

# **"To a Town with a Better Future"**

**Young People and Their Future Orientations in the Barents Region**

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## INTRODUCTION

Migration from peripheral and remote regions has been an important issue lately in northern areas. Populations have been dwindling and unemployment has become a real problem. One fundamental feature of migration patterns has been the migration of young people from remote rural areas to more central urban locations. This makes the way in which young people in peripheral areas view their lives and their future an important question.

The most important reasons for young people to migrate are education, work, good career prospects and gaining new experiences (see Waara 1996, Soininen 1998, Viinamäki 1999). Migration patterns are guided not only by present openings in education and work; they are also guided by and structured according to local realities and possibilities (Viinamäki 1999, 112). For example, over the recent decades young people in northern Karelia and Lapland have developed a certain culture of migration due to diminished educational and employment opportunities. It has also been reported that young people want to move to areas which have versatility in educational opportunities and labour markets. This tendency can be seen especially clearly in Lapland and northern Sweden (Viinamäki 1999, 114-115).

Very few studies are being done concerning rural youth or young people in peripheral areas in Finland or the Barents Region. There is also lack of comparative and coherent research material regarding these issues, though various reports and books can be found about young people in general. So far studies concerning young people in peripheral and remote areas in Finland have been dealing with cultural identity (Mäntykorpi 1986); job placement, future occupational expectations and attitudes towards education (Tervo 1993); opinions involving remote areas as a living environment (Paunikallio 1997); operational models in the country side (Soininen 1997); the significance of participation (Soininen 1999); cross-border activities (Jukarainen 2000); involvement in the development of home municipalities (Paunikallio 2000); and perceptions of life and migration plans (Kurikka 2000).

In the Barents Region the focus on young people has been in relation to the following themes: future plans and orientations (Waara 1996, Sinisalo 1999, Kasurinen 1999, 2000a), everyday life and life contexts (Puuronen & Kasurinen 2000, Nummenmaa & Shvets 2000, Puuronen & Shvets 2000), identity development (Nummenmaa & Sinisalo 2000), value orientations (Zlokazova 1999, Posnova 1999, Sinisalo, Shvets & Rusanova 2000, Miljukova & Puuronen 2000a, Sinisalo & Shvets 2000), future hopes and fears (Kasurinen 2000b), drug use (Goranskaya & Ivanova 1999), health and attitudes towards smoking, alcohol and drugs (Predtechenskaya & Sinisalo 1999, 2000), opinions about the future relations between the Karelian Republic and Finland (Miljukova & Puuronen 1999), political commitment and awareness (Miljukova & Puuronen 2000b), national

prejudices (Miljukova & Puuronen 2000c), living conditions and constructions of cultural identities in coastal communities (Paulgaard 1999), occupational goals (Sinisalo & Nummenmaa 2000) and work and educational paths of young people (Viinamäki 1999).

It is problematic to use such a heterogeneous body of knowledge and research, coming from so many different starting points. The aim of this report is to fill the information gap concerning young people in the Barents Region by providing a large standardised data set based on responses to a questionnaire from nearly 2000 young people. More importantly, the aim is to discover the main trends in young people's future orientations and their attitudes toward their home districts. This survey was designed to gather information about young people living in the Barents Region – especially concerning their plans for migration from their home district and the reasoning behind those plans. This data is also intended to provide information about young people's attitudes towards their home districts and the future there. These findings should deepen our understanding of young people's future orientations and local roots. The questionnaire included questions concerning young people's life situations, future plans and attitudes towards their home district. Young people were also asked how satisfied they are with their life in their home district.

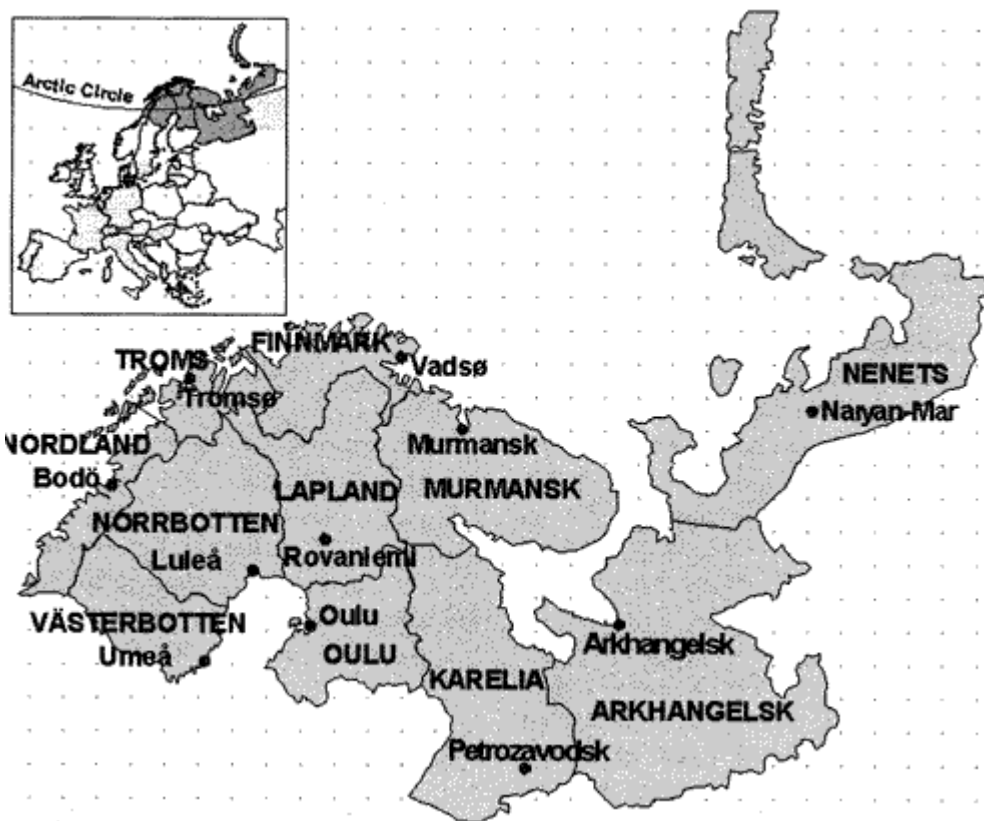
The data consists of responses to a survey (N=1627) which was distributed in November and December, 1999 to young people in the Barents Region at four different levels in school. The age of the respondents was 14-30 years old. In specific geographical terms, data was gathered from the following counties: Nordland and Troms in Norway, Norrbotten in Sweden, Lapland in Finland and Murmansk, Arkhangelsk and the Republic of Karelia in the Russian Federation.

The purpose of this report is to give the central findings of this survey concerning young people's feelings about their migration plans and the factors leading thereto. In reading this report one, should keep in mind that the survey data is a sample of the opinions of young people living in the Barents region. The opinions and attitudes reflected in this survey report are only those of the research population – of young people living in the given places in the research area. This data does not enable us to make valid generalisations, but it does give us quite a good standpoint from which to view the main trends in these young people's attitudes. Hopefully this will enable us some to develop some concrete tools for improving the position of young people in the Barents Region and for making the idea of staying in this region more tempting for them.

## **BASIC FACTS ABOUT THE BARENTS REGION**

The Barents Euro Arctic Region, or simply the Barents Region, altogether includes eleven counties in four different countries. The total area of Barents Region is 1.4 million km<sup>2</sup> with a population of

5 million inhabitants. The population density is thus quite low: only 3.8 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup> (Centre for International Mobility CIMO 1998, 30).



Map 1: The Barents Euro-Arctic Region (CIMO 1998, 30.)

The Barents Region came to be formally recognised as such, on the basis of a Norwegian initiative, in Kirkenes on January 11, 1993. This has come to be known as the Kirkenes Declaration. The declaration outlines seven main areas of co-operation within this region: environment, economic development, science and technology, regional infrastructure, indigenous peoples, cultural relations and tourism (Holst 1994, 11; Tunander 1994, 35). A two-layered administrative structure was established for the Barents region. The first layer, which is called the Regional Council, includes representatives from the three northern Norwegian counties, Nordland, Finnmark and Troms; from the northernmost Finnish and Swedish administrative provinces of Lapland and Norrbotten; and from Murmansk, Arkhangelsk and the Karelian Republic in Russia. This first layer also includes a Saami delegate. The second layer is called the Council of the Barents Euro-Arctic Region or the Barents Council. This layer is made up of government representatives from Russia and the Nordic countries (Finland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Iceland) with an additional representative from European Commission. Besides this, Canada, France, Germany, England, Japan, Poland, the Netherlands and USA have been given observer status. The Chairmanship rotates at one-year intervals between those countries which are directly included in the Barents Region: Finland, Sweden, Norway and Russia (Stokke & Tunander 1994, 1-2; Holst 1994, 11). For the year 2001 the chair is held by Russia.

## **Environment**

The vast territory of the Barents Region, stretching from the cold and humid Arctic rim to the fertile inland of southern Arkhangelsk and Karelia, has extremely varied environmental and climatic conditions. Yet both marine and terrestrial ecosystems here are simple, which means that disruption of the one link of the chain can have serious effect to the rest of the system (Stokke 1994, 145). The coastal area, with most of the population and with most of the industrial and military activity in the region, is the most vulnerable to human actions, due to the low water circulation during the long, cold winter.

For this reason, many aspects of nuclear power and nuclear waste are regarded as the major environmental risks in the Barents Region. Firstly, since 1965 seventeen nuclear reactors have been dumping large amounts of low and medium level radioactive solid waste in thin containers into the Kara Sea. This threatens the market profile of fish products from the area. Secondly, the poor construction of most of these nuclear installations and their lax safety regulations do not satisfy current international safety requirements. Thirdly, nuclear weapons tests were conducted in the 1990s in Novaya Zemlia and in the 1970s and 1980s in Arkhangelsk and Murmansk counties. The decision in 1990 to conduct nuclear tests in Novaya Zemlya was made because the environmental impact was regarded as less harmful and cheaper to deal with in that more sparsely populated area (Stokke 1994, 146 & 149). In general, the problem with nuclear power is a lack of adequate storage and recovery facilities for highly radioactive nuclear fuels (Stokke 1994, 147). The most significant sources of air pollution in the region are smelting furnaces and coke ovens located, for example, in the Perchenga area on the border between Norway and Finland (Stokke 1994, 148).

## **Transportation**

Transportation can be seen as an important aspect of the Barents Region, because the area is a kind of junction. Barents Region lies between the world's most industrialised regions, and since 1991, when Russian authorities allowed foreign ships access to their coastal waters, the Barents Region has offered a shortcut for cargo vessels sailing between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. Sailing in the summertime by way of the Northern Sea Route<sup>1</sup> between Japan and Europe, for example, reduces the distance of the voyage by some 40-60 % (Østreng 1994, 162 & 167). Shipping in the Barents Region has its problems, however. The most problematic factor is extremely difficult ice conditions. Shipping in the region thus requires icebreaker assistance and heavy-duty ice-reinforced freighters, making it rather expensive. There are also practical difficulties, such as a lack of regular sailing timetables. And then the sailing season, sailing speed and cargo capacity on this route are

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<sup>1</sup>The Northern Sea route is a general term for a series of shipping lanes that run along the Russian Arctic Ocean coasts between Novaya Zemlya in the west to the Bering Strait in the east (Østreng 1994, 159).

limited. Insurance costs are also very high (Østreng 1994, 162, 163).

### **Regional Uniqueness**

The Barents Region can be regarded as unique for at least three other reasons. First, there is a very strong cultural and economic heterogeneity between different parts of it: North-western Russian differs greatly from the Nordic countries in language, religion, standard of living, political traditions and historical aspects. Secondly, the Barents Region has been a very sensitive area in recent history – the from lines of the cold war between the USA and the Soviet Union (Tunander 1994). With this in mind, the Barents Declaration does not include any form of military co-operation (Baev 1994, 177). Thirdly, the Barents Region's two-layered institutional structure sets a new precedent in balancing state sovereignty with geographical mutual interest. In this regard the position of the Barents Region, located on the periphery of the European Union, is also significant (Stokke & Tunander 1994, 3).

Due to its heterogeneity in every respect, the identity of the Barents Region as such is not necessarily the primary frame of reference for its inhabitants (Hansen 1994, 63; Castberg, Stokke & Østreng 1994, 75). It would be wrong to argue, for instance, that inhabitants in the Nordic parts of the Barents Region would feel a strong sense of community with inhabitants of north-western Russia, or vice versa. There are, however, considerations to the contrary. First of all there is the indigenous Saami population in northern parts of Scandinavia and Finland, which shares similar cultural features with inhabitants of the Kola region of Russia. Secondly, many decades of secularisation have seemingly reduced the importance of religious differences in the Barents Region. And thirdly, Russian political (and probably economic) ideology is in the process of becoming more westernised. It has also been said that cultural differences have been seen as an exotic spice stimulating fresh regional interaction here (Castberg, Stokke & Østreng 1994, 76). However, traditional differences here, as is the case everywhere “where two worlds meet,” can also be seen as a source of conflict and communication problems (Hansen, 1994, 69).

### **Young people in the Barents Region**

Even taking these arguments for stronger regional identity into consideration, it must still be assumed that Barents Region would not be the primary frame of reference for inhabitants of the region, on account of the great geographical distances involved, as well as the variations in cultural practices, economics and living conditions. It is thus hard to imagine that adolescents living in this vast area would regard the Barents Region as their primary frame of reference when they think about themselves and their origins. At present, it seems that the Barents Declaration has a far greater meaning politically than culturally (Castberg, Stokke & Østreng 1994, 75). In the future,

however, this political stance might have a cultural effect that would even trickle down to the young people living in the region. For example some official statements have been made about developing youth policy at the level of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, facilitating and supporting youth mobility and co-operation, as well as improving young people's living conditions in the Barents Region (Ministry of Education & Centre for International Mobility 1999, 8).

In particular, young people themselves have also been active and have formed the *Barents Regional Youth Forum*, BRYF, which is a non-governmental and non-bureaucratic youth network for young people and youth organisations in the Barents Region. The BRYF was developed and established in a series of meetings around the Barents area between 1995 and 2000. The BRYF has altogether 18 volunteer co-ordinators who have been elected from among young people actively involved in member youth organisations. The co-ordinators are responsible for forming a network of young people and youth associations in their own regions. The BRYF has a goal of expressing young peoples interests and bringing their suggestions to the decision makers, and in this way influencing youth policy (Barents Youth Meeting Report, 2000).

## **DESCRIPTION OF THE DATA**

Survey data was collected in November and December of 1999.<sup>2</sup> In Finland data was collected from different schools and universities in Lapland; in Sweden, from Norrbotten; in Russia, from the Republic of Karelia and the counties of Archangelsk and Murmansk; and in Norway, from Nordland and Troms. The following figure illustrates how respondents are divided up between the different countries involved in the survey:

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<sup>2</sup>Survey data was collected, coded and translated with assistance of the researchers of The Barents Research Network with the help of some others: Tommi Hoikkala, Vesa Puuronen, Elvi Leino, Aino Harinen, Maarit Pietiäinen, Jorma Puuronen, Anna-Maria Jääskeläinen, Sinikka Karhu, Meeri Vaarala, Steinulf Severinsen, Peter Waara, Susanna Henricsson, Tiina Marjeta, Larissa Shvets, Irina Miljukova, Denis Savtshenko, Leif Olsson and Leila Väänänen. Leena Suurpää, Gry Paulgaard and Vesa Puuronen have given valuable comments. Thank you, all!

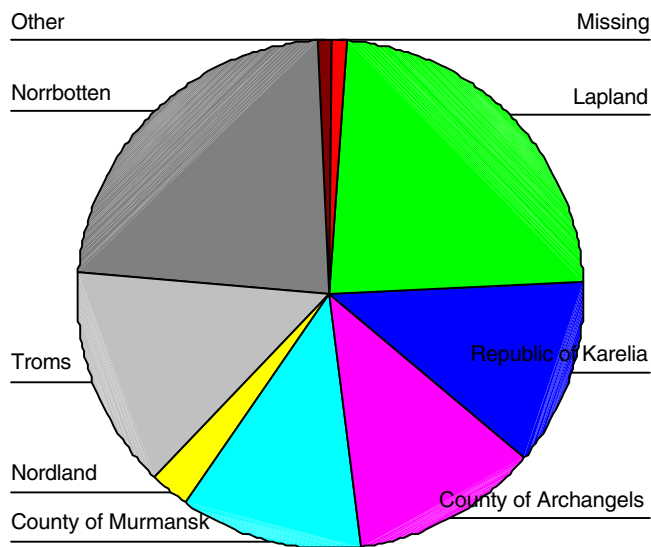


Figure 1: Respondents' counties of residence

The target group of this study was defined as pupils and students in the Barents region. For this reason the survey was carried out in four different levels of education: in comprehensive schools, high schools, vocational institutes and universities. This was a practical decision, in that it would have been impossible to carry out this size project as a postal survey in a limited time. Accordingly survey data has weaknesses. Firstly, unemployed young people and those outside of educational institutions are not represented in this data. Secondly, samplings are discretionary – provided by consulting youth researchers in the Barents Region. Regardless of its weaknesses though, this data can still be taken as being of an informative nature: it represents opinions of a wide spectrum of age groups and it shows how young people's motives develop during the course of their lives. The data also presents the views of young people from different educational backgrounds and from all social classes. And finally, this data set also provides a tool for regional comparisons.

We began with a total of 2100 questionnaires. For Finland, Norway and Sweden 500 questionnaires were sent to each country, with 600 questionnaires being sent to Russia due to its having a higher population than the other countries involved in the survey. Questionnaires were delivered to schools by local research partners. For various reasons 452 questionnaires came back blank. For example some students refused to fill in questionnaires for unknown reasons, or there was a poor flow of information among teachers in some schools. All together 21 questionnaires were rejected, because they were filled in improperly or because it could be assumed that information was given jokingly



or in an intentionally absurd manner. There were also three respondents who were too old for the research purpose, i.e., over 30 years old. Respondents all had the possibility of answering questions in their own mother tongue.

Following table shows the amounts of the questionnaires in the beginning of the data collection and the total amount of accepted questionnaires in each country.

<b>Questionnaires</b>	<b>Completed</b>	<b>Rejected</b>	<b>Lost</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Finland</b>	373	11	116	500
<b>Norway</b>	284	7	209	500
<b>Sweden</b>	383	3	114	500
<b>Russia</b>	587	0	13	600
<b>Total</b>	1 627	21	452	<b>2 100</b>

Table 1: Amounts of accepted and rejected questionnaires

Age of the respondents varied between 14 and 30 years old. The majority of the respondents, 78 %, were 15-20-year-olds in the year 2000, when the data was analysed. This being the dominant age group in the survey, the most common educational background among respondents was to be studying at the comprehensive school level, hence 41 % of all respondents were in comprehensive school at the point of research. We must then bear in mind that opinions of pupils in comprehensive schools are the primary determinant in the survey results. Respondents in vocational training were the smallest group in the survey.

The percentage of male respondents was 46; female, 54. Again for obvious reasons, the most common marital status among respondents was single: 84 % defined themselves as such, with another 11 % choosing the options of “engaged” or “cohabiting.” Only 1 % of the respondents were married and just 2 % had children of their own. 76 % of the respondents still lived with their parents at the point of research. Russian respondents showed a tendency to keep living with their parents for longer than those from other countries.

Looking at the data set as a whole, respondents parents’ educational backgrounds in general were much as would be expected. All different levels of educational are quite equally represented among both the fathers and mothers of respondents. Respondents’ mothers, however, tended to be a slightly more educated than their fathers. About 24 % of respondents’ mothers had university

degrees, whereas for fathers the figure was about 20 %. Fundamental differences can be seen when comparing parents' educational background in different countries. First of all, both the mothers and fathers of Russian respondents had university degrees more often than respondents' parents in other countries. 37 % of Russian respondents' mothers had university degrees, compared with 24 % for the survey as a whole. Likewise among the fathers of Russian respondents 32 % had graduated from a university, compared with 20 % for the survey as a whole. Secondly, the mothers and fathers of Finnish and Norwegian informants have very similar educational background to each other. Respondents' mothers and fathers in Norway and Finland were characterised by the fact that they had very few university degrees; vocational training being the dominant form of education among them. There was also a rather high percentage of Finnish and Norwegian mothers whose education has gone no further than elementary/comprehensive school. In Finland this percentage was 21; in Norway, 20. These are rather high numbers when compared to overall figures for mothers in the data; all together about 13 % of respondents' mothers have only elementary or comprehensive school diplomas.

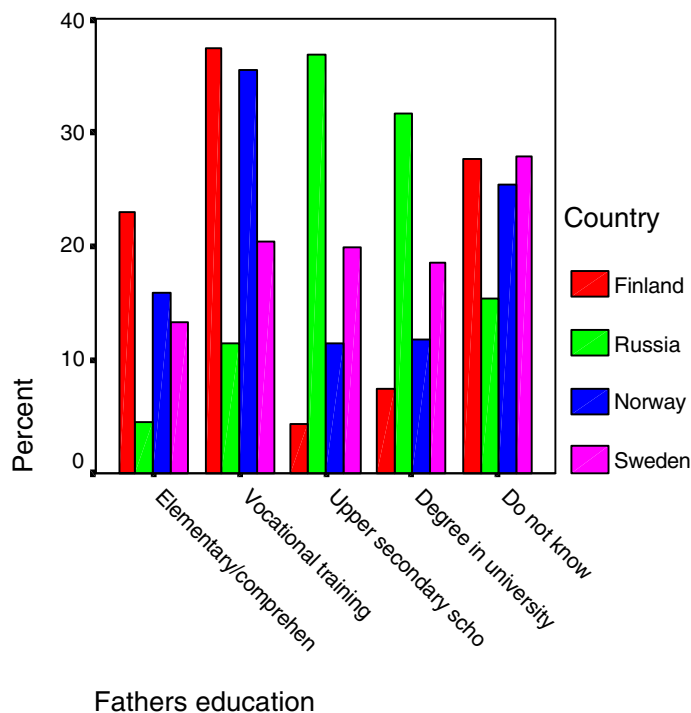


Figure 2: Education of respondents' fathers

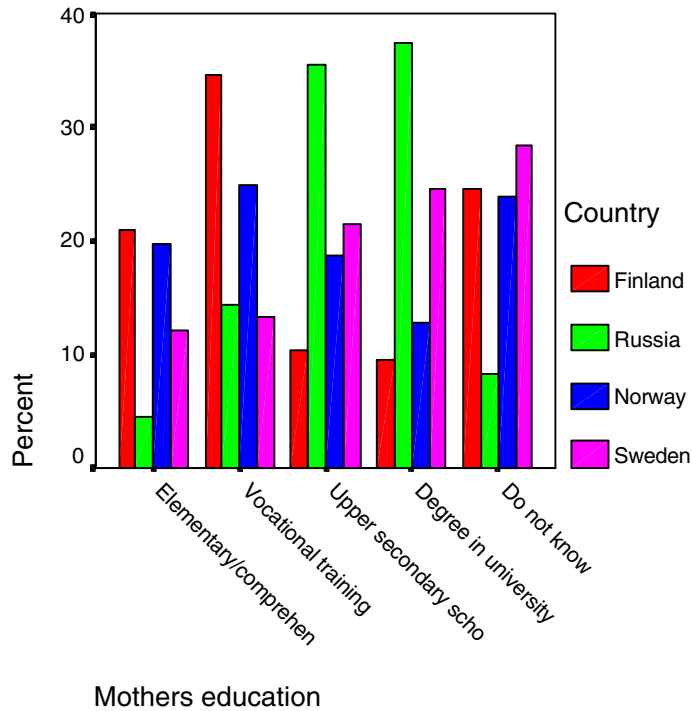


Figure 3: Education of respondents' mothers

Respondents' living environments vary: 54 % live in urban environments; 20 %, in municipal centres; and 26 %, in the villages or scattered settlement areas. Living environments also vary among respondents in different countries: in Finland the vast majority of our respondents (74 %) live in municipal centres and in scattered settlement areas, with only 26 % in what can be called urban areas; whereas in Russia the vast majority of our respondents live in urban environments (75 %) and villages (17 %) with only a small minority of living in municipality centres or scattered settlement areas. Norwegian and Swedish respondents were rather equally divided between rural and urban settings. In Norway 55 % of respondents live in urban milieu and 45 % in municipalities or remote area. In Sweden 44 % of informants come from cities and 56 % from municipality centres, remote areas or villages.

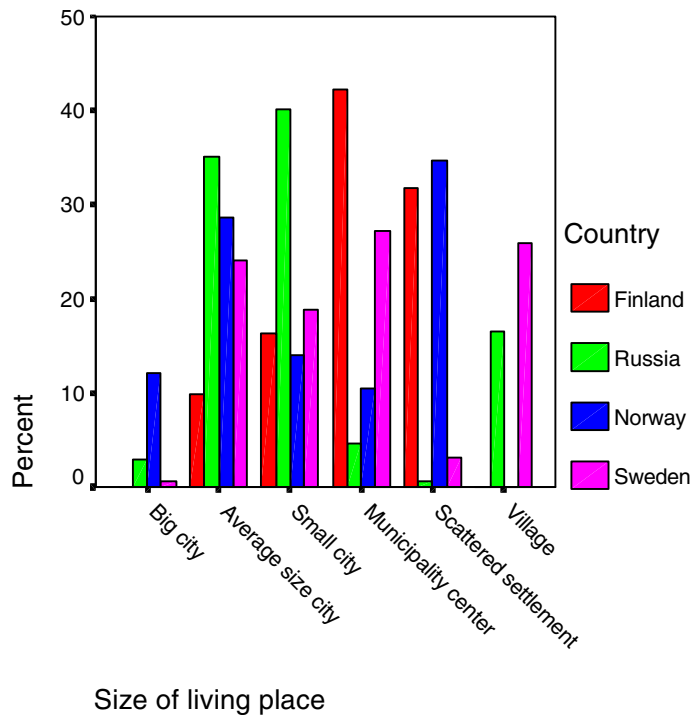


Figure 4: Living environments of respondents

The vast majority of the respondents (88 %) were born in the Barents Region. The rest have moved to the area with their parents or, for example, in order to study in a university located in the region.

### MIGRATION ALACRITY AS A DOMINANT FEATURE

One central theme of the survey was young people’s plans for migration. Data shows, that migration alacrity is a dominant feature in the area. The same tendency can be seen everywhere. Many recent research reports have given the same message: young people are planning to move away from their home district, especially in remote areas. (See Waara 1996, Paunikallio 1997, Soininen 1998.) This survey makes the same point: 73 % of the respondents have answered “yes”, when asked “Do you think that you will move out of your home district?”

Migration alacrity is high throughout the data, but there are some differences in migration readiness in different countries. The strongest desire to migrate can be found among Finnish and Swedish respondents. In Finland 81 % of all respondents plan to move out of their region; in Sweden, 82 %. Russia and Norway join at a lower level; about 67 % of those surveyed from each of these countries have migration plans.

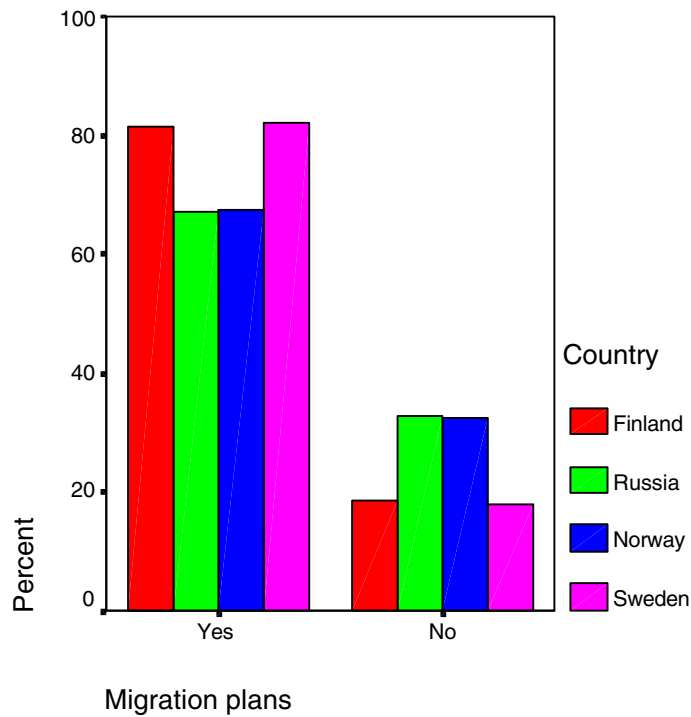


Figure 5: Migration plans of respondents in different countries

Differences in migration alacrity can also be found between the different counties involved in the research. The highest migration readiness can be found among respondents from Lapland, Murmansk county and Norrbotten, over 80 % of informants living in these areas have migration plans. The lowest migration willingness can be found among respondents from Republic of Karelia.

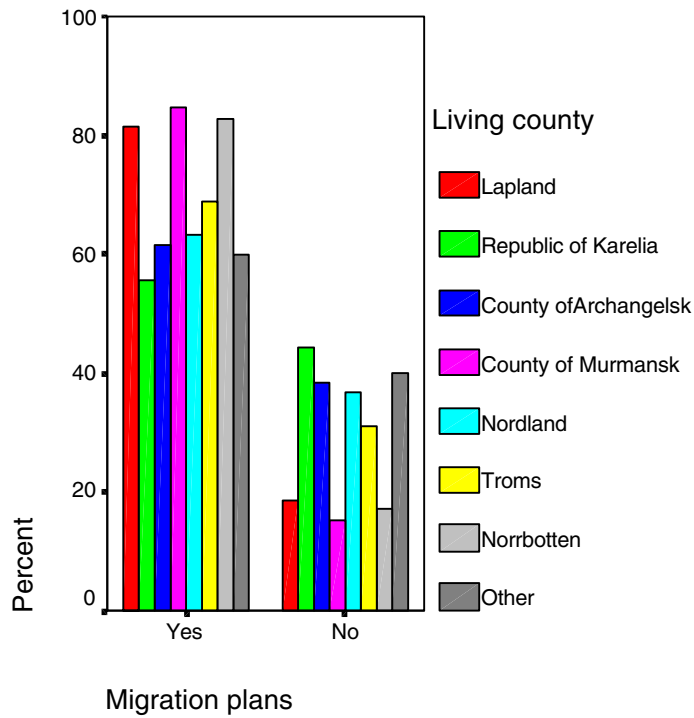


Figure 6: Migration plans of respondents in different counties

Generally speaking, the smaller the population in the respondents' living place, the greater their migration alacrity is. About 82 % of the respondents who live in villages or in municipality centres, 77 % of those who live in a scattered settlement areas, 75 % from small cities, 63 % from average sized cities and 59 % from big cities have plans for migration.

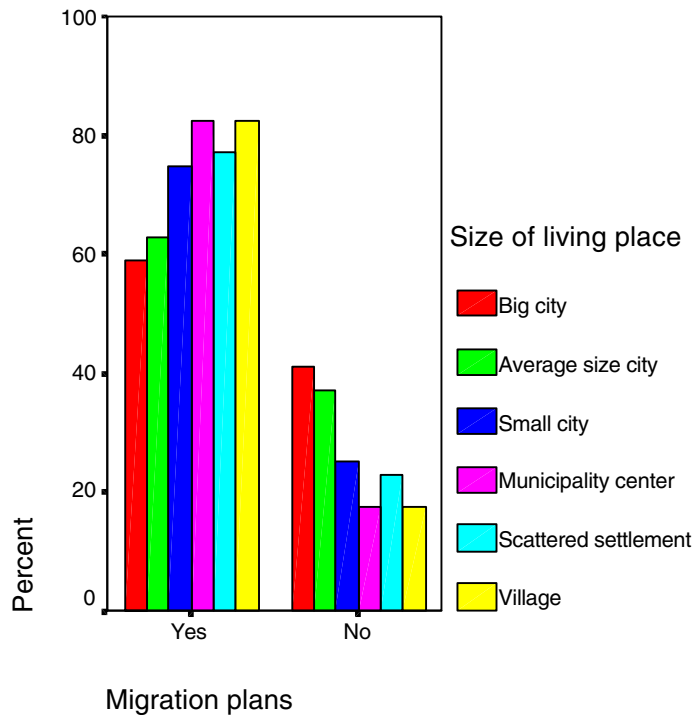


Figure 7: Migration plans related to the size of respondents' living place

Female respondents are more eager to migrate than male respondents. About 78 % of female respondents have migration plans, compared with about 69 % for male respondents.

### **EDUCATION: THE MOST IMPORTANT REASON FOR MOVING OUT**

Since the majority of our respondents have migration plans, a very important question must be asked: *Why* they will be moving out from their home district? The most important reasons for migration among young people are education, employment and gaining experience. Among these familiar and traditional motives for migration our survey data points to education as the clear number one. The value and meaning of education to these young people is obvious when we looking at number of respondents who want to have university degree in the future: 59 % of respondents say that their future occupation would possibly require a university degree. This is a very high percentage, especially considering that only about 20 % of these young people come from families where both parents have university degrees. This can be accounted for in four different ways. First, education and work play a very important role in young people's identity work; work is seen by some as a means of self-fulfilment (Tuohinen 1990). Secondly, it is known that a high level of education increases one's probability of employment (Kilpeläinen 2000), which in turn is a person's source of money and commodities (Tuohinen 1990). Thirdly, young people have broken away from their parents' educational traditions (Soininen 1998, Koivuluhta 1999). Then beyond all this, fourthly, Tuohinen (1990) claims that young people have more individualistic attitude

concerning their work than their predecessors had. Nowadays work plays a major role in social life and it can be seen as an important arena for social participation (Sinisalo & Shvets 2000, 92). Work also sets a pattern for people's daily lives, which are divided into two categories: work and leisure. Work is not only a way to make a livelihood anymore; it is also a way to fulfil oneself and establish an identity.

Our data shows that the meaning of education and individualistic attitudes are also reflected in young people's thoughts about their career prospects. The possibility of entering a successful career is generally considered by our respondents to be an important or very important factor in making decisions in life and choosing a place to live in the future. Altogether 79 % of the respondents shared this opinion. In fact we cannot blame young people for their opinions and migration plans, since mobility and migration can be regarded as the rational pattern of behaviour which (together with education, of course) best insures future employment (Kilpeläinen 2000).

Among university students migration plans are very general. This is not surprising, since for example Jolkkonen (2000) has reported that in Finland migration alacrity is higher among persons in higher education.

It can further be assumed that the findings mentioned above tell us not only of an individualistic attitude among respondents, but also of an instrumental attitude towards work. This was seen when focusing on the question of salary. A high salary seems to be an important issue when it comes to respondents choosing an occupation for themselves: About 65 % of all respondents said that salary has an affect on their process of choosing an occupation.

Social relations, such as friends and romantic partners, also seem to be very important factors for young people making decisions about their future living places. 61 % of our respondents regard "friends living close by" as an important or very important factor in choosing their future place of residence. Girlfriends and boyfriends have an even greater influence on respondents when they choose their future place of residence, in that 79 % of all respondents regard girl- or boyfriends as a very important or important considerations when settling down. Only 34 %, on the other had, say that it is very important or important to live close to their parents. After that other important factors in choosing where to live are having a good environment for children, services, reasonable housing prices, proper telecommunication and computer connections and closeness to the nature.

Age, together with education and work, is one of the factors which has the most pronounced effect



on young people's migration alacrity. In this survey there are two age groups which are very eager to move out from their home district – more than 80 % of the respondents in these groups having such plans. These are the 19-20-year-olds and 25-26-year-olds. These age groups are at the transition points of moving from their parental home to their first household of their own, and the transition from education to work, respectively. This shows the extent to which education and work construct young people's migration plans, as well their aspirations towards independence.

Young people were also asked when they will possibly migrate. 57 % of the respondents who have migration plans expect to migrate in 1-4 years. The exceptions to this trend were the young people from Lapland and Norrbotten, whose migration plans are spread more evenly across a 6 year time scale so that most of them would like to migrate in 2-4 years. Some other differences could also be found between regions: Young people from Troms hope to migrate already in 1-2 years. Respondents from Republic of Karelia and Arkhangelsk and Murmansk counties plan to stay for the longest time in their home districts – some planning to migrate as late as 8 years from the point of research.

#### **“TO A TOWN WITH A BETTER FUTURE”**

Those respondents who had migration plans were asked what their preferred migration target is. Almost all of them took some kind of a view on the matter, but hardly any of them had clear opinion about the issue. Thus rather many respondents answered that they do not know where they would like to move to in the future. Some said that they have not decided yet. One good example of this is a respondent who answered, “I don't know yet; maybe I'll move some place in the south.” This could tell us that the respondents do not feel much of a need to choose their future place of residence. We can assume that young people will make decisions about their future living place after they have decided what to do with their life and what their future occupation will be. After making these decisions young people have some concrete reasons to choose their living place. For example someone may want to be a lawyer and because of that one has to go to certain university. This view is supported by one respondent's answer which said, “I have no particular plans. They'll take shape automatically together with my education.”

Those respondents who had thought about moving out from their home district, and specifically about where they wanted to move to, had various answers and opinions. The data shows that, first of all, an average size city is the most popular type of place to live among the respondents: About 35 % wanted to move to a medium size cities. Big cities were chosen by 28 %. Villages in the country side or scattered settlements are not so tempting for young people; only 8 % of all

respondents would like to live in a village or in the scattered settlement in the future. 16 % would like to remain in the same place where they lived at the point of the survey. The following figure illustrates what kinds of opinions respondents from different countries had regarding this issue.

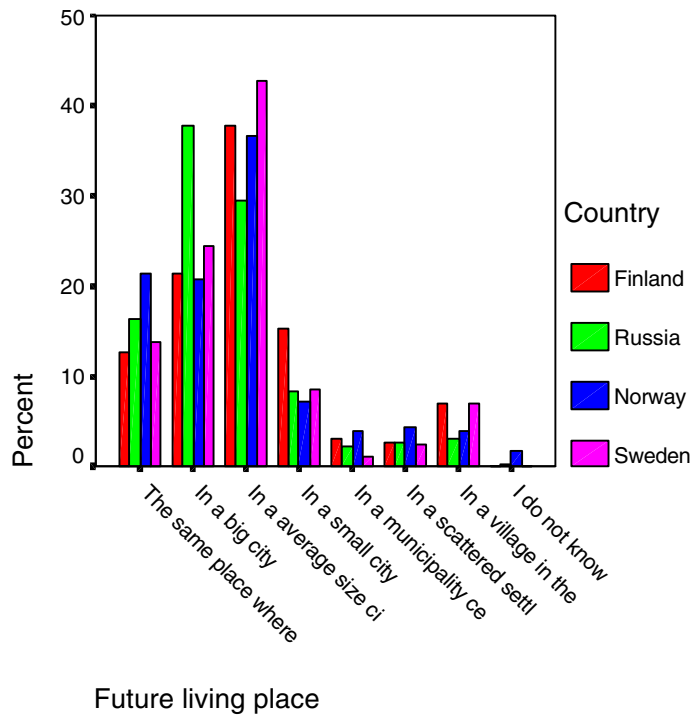


Figure 8: Possible future living places of the respondents

Most of our respondents want to remain in their home country in the future. The majority of all age groups want to live in their home country, but young people aged 17-18 were more eager to move abroad. Respondents from Finland were more strongly rooted in their home country than respondents from other countries: About 68 % of the Finnish respondents would prefer to live in their home country in the future, whereas only about 51 % of our Russian respondents, for example, would like to remain in their home country in the future. The Norwegians and Swedes were half way in between their eastern neighbours in this regard: About six out of ten there would prefer to remain in their home country in the future. Swedish respondents, on the other hand, were the least likely to show a clear desire to move abroad in the future – only about 15 % of them noting such a preference.

Frequently mentioned migration targets within the respondents’ home countries were cities in the southern parts of their countries and capital cities. Regional centres also tend to attract young migrants. Those who were eager to move abroad often named well known cities, such as Paris, London and New York, as their preferred migration targets. Also the USA, Canada and England

were mentioned as a possible migration targets.

Some respondents did not name any places, but they had clear criteria as to what kind of place they would like to migrate to. One frequently mentioned criterion was an ecologically sound and unpolluted living environment. Also features like high technology, cultural variety and a warm climate are tempting for young people. Political factors being under control was also regarded by some as an important element of any potential new home town. One Russian respondent went as far as to say, “one must move to a place where there are clever people in the government.”

Some of the respondents’ possible migration targets were quite uncommon and perhaps unrealistic. Some ideas about preferred migration targets seemed to have been constructed on the basis of commercials or the entertainment media. A good example of this was when one respondent answered the question about her preferred migration target with the name of the internationally famous American TV serial for teenagers, “Beverly Hills 90210.”

### **Those who would like to stay**

Even though migration was the dominant tendency among respondents, there were those who are not planning to migrate from their home region. If we take a closer look at the data, especially at the schools from where questionnaires were completed, we can see that there are noticeable differences between regions in young people’s eagerness to move. There are some schools in which the majority of the respondents answered that they do not have migration plans. Such schools were in Petrozavodsk, Bodø, Tromsø, Gällivare, and Archangel. These were comprehensive schools, vocationally oriented high schools or vocational institutions.

In light of this, it seems as though young people with a lower educational status would be more willing to stay in their home regions. Koivuluhta (1999, 85) got the same results in her research concerning young people’s vocational interests and careers in northern Karelia. She found a connection between staying in one’s home district and one’s standard of schooling, so that young people with a lower education were more willing to stay in their home district. We must also take into account the fact that almost all of the schools showing such trends are in cities. This strongly affects one’s migration willingness, as there are ample opportunities for education, work and leisure where they are. This, of course, is only one factor affecting their fondness for and willingness to stay in their home districts. In the following chapters we will present a number of other reasons why some choose to stay in their home district, and why others choose to leave.

## **WHY WOULD YOUNG PEOPLE STAY IN THEIR HOME REGION?**

Respondents were asked to respond in their own words to the question, “What would make you to stay in your home district?” Some answered with the short response, “Nothing.” Some even added an exclamation mark after this word. Others explained at greater length that they have no will to stay. One Finnish fellow gave an alternative ultra-brief answer here which really says it all: “A miracle.”

Those respondents who gave more detailed reasons for potentially staying in their home district tended to mention just one or two reasons for staying. Most of these answers could be divided into five different categories: having educational and work opportunities there, feelings of connection with their home district, relatives, sticking with familiar services and hobbies, and environmental concerns. There were also some marginal considerations mentioned by some in addition to these main reasons, such as scepticism towards new places, a lack of moving money and fictitious expectations.

### **Opportunities for education and work**

Education and work – the main reasons for migration – can be taken as having a double significance; they were also mentioned quite often as reasons for staying in the home district. There was a trend among those who responded in this way which was clearly linked to the respondents’ future occupations: they had picked out a certain faculty in a local university which they wanted to study in. Respondents made it clear that if there was a university with a suitable faculty for them locally, they would be willing to stay. One respondent had answered that it would be possibility to stay if there were better internet connections and possibilities to study different subjects through distance learning via internet, for example.

Good future prospects in a working life and a fair possibility to build a career in one’s home district would make some of the respondents stay. Also the possibility to succeed as an entrepreneur was mentioned as a potential reason to stay. About 24 % of the respondents think that they have “rather good” or “good” possibilities of having their own business in their home district. It is worth noting that young people tended not to mention already having a permanent job as a reason to stay; they tended rather to talk about interesting, challenging and meaningful job possibilities. It is furthermore apparent in the data that respondents do not want job possibilities just for themselves, but for their possible spouses as well.

## **Relatives and strong ties to the area**

Relatives were a very important reason to stay in the home district among Russian respondents in particular. It became evident from the data that Russian young people have very strong bonds with their families. The majority of Russian respondents' answers dealing with staying in their home district concerned family relations. Russian respondents naturally mentioned other reasons as well, but the feature of strong family relations did not appear so notably among respondents from other countries. This is natural, since family relations are generally stronger in Russian society than in Finnish, Swedish and Norwegian societies. In Russia young people live in their parental home longer than do young people in other countries involved in the survey. Russian family culture is different from family cultures in other countries: in Karelia, for example, there still are families of many generations living together (Sinisalo, Shvets & Rusanova 2000, 89).

Russian respondents very often felt that they have to respect their parents and do things for the family and family members. It was mentioned that doing things for the sake of family or relatives is not always voluntary; in many cases it is the strength of family traditions is so great that it suppresses young people's migration plans. Reasons for this kind of suppression may be, for example, a parent's or grandparent's illness. Someone would have to stay with the other parent, who would be widowed. Another reason to stay could be that parents are against the young person moving. The role of one's own potential, or already existing, family was often mentioned among Finnish, Swedish and Norwegian respondents. Many respondents would cancel or postpone their migration plans if they would find a spouse who would like to stay in the region.

Some of the informants were very attached to their home region. They said that they were born there and they have had a good childhood there and they would like to live there for the rest of their lives. Some of the respondents also have dreams of being able to help people living in their home district, which involves them having very strong ties to their home region.

## **Better services**

Services and possibilities to have more interesting hobbies where they are could also make young people forget about their migration plans. The tendency among wishes for better services mostly had to do with shops; respondents wanted a greater variety of shops in their home regions, both in terms of quantity and quality. Some respondents also criticised their public transportation systems, saying that better travel services in particular would make staying easier. Some respondents longed for better healthcare centres. Respondents also mentioned cultural services; one young lady even wanted to have a National Opera brought to her city. Also possibilities for amusement were regarded as an important feature of a place to live. Some respondents would like to see new night

clubs in their areas; others, a good football team and better possibilities for national league sports for women.

### **Nature and residential environment**

Issues related to nature and one's residential environment were also mentioned as important reasons to stay. Many of the respondents hoped that their home towns would develop into bigger and more lively places. Someone from Norway expressed this wish by saying that "there should be more drinking and hustle." But there were also preferences shown for a pleasant living environment offering soft values, such as a beautiful and peaceful environment and good opportunities to have pets. Also having good places to build one's own house was mentioned as a reason to stay. Housing was also mentioned in the sense that living expenses should be lower in the area. Respondents also thought that general improvement in the standard of living would make them to stay. Improvements in local political structures were also mentioned in lists of things that could be done to make some reconsider settling down in their home district. Quite many respondents shared the opinion that it would give some added value to the living environment if they were to have possibilities of affecting local politics and if young people were taken seriously.

Having a safe living environment was also regarded as a reason to think twice about migration. Some respondents said that their home district is safe, because there are no crime or drug problems. Someone argued that it is good for one to be well known where one lives; this creates a sense of safety. A safe environment was also regarded as an guarantee of a good future for one's children.

Also unpolluted nature would motivate young people to stay around. Respondents seemed to be well informed about the condition of the nature and the threats nature will possibly confront. Nature in the Barents Region is generally regarded as being in quite good shape so far, but 32 % of all respondents think that there will be environmental problems in their home districts in the future.

### **Other reasons for staying**

Besides the mainstream reasons for staying mentioned above, there were three marginal groups of reasons for staying: having a poor financial situation, scepticism regarding new places and fictional expectations. Scepticism towards new places occurred when respondents were thinking about their future out side of their familiar living environment. One respondent mentioned his anxiety that life would be difficult, or even impossible in a new place. It was also mentioned that it would be impossible to get used to live in a new environment. Another respondent said that it may be difficult to find an apartment in a new place. Poor financial situations were also mentioned by some

respondents. For some of these young people their financial situation is so weak that it would be impossible even to think about moving. Other possible reasons for staying can be regarded as fictional hopes which would be impossible to fulfil. For example, someone would like to stay in their home region if there would be a possibility to live among wild horses there and to make climate warmer.

## **HAPPY AND SATISFIED YOUNG PEOPLE?**

All of us give different meanings to space and place.<sup>3</sup> Especially one's living environment and home district have special subjective meanings. Residential areas or home districts are places which are regarded as meaningful in one's life. One's residential area or home district possesses meanings from the past, and at the same time it represents the context of one's future (Jukarainen 2000, 36-38), or in some cases the home district may even represent the lack of a future. For this reason it is vital to pay attention to young people's attitudes towards their home district and residential area.

It can be assumed, that the level of happiness and satisfaction with one's living environment are guiding young people's migration plans. Owing to this, young people were asked how satisfied they are with their home district in terms of many aspects of life. The themes asked about were relationships with parents and friends, educational opportunities, possibilities to have hobbies, leisure time, health, financial situations, local atmosphere, apartments, travel opportunities and possibilities to affect local matters and politics.

Respondents in the survey were given the chance to evaluate their satisfaction with their possibilities to realise their dreams in their home districts. The percentage of "rather satisfied" or "very satisfied" informants was 47. The percentage of "rather unsatisfied" or "very unsatisfied" respondents was 22. Only about 3 % thought that they have absolutely no possibilities to realise their dreams in their home districts. Those very unsatisfied made up only 8 % of all respondents. Young people living in Nordland and Troms were more often satisfied than respondents in other

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<sup>3</sup> The concepts of space and place are not entirely homogeneous. Space is understood in many different ways among different researchers. Space can be regarded as a "silent stage" where phenomena take place. This means that the existence of space is not dependent on one's social world. On the other hand it can be said that space produces causal effects in one's social world. Place can be seen as individual relations and personal meanings given to one's everyday environment. Personal experiences give implications to a place. Place may also refer to certain locations where, for example, something meaningful has happened or where certain phenomena occur (Jukarainen 2000, 37).

research areas. Respondents living in Murmansk county had a more pessimistic view of their possibilities to realise their dreams in their home districts than did other respondents. The general trend was that majority in all age groups are satisfied with their possibilities to realise their dreams. There are no crucial differences between age groups. The only exception which must be noted is that there were very few or no “very unsatisfied” respondents among oldest groups surveyed – those born in years 1971-1973. More detailed information about young people’s happiness will be given in the following chapters.

### **Living environment**

Figures for levels of satisfaction with living places showed that about 46 % of our respondents were “rather satisfied” or “very satisfied” with their living place. Respondents born in years 1970-1971 and 1982-1986 were the most satisfied with their living place. Young people living in Nordland, Troms and Norrbotten were slightly more often satisfied with their living place than respondents living in other areas, and respondents living in Arkangelsk and Murmansk counties were the least satisfied with their living place. Respondents living in average size cities tended to be the most satisfied with their living place; those from small cities, the least satisfied.

Young people were also asked how satisfied they are with the apartment they live in. Those living in Arkhangelsk and Murmansk counties were the least satisfied group in this regard. Young people living in Lapland, Nordland and Norrbotten chose the options of “rather satisfied” or “very satisfied” more often to describe their feelings about their apartments than did respondents from other areas. All age groups were mostly satisfied with their apartments, but those born in the year 1986 were the most satisfied. It can be assumed that these young people are still living at home with their parents, and therefore they possibly have a reasonably high standard of living compared with those who are on their own. The population density of the respondents’ living places also shows some correlation with their satisfaction with their apartments. Our data shows that those living in scattered settlement areas are more often satisfied with their apartment than respondents from other environments.

However, there were also young people who were unsatisfied with their apartments: 6 % of respondents were “very unsatisfied”, 10 % of respondents are “rather unsatisfied.” The most unsatisfied respondents here were those born in years 1978-1979 and 1982-1983. These two rather small groups possibly consists of students who just have moved away from their parental home and are living first time on their own – for example in student housing – and then those who have just moved from student housing into the housing on the open market.



The majority of our respondents were “rather unsatisfied” with their opportunities for travelling, with as much as 11 % of all respondents saying that they have no possibilities whatsoever to travel, and then another 38 % saying that they are to some extent unsatisfied with their travel opportunities. The most unsatisfied respondents were found in Arkhangelsk and Murmansk, where nearly 30 % of all respondents said that they have no opportunities to travel. About 28 % of all respondents were to some extent satisfied with their travel possibilities. The youngest respondents (born in 1984-1986) and those from Lapland and Nordland were more often satisfied with their travel opportunities than those from other age groups or other areas. Also, respondents from municipal centres were more satisfied with their travel opportunities than others, whereas those from average size and small cities were the least satisfied in this regard.

The Barents Region is attracting tourists with its unspoilt nature, snow covered mountains and unique fauna. Experiences of the north are linked with nature, nature conservation and sustainable development (Österholm 1994, 161). This “northern nature ideology” is clearly seen in the responses to our survey. Closeness to nature is one of the few things in these Nordic territories which is clearly regarded as satisfactory by all of the respondents in our survey: nearly 70 % answered that they are “rather satisfied” or “very satisfied” with closeness to nature in their home district. Only 11 % of all respondents were not satisfied with their closeness to the nature. All age groups were satisfied with this feature of their home districts. Our data does show, however, that there are small differences in this regard between the different geographical areas studied; respondents from Arkhangelsk and Murmansk counties are not very satisfied with their closeness to nature. About 6 % of the respondents from each of these areas think that there is no closeness to nature in their home district. This is certainly related to the fact that these areas, especially Murmansk, can be regarded as more polluted than other research areas (see Olsson & Sekarev 1994). Respondents from municipal centres and scattered settlement areas were more satisfied with their closeness to nature than other respondents.

The majority of all respondents (56 %) were “rather satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the local atmosphere<sup>4</sup> in their home districts. Respondents coming from the Republic of Karelia and Murmansk county were more satisfied with quality of the local ambience in their region than other respondents. The percentage of satisfied respondents from these regions was over 70, whereas satisfaction percentages in this regard in other regions went as low as 41. Young people from Lapland and Norrbotten chose the options of “rather unsatisfied” or “very unsatisfied” more often than respondents from other areas. Differences between age groups in this regard ranged from negligible to non-existent, with the only difference being that younger respondents tended to be

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<sup>4</sup> “Local atmosphere” refers to the social spirit in the respondents’ living environments. This includes, for example, tolerance and a sense of community and shared social interaction.

satisfied with local atmosphere slightly more often than older respondents. Those from average size cities were the most satisfied with local spirit, while respondents from municipal centres and scattered settlement areas disliked the local atmosphere more often than other respondents.

### **Social relations**

The quality of relationships with parents and friends is also a factor which has an effect on happiness and satisfaction. Young people involved in the survey seem to be happy with their family connections and social relationships. The vast majority (78 %) of all respondents are “very satisfied” or “rather satisfied” with their relationships with their parents. Only about 7 % of all respondents in the survey are “rather unsatisfied” or “very unsatisfied” with their parental relations. Of the areas surveyed, those living in Norrbotten were the most satisfied with their relationships with their parents; those from Murmansk county, the least satisfied. One interesting finding from our research is that the smaller respondents’ living place is, the more satisfactory they regard their relationship with their parents to be.

According to our data, it is clear that our survey respondents consider their friendships to be even better and more important than their relationships with their parents; altogether 87 % of the respondents were “very satisfied” or “rather satisfied” with their relationships with friends. Younger respondents seemed to be more satisfied with their friendships than older ones, and those from Nordland were more satisfied with their friendships than respondents from other areas. In this case difference between Nordland and other areas is quite distinct; none of respondents in Nordland chose the options of “rather unsatisfied” or “very unsatisfied” when asked about satisfaction with their friendships; they all chose options showing some degree of satisfaction. According to our data the size of the living place had virtually no impact on satisfaction with friendships.

### **Leisure time**

Leisure time is an important part of young people’s lives. It was thus necessary to ask about respondents’ satisfaction with their free-time activities. It seems that young people in the Barents Region are quite happy with their leisure time, since 54 % of all respondents were satisfied with their leisure time to some extent, and 22 % of them were very satisfied even. It is worth noting that respondents from Nordland were more satisfied with their leisure time than the respondents from other areas. There was only one respondent from Nordland who was unsatisfied with leisure time there; all other respondents from that area were satisfied at least to some degree with their free time, or else they chose the option “difficult to say.” The size of the living place had no major significance in terms of satisfaction with leisure time, but those living in big cities or municipal centres did show slightly more satisfaction with their leisure time than did other respondents.

There is, however, a significant minority which is not very happy with their leisure opportunities. Approximately 11 % of all respondents when asked about their satisfaction with their leisure time chose the option, “rather unsatisfied,” and about 6 % were “very unsatisfied.” Most of these unhappy respondents were over 20 years old. The correlation between age and satisfaction with leisure activities can also be seen in answers to the question of how satisfied young people are with possibilities to have hobbies in their home districts. Respondents from older age groups are more cynical about their possibilities of having hobbies in their home district. Young people born in years 1984-1985 and 1986 were the most content with their leisure opportunities. In total, 47 % of all respondents said that they were to some extent satisfied with their possibilities to have hobbies, with 26 % of the respondents in some degree dissenting with this opinion. Respondents from Nordland differ here from the rest because of their high levels of satisfaction in this regard. Respondents from Norrbotten as well seem to be more satisfied with their possibilities to have hobbies than respondents living in other parts of the Barents Region. Respondents from Murmansk, on the other hand, differ from the rest in the sense of having a notably higher portion of respondents (9 %) who think that there are no possibilities for having hobbies in their home district. Respondents living in big cities were the most satisfied with their hobby possibilities; those from small cities, the least satisfied.

Young people taking part in the survey seemed to be quite satisfied with their leisure time, but they tend to think that there are not enough proper meeting places for young people in their home districts. About 38 % of all respondents are to some extent dissatisfied with the meeting places available for young people and about 7 % say that there are no meeting places at all for young people in their home district. Young people from Murmansk county and Troms showed the strongest tendency to think that there are no meeting places for young people in their home districts. In terms of age group, the most unsatisfied respondents were those born in 1980-1983. This is possibly the age at which they are too old for traditional community youth centres, but too young to be allowed into many restaurants and night clubs. Respondents living in scattered settlement areas were the least satisfied with the meeting places available for young people. The most satisfied in this respect were those living in average size cities. There were, in fact, many young people who think that they do have satisfactory meeting places in their home districts. Especially young people in their mid-20s and those living the Republic of Karelia or in Arkhangelsk county tended to feel this way.

### **Personal aspects of life**

Young people living in the Barents region seem to be generally satisfied with their possibilities to

develop themselves,<sup>5</sup> with 44 % of all respondents giving positive responses to our survey questions in this regard. Only 2 % of all respondents said that there are no possibilities for them to develop themselves. Yet this question clearly divided the respondents into two groups – the first consisting of young people born before 1979, who are principally satisfied with their opportunities to develop themselves; the second consisting of young people born after 1979, who are rather unsatisfied with their development possibilities. In particular, respondents living in the Republic of Karelia tended to be more often satisfied with their possibilities to develop themselves than those in other districts. Respondents from average size or small cities find themselves, more often than others, satisfied with their possibilities to develop themselves, while informants from scattered settlement areas and villages are more often dissatisfied with their possibilities in this regard.

Respondents of all age groups were to some extent unsatisfied with their financial situation. About 27 % of all respondents say, that they are “rather unsatisfied” or “very unsatisfied” with their economic situation, and 9 % of all respondents go as far as to say that they do not have any finances whatsoever. Only about 9 % of the respondents were “very satisfied” with their financial situation. Those “rather satisfied” made up another 18 % of all respondents. Young people who have born in 1982-1984 were more often pleased with their economic situation than respondents in other age groups. It can be speculated that young people of this age still live in their parental home and are supported by their parents. We also find that respondents from Troms, Murmansk and Arkhangelsk counties were more often unsatisfied with their economic situation than respondents in other research venues. Respondents living in municipal centres, scattered settlement areas or villages are more often satisfied with their financial situation than their peers living in urban environments.

Most of the young people who filled in the questionnaire (72 %) claim to be happy and satisfied with life in general. However, about 8 % of all respondents are to some extent unsatisfied with life in general. It is interesting that we found no unsatisfied young people among the respondents born before the year 1975. This would indicate that older the respondents are, the more likely they are to have found satisfaction in life. We found no big differences between regions in terms of satisfaction with life in general, though it must be mentioned that respondents from Arkhangelsk and Murmansk counties were more likely to be dissatisfied than respondents from other regions. According to our data, young people from big cities and from scattered settlement areas are the most satisfied with life in general.

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<sup>5</sup> “Possibilities to develop oneself” here refer to the respondents’ own sense of their possibilities to increase their knowledge and skills in areas of their own interest, which seem useful to them.

## **Disbelief regarding political practices**

There was a prevailing disbelief among all respondents towards political practices: 32 % said that it is impossible for them to affect politics, and beyond that about 38 % were either “very unsatisfied” or “rather unsatisfied” with their possibilities of influencing politics. Only a small portion, 9 % of all respondents, are “rather satisfied” or “very satisfied” with their possibilities to influence politics. Young people born after the year 1978 were especially sceptical about their potential influence.

Respondents from Lapland were the most positive group regarding political matters, with 18 % of them “rather satisfied” or “very satisfied” with their possibilities to affect politics. When compared with those of other regions this a rather high percentage. For example, the second most satisfied region was Troms, where the percentage of satisfied respondents was 12. A tie for third place here goes to Nordland and Norrbotten, each with a young people’s political satisfaction rating of just 8 %. Russian respondents were particularly unsatisfied with their political influence. The most dissatisfied respondents were those from Arkhangelsk and Murmansk; 55 % and 60 % of the respondents from these districts, respectively, said that they do not have any opportunities to influence politics in their region. Among all Russian respondents only about 2 % were “very satisfied” with their possibilities to influence politics. We also noticed that respondents from scattered settlement areas and villages tend to be less satisfied with their potential political influence than their more urban peers.

Survey respondents seem to be a little bit more satisfied with their possibilities to affect local matters<sup>6</sup> than with their possibilities to influence politics in general: 11 % of all respondents are “rather satisfied” or “very satisfied” with their chances to affect local matters in their home district. But here too about 42 % were to some extent unsatisfied with their chances to somehow effect local matters, and about 22 % said that they do not have any opportunities to affect local decision making. Regional variations put this question in a particularly interesting light. For instance 38 % of the respondents from Arkhangelsk county and 42 % of respondents from Murmansk county were of the opinion that they have absolutely no possible influence in local matters in their home regions. Respondents from these two districts were also the most certain of their views, with far fewer there choosing the “difficult to say” option for this question than in other regions. Nordland also stands out here in the sense that none of the respondents there were “very satisfied” in this regard. As with politics in general, respondents in younger age groups were even more often unsatisfied with their possibilities to participate in local decision making than older respondents. On this question, however, we found no correlation with the population density of the respondents’ place of residence; about 40 % of the respondents were unsatisfied with their possibilities to influence local

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<sup>6</sup> “Local matters” here is in reference to issues which deal with one’s residential area and, for example, neighbourhood decision making.

matters no matter what sized city or settlement they came from.

The responses concerning satisfaction with politics and local decision making were also analysed in relation to whether the respondents were “movers” or “abiders.” Those respondents who have migration plans were grouped together as “movers” and those who do not have such plans were accordingly grouped together as “abiders.”

Both of the groups were generally unsatisfied with their potential influence; both having a notably high percentage of respondents saying that it is impossible for them to affect local decision making or politics in general. Surprisingly though, these percentages were higher among the “abiders” than among the “movers.” Resignation from politics in general was seen in 31 % of the “movers” and in 35 % of the “abiders.” When it comes to local decision making, 21 % of “movers” said that they have no possibilities; for “abiders” this figure was up to 25 %. The reason for this higher level of satisfaction among movers might simply be the fact that those who are planning to settle down in their home district are more worried about local matters and are more eager to affect matters which are touching their living environment and personal life. This interpretation is supported by Paunikallio’s (2000) research results. Her research dealt with young people and their willingness to affect their municipalities, and she found that young people value their home districts and take them seriously and they would like to take part in decision making in their municipalities. Possibilities to affect local matters can be regarded as a factor which integrates young people to their home districts (Soininen 1999, 80).

### **Participation and influence**

Respondents were given a chance to speculate about how things will be in the future in terms of their level of influence: will they have possibilities to influence matters and to be heard? In other words, will young people’s opinions be taken into account in the future? Respondents are not very optimistic in this regard; overall only about 20 % of all respondents believe that young people’s opinions will be taken into account in the future. Male respondents are slightly more optimistic than female respondents here; about 22 % of male respondents agree with the statement that young people’s opinions will be taken into account in the future, whereas about 19 % of the female respondents shared this view. “Abiders” seemed to be more optimistic than “movers” in terms of young people’s potential influence: about 26 % of the “abiders” think that young people will be heard in the future, whereas only about 18 % of “movers” agreed with the statement. Young people from Lapland and Norrbotten had the lowest expectations for young people’s opinions being taken into account someday, with only a 13 % positive response to this question in both areas. On the other hand, respondents from the Republic of Karelia and Arkhangelsk county showed a stronger

faith in their eventual influence than those from other regions, with 30 % and 33 % respectively giving a positive response here.

“I will have better opportunities to join associations in the future,” is a statement that not many respondents could believe in for themselves; overall only 25 % agreed with the statement. Female and male respondents seem to have quite similar opinions here. On the other hand, “movers” again tended to be more sceptical than “abiders” regarding their future possibilities of joining associations. Only one out of five among the “movers” agreed with this statement, whereas about one out of three “abiders” was ready to sign on. Respondents from Nordland maintain particularly high hopes here, with about 55 % of them believing that young people will have better possibilities to join associations in the future. In contrast with that there were the young people from Norrbotten and Arkhangelsk, who do not trust things to get much better; only about 14 % of the respondents from Arkhangelsk county and about 20 % of those from Norrbotten suppose that there will be better chances for them to join associations in the future.

## **DOES THE BARENTS REGION HAVE A FUTURE?**

On the basis of the previous chapter, we come to the conclusion that young people are quite satisfied with their own life situations.<sup>7</sup> Unfortunately, that does not necessarily mean that they are as satisfied with and feel as positively towards their home district as they do towards their own lives. This was seen in their responses to questions dealing with the future of the Barents region. Young people who responded to this questionnaire were more guarded in what they said about the future of their home district than what they said about their own life and future. Overall a very slight majority (52 %) of the young people who filled in the questionnaire are optimistic about the future of their home districts.

The questionnaire included sample statements about the future of respondents’ home districts, such as, for example, “there will be better opportunities for young people to join associations in the future,” and “there will be environmental problems in the area in the future.” Respondents were asked simply to either agree or disagree with these statements. The following chapters focus on different issues raised in these statements and what they imply for the future prospects of the

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<sup>7</sup> Most of the young people who filled in the questionnaire were of the opinion that they are happy in general and they have good possibilities to realise their dreams in their home district. This is not an unexpected result, considering the recent findings of Puuronen and Kasurinen (2000). Their research, dealing with the everyday lives of young people in Finland and Russia, also shows that overall young people are satisfied with their lives.

Barents Region. We found no major, divisive differences between the genders or between “movers” and “abiders” in these regards, but we did see a general trend for male respondents and “abiders” to have a more positive attitude towards the future of their home district than female respondents and “movers” across the board.

### **Job opportunities**

Only 18 % of all respondents think that there will be more work in their home district in the future. As might be expected, our data shows that “abiders” are more likely to believe that in the future there will be more jobs in their home districts, with about 26 % of them agreeing with such a statement. The “movers” are a bit more sceptical; only about 15 % of them believing that more jobs are coming. Male respondents believe more often in future job opportunities than do female respondents. If we look at differences between respondents from different areas, it can be seen that informants from Norrbotten and Lapland believe in improved future employment prospects more often than respondents from other areas.

About 39 % of all respondents assume that there will be more private enterprises coming to their municipalities in the future. Young people from the Republic of Karelia and from Murmansk and Arkhangelsk counties are very optimistic about the future of private enterprises in their home districts. The difference is very clear: 71 % of the respondents from the Republic of Karelia, 60 % of those from Arkhangelsk county and 56 % from Murmansk county believe that more private enterprises are coming. The comparative percentage of respondents from other areas is around 30 %. “Abiders” and male respondents are more optimistic than “movers” and female respondents concerning the amount of private enterprises coming.

### **Nature and residential issues**

Our inquiry about expectations of environmental problems in the future did not reveal any great differences between sample groups. About 32 % of all respondents agreed with a statement that there will be environmental problems in their home district in the future. This percentage was very close to equal for “movers” and “abiders.” Male respondents had slightly more pessimistic views concerning the environment than female respondents: about 35 % of the male respondents and 31 % of the female respondents expected environmental problems in their home district in the future. Regional differences, however, were very clear: Respondents from Russia agreed with the statement given more often than others. For example, about 56 % of the respondents from Murmansk and 40 % of those from the Republic of Karelia were convinced that there will be environmental problems in the future, whereas only 13 % of those from Norrbotten and 20 % from Lapland expect environmental problems.



The question about crime rates in the future brought very even figures across the board in comparisons between regions, sexes and “mover” versus “abider” groups. Generally speaking, about 41 % of all informants believe that there will be more crime in their home district in the future. Regardless of the variable we looked at, the different groups were always within a percentage point of each other on this issue.

Respondents’ expectations regarding their standard of living were also asked about. We found that respondents are not very optimistic about this, with only about 28 % of all respondents believing that the standard of living in their region will be higher in the future. Here it can be seen again that again “abiders” are more optimistic about the future of their home districts than “movers,” with about 39 % of “abiders” agreeing to the statement, as compared with about 25 % of “movers.” It can also be seen that male respondents are again more optimistic than female respondents in respect to the higher living standard. The data also shows that respondents from Lapland and Norrbotten are the most sceptical regarding the standard of living question, with those from the Republic of Karelia and from Nordland being the most optimistic.

### **Services and education**

Young people were next asked about they anticipate in terms of service standards in their home district: Did they agree or disagree with the statement, “service standards will be low in the future”? One fourth of the “movers” tended to think that service standards in their home district will be low in the future. The “abiders” are clearly more optimistic regarding this issue, with only 15 % of them expecting such problems. There were virtually no differences between the answers of male and female respondents on this question. Differences can, however, be seen when looking at figures from the different areas of Barents Region: Respondents from Norrbotten and Lapland agreed with the statement about low service standards in their area in the future more often than other respondents. At the other end of the spectrum, respondents from the Republic of Karelia were the most optimistic group in relation to the threat low service standards in the future.

Since education is one of the main reasons for migration, we must note that young people do not have very high expectations for better educational opportunities in their home district in the future. Only about 34 % of all respondents think that there will be better educational opportunities in the future. This percentage was the same for both sexes. There was a notable difference “movers” and “abiders” on this question though: “Abiders” tend to have more optimistic future expectations for educational opportunities; about 42 % of them agreed with the statement that better educational possibilities were coming in their home district, as opposed to just 31 % among the “movers.”

Regional differences are even larger in this regard: About 51 % of the respondents from Murmansk county believed that educational prospects will be better in their home district in the future, as opposed to only 19 % agreement with such a statement among young people in Lapland.

### **Age composition and migration**

Respondents share a general belief that the migration tendency will continue; 62 % of all respondents agreeing with the statement that “young people will be leaving our home district.” Opinions differ between “movers” and “abiders” on this point. It seems that most of those who are planning to migrate are assuming, that many others will also be migrating, and those who are planning to stay believe that there are many others who are also planning to stay in their home district. Female respondents were more distrustful of their peer’s geographical persistence than male respondents; about 66 % of the female respondents, as opposed to 53 % of the male respondents, agreed with the given statement. A majority of respondents from every regions surveyed believed that young people will be moving out from their home district, but this majority was greater in Lapland and Norrbotten than in other places, and at its smallest in the Republic of Karelia.

Respondents were also asked to speculate about migration in the opposite direction, agreeing or disagreeing with the statement, “more people will be moving into this area in the future.” Pessimism was quite widespread on this issue. About 25 % of the male respondents and 21 % of female respondents agreed with the statement. The “abiders” were decidedly more positive on this subject; about one out of three believing that new neighbours were coming. Only one out of five “movers” shared this faith. Even larger differences, however, turned up between different regions in this regard. Young people from Nordland have by far the highest expectations when it comes to new people migrating into their area; about 48 % of them agreeing with the given statement. Troms came second in this category, with 38 % there agreed believing that more people will be moving to the area. At the other extreme, young people from Norrbotten and Murmansk county were the most incredulous concerning the attractions of their areas for newcomers; only about 12 % from Murmansk and about 13 % from Norrbotten agreed with the statement given.

The statement, “more old than young people will live in this area in the future,” drew a fairly uniform response. Altogether about 41 % of the respondents agreed that there will be more old than young people living in their home district, with no significant differences between male and female responses. Only small differences showed up between the different geographical areas surveyed. Respondents from Lapland were the most likely to expect such a demographic imbalance in the future; those from Murmansk, the least likely to expect such.

## **WHAT WOULD YOUNG PEOPLE LIKE TO CHANGE IN THEIR HOME DISTRICTS?**

As previous chapters have shown, young people have a fairly positive attitude towards their home districts, especially in relation to nature and their social relationships there. However, the data also shows that respondents are quite critical of other aspects of their home districts and of future possibilities there. Young people in the Barents Region clearly see a lack of positive future prospects for their home districts. This is an important factor affecting to young people's migration alacrity and future orientations, further demonstrated here by the greater pessimism of the "movers" concerning the future of their home districts. This leads to another important question: How can we make young people more optimistic about the future of their home regions in order to increase their chances of staying there? Changing their living environment to make it more alluring is one basic answer.

Respondents were asked to tell us, in their own words, what they would like to change in their home districts. The answers we received here provide us with information that is especially important in terms of understanding young people's satisfaction with their residential environments. The following chapter offers a few hints as to what these young people would like to see changed in their home districts and living environments in order to make them more appealing. The task of improving the Barents Region is not very simple, in that respondents brought out a huge number of areas for improvement. Many of the answers were also in conflict with each other. Nevertheless, we have made a list here of the most common themes and the most interesting proposals put forward by respondents.

### **Residential environment and housing**

Respondents who live in urban environments often mentioned public transportation as a matter which they would like to see made more efficient and encompassing. Respondents from urban areas all over the Barents Region mentioned that cityscapes should be improved and new suburbs and residential areas should be established. Towns should also be made cleaner. Respondents from urban environments mentioned that new housing construction in city centres should be limited, because in many cases these centres are already over-built. One way mentioned to improve city centres is to restore and renovate old buildings, but there was also a contrary proposal to beautify the cities by destroying all of the old buildings and replacing them with new, trendier ones. Respondents from urban and scattered settlement areas have also taken a stand on traffic arrangements. For instance some of them hoped that there were more street lights, more pedestrian crossings or areas in the city centre with no cars allowed. Railroad locations were also criticised in a few cases as being too close to residential areas.

General housing standards was one of the issues often mentioned by respondents. Those from Russia in particular said that they should have better central heating, and that water supply problems should be solved so that people could get hot water in their homes. Better internet connections and cable television were also mentioned often in Russian answers. Finnish respondents wished more for lower rents. Respondents from all countries pointed out that there should be more building sites made available for new houses.

Especially respondent living in small places such as villages or scattered settlement areas would like to see new houses and more people brought in, particularly those of their own age. Many of the respondents in each country said that they would like to have more people in their residential areas; yet there were also those who said that there are too many people already, with migration in their direction putting their peaceful and lovely milieus at risk. One respondent suggested that the construction of new summer cottages should be restricted, and another would even like to prohibit any new people moving into the area where she lives.

Some answers also contained direct references to specific current problems in their living environments, such as drunkenness, homelessness and crime. Some respondents, especially from Norway and Russia, paid a lot of attention to drug problems among young people. Respondents naturally expressed their wish for these issues to be dealt with. For example, young drug abusers should be rehabilitated and drug dealers should be punished. Some respondents from Sweden thought that there were too many immigrants in their home district.

### **Issues concerning pupils and students**

Finnish respondents in particular paid attention to matters relating to schooling and living standards for students. Respondents were hoping that more educational opportunities, and a wider scale of such opportunities, would be made available. Also more attention should be given to student housing, making more cheap student apartments available. Respondents also expressed the opinion that municipalities should take better care of students, in terms of the decisions they make which relate to young people's lives and which affect students in particular. One Finnish respondent went as far as to write a rather long essay about her concern for the way in which students are pushed to the breaking point, both mentally and financially. In her opinion, these things should be changed as soon as possible in many municipalities. One of the youngest respondents wished for shorter school days during the darkest part of the winter. Respondents living in scattered settlements hoped for schools closer by, so that they would not have to travel so far each day. Russian respondents often suggested that there should be cheaper or even free public services for students, such as free public transportation and the elimination of tuition fees in educational establishments.

## **Local atmosphere**

Local ambience was one of the main issues raised in our respondents' complaints. Many respondents in each country said that people should be more broad-minded. Some kind of "European spirit" was mentioned. One Finnish respondent wrote that attitudes towards women and minorities should be changed. Especially Finnish and Norwegian informants mentioned the issue of equality between men and women. According to some respondents women are not taken into account as active subjects. For example when it comes to financing for sports and political projects, girls felt that their gender was being put in a weaker position. Also issues dealing with sexual minorities were mentioned by Norwegian respondents, who said, for instance, that sexual minorities are not given meeting places because of prejudiced attitudes towards homosexuals.

## **Decision making**

Respondents from every country mentioned that the voice of young people themselves should be heard more when public decisions concerning young people are being made. Many respondents stressed that young people should be invested in and listened to. Respondents also stated that they do not trust the skills of their present political leaders, and some said that certain politicians should be replaced by "experts" instead. Local decision makers were also characterised as old and mulish politicians, without any intention of developing their city. Respondents had a clear position on this: selfish politicians should be removed from their posts.

## **Services**

In every country surveyed respondents had all kinds of proposals for public initiatives. The basic message behind all of these was that there should be more services, and beyond that more activities and amusements, made available for young people. The most sought after services were cafes, clothing shops, movie theatres, discos, night clubs, shopping centres and other possibilities for consumption. Cultural activities were also near the top of the list of services which respondents thought were missing. Respondents said that there should be more cultural activities such as art exhibits and concerts. Spiritual events were also desired, as well as possibilities to practice yoga and meditation. It was frequently mentioned that there are just not enough meeting places for young people.

## **Job opportunities**

Finding more job possibilities for young people was the most common wish found in the answers of all respondents from every country surveyed. Some respondents had written suggestions of what should be done in order to create more jobs. One such suggestion was to start retiring old people

already at 50 years old in order to provide more jobs for young people. Respondents also mentioned that new enterprises should be given assistance and that there should be more jobs created in all lines of industry and business. Technology was generally seen as an effective means of increasing job possibilities. Another related issue raised by respondents was that the livelihoods of indigenous peoples should be maintained.

### **No use in making changes**

One respondent wrote that, “there’s no use trying to change my home village; it’s been dead for years already.” Other respondents stated that it is impossible to even try to affect local matters – simply beyond the realm of possibility. Again, respondents who have decided to move out have noted that they have no opinion about this matter and there is nothing that they want to try to change in their home districts, because they will be moving out anyway.

## **CONCLUSIONS: FOUR MIGRATION ORIENTATIONS**

The most significant reasons for young people migrating out of the Barents Region are education, work, good prospects for entering a career and gaining new experiences (see Waara 1996, Soininen 1998 and Viinamäki 1999). However, it can be argued that migration plans are guided not only by factors such as education and work. Migration can also be the result of a basic orientation in that direction based on other factors, such as issues arising from the living environment and the young person’s way of looking at his or her home district and immediate place of residence.

According to Viinamäki (1999, 112), migration orientations are structured on the basis of local realities and possibilities. For example, young people in northern Karelia and Lapland have adopted a certain migration pattern over the past decades because of diminished educational and employment opportunities. It has also been reported, that young people are motivated to move to the areas which have versatility in educational opportunities and labour markets. This tendency can be seen especially clearly in Lapland and northern Sweden (Viinamäki 1999, 114-115). Viinamäki (1999, 118) claims in her dissertation about the formation of young adults’ lives that there are three different orientations which structure young people’s decisions concerning migration. These are: *an individualistic orientation, a family-centred orientation, and a compromise-based orientation.*

*An individualistic orientation* means that the young person emphasises personal aspirations concerning education and work when making decisions about migration. Such young people set educational and employment objectives as their primary motives and do not pay attention to other factors in their life situations when thinking about moving (Viinamäki 1999, 118).

For this reason it can be argued that migration alacrity in the Barents Region is partly a consequence of young people's individualistic world views and values, and not only their relation to opportunities in education, work and/or living environment. Moving away from home has always been a sign of independence and adulthood. Nowadays young people, through different means, have better access to information about other parts of the world. This has made new places and towns more familiar and easy for them to approach. Young people tend to travel a lot, constantly gaining new experiences, and they want get everything possible out of their lives. Nowadays young people do not stay in their childhood neighbourhoods, following in their parents' career footsteps. In this sense migration plans can be regarded as an important part of these young peoples' intentions to establish independent lives for themselves. In this way a migration orientation can be regarded as an important factor in young person's identity construction. Young people of this orientation are not moving out from their home districts just because things are in a bad way there, but rather because they want to find a place where they are able to create for themselves the networks and scenery required to build their identities. This interpretation is supported by the fact that almost half (46 %) of the young people surveyed were to some extent at least satisfied with their living place, but that many of these respondents were planning to move away regardless.

A young person who makes migration plans according to a *family-centred orientation* prefers to consider factors involving family relations, home and living environment ahead of educational and work aspirations. One may choose to move away from local educational and working opportunities only because that is more suitable or convenient for one's spouse or for other family members. Also relations to relatives or friends may have an impact on such a person's migration plans (Viinamäki 1999, 118). This orientation was clearly seen among our Russian respondents, whose answers were very family centred. The reason for this may be cultural differences and local realities apart from educational and occupational factors.

If a young person follows pattern of *compromise-based orientation*, he makes decisions based on different motives coming from both of the patterns described above. For this sort of young person the living situation right at the moment of decision making is crucial (Viinamäki 1999, 118).

It is worth noting that all three of the motivations for migration outlined by Viinamäki can be found among our respondents, but it is still more complex than that. In outlining these patterns Viinamäki concentrates only on the impact of the factors related to one's career orientations and one's family-based socialisation pattern on young people's migration tendencies. Thus, her orientation patterns do not give a holistic picture of young people's migration culture. It is also necessary to take into account local realities and young people's opinions about their home districts and living

environments. In doing so we have found a fourth motivational orientation for migration, which we have called a *negative future prospect-centred orientation*.

On the basis of this report it can be argued that young people's tendencies to migrate and their migration alacrity are tied to beliefs they have concerning their home district and what their home district is not able to offer them. Young people's migration alacrity is thus partly a consequence of their belief that their home district has no future. First of all, our data shows that young people who have migration plans (the "movers") seem to have more pessimistic attitudes towards almost all aspects of their home district. Secondly, the data also shows that the areas where young people have the highest migration alacrity – Norrbotten and Lapland – are also the places where young people have, in many respects, the most negative attitudes towards their home districts. Thirdly, it can be seen that young people are very much aware of the basic social problems associated with remote areas. Our data shows that young people have noticed signs of these problems in their home districts, since many of them believe that a distorted age structure and greater unemployment will be problems in the future. Respondents also share a general belief that this trend towards migration will continue.

Fourthly, as Rubin (1998, 10) has stated, "images of the future influence human behaviour and that behaviour in turn contributes to making the future." The ways in which young people describe the places they are going to move to, or the reasons why they want to migrate, tell something about their attitudes towards the places they were living in at the point of research – and towards the future of these places. A good example of this came in one of the answers to the question, "What is your preferred migration target?" to which one young person replied, "I'm going to move to a town with a better future." There were several other respondents as well who did not name any specific place as their preferred migration target, but who rather gave some clear criteria as to what kind of place they would preferred to live in. Two frequently mentioned criteria were an ecologically sound and unpolluted living environment. Features like high technology, cultural variety and warm climate, are also tempting for young people. In a pointed way, this may mean that many young people in the Barents Region think that the places where they now live have an old-fashioned image and a serious lack of cultural activity and ecological thinking.

Young people also referred to holes in the political competence they saw around them when stating their ideas about their preferred migration targets. A rather sharp criticism can be read between the lines of the answer of the Russian respondent who said that, "one has to move to a place where there are clever people in the government." It can thus be argued that the futureless perspectives of some of these young people may be linked to their cynicism and distrust towards political practices,



which was prevalent among all respondents. This can be seen in the responses to the questions about possibilities to affect politics and local matters. The results demonstrate that young people are very sceptical about political matters. There are a lot of young citizens who are unsatisfied with their possibilities to affect local matters or political issues: 32 % of all respondents said that there are no possibilities whatsoever for them to affect politics, and another 38 % were either “rather unsatisfied” or “very unsatisfied” with their possibilities to influence politics. Only a small portion (9 %) of the respondents were actually satisfied with their possibilities to influence politics in their home district.

This leads us to the conclusion that young people should be given a chance to at least express their needs and to be heard and taken into account. It makes a difference if young people are given the feeling that they are taken seriously and that they actually have a chance to affect issues which are of concern to them. It can be argued that young people with possibilities to somehow affect local matters are more likely to stay permanently in their home districts. Chances of affecting local matters are important to young people and especially to the process of integrating young people into their home districts. If young people are not adopting old, traditional ways of influencing matters, the old, traditional machinery of decision making must adopt and get used to new types of influence and participation. The old political structures can not be the only right ones nowadays.

It seems that young people’s migration alacrity in the Barents Region is a cold fact. It is easy to see that this is a strong tendency, and that it will continue to be a strong tendency for some time to come. It is relevant to ask if there is anything that can be done about this tendency. When looking at the responses received, one does get the feeling that there is nothing that can be done about the matter; young people will continue to move out in any case. That maybe true, but that is not the point. The fundamental issue here – the task before us – is to create an image of a good living environment. It is not enough to try to increase job opportunities or try to cling to young people with false promises about possibilities for distance working. It is just as essential to think about young people’s own motivations for staying in their home regions as it is to think of how young people could be lured back to their home district after they have finished their education. Migration out of the Barents Region to the south should be transformed into migration within the Barents Region. This kind of development would require creating a tempting Nordic image or a collection of tempting local images, which would require holistic youth work and youth policy in the Barents Region.

We should also remind ourselves that though migration is strongly influenced by certain general factors mentioned above – such as education, work, personal goals, future prospects and the image one has of one’s home district – reasons for migration are still personal, and thus variable.

Migration should be understood as a broader phenomenon of which education and work are but one aspect. Every individual young person has his or her own special combination of factors which cause that person either to migrate or to stay. Migration plans and patterns, therefore, are not a very easy subject to study. One must agree with Arango (2000, 295), who has expressed this by saying, “the greatest difficulty in studying migration lies in its extreme diversity in terms of forms, types, processes, actors, motivations, socio-economic and cultural contexts.” Thus, it is very difficult to gather comprehensive information about migration using a single survey as one’s research method. If the intent of research is to offer a deeper level of information, it has to take individual life choices into account. It follows that research concerning young people in the Barents Region cannot end here – it has actually just started! This research project and data analysis will thus continue, and new data will be collected by interviewing young people in the Barents Region. More subjective aspects of adolescence will be considered in a deeper way, and a more understanding analysis of being young and deciding about future in a Barents context will be created up here under the beautiful northern lights.

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