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Migration and Place Attractiveness
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Abstract

The thesis includes six self-contained papers that from various perspectives examine place attractiveness and migration in Sweden.

Paper I provides an extensive overview of Swedish municipalities’ place marketing engagement to attract in-migrants, based on survey responses from 220 municipalities. The results suggest that, although this kind of marketing has become more prominent during the last few years, there is little evidence of any significant effects on migration flows.

Paper II addresses place marketing campaigns directed towards the Stockholm region carried out by rural municipalities. The results show no general evidence of success, but in a few cases a positive impact of these campaigns cannot be ruled out conclusively.

Paper III explores the effect of tourism on interregional net-migration in Sweden. The results indicate that tourism exerts a positive influence on migration, and it is shown how its effects vary depending on age group.

Paper IV scrutinizes recent survey research on migration motives in the Nordic countries. This paper employs a different questionnaire design and surveys a somewhat different migrant population. The findings do not support recent research and the importance of employment-related motives is emphasised.

Paper V focuses on residential preferences and explores what place attributes people would consider important if they were to migrate. Special attention is given to demographic, socio-economic and geographical determinants. The results show how these aspects influence residential preferences, and make some contributions to methodological issues on researching preferences.

Paper VI aims at a conceptual framework whereby place attractiveness can be better understood. It is suggested that needs, demands and preferences are central factors and the attractiveness of places increases with the successive fulfilment of these factors. But the more factors a migrant seeks to fulfil in his or her destination selection, the fewer the choice possibilities.

Keywords: Interregional Migration, Place Attractiveness, Sweden, Tourism, Marketing, Promotion, Life-course, Age, Survey Research, Residential Preferences

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The attached papers

Paper I  

Paper II  

Paper III  

Paper IV  
Niedomysl T, 2006, "Re-examining Migration Motives in the Nordic Countries with a focus on Sweden"*

Paper V  
Niedomysl T, 2006, "Residential preferences for interregional migration in Sweden: demographic, socio-economic and geographical determinants"*

Paper VI  
Niedomysl T, 2006, "How migrants with “choices” choose their destination: towards a conceptual framework of place attractiveness and migration"

* Papers II, IV and V are, at the time of writing, submitted to refereed journals.
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Preface

I have never before had the opportunity, nor any particular reason, to thank some three thousand persons for taking an active part in my work. I would like to thank all of you – survey respondents, interviewees, commentators, referees, colleagues and friends – whose various contributions to this thesis have been so valuable.

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Lastly, I would like to thank my wife, Malin, for everything.

Thomas Niedomysl
Gävle, April 2006
Introduction

What is it that makes some places appear more attractive than others to live in? Does it depend on the particular characteristics or situation of the persons considering the attractiveness, in what phase in life the persons find themselves in, or are there some common features, perhaps place characteristics that are viewed positively by all, independently of context? The present thesis sets out to examine place attractiveness from a migration perspective. This topic is important since the ability of places to attract migrants has become a key issue in recent development debates. However, place attractiveness is problematic to approach due to the abstract and usually subjectively understood nature of the concept. The thesis will therefore present a conceptual framework from which it is argued that place attractiveness is suitably approached in a migration context. The thesis also examines what it is that makes some places more attractive than other places, when and for whom.

The thesis begins with this summary, which serves as a general introduction to the six attached papers that contribute empirical, methodological and theoretical perspectives in order to facilitate a better understanding of place attractiveness and migration in Sweden. In this introductory section current debates relating to place attractiveness and migration will first be reviewed before moving on to a presentation of the aim of the thesis and the more specific research questions addressed in the attached papers. The summary also contains a proposal for a conceptual framework for the study of place attractiveness in a migration context. This is followed by a brief review of the concept of migration and how it is used in the attached papers before the results of the thesis are discussed. Lastly, this introductory section ends with a summary in Swedish. The term “place” is used in a general sense throughout the summary, encompassing geographical terms such as space, region, municipality, neighbourhood, etc. The term “migration” should be interpreted as interregional or long-distance migration within Sweden.

Current debates

The ability of places to attract migrants is of fundamental importance to local and regional development. This is particularly evident in countries that experience low or negative natural population growth (Champion, 1993). Consider for instance the contemporary low fertility levels that lead to an
increasingly ageing population. This development has caused concern over societal progress when a declining share of the population must provide resources for an increasing share of the elderly (Malmberg and Sommestad, 2002; Harper, 2006). There are many other examples that may also help explain why migration issues receive such high policy salience in local and regional development debates. For instance, the importance of places’ ability to attract the right kind of work force or businesses to enhance the competitiveness of trade, service and industry has frequently been emphasized (e.g. Florida, 2002; 2005), coupled with a growing interest in the interrelationship of demography and economic growth (e.g. Bloom and Williamson, 1998). Other examples range from traditional arguments that stress the tax and spending power that migrants may contribute (Serow, 2003; Malecki, 2004), to more vague notions of population growth being positive in a more general sense (Bäcklund, 1999). Places that appear as desirable for migrants will obviously face brighter prospects than places not so fortunate.

While the aforementioned importance ascribed to the ability of places to attract migrants is by no means new in development contexts (see e.g. Kryger, 1764), there are other aspects that arguably make the publication of this thesis somewhat timely. Contemporary societal changes may tentatively play a part in creating an advantageous setting for changes in migration patterns. Recent arguments claim that the factors influencing residential choices and attracting people to particular places have been altered fundamentally during the late 1990s (Fotheringham et al, 2000:393-394). While it used to be thought that choosing between places to live was dictated by employment considerations, other aspects have come into play enabling other factors to influence destination choices (Ibid.). Thus before discussing the more specific aims of the attached papers it seems warranted to present the most salient features of these aspects since they might be instrumental in shaping both contemporary and future migration patterns.

The first, and perhaps most distinctive, aspect is a demographic feature that results in an increasing share of the population having fewer constraints. It relates to the ongoing change in age structure of the population and contemporary trends towards zero, or even declining, population growth. During the 1990s the birth rates in Sweden began to decline, following a general trend in the western world (e.g. Kohler et al, 2002). By 1999 Swedish birth rates had reached an historical all time low, or at least since measurements began some 250 years ago (Hofsten, 1986; Andersson, 2004). The point to be made in the context of this thesis is that low fertility levels will lead to an increasingly ageing population. From this it follows that an increasing share of the population is going into retirement and thus no longer dependent upon the location of workplaces. They can therefore increasingly let their preferences guide them in migration decisions. In addition, the actual average retirement age in Sweden is well below 65 years and, despite the fact that people also tend to live longer, Soidre (2005) has shown that less than ten per
cent of the population 55 to 64 years could consider working beyond the age of 65. In sum, a growing proportion of the population will experience fewer constraints and can choose more freely where they want to live.

A second aspect that may lead to greater opportunities to choose among places to live relates to technological advances. What has become known as “time-space convergence”, defined by Johnston et al (1998:628) as “a decrease in the friction of distance between places”, means that people can travel much faster over longer distances and at lower costs (see Janelle, 1968; 1969; Abler, 1971). In addition, ever improving information and communication technologies have brought about less dependence on living close to the workplace and more and more people are able to work some of the time from their home; for instance, most Swedes today have Internet-access (Ellegård and Vilhelmson, 2004). Therefore, the increasing ease with which people can undertake long distance commuting or telework has augmented the number of possible places to live. This ongoing development might lead to more opportunities when making destination choices.

The third aspect concerns increasing economic well-being and possible changes in life values. Inglehart (1997) has argued and also shown empirically that people living in societies that have reached a certain stage of material wealth will increasingly focus upon immaterial aspects of life. The attractiveness of places would then arguably become more important in people’s lives. This argument is actually quite simple since basic needs (e.g. food, clothing and shelter) must be reasonably fulfilled before more “advanced preferences” can come into play – for instance, preferences in terms of what places are perceived as desirable to live in.

Taken together, these three aspects – an increasing less constrained share of the population, technological advances that give greater possibilities of choosing where to live, and an increasing economic well-being coupled with possible changes in what people value in life – would indeed seem to allow the preferences of individual migrants to play a more prominent role in migration decision-making. This greater flexibility may imply that “the significance of spatial variations in quality of life has been reinforced” (Findlay and Rogerson, 1993:46), making it more important that places are perceived as attractive.

But even so, objections can be raised regarding the extent to which each of these factors really matter for prospective changes in migration motives and population redistribution. For instance, the elderly may choose to use their lack of constraints for tourism and not migration – particularly since the growing elderly population does not have a great migration probability (Bell and Ward, 2000). Furthermore, whatever new opportunities communication technologies may have provided, there is little to suggest that tele-employment, for example, has become as widespread as was initially expected by many analysts (Vilhelmson and Thulin, 2001, but see also Hedlund, 2003:148). Despite popular arguments that businesses will move to
places where their employees prefer to live (e.g. Florida, 2002; Dziembowska-Kowalska and Funck, 2000) business relocations to low-pay countries seem to be the dominant trend.

Nevertheless, some regions have obviously undergone quite dramatic changes in settlement patterns as a result of changing migration motives, for instance around the Mediterranean (e.g. Casado-Diaz et al, 2004). But apart from such well-known examples, little is known about similar trends in countries such as Sweden. So, while Johansson and Persson (1991) pointed to what they termed a “post-industrial migration and settlement pattern” from a Swedish perspective, it is surprising to note how few empirical studies have been conducted on this subject. In a review of quality of life and migration, Rogerson (1999:977) noted that “the relationship between … location decision-making and quality of life is only partially substantiated by empirical research”. There is thus little empirical evidence supporting arguments that the factors influencing residential choices and attracting people to particular places have been altered.

Aim of the thesis

The overarching aim of this thesis, shared by all the attached papers, is to examine place attractiveness from a migration perspective. Since this is an article-based thesis, the papers have their individual, more sharply delimited purposes and research questions. The intention is however that they shed light on various aspects of place attractiveness, while simultaneously helping to advance the research frontier of migration studies through their specific empirical, methodological and theoretical contributions.

In addition, three issues of a more general character are approached in the thesis. The first relates to how place attractiveness may be understood from a conceptual point of view in a migration context. The second issue relates to what it is that makes some places more attractive than others; for whom and when. The third issue concerns relating the findings of the thesis to current debates on local and regional development.

A brief disclaimer regarding the two central concepts, place attractiveness and migration, is appropriate here. Place attractiveness is an abstract and usually subjectively understood concept and, like concepts such as “beauty” or “happiness”, most people intuitively know what it is but are unable to define it. Migration is also a somewhat problematic concept since its temporal and spatial dimensions most often vary in different studies. Both concepts will therefore be discussed in the next sections to facilitate the understanding of the problematic aspects associated with them.
Aims of the papers

The first two papers both deal with place marketing campaigns carried out by Swedish municipalities to attract new residents. The promotion and marketing of places has a long tradition (Ward, 1998), but as opposed to attempts to attract the traditional target groups of tourists and businesses, the extent to which attracting migrants constitute an aim is largely unknown. Further, the actual results of place marketing are also unknown. However, promotion and marketing might be particularly important since creating or strengthening place attractiveness is what these campaigns are all about and they are designed to influence people’s perception of places in order to influence their migration decisions.

I. The first paper aims to provide an extensive overview of Swedish municipalities’ place-marketing engagement to attract migrants and to provide an initial evaluation of whether this engagement is successful or not.

II. The second paper aims to further advance the evaluative effort by focusing more specifically on place marketing campaigns directed towards the Stockholm region carried out by rural municipalities.

If, as argued earlier, people increasingly place more emphasis on factors other than employment opportunities when making migration decisions, it might be the case that people will migrate to enjoy life in places offering more stimulating leisure activities. Then, it could be hypothesized that places drawing many tourists will also be successful when it comes to attracting migrants, since people choose to visit these places in their leisure time.

III. The third paper aims to explore the effect of tourism on interregional migration in Sweden.

There are few empirical contributions supporting arguments such as those mentioned earlier – that factors influencing residential choices and attracting people to particular places have been altered. However, some Swedish survey research, which has attracted considerable attention among policymakers, constitutes an exception (Lundholm et al, 2004). It has claimed that environment-related migration motives are more important than employment-related motives as causes for interregional migration (Garvill et al, 2002). This may seem to contradict traditional views on migration as primarily economically driven, but appears to support the notion that the importance of place attractiveness is growing. Therefore, these results clearly deserve more attention in the context of this thesis. Previous research needs to be critically
reviewed and the findings supported by further empirical research, particularly as there are some methodological aspects that are problematic.

IV. The fourth paper aims to re-examine the migration motives of Swedish interregional migrants.

Irrespective of the extent to which people let their preferences guide them in migration decisions nowadays, such tendencies might become more pronounced in the future and making places more attractive to migrants might therefore be a plausible goal for policymakers. Since place attractiveness is subjectively perceived, it can be expected that there are differences among people depending on who they are and their life situations. This implies that groups of prospective migrants may have similar views on what is perceived as attractive when considering migration.

V. The fifth paper aims to explore what place attributes people would put a high value on if they were to migrate and whether there are any differences in preferences between different population subgroups in terms of demographic, socio-economic or geographical determinants.

The sixth paper takes as its starting point the fact that most migrants do not seem to have many choice opportunities. Therefore, it might be valuable to approach attractiveness by way of focussing upon migrants who seem to have had at least some choices when deciding upon their destination. Such an approach would provide a different perspective and hopefully also a better understanding of place attractiveness.

VI. The sixth paper aims to examine what it is that makes some places appear more attractive than other places in a migration context, in order to arrive at a conceptual framework whereby place attractiveness can be better understood.

However, since it mainly, albeit not exclusively, approaches attractiveness from a stated preference perspective by way of interviews, the discussion of the sixth paper is widened somewhat in this summary in order to make a broader conceptualisation that also takes into account the perspective of migration flows between places.
Approaching place attractiveness in a migration context

The purpose of the following sections is to provide a basis for the papers and to discuss concepts and their usage in the thesis. Importantly, “place attractiveness” needs to be conceptualised and situated in a migration context. It is not the intention however to delve deeply into different theoretical approaches. Excellent accounts that link social theories to migration are provided elsewhere (e.g. Cadwallader, 1992; Boyle et al, 1998; Stjernström, 1998).

Theoretical perspectives on migration

The critique that was levelled at population geographers during 1990s for their inattention to social theory (Findlay and Graham, 1991; White and Jackson, 1995; Graham and Boyle, 2001; Findlay, 2003) does not seem to apply fully to migration research. In fact, migration research has been described, perhaps somewhat overenthusiastically, as “at the forefront of theoretical developments in geography as a whole” (Boyle et al, 1998:x). Cadwallader (1992) similarly argued that theoretical pluralism and epistemological debate characterise research on migration, perhaps a result of his recognising that research on migration represents one of the few truly interdisciplinary fields where most of the social sciences are involved. Either way, philosophical questions are of fundamental importance to the study of migration, since they both determine how to conceptualize the migration phenomena from a philosophical standpoint (Boyle et al, 1998:57), which in turn influences methodological choices (McKendrick, 1999) and ultimately the insights gained from research.

In an often-cited article White (1980) argued that there is a basic epistemological dichotomy within migration research and pointing out two broad lines of thought. The first perspective (designated as objective philosophy) presupposes that migration can be explained and understood by studying the relation between migration and measured characteristics of places, without having to bother about how the migrants themselves apprehend these characteristics. The second perspective (designated as cognitive philosophy) presupposes on the contrary that migration can be explained and understood by
studying how people understand their situation. This dichotomy has been influential and forms the basis of much theoretical understandings of migration (Boyle et al., 1998; Cadwallader, 1992). It is furthermore argued by White (1980) that the major difference between the two philosophies is one of defining independent variables, i.e. whether to use variables that are measured directly from the landscape or those that are surrogates of cognitive structures.

This division is however not the only one applied as a basis for subdividing theoretical approaches in migration research, although it definitely seems to be the most influential. Other attempts are more or less variants on the same theme. For instance, Boyle et al. (1998) have more recently labelled determinist and humanist conceptual approaches as a similar dichotomy. In their view, the determinist approach plays down the role of the individual and sees migration as an almost inevitable response to a rational situation. The humanist approach instead stress the importance of seeing the individual migrant as an active decision maker, whose decision to migrate may or may not be rational (Boyle et al., 1998). Similarly, Holm et al. (1989) made a distinction between theories about societies with individuals (relating to theories of structural causes for migration) on the one hand, and theories about individuals in societies on the other hand. The latter relates to theories where the perspective of the individual is focussed upon.

From such philosophical divisions another dichotomy follows that relates more to methodological approaches and analytical levels of aggregation. These are usually labelled micro and macro approaches and can arguably be seen as the empirical approaches of studies carried out within the objective and cognitive philosophy respectively (Halfacree and Boyle, 1993). According to Cadwallader (1992) studies that employ a macro approach are concerned with “explaining” aggregated migration behaviour by measuring socioeconomic or physical place characteristics and relating that to migration flows. On the other hand, the micro approach tries to explain migration from the perspective of a psychological decision-making process and focuses upon how individuals choose between alternatives (Cadwallader, 1992).

Although much of the work on migration has tended to enhance one of these approaches or philosophies, there have been many arguments for an integration of the two (e.g. White, 1980; Cadwallader, 1989) and Golledge (1980) has suggested that they are complementary rather than competitive. However, compared with the number of studies that have enhanced either of the two approaches there are relatively few studies carried out with an explicitly integrated approach (but see e.g. Hedberg, 2004). Nonetheless most migration researchers would presumably agree that for achieving a more complete understanding of migration both approaches are necessary and preferably integrated in some way, even if that is easier said than done. It is important to point out that epistemology does not preclude any methodology (McKendrick, 1999:43). But, for sake of simplicity, and indeed for the way
Towards a framework of migration and place attractiveness

It follows from what has been said above that most societal phenomena concerning migration can be seen and approached from at least two overarching perspectives depending on philosophical and methodological viewpoints. It is now argued, admittedly somewhat simplistic, that place attractiveness may also appropriately be approached from such points of departure.

Like most concepts “attractiveness” is unproblematic when used in common language, as stated earlier. Usually it is interpreted as something positive or as something that exerts a physical or emotional pulling power (from Latin *ad trahere*, meaning to draw). However, when applied in a scientific context its usage has to be clarified more specifically. Therefore, a brief review will be carried out of how “attractiveness” is conceived of in migration studies. There are two relatively distinct ways of approaching place attractiveness and it is argued that these different approaches are important for an understanding of what it is that makes places attractive.

Assumption-based place attractiveness

With an objective philosophy as a starting point followed by the employment of a macro (-methodological) approach, the endpoint may be termed “assumption-based” place attractiveness because certain assumptions are made about why people are drawn to certain places. Take for instance a certain place that has experienced a larger population growth than other places over the last 50 years. One might then assume, for seemingly good reasons, that such a place has a higher degree of attractiveness compared to other places not experiencing a population increase. Since this is an indirect approach (no one is asked about the attractiveness – it is simply assumed or defined), it seems appropriate to call it assumption-based.

However, while assumption-based approaches to place attractiveness often seem very logic and straightforward, it is necessary to think more about what the assumptions actually are and how they relate to place attractiveness. In the example above with a rise in population it is relevant to ask what has caused the rise since it might be an effect of natural population increase rather than having anything to do with migration. Is it relevant to talk about a high degree of place attractiveness in such cases? There are many other similar examples where assumption-based approaches need to be problematised to avoid an obvious risk of making strange conclusions about attractiveness.
For instance, Amcoff (2005) has recently shown that a supposed population increase in the Swedish countryside is in fact fictitious and caused by problematic areal delimitations and Håkansson (2000) has shown how population development may vary quite significantly for different geographical levels within a larger region.

One may perhaps ask why not the better-known term “revealed preferences” (see e.g. Fransson 1997:48) is employed in this thesis (“revealed attractiveness” instead of “assumption-based place attractiveness”). The main reason is that the term “assumption” arguably better illustrate that revealed preferences might not necessarily be what they seem. Rather, they are observed behaviour interpreted in some way by a researcher whose assumptions and understandings about the object of study may be wrong. Well-known examples such as the “economic-man” (assuming that people are rational utility maximizers with full information) and that people “vote with their feet” (assuming that people always migrate to places that are “objectively” seen as better for them) are two examples of assumptions of the same kind that lead to conclusions being drawn about the attractiveness of places (see e.g. Tiebout, 1956). In essence, however, it is assumed that people reveal their preferences by way of their migratory behaviour. In the extreme, as for instance in some migration studies carried out during the heydays of positivism, the terminology seems to completely disregard migrants as decision makers and rely more on natural science when analysing the attractiveness of places (see e.g. Svensson, 1954:178). Nowadays not only the terminology has changed but there has of course also been a greater recognition of migrants as active decision makers. Nonetheless, an assumption-based approach to place attractiveness is still very often applied – and that for good reasons. The point to be made is that if migration is to be fully understood, assumptions about the relations between “objectively” defined place characteristics and migration are unavoidable due to the aggregated nature of migration flows.

Fotheringham et al (2000) provide a good example of a study estimating the attractiveness of places based on the assumed/revealed preferences of migrants. In short, after trying to make places independent of their location, places with large numbers of in-migrants are considered to have a higher degree of attractiveness than those with few in-migrants. Using a number of place specific variables, Fotheringham et al then try to explain why some places are more attractive than others. Their approach is however not unproblematic, as the authors themselves acknowledge. In addition to the examples given above, a place may have a high number of in-migrants simply due to recent housing construction that provides more opportunities – while a neighbouring area might have low numbers of in-migrants due to e.g. legal restrictions that does not allow housing construction, yet both places might be considered equally desirable if any observer was asked.
Another problem associated with such research is that the assumptions made are not always reported thoroughly. It is sometimes not made clear for those unfamiliar with such migration research that it is correlations between behaviour and characteristics that form the basis for conclusions about place attractiveness, rather than some causal analysis based on opinions of the migrants actually involved. For instance, brown-field redevelopment in waterfront locations into housing estates has been popular in many cities lately. Studying migration flows one might be inclined to draw a conclusion that waterfront housing is very attractive since it draws lots of migrants. However, it might tentatively be the case that what the migrants really want is a modern newly built apartment – regardless of its location – but now it happened that modern newly built apartments were only available in waterfront locations. Thus, it is important to make clear that conclusions drawn from studies with a macro approach make assumptions about attractiveness by way of “revealed” preferences; they do not base their conclusions on people’s “stated” preferences, a matter which will be addressed below.

Statement-based place attractiveness

The alternative approach to place attractiveness might be termed “statement-based” attractiveness. It follows from a cognitive philosophy and, in turn, a micro approach that results in a subjectively defined attractiveness based on stated preferences. Whereas the assumption-based attractiveness must be defined from specific criterias that are chosen by some observer, the statement-based attractiveness should be thought of more as “attractiveness” as used in common, everyday language. That is, as a concept used completely subjectively where there is no right or wrong – within the boundaries of what is socially accepted. When an individual states that a certain place is attractive to him or her, it is of course possible to conclude that the individual has a positive attitude towards that place. However, such statements require further probing to understand what it is that makes a place attractive and also how attractive that place appears in relation to other places to understand the “degree” of the attractiveness. This implies that different individuals may have completely different opinions regarding the specific aspects of a place they would emphasise as positive depending on their individual circumstances and what they value. In essence, the statement-based approach to place attractiveness emanates from the situation of an individual and should thus be understood subjectively.

While it was said above that there is no rule of thumb as to whether a statement about attractiveness is right or wrong, this certainly does not mean that the approach is unproblematic from a research perspective (see attached papers V and VI). However, it seems as if the methodological problems with such approaches are seldom awarded any lengthy discussions in migration studies. They nonetheless influence the results in the same extent as the as-
sumption-based approach but arguably in different ways and might be even harder to check. Consider for instance an interview with a migrant where the aim is to understand what the migrant perceived as attractive in the destination selection when comparing different alternatives. Besides the usual interviewer effects, aspects such as post-rationalising, reluctance to talk about potentially embarrassing issues or trying to avoid them, tendencies to emphasise “politically correct” issues or simply take some aspects for granted etc are a few examples of problems tentatively faced when using the statement-based approach to researching place attractiveness (see also Stockdale, 2004). Moreover, in the attached paper VI an example is given showing that people do not always necessarily know their preferences explicitly.

Another problem with the statement-based approach is the view that the practical utility of population geography is to make statements at an aggregated level (White and Jackson, 1995). If that view is accepted it requires that the understandings of attractiveness gained by statement-based approaches somehow have to be analysed at a higher level of aggregation. The obvious risk is then that the complexity and insights from feelings towards places become lost. Those aspects notwithstanding, the statement-based approach to an understanding of place attractiveness is of course hugely valuable given the subjective nature of the topic of interest. In fact, it may seem impossible to try and understand something as personal as what people consider as attractive without hearing it from individuals themselves (either directly or indirectly) and trying to understand their situation.

A conceptual framework of place attractiveness and migration

This section presents a conceptual framework, shown in Figure 1 below, that can facilitate the understanding of place attractiveness in a migration context. It is designed as an instrument of analysis that should be able to provide insights into individual migrants and their decision-making (statement-based approach) as well as into migration on an aggregated level (assumption-based approach). The core of the framework has a pyramidal shape that consists of three levels: Needs, Demands and Preferences. Needs refer to basic requirements; factors such as having a safe and affordable dwelling. Demands refer to more or less non-negotiable factors that must be fulfilled for a certain destination to be selected. Preferences refer to factors that can be regarded as “that something extra”. Both demands and preferences should be considered parts of the same preference-order where demands are more important than preferences.
Figure 1. A conceptual framework of place attractiveness in a migration context.

On each side of the pyramid scale indicators have been placed showing Degree of place attractiveness and Number of choice possibilities, respectively. This illustrates that the greater the extent to which a place may fulfill the needs, demands and preferences of a migrant, the greater the attractiveness of such a place. At the same time, however, when the degree of place attractiveness increases due to the successive fulfillment of these three factors, the number of choice possibilities decreases. That is, the more factors a migrant may wish to fulfill in his or her destination selection, the fewer the choice possibilities available.

To give an example of what has been mentioned above, one family may consider a house with a water view and at least four bedrooms to be a demand for migration to take place. Another family may place less importance to the same factors – but still consider them very positive should they be fulfilled – and they are therefore better understood as preferences in that case. Hence, place attractiveness can only be properly understood if viewed contextually and from the situation of the individual. This is arguably true also for migration on an aggregated level where it in most cases is useful to think about e.g. the needs and demands of individuals or groups of migrants when trying to understand why they are attracted to certain places.

It should be noted that the division of needs, demands and preferences is not rigid, as indicated by the dashed lines in the figure. Consider for instance a homeless person whose only preference would be to satisfy his or her needs (to find a dwelling, any dwelling whatsoever). In such cases, demands are arguably irrelevant as needs fill up the pyramid. It seems reasonable to assume that people’s basic needs (such as a safe and heated affordable
dwelling e.g.) must be fulfilled for a destination to be relevant as a potential choice. This is a factor often taken for granted, but it is nevertheless fundamental to our understanding of how and why destination choices are made since it rapidly narrows down the number of choice possibilities. Therefore it is also important to acknowledge that different people have access to different resources, be they e.g. economic or social, and act within different sets of constraints depending upon their life-course situation, aspirations, etc.

A few elucidations are necessary to avoid misunderstandings. First of all, the framework is mainly thought of in terms of “voluntary” migration. Even if the migration of convicts might be seen as drawn to places with an abundance of prison cells (e.g. correlations in an assumption-based approach), the subjective nature of attractiveness arguably restricts from relating such migrations to place attractiveness. Secondly, it should be acknowledged that in many places it is difficult to satisfy basic needs (e.g. due to lack of housing) and therefore the number of possibilities needs to be put into perspective. Thirdly, objections could perhaps be raised as to whether the distinction made between demands and preferences is necessary; it could for instance be argued that having a job instead of being on the dole is better seen as a preference. At the same time it seems like an unnecessary simplification to call everything preferences, a simplification that arguably renders it more difficult to facilitate an understanding of place attractiveness. In the view of the present author the inclusion of demands helps sharpen the analytical focus, making it easier to distinguish factors that are very important from those that are not as important. It seems as if many general discussions about place attractiveness mainly relate to preferences, which according to Figure 1, could be interpreted as being only “the tip of an iceberg”. Moreover, making a distinction between needs and demands is also necessary since it sheds light on issues that are fundamental for understanding migration, but quite frequently overlooked (the various parts of the framework is elaborated, mainly from a qualitative perspective, in paper VI, which also contains a more lengthy discussion about resources and constraints).

Methodological approach

From the discussions above – where it was argued that place attractiveness could be approached from a statement-based as well as an assumption-based perspective – it now follows logically to argue that there is no single method that is superior to other methods or techniques when aiming to reach a greater understanding. For instance, discourse analysis of promotional material from places wanting to attract migrants may prove to be as valuable as in-depth interviews with policymakers and migrants or statistical analyses in the pursuit of understanding migration and place attractiveness. This is not to claim that all methods are equally valuable – the value of any one method
must be judged in relation to the research question – but in most cases there are a number of alternatives that may provide complementary insights (McKendrick, 1999). Combining qualitative and quantitative methods in migration research is of course not new (see e.g. Andersson, 1987) even if it might seem as if interest in them has risen during the last few years. According to Findlay and Li (1999) contemporary social theory is more tolerant towards mixing methods, which in this context is interpreted as a way of embracing the theoretical discussions reviewed above.

But there are several other arguments speaking for the advantages of employing a multi-method approach and McKendrick (1999:41-43) has identified a number of them, summarised as follows. The first, and perhaps most common reason, is that multi-method could be used to (1) strengthen weaknesses in data resources and approaches. Further, (2) the breadth of understanding that comes from using multi-method is consistent with traditional academic ideals of scholarship. The use of different methods could also be of strategic character, and as an example McKendrick argues that it may be helpful to (3) gain trust from an otherwise sceptical audience. Other ways of using multi-method include (4) identifying case studies from a general overview and to (5) incorporating case study findings in a broader context. Based on the principle of triangulation, multi-method could also be used to (6) strengthen conclusions or to (7) tease out meaningful inconsistencies and to (8) address different aspects of the same research question (Ibid.). As the reader of the attached papers will notice, all of these arguments appear to a greater or lesser extent in the papers.

A few notes on the definition of migration
The definition of migration is of course an important aspect of all migration studies. However, despite the fact that there is no definition all migration researchers would agree upon, the problems associated with the definition is seldom paid much attention to in empirical studies. There are two main explanations for why this is the case. The first explanation relate to the kinds of migration data that is available for researchers and the restrictions for researchers to influence and control the way migration is defined in official statistics, be they economic, juridical or of some other nature. Thus migration researchers wield in most cases little influence upon the migration data available (Boyle et al, 1998), which is important to understand as an explanation to why the definition of migration is often overlooked. The second explanation relates to the temporal and spatial dimensions of the definition (i.e. how long and how far/in what context) that are intrinsically problematic and deserve some elaboration.
The temporal dimension

The problems associated with the temporal dimension of the definition of migration may be illustrated with a household that for instance goes on vacation for two weeks. It is quite obvious that they should not register as residents at their vacation destination, nor do they presumably perceive themselves as anything else than tourists, but when and how does one distinguish one form of mobility from another and what are the implications? Although it is customary to distinguish between different forms of mobility such as commuting, tourism and migration, there are no easy, objection free, ways of separating them. What if the household had decided to stay for two years at their vacation destination, should they still be considered tourists or perhaps migrants? The main question is thus one of “degree of permanency”, but is actually more complex since motives and intentions are also important (for further discussions see e.g. Gustafson, 2002).

Swedish citizens are according to Swedish law required to register as residents if they intend to stay for a period of more than six months at a certain location (Folkbokföringslag 1991:481) and this law determines who should be counted as a migrant in the official statistics. As far as the present author is aware, there are no studies on the extent to which people follow this law and if there are certain population subgroups, like students for instance that perhaps do not register to the extent they should. The relevance of six months is of course also debatable. The problems with the temporal dimension are thus strongly associated with the difficulties of the ambiguous “degree of permanency”.

Behr and Gober (1982) – among others – did strongly emphasise that for some populations a fixed residence is not applicable, further problematising the temporal (and spatial) dimension. Consider for instance the elderly sunbirds “travelling the seasons” and moving north in the summer and south to Florida or the Mediterranean in the winter. However, while such population subgroups are important for our understanding of migration and should clearly be acknowledged, they are presumably exceptions from the vast majority of the population. As shown by Ellegård and Vilhelmson (2004) the Swedish population in general spend 63 per cent of their time at their regular home and 18 per cent at work, which in fact leaves few other opportunities for spending time elsewhere. The notion of a fixed residence is thus relevant in most cases, but in some particular instances, like weekly commuting and tourism-related migration, the temporal dimension is indeed problematic and difficult to handle (for further discussion see Bell and Ward, 2000).

The spatial dimension

The other major problem relates to the issue of how long a move should be for it to be counted as migration. At first thought this might perhaps seem
like a truly academic issue of little practical relevance. However, consider a household moving to a different apartment across the street in the same neighbourhood and another household moving from one part of the country to another. Within the spatial dimension there is obviously also a “social” dimension: a move across the street is unlikely to have much influence upon daily mobility patterns, but a long distance migration is bound to change lives (Fielding, 1992). There is thus an obvious need for distinguishing short distance migration (often termed local or housing mobility) from long distance migration (often termed interregional migration or simply migration).

The problem is that long distance or interregional migration usually contains a great deal of variation in terms of distance and geographical context, simply because different regions (e.g. labour markets areas or municipalities) are of different size, shape and settlement pattern. In extreme cases an individual may for instance move to a neighbouring house and become registered as an interregional or even international migrant. To handle this problem, a distance restriction is often added (e.g. 50 or 100 km) (e.g. Clark and Huang, 2004) since there are, as mentioned above, many differences when comparing housing mobility and migration. But these kinds of definitions lack support or are at best vaguely defined and the effects of such procedure are more or less unknown in an empirical sense (but see White and Mueser, 1988; Long et al, 1988).

Roseman (1971) made a very useful pedagogical distinction in his separation of migration into two categories based on daily/weekly reciprocal movement patterns of a migrant. His two categories, “total” and “partial” displacement migrations, are determined by whether a migrant changes all (total displacement) or only some (partial displacement) of the significant places (e.g. school, workplace, grocery store etc) visited by him or her on a daily/weekly basis. Roseman’s two categories arguably show the differences in general importance between housing mobility and migration and why it is valuable, even if it is problematic, to make a separation between them.

The definitions of migration used in the thesis

The definition of migration as involving “the movement of a person (a migrant) between two places for a certain period of time” (Boyle et al, 1998:34) may sometimes suffice but as has been briefly illustrated above, a fuller understanding of migration requires a greater awareness of the problems associated with definitions of migration.

The definitions of migration used in this thesis vary primarily in terms of the spatial dimension. However, note that in papers IV, V and VI Statistics Sweden were asked to select people who had migrated within a period of six months to facilitate memory-recall. The other papers are based on the more common definition where a migrant is defined as an individual who has a different place of residence on the 31st of December compared to where he
or she resided the previous year according to official statistics. Regarding the spatial dimension, two definitions are used where the first is referred to as interregional migration and the second as long distance migration. Interregional migration refers to an individual who moves across an administrative border of some kind and is of course particularly useful from a fiscal and governmental perspective concerns (authorities need information to collect taxes and plan for services etc.).

The second definition of migration in this thesis is referred to as long distance migration, where a migrant is defined as an individual who crosses a municipal border and moves a distance of at least 100 km. It would perhaps be more correct to call it “interregional long distance migration”. Adding this distance restriction comes closer to the perspective of Roseman (1971) and arguably also closer to the significance of migration when seen from the viewpoint of the individual migrant. In the Swedish case where municipalities are tightly clustered in populous areas (Stockholm being the prime example) a lot of migrants will cross a municipal boundary even if only moving a short distance. To complicate matters further, some research does not make any distinction but simply assumes that interregional migration is long distance migration. The use of different definitions is a problem for interpreting the results of migration studies generally speaking, but exactly how these problems affect our understanding is largely unknown (see paper IV for some further discussion). It would be a valuable deed for further research to thoroughly investigate and clarify the effects of different definitions of migration.
Findings

This section begins with recapitulating the point of departure for the thesis and then summarises the results of the six attached papers. The papers all have their individual purposes and research questions that shed light on various aspects of place attractiveness. Taken together, they fulfil the overarching aim of the thesis: to examine place attractiveness from a migration perspective. In light of the conceptual framework, which is mainly the result of the sixth paper, the focus of the concluding discussion will centre more upon what it is that makes some places more attractive than others – for whom and when – and briefly to relate the findings to current local and regional development debates.

Recapitulating the point of departure
The point of departure for this thesis has been the question of what it is that makes some places appear more attractive than others to live in. From there, the present author sets out to examine place attractiveness in a Swedish migration context. This subject is currently receiving a high policy focus since the ability of places to attract migrants is of fundamental importance to local and regional development. Consider for instance the increasingly ageing population coupled with a general interest in demography and economic growth, or policymakers perceived needs to attract the right kind of workforce or businesses to enhance competitiveness while at the same time increasing the tax base and spending power. These examples have all attracted much attention during recent years, but are of course not new in themselves.

There are, however, other aspects that make the subject of this thesis timely. Some researchers (e.g. Findlay and Rogerson, 1993; Fotheringham et al, 2000:393-394) have convincingly argued that contemporary societal changes may be at work to influence a change of migration patterns. The overall argument it that the constraints of where to live have weakened which gives more space for quality of life related considerations to influence destination choices (Ibid.). Three aspects deserve particular mention – an increasing share of the population having less constraints, technological advances that give greater possibilities of choosing where to live, and an increasing economic wellbeing coupled with a possible change in what people
value in life – that would seem to make it easier for the preferences of individual migrants to play a more prominent role in migration decision making.

However, objections can be raised regarding the extent that each of these factors really matter for the prospects of changes in migration motives and population redistribution. Little is known about such trends in countries comparable to Sweden and there are relatively few empirical studies that have been conducted on this subject (Rogerson, 1999). Hence, there is little evidence supporting arguments that the factors that influence residential choices and attract people to particular places have been altered.

Summaries of the attached papers


At the time when the work with this thesis began, Swedish municipalities seemed to have become increasingly engaged in a competing for new residents. An important element of these efforts was the use of place marketing campaigns and promotion. Very little was known, however, about these attempts in terms of the number of municipalities involved, the economics of the campaigns and promotions, ways of marketing, target groups, etc. Furthermore, and more importantly, there had been few attempts at evaluation. As far as is known, Swedish municipalities seems to be contemporary fore-runners in attempts to attract migrants from different parts of the country even if this issue is being more frequently discussed also in other countries (e.g. Wilson and Rees, 2003).

The purpose of this first paper is to provide an extensive overview and to evaluate the effects of the place marketing efforts to attract in-migrants made by the municipalities in Sweden. The empirical material is largely based on survey responses from 220 municipalities. There are two interrelated reasons why the marketing and promotion of places is an important component in the context this thesis. The first reason is that “place attractiveness” is such a prominent feature of the campaigns and that local authorities try to put forward a suitable image of a municipality, one that is supposed to be tailor made for a specific target population. The second reason relates to the question of whether such efforts can have an impact on migration. That is, are place-marketing campaigns an effective and successful means of making places more attractive?

One of the significant empirical findings was that place marketing to attract new residents indeed has grown rapidly over the last few years and
become an important part of municipalities’ development strategies, at least when measured in terms of ascribed importance and economic effort. In fact, the municipalities give greater weight to attracting in-migrants than to attracting tourists, which may seem surprising considering the neglect of migration in the large body of literature on place marketing. However, industries seem to be more important to attract than in-migrants. Presumably, the policymakers partly see an increase in the number of employment opportunities as a more effective means of attracting in-migrants rather than the other way around. Furthermore, it is estimated that 49 per cent of the municipalities have carried out some kind of marketing campaign to attract in-migrants during the last three years, which is a remarkably high figure. In light of the ongoing discussions about attracting highly skilled migrants, that the most attractive category of in-migrants according to the municipalities, are “families with children”, clearly surpassing the “highly educated or qualified labour”, is a somewhat surprising finding. The paper also reviews differences between municipality-types in terms of their marketing engagement, target groups, etc.

Two approaches were employed in the attempt to evaluate the results of these marketing efforts. Firstly, the municipalities were asked whether they believed their efforts had been successful. A significant number (36 municipalities) reported that they were “definitely sure” that they had been successful in attracting in-migrants through place marketing. However, it should be kept in mind that positive results from self-evaluations may be a form of self-justification and that it is, so to speak, inherent in marketing campaigns to claim success for oneself as this may strengthen a positive image. Secondly, actual migration statistics were compared between categories of municipalities identified as having carried out marketing campaigns and a control category consisting of municipalities that had not carried out any marketing campaigns. The results of these comparisons did not yield any support for the success of marketing campaigns in terms of attracting in-migrants. There is thus little evidence of any significant effects on interregional migration flows.


However, while the study discussed above provided an initial attempt at evaluation, methodological improvements were possible and it was decided to look more specifically upon a category of municipalities that had carried out place marketing campaigns. The selection fell on rural municipalities for two reasons. First, rural municipalities were identified as having been highly active when it came to carrying out campaigns and per capita spending. This interest is explained by the fact that throughout the 1990s, most rural mu-
municipalities in Sweden experienced population declines and were forced to face constraints of an ageing population. Therefore, to counter this development a significant share turned to place marketing campaigns and promotion in hope of attracting new residents. Second, while previous research did not find any evidence of success, there were nevertheless some indications that, if any municipalities had been successful, it was the rural ones.

To show what these campaigns are all about, the paper contains an introductory case study of one municipality using interviews and descriptive analysis of migration data. The interviews did provide some insights, but perhaps not as much as was hoped for. According to the respondents a very kind reception by the local authorities was the most notable result, but whether this is attributable to the campaign effort remains uncertain. Possibly, such an impact is unconscious or in other ways difficult to recognise. However, in-depth analysis of migration flows did present some indications of success when the specific target group showed a notable increase during the year when the campaign effects were anticipated, clearly higher than that of two neighbouring municipalities of similar character.

The main methodological approach used in the paper was the employment of a pooled regression analysis (i.e. a combination of time series and cross-sectional data) to study the effects of marketing campaigns on migration flows to rural municipalities while simultaneously controlling for other potentially influential factors such as changes in the labour market. The empirical findings showed that it is not possible to generalise and conclude that the marketing campaigns of rural municipalities have been successful when it comes to attracting in-migrants. Even if a few cases provided significant estimates suggesting success – and the campaign estimates for all campaign municipalities were positive although not statistically significant – there is not sufficient evidence to convincingly rule out the possibility that this might be the result of lucky circumstances. Given the detail and accuracy of the migration data employed, one would have expected to find clearly more significant estimates to be able to draw any other conclusion. Hence, campaigns do not seem to make places more attractive to migrants.


In welfare states like Sweden, where most inhabitants are assumed to have their basic material needs fulfilled, it is probable that the relative importance of immaterial wants is growing. This may result in people concentrating more on the attractiveness of places when deciding where to live. If people increasingly seek amusement and the recreational aspects of existence, some places will likely be more successful than others when it comes to attracting
migrants. One such argument, as proposed in the third paper of the thesis, is that places offering an abundance of tourist activities may attract migrants; people whom, so to speak, migrate, at least in part, to enjoy life in places that offer more stimulating leisure activities.

The aim of this paper is to explore the effects of tourism on interregional migration in Sweden. Two complementary empirical data sources are used. Firstly, using a statistical approach, a number of tourism indicators are used to estimate their effects on net-migration. Secondly, a survey was sent to all municipalities to find out whether the local authorities have noticed any relationship between tourism and migration.

The work is guided by the overall hypothesis that places with a successful tourist industry are also successful when it comes to attracting migrants. Bolstering this hypothesis are two assumptions that work to increase the probability of migration to these places. The first assumption is that tourist attractions increase place attractiveness. If a migrant has the opportunity to choose a destination, he or she is likely to opt for the destination that is perceived as most attractive. It is assumed, *ceteris paribus*, that tourist attractions, or whatever draws tourists, have a positive impact on such decisions - after all, people choose to visit these places in their leisure time. The second assumption is that migrants seldom move to places they know nothing about. Tourists automatically improve their knowledge of the places they visit and moreover, it seems reasonable to argue that the tourists will have a more positive impression of a place when on vacation, in part because they have more time for enjoyment and in part because many places display their most prominent features during their tourist season.

The empirical findings indicate that tourism indeed exerts a positive influence on migration. This is supported firstly via the statistical approach where number of tourists, cultural supply and leisure homes were found to have statistically significant positive effects on net migration (but the effects vary quite significantly among different age groups as well as when a ‘metropolitan effect’ is taken into account). Secondly, via the survey where 23 per cent of the respondents reported that they were certain that their municipality had gained migrants by way of tourism (though this may be partly wishful thinking on behalf of the respondents).

Paper IV Niedomysl T, 2006,"Re-examining migration motives in the Nordic countries with a focus on Sweden"

As mentioned earlier there is little evidence to support the argument that the factors that influence residential choices and attract people to particular places have been altered. Recent survey research in Sweden has however suggested that environmentally-related migration motives are more important than employment-related motives as causes for interregional migration
This may seem to contradict traditional views on migration as primarily economically driven and a great deal of attention has been given to migration motives in Swedish regional development debates. These studies are causing policymakers concern since a salient feature of the Swedish labour market policies is, by various means, to shorten periods of unemployment for individuals and to contribute in helping services and industries to fill vacant positions. If people no longer tend to move for employment-related reasons but to a greater extent for various other reasons, the concerns of some policymakers become more comprehensible.

The purpose of this paper is to re-examine the migration motives of Swedish interregional migrants. The strengths and weaknesses of recent research is discussed, in particular the validity of different questionnaire designs is reviewed. This constitutes the basis and rationale for employing an alternative questionnaire design compared to that used in recent research (open-ended instead of closed response alternatives) and a somewhat different migrant population was surveyed to gain further insight into migration motives.

The findings of the present study do not support the recent research since employment-related migration motives were indeed found to be the most common migration motive. More than one third of all interregional migration in Sweden is employment-related (36 per cent). Education-related motives were given by 22 per cent, which is quite expected given that people around the age of 20 constitute a majority of the total migrant population. Eleven per cent of the respondents stated that the formation or separation of households was the most important migration motive.

It is argued that the differences found between these studies are presumably outcomes of differences in both questionnaire design and sample population, aspects that needs to be elaborated by further research. The potential of this papers’ methodological contribution is important when considering the significance and widespread use of closed ended questionnaires when researching migration motives (e.g. in censuses) and further research will hopefully confirm this initial research as a healthy questioning of central research methods in migration studies.


Policymakers are showing increasing interest in factors that make places attractive for prospective new residents. This paper focuses on residential preferences for interregional migration and aims to explore what place attributes people would value highly when considering migrating. Special
attention is given to differences in preferences between population sub-
groups in terms of demographic, socio-economic and geographical determi-
nants. An ambitious pre-study with 390 respondents was carried out to ascer-
tain relevant place attributes for the main study, which was carried out via a 
survey sent to a national sample of 5000 Swedes of whom approximately 53 
per cent took part.

Regarding demographic determinants, all three factors that have been 
studied (sex, age and whether respondents had children or not) turned out to 
show statistically significant different influences on residential preferences. 
The socio-economic determinants did not produce as many significant dif-
fferences as did the demographic, but those that were found were nonetheless 
interesting. For instance, unemployed people did not emphasise work oppor-
tunities to the same extent as did those who were employed. Self-employed 
respondents, on the other hand, who placed the least emphasis on work oppor-
tunities among the groups studied, can perhaps more easily bring their 
workplace with them if they migrate and therefore place least emphasis on 
work opportunities among the studied groups. Regarding the geographical 
determinants most of the results were in accordance with expectations, but a 
somewhat surprising example concerns local tax-rates, an issue frequently 
discussed in political debates. It would seem that most people do not place 
much weight on this question, regardless of whether they have high incomes 
or not.

The paper also makes some methodological contributions by arguing that 
more attention should be paid to the initial selection of attributes to be in-
cluded in studies of residential preferences. The most interesting finding in 
that respect was that very few respondents in the pre-study mentioned factors 
related to avoidance of places, such as high crime rates, as influential in their 
decision-making, which clearly contrasts previous research on residential 
preferences. The findings suggest that some factors such as fear of crime or 
access to health care are more problematic than is usually assumed and the 
usefulness of their inclusion in preference studies may need reconsideration. 
Moreover, it is important to keep in mind that migrants act under constrains 
not controlled for in this study and it is by no means certain that preferences 
will ever result in actual migration.

choose their destination: towards a conceptual framework of 
place attractiveness"

The origins of the sixth and final paper can be traced back to the second 
paper of the thesis in which an initial attempt was made to approach place 
attractiveness by way of interviews with long distance migrants. Even if that 
was not the papers main purpose it provided some valuable lessons. One was
that it might be problematic to approach attractiveness by interviewing migrants that, more or less, only seemed to have made a choice between staying or moving to one particular destination. It would arguably be more valuable to interview migrants who had reflected more extensively upon issues relating to place attractiveness. Therefore, in this sixth paper interviews were carried out with migrants that seemed to have considered at least one alternative destination in their search for a place to move to. The overarching purpose of the paper is to examine what it is that makes some places appear more attractive than others in a migration context, in order to arrive at a conceptual framework whereby place attractiveness can be better understood.

While the proposed framework (see Figure 1 presented on page 17) mainly draws upon the interviews with long distance migrants, it also draws upon ideas and empirical findings of the other papers of the thesis. With support from these sources, it is argued that people about to migrate guide their search behaviour to find the most desirable location, which may be thought of as a match between the household’s needs, demands and preferences on the one hand, and the resources and opportunities available to them on the other. At the same time, migrants always act under a variety of constraints depending on who they are and this influences their opportunities. Moreover, the successive fulfillments of needs, demands and preferences will lead to a successive decrease in the number of choice opportunities. However, the greater the extent to which these factors may be fulfilled at a certain location, the greater the attractiveness of such a place.

But the framework does not explicitly take into account the fact that people who migrate over long distances may consider the attractiveness of places on different geographical levels. Consequently it is necessary to consider how needs, demands and preferences can be matched geographically to really understand place attractiveness in a migration context. While the conceptual framework suggested in this paper is admittedly simple, it is arguably useful as an instrument of analysis capable of providing general insights into individual migrants and their decision-making from a perspective of place attractiveness in a migration context.

Concluding discussion

Taken together the six papers reviewed above fulfill the overarching aim to examine place attractiveness from a migration perspective. In this section the question of what it is that makes some places more attractive than others to live in; for whom and when – will be presented in a concluding discussion based upon the findings in the attached papers and briefly relate them to current debates of local and regional development.

The question of what it is that makes some places more attractive than others depends upon how place attractiveness is approached. In the previous
section it was proposed that there are basically two approaches: either from an assumption-based approach (an indirect perspective of attractiveness, e.g. estimating the attractiveness by way of migration flows between places) or a statement-based approach (the subjective perspective of the individual).

If the statement-based approach is adopted, the answer to the question is that place attractiveness depends upon the needs, demands and preferences of the individual. The greater the extent to which a place can fulfil these three factors, the greater its attractiveness. What these factors actually are also depends upon the individual and his or her situation. “Situation” should be interpreted very broadly and refer to life-course situation, family situation, economic situation, etc. Therefore it is difficult, if not impossible, to give more concrete answers to the question what it is that constitute attractiveness, since attractiveness can be so individually defined. For example, it is shown in paper VI that one family with young children left the city and moved to the countryside with their children’s best interests in mind. Another family, also with young children, moved in the opposite direction from the countryside bound for the city – but they also had their children’s best interests at heart. Arguably this illustrates the complexity of trying to answer the general question of what it is that makes some places more attractive than others to live in.

However, if the level of abstraction is increased somewhat to discuss groups of individuals (e.g. people of a certain age or occupation) the “what” question becomes more meaningful and possible to answer by making some generalisations (while acknowledging that there is of course also variation within groups). Staying with the example of people who have children it was for instance shown in paper V that there were no statistically significant preferences for a countryside location over a central location. When they were asked, respondents with children placed more importance upon access to higher education and sports facilities than did people without children. But this group of course also contains a lot of variation in terms of preferences and for instance when studying people who have children younger than thirteen years old, other factors emerge as statistically significant. For instance they place more value on living close to family and friends, that the neighbourhood should be peaceful and have good access to health care while at the same time they seem to be paying less attention to housing costs. Many other examples of how different groups value different place characteristics on different geographical levels are given in paper V and more in-depth examples are found in paper VI.

If the assumption-based approach is taken, the answer to the “what” question is determined by the factors that a researcher chooses to study and his/her choice of methods of analysis. Quite naturally the level abstraction is raised significantly when migration flows between places are analysed. It has been argued earlier in the thesis that needs, demands and preferences need to be taken into account, also for the assumption-based approach – at least it is
important to think in those terms when different factors are tested for their correlation with the outcome of certain migration flows.

The hypothesis that marketing campaigns should have a positive influence on migration flows is however rejected since no convincing evidence was found in paper I and II. Hence, marketing campaigns do not seem to “increase” place attractiveness in a migration context. In paper III the focus was upon whether certain place characteristics, tourism related ones in particular, showed a positive impact upon net-migration flows. The statistical analyses showed for instance how different age groups were drawn to different types of tourism supply. But the results of paper III can also be compared with the other papers where a statement-based approach was employed, since it is expected that similar variables will have a similar influence upon migrants independently of approach. For instance, paper III showed a strong correlation between the presence of a university in a municipality and a positive net-flow of 15 to 24 year olds, but also a strong corresponding negative net-flow for 25-34 year olds. It could then be assumed that the opportunity to gain a higher education is viewed very positively by young people. In paper V, where respondents were asked to rate the importance of range of different place attributes, a similar preference pattern – as indicated by the statistical analyses of migration flows in paper III – was confirmed in that 18 to 24 year olds awarded much greater importance to access to higher education than other respondents.

As has already been hinted at, the life course perspective is a powerful tool for understanding place attractiveness. It illustrates well how all three questions, what it is that makes some places more attractive than others; for whom and when are connected to each other, irrespective of whether an assumption-based or statement-based approach is employed. However, employing either of these two approaches runs the risk of regarding place attractiveness as either too abstract (with the assumption-based approach) or too subjective (with the statement-based approach) and there is thus a need for a conceptual integration of these perspectives. Therefore, the conceptual framework presented in this thesis may be used for integrating the two approaches in order to gain thereby a better understanding of place attractiveness and migration. No matter whether migration flows or interviews with migrants constitute the focus of a study, needs, demands and preferences are relevant. The fulfilment of these factors will lead to a higher degree of place attractiveness, but will at the same time also lead to fewer choice possibilities.

How then do the findings of the thesis relate to current debates of regional and local development? While the empirical findings of the attached papers are manifold, only a brief discussion will be given in the following. First of all, it should be noted that Sweden is – in comparison to many other countries – a highly regionalized country with a high level of decentralization of tasks to municipalities and county councils that account for the bulk of wel-
fare services (Berggren and Tingvall, 2005). It might then almost seem like a natural consequence that competition between places to attract migrants should be increasing along the lines discussed earlier. However, the importance for the local authorities to attract e.g. wealthy taxpayers could perhaps be discussed since Sweden for quite some time has had a financial equalization system designed to redistribute resources and make it possible to establish more equal conditions for the provision of welfare services (Ibid.). The equalization system might seem to lessen competition between places (at least in theory and presumably only on a relatively short-term basis), but it should be noted that it has not been an objective of this thesis to attempt and explain why many local authorities are so anxious to attract new residents. However, as shown in papers I and II, it can be confirmed that they are increasingly making efforts to do so and there have been arguments that the Swedish welfare policy is becoming less prominent (see e.g. Lähteenmäki-Smith and Persson, 2002).

As already mentioned the two first papers show that there is no convincing evidence of success from the Swedish municipalities’ marketing campaign efforts to attract migrants. It might then be reasonable to suggest that these campaigns have been a failure and a waste of taxpayers’ money. But is this necessarily the case or are there perhaps some positive aspects of this increasing competition for migrants? While there is a lack of literature in this field, the campaign efforts can – in view of the present author – be seen as indications that the municipalities are increasingly emphasizing the importance of the population as a key development factor and are taking measures to strengthen their development prospects. Such insights and interest in the relationship between place attractiveness, migration and development will arguably benefit present and future residents alike. At the same time, it is important to keep in mind that place attractiveness is also about the willingness of people to remain where they are and, while perhaps less spectacular and definitely more strenuous than outwardly directed marketing campaigns, policymakers may need to think afresh about how they enhance endogenous “growth” of attractiveness. The campaign efforts reviewed in the two first papers may be seen as indications of larger development processes emerging in Sweden. It is from the perspective of such development discussions that the findings of the thesis may have some benefits.

When place attractiveness has been the focus of development debates, “soft” factors have often been centred upon. The empirical findings of paper IV and V, in particular, may however serve as a reminder for policymakers of the prevailing importance of “hard” factors such as employment opportunities. For most migrants a destination must be able to provide the basic needs and demands, such as jobs and housing, for it to be considered at all. “Preferences” are then, as illustrated in Figure 1, factors representing that something extra – positive if they would be fulfilled, but seemingly not as decisive as other factors.
Place attractiveness needs however to be viewed in a wider geographical context. The fact that people do not have to satisfy all their needs, demands and preferences at the same location, but can for instance instead choose to commute some distance to work and live elsewhere, points to the importance of adopting a wider geographical perspective when trying to understand place attractiveness in a migration context. While the conceptual framework presented in the thesis may provide a useful starting point, further studies would perhaps benefit from more directly trying to incorporate a time-geographical perspective (see e.g. Hägerstrand, 1970), to give one example, in order to enhance understanding of place attractiveness and migration. Since people nowadays can (or perhaps are more willing or indeed forced to) commute to work over quite considerable distances, it may not suffice however for a place to be able to provide jobs for it to be successful in attracting migrants. As shown by a number of examples in the fifth and sixth papers, place attractiveness is constituted by many factors and place attributes and different individuals value them differently, which again returns the discussion to the importance of preferences. Preferences are therefore obviously not to be neglected since they are likely to be decisive when migrants are facing different choice opportunities. Therefore it is important to advance the understanding of how needs, demands and preferences can be matched in a geographical context where the number of choice possibilities will always be limited, so that the highest degree of place attractiveness possible may be attained – from the perspective of the individual and society alike.
Migration och platsers attraktivitet

Vad är det egentligen som gör att vissa platser uppfattas som mer attraktiva än andra platser att flytta till? Beror det på vem betraktaren är, i vilken fas i livet han eller hon befinner sig eller finns det kanske några gemensamma drag, till exempel vissa platsegenskaper som uppfattas positivt av alla människor oberoende av sammanhang? Dessa och liknande frågor diskuteras återkommande i olika utvecklingssammanhang eftersom platsers förmåga att locka inflyttare är av stor betydelse för lokal och regional utveckling.

Det övergripande syftet med föreliggande avhandling är att undersöka platsers attraktivitet ur ett migrationsperspektiv. Eftersom detta är en sammanläggningsavhandling har de olika artiklarna mer avgränsade syften och frågeställningar samtidigt som de genom sina empiriska, metodologiska och teoretiska bidrag belyser olika aspekter av platsers attraktivitet ur ett migrationsperspektiv. I det följande ges emellertid endast mycket kortfattade beskrivningar av de i avhandlingen ingående artiklarna. Mer utförliga diskussioner om avhandlingens implikationer och relevans för exempelvis lokal och regional utveckling återfinns i den föregående engelska sammanfattningen.

De två första artiklarna tar sin utgångspunkt i att svenska kommuner till synes alltmer börjat konkurrera om invånare. Ett tydligt inslag i denna konkurrens har varit genomförandet av marknadsföringskampanjer för att locka inflyttare. Mycket lite är emellertid känt om dessa kampanjer, exempelvis hur många kommuner som är involverade, hur stora de ekonomiska insatserna är, vilka sätt man marknadsför sig på och om det är några specifika målgrupper man försöker nå. Men viktigast av allt är kanske frågan om dessa kampanjer är framgångsrika, det vill säga blir kommuner mer attraktiva (i bemärkelsen att de lockar fler inflyttare än vad de annars skulle ha gjort) om de marknadsförs? Syftet med de två första artiklarna är att beskriva svensk kommuners marknadsföringsengagemang i syfte att locka inflyttare och att undersöka huruvida deras kampanjer är framgångsrika eller inte. Studierna baseras huvudsakligen på 220 enkätssvar från kommunerna. Resultaten från

Den tredje artikeln prövar en hypotes om huruvida platser med en framgångsrik turismindustri även är framgångsrika när det gäller att locka inflyttare. Två antaganden stödjer hypotesen, nämligen att människor sällan flyttar till platser som de inte har någon kunskap om och att turistattraktioner ökar platsens allmänna attraktivitet. Två olika angreppssätt användes för att testa hypotesen varav studierna huvudsakliga fokus utgjordes av statistiska analyser av sambandet mellan nettoinflyttning och olika oberoende variabler, där bland annat olika turismrelaterade variabler användes för att testa huruvida turismutbud kan tänkas påverka migrationen. Därutöver analyserades även enkätdata där företrädare för de svenska kommunerna tillfrågats om de noterat något samband mellan turism och migration i deras respektive kommun. Resultaten pekar på att turismen har en positiv effekt på nettoflyttningen, men effekterna varierar ganska kraftigt beroende vilka åldersgrupper av flyttare som studeras. Artikeln, som har en explorativ karaktär, pekar dock på behovet av vidare forskning för att slutligen kunna bekräfta hypotesens giltighet.

Den sjätte artiklens övergripande syfte är att undersöka vad det är som gör att vissa platser verkar mer attraktiva än andra platser att flytta till för att därigenom komma fram till en konceptuell modell, med vars hjälp platser attraktivitet bättre kan förstås. Studien bygger huvudsakligen på intervjuer med flyttare som valdes ut på basis av att de verkar ha haft vissa valmöjligheter i valet av plats att flytta till, men även resultaten från de andra studierna i avhandlingen ligger till grund för modellens utformning. Med stöd i dessa källor argumenteras det i artikeln för att människor som står i begrepp att flytta söker efter den mest lämpliga platsen att flytta till. Lämpligheten eller attraktiviteten kan ses som en maximering av flyttarens behov, krav och preferenser å ena sidan, och de resurser och möjligheter som står till buds för honom eller henne, å andra sidan. Samtidigt är det så att flyttare agerar under en mängd restriktioner som begränsar deras möjligheter. Dessutom leder en successiv uppfyllelse av behov, krav och preferenser till en successiv minskning av antalet valmöjligheter. Men i ju större utsträckning dessa faktorer kan tillfredsställas på en plats, desto större är attraktiviteten på en sådan plats.
References


