives play and how can they be distinguished from other features of the region?

But first a brief discussion of the concept of “home region”. Figure 1 presents a seemingly clear-cut picture of where people live. But national statistics tend to have few dimensions. Do people generally live at one place at the time? How permanent is home and to what extent to people over bridge geographical distances by working at home or by using electronic media?

### *The home in the arena society*

The society that has emerged during the second half of the 2000<sup>th</sup> century has been described by the term “arena society” (Johansson & Persson 1991). The arena concept is used to highlight the fact that people today, to a greater extent than in earlier agrarian and industrial societies, have got access to opportunities in a global surrounding. The agrarian society was to a great extent locally oriented with home, work and leisure concentrated to the same place, often a farm or a village. In the industrial society the conditions for movement on a daily basis changed and home versus work could be located in different parts of a city or a region. The arena society is, more than earlier societies, characterized by the fact that people live at one place, work at another and spend their spare time on a third place. But

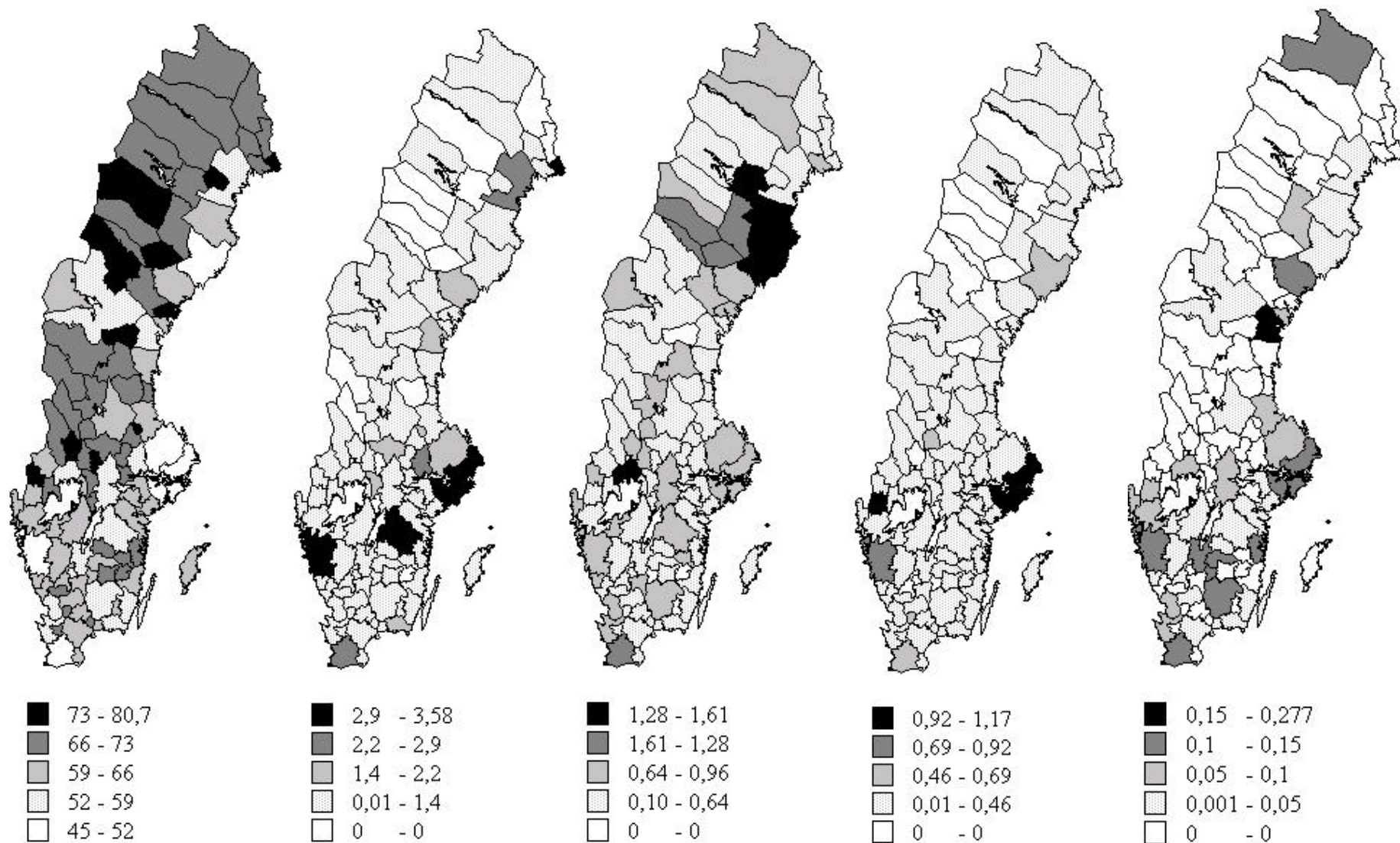


Figure 1. Share of population 30-35 years old with a specific education 2001, per cent.

Source: Swedish Statistics (SCB), data collected from the register of the population and the register of education.

Table 3. Some aspects of mobility.

Per cent	Upper- second- ary	Civil engineer	Specialist teacher	Art	Media- commu- nication
Share living 1 month or more at another place than where they live the longest time of the year.	12	32	33	41	35
Share living 2 months or more at another place than where they live the longest time of the year.	4	6	11	15	8
Share with double housing.	2,2	2,5	2,6	5,9	4,5
Share of those working, working at least one day a week at distance.	12	22	14	27	24
Share that think they will move over a municipality border in the future.	24	61	45	55	60
Share that has been living abroad at least 2 months.	20	53	47	53	64
Share that would like to live abroad sometime in the future.	51	68	61	68	79
Share of those working having 100 km or longer to work.	2,3	2,1	1,4	5,0	1,3
Share travelling in Sweden on leisure trips more than once a year.	46	66	62	62	67
Share travelling abroad on leisure trips more than once a year.	11	26	17	23	28
Share using Internet daily	38	80	51	56	84
Share using Internet at least once a week.	67	97	87	83	96

how significant are these trends and how do they apply to different social groups ? The Spanish sociologist Manuel Castells (1996) distinguish between the technocratic, political and financial elite moving in air plane or fast train corridors, and the vast majority of people living most of their life in one or a few places.

The majority of those answering the questionnaire live all twelve months of the year at the same place (se table 3). But between 32 and 41 per cent of those with higher education live one month or more per year at another place than where they live the biggest part of the year. Quit many of those living somewhere else during one or two months per year have got a summerhouse. Between 25 and 30 per cent of those living 1 month a year at an alternative place have got a summerho use, compared to between 43 and 70 per cent of those living 2 months a year at an alternative place. Only very few live at an alternative place for more than two months a year. The home region thus still seems to be a relevant study object.

Very few have got double housing. It's more common to work at distance. Around half of those working at distance did this one day of the week. The share telecommuting one day in the week was much larger amongst the engineers and the media-communicators than amongst the others.

How permanent is home? Between 21 and 47 per cent stated that they had moved across a municipality border in the last five years and more than half of the civil engineers, the media-communicators and the artists believe that they will move across municipality borders again in the future.

Those with upper secondary education or teachers' education are less mobile than the other groups in a number of respects. They however do not seem to compensate their relative immobility by working at distance or communicating by Internet. On the contrary, the groups that are most mobile in other respect are also using Internet more often.

## Why do they live where they live?

What preferences and pre-conditions do these settlement and mobility patterns reflect? Those answering the questionnaire were asked to grade the importance of 35 factors. The grading ranged between totally unimportant and very important. They also had the possibility to tick "the statement is not correct" and "I don't know". Some factors proved to be very important for people in all groups. Good housing is valued highly by all groups as well as appealing natural environments, safety on the place where they live and having close to friends (see figure 3).

On the other hand there are factors that are equally unimportant for all groups. The fact that "they have lived in the region for a long time" didn't prove to be particularly important. The choice to stay in a region obviously is more conscious and reflective than this. Nor do those answering the questionnaire agree with the statement "it does not matter where I live".

But there are other factors that were valued quite differently. Insider advantages seem to be more valuable for those with a shorter education, a fact that probably to some extent can be explained by their lower mobility. Those with upper secondary education value the fact that they know the place well, that they have material assets there (house, property), and that their friends and relatives live there, more highly than the other groups.

Labour market conditions are of importance for the location decision of many groups, especially for the civil engineers and those with a media-communication education. Those with upper-secondary education and those with specialist teacher degree rate labour market variables much lower.



The culturally related variables are valued very differently between different groups of educated. Opera, theatres, museums, cinemas and culture in other respects is much less important for those with upper-secondary education than for the other groups. Those with upper-secondary education however value the libraries quite much. This is also the case with the specialist teachers. Culture is most important for those with an artistic education that probably in part also can be explained by the fact that they depend on cultural institutions in their line of work. Those with media-communication education are also interested in culture. The civil engineers and the specialist teachers did not value the cultural infrastructure particularly highly except for the specialist teacher's interest in the public libraries.

Most people seem to agree to the fact that the housing decision is affected by a variety of factors. Out of 35 factors possible to value (of which the 35<sup>th</sup> included an alternative where it was possible to note "other things of importance"), the average person valued 27 factors as being of some importance.

### Who prefers culture?

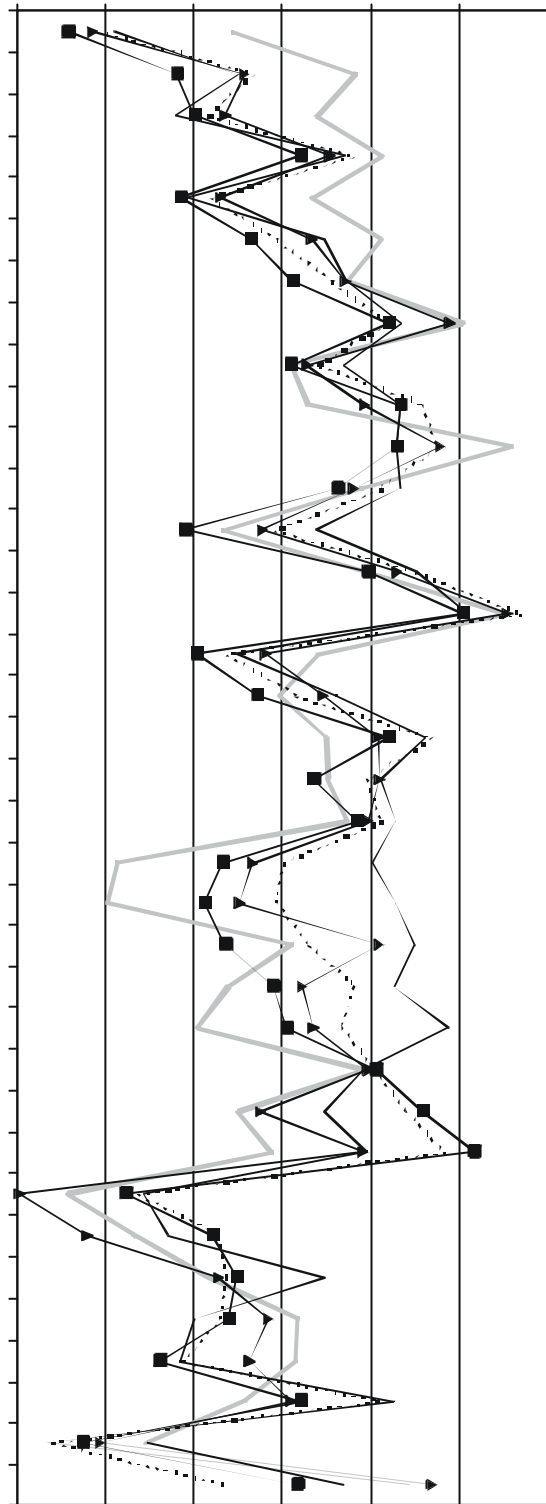
Who then prefers culture when they choose home region? A logistic regression analysis reveals several factors of importance for high cultural preferences<sup>1</sup>. Women have more articulated cultural preferences than men. But even after gender has been taken into account, the most male dominated group, the civil engineers, has got considerably less pronounced cultural preferences than the other groups. The culture activity varies significantly by education. Those with civil engineer degree are much less culturally active than the other groups while those with arts education are the most culturally active group. The most feasible reason behind this variation is that the education has got a sorting function. People tend to choose education based on the capital they have and want to further in their future line of work.

The lifestyle in terms of leisure activities also forms an important base for the preferences. The frequency of going to the opera, art galleries, museums, cinema, libraries etc. explain a rather large part of the variations in cultural preferences.

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<sup>1</sup> High cultural preferences are expressed as a mean of how opera, theatre, museums, art galleries, libraries, cinemas and culture in other respects were valued. The cultural preferences have been studied three different logistic regression models where high cultural preferences have been defined as a value higher than 3 (0= not important, 4=very important), a value higher than 3,5 and a maximum value of the different cultural activities of 4). All models show similar result. The model only includes the groups with higher education.

0= totally unimportant/statement is incorrect      4= very important  
 0,5    1,0    1,5    2,0    2,5    3,0    3,5



Upper-secondary ed.     
 ■ Civil engineer     
 ▲ Specialist teacher  
 Arts education     
  Media-communication

Figure 2. Of what importance are the following conditions to your choice to live where you live at present?

The perceived values of the parents, concerning music, art and theatre did affect the present cultural activity but it wasn't significant in the model explaining the cultural preferences when choosing home region. On the contrary the cultural preferences of the partner were of considerable importance. The more the partner valued culture, the higher were also the cultural preferences of the individual. The questionnaire also asked for a categorization of how the person perceived their work. Those perceiving their work as highly creative also did value culture significantly more. The educational level of the parents however did not explain any significant part of the variations in cultural preferences.

## Conclusions

The overall question about what factors affect the choice of home region is of importance in many respects. Increasing demand for continuous innovation and knowledge generating in the manufacturing and service production has made human intellect to the most strategic production factor (Storper 1995). Firms today are dependent on being located to regions where there is skilled labour (Lundquist 1996 and Johnsson, Persson & Silbersky 2000). If the labour on the other hand tend to be more inclined to choose home region based on factors that are not work-related the question of what constitutes an attractive living environment will be of great importance to the regional economic development. The ability to offer a good quality of life thus will be of crucial importance in the inter-regional competition.

The theoretical discussion as well as the empirical data reveals that choosing a home region involves a great number of considerations. It also implies that the question needs to be specified in terms of which culture, for whom and in relation to what. Different kinds of culture are of varying importance for different groups of people. The role of culture also should be discussed in relation to other factors that affect the choice of home region. Culture is perceived as quite important for some people but then again, housing, nature and possibilities of finding an interesting job where perceived as equally or more important than the cultural infrastructure.

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