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## Motives for moving to rural, peripheral areas - work, "rural idyll" or "income transfer"

Much interest is given to attracting new settlement in rural, peripheral areas due to long-term population loss. The ideal type of settler is identified as families with young children. However, various studies on rural migration show that migrants are a mixed group of young, middle aged and older couples and individuals as well as families with children. A large part of the migrants have jobs while other are unemployed or on other types of social welfare. In a Danish context a key hypothesis is that especially welfare recipients and those outside the labor market settle in rural, peripheral areas due to low housing prices. This article explores which groups of people move to rural areas in Denmark and why they chose to do so.

Rural and peripheral areas in many parts of the EU are presently challenged by long-term restructuring processes; functionally and economically by closing down local production industry as well as by rationalisation of the farming industry. Another key challenge is continued population loss of which combined have resulted in excess of building structures redundant from enlargement of the farming industry as well as empty and deteriorating housing. However, restructuring processes vary between and within individual countries and although the population balance is generally negative in rural areas, there is not only an out-movement of people but also an in-migration in these areas.

The purpose of this article is to shed light on the migration to peripheral areas in Denmark coming from other parts of the country and the motives for this migration. The article draws on two recent studies on migration to rural areas (Skifter Andersen: 2009 & Nørgaard et al.: 2010). In the first study, a number of hypothesis for settlement in rural areas were tested by using logistic regression and by grouping the movers using a two-step cluster analysis based on data on moves from 2002 (Skifter Andersen, 2009). The second study draws on an internet-based survey with migrants or newcomers asking about their background and reason to move to the countryside (Nørgaard et al: 2010). Both studies focus on rural, peripheral areas as shown in Figure 1. The first study included migrants moving more than 30km whereas the second study focu-



sed on migrants moving more than 50km. The areas marked in Figure 1 are 16 municipalities that represent the most rural or peripheral regions in Denmark, the so called 'yderkommuner' (municipalities in the outskirts of Denmark) (Velfærdministeriet 2007). These municipalities are identified on the basis of a range of indicators but most importantly loss of inhabitants, economic decline and increase in levels of unemployment.

### Migration theory and moving motives

Migration and decisions to move have traditionally been explained in terms of 'push' and 'pull' factors or advantages or disadvantages. In traditional economic theory the location of households is determined by the labour market (Böheim and Taylor, 2002) where it is assumed that households first choose a place to work and then a place to live within acceptable commuting distance. Thus labour market conditions are seen as superior determinants compared to, for instance, social ties (Lundholm & Malmberg 2006). This has however been questioned and according e.g. by Hanson and Pratt (1988) who found that place of residence is often chosen first whereas work place comes second. Recent research supports this finding and further stresses the importance of non-economic factors, such as social networks and interaction as well as place attachment (Brown 2002; Ní Laoire 2007; Hidalgo and Hernandez 2001; Cuba and Hummon, 1993). Thus, some people choose to commute over long distances to obtain a good combination of living environment, job satisfaction and income (Wienfels and van Kempen, 1997).

Life cycle is a key aspect in understanding migration and moving decisions and various studies show that mobility sharply decreases with age and is very low for people over 50 years (Rossi, 1955; Skifter Andersen 2009, Skifter Andersen & Bonke, 1980). Family changes are not by itself a reason for migration, but can result in changes in needs and priorities that can provoke migration. Fischer and Malmberg (2001) find that only



Figure 1. Rural, peripheral areas in Denmark.  
Source: Dansk Bygningsarv on the basis of Ministry of the Interior and Health (2007).

marriage and divorce have importance for intentions to migrate but not the birth of children. Others (Clark & Onaka, 1983; Howell & Freese, 1983; Floor & Van Kempen, 1997) find that the the stage of establishing a family involves substantial changes in needs, lifestyle and priorities especially in terms of housing preferences. More specifically, preferences for detached homes with gardens in more quiet surroundings increase while preferences for living in central cities are weakened (Skifter Andersen 2009).

Mobility and explanations for migration are very different among different kinds of families. This is of particular importance with couples where both partners have jobs. Decisions on migration and commuting are much more complex if both adults in the family have to seek employment. Therefore, it can be argued that such families have strong preferences for regions with many and diversified job opportunities (Hanson and Pratt, 1988). It can also be argued that these households have larger

incomes and better opportunities to find housing in such regions while counter-urban movers are expected to settle due to low housing cost and lower income. In general singles are much more mobile than couples and families with children. But it is more difficult for single people to migrate to a part of the country where they do not have a social network than it is for families with children. The unemployed are a group that in theory should gain advantage by migration to areas with better job opportunities and studies in Sweden and England (Fischer and Malmberg, 2001; Böheim and Taylor, 2002) have shown that the unemployed are more inclined to migrate between regions than the employed.

#### *Motives for moving to rural areas*

A broad theoretical framework for understanding rural migration (Boyle and Halfacree:1998) stress that much migration theory "overemphasise the acquisition of resources to the neglect of movement goals and the motives of the participants involved" (p. 311) and argue for a 'biographical approach' in migration research which "moves away from the assumption that migration is stress induced, stimulated purely by particular events and circumstances" (p. 312). In this view there are multiple reasons and motivations that influence migration decision-making stressing the complexity of the seemingly simple act of migration and its embeddedness within the everyday context of daily life for those involved. A recent study on migration to rural areas in Denmark show similar findings (Nørgaard, forthcoming).

Long distance migration implies serious reasons for moving away from a well-known place of residence to a new place far away. In the following will be discussed potential considerations for long distance migration on the basis of 1) education, 2) career and employment, 3) exit from the labour market, 4) demands for changed or improved housing and neighbourhood or for a change of life style, 5) demands for cheap housing – the 'income-transfer' hypothesis and 6) desire to go back to

the place where one grew up, or to other places one is attached to

#### *Education*

Choice of education is one of the most important decisions in life and is thus an important cause of migration as especially institutions of higher education are concentrated in a few places in Denmark. Mobility is greatest at times of the year when enrolment starts as well as when education is completed and the new candidates seek jobs and more permanent settlement (Nordstrand and Andersen 2002).

Typically, migration in connection with start of education go from the less to the more urbanised parts of the country as most schools of higher learning and universities are located here. There are fewer educational centres in the peripheral areas and they are mostly at a lower level and mostly aimed at the local youth. In Denmark, a special system of so-called folk high schools located at decentralised places in the country attracts many young people who stay for a year after finishing primary school. This is an opportunity to get away from home and at the same time explore future options whether studying or finding a job. These young people, however, seldom stay in the peripheral areas after completing a year of folk-high school. Contrary to this, some young people may choose to return to their place of origin after finishing other types of education and graduating from e.g. universities in the metropolitan areas.

#### *Career and unemployment*

A Danish study of persons in the age of 20-59 years moving between municipalities showed that in 44 per cent of the cases a change of job took place in connection with the move, and if the partner was involved it was 68 per cent (Deding and Filges, 2004). But only 20 per cent of the respondents stated job reasons as the main cause of the move. Based on this, it is assumed that in many cases a decision to move to another place is taken first



and then sometimes a new job is found nearby the new settlement.

According to economic theory (Tunali, 2002) it is to be expected that people will migrate from regions with low employment and low wages to regions with high economic growth where the supply of jobs is larger and wages higher. But higher costs of living and more expensive housing in growth regions often counteract this tendency.

It is especially for people with higher education and specialised qualifications that growth regions are attractive. These groups have greater advantages by job changes and also can better afford costs of moving (Böheim and Taylor 2002). At the same time it is often more difficult for them to find specialised jobs in the peripheral areas. Manual workers are much less inclined to migrate. A study in England (Fielding 1992) thus showed that managers and well-educated people migrate 50-90 per cent more frequent than the average and that the migration rate of manual workers is more than half the average. One of the reasons is that jobs for manual workers are available in all regions. Self-employed also have a lower migration rate; often because their entrepreneurial career strategies are based on local contacts and network, which make it difficult to move to other regions (Green et. Al 1999). A Swedish study (Lindgren 2003) shows that there are some self-employed among counter-urban movers, but that they often are people, who shift from being a wage earner to being independent in connection with the move; and that they often do this because they can't find stable employment.

A key assumption is that job reasons will be of less importance for counter-urban migration than for other kinds of migration as those having priority on career improvement will be less inclined to move to peripheral areas where job possibilities are more limited than in the urbanised growth regions. Therefore people with higher education or jobs at the upper levels will be less inclined to move to peripheral areas. Moves to peripheral areas

sometimes can be followed by job change but it can be expected that in many cases people change job because they migrate and not the other way around.

Commuting is a solution for people, who want to live in rural areas without changing job. An English study (Rouwendal and Meijer 2001) thus has showed great willingness among households with jobs in cities to commute to get access to detached houses in the countryside. This is another reason for why job changes are of relatively less importance for counter-urban moves.

#### *Exit from the labour market*

The stage of life when retirement takes place allows more choices for settling independently from work place. At the same time, however, barriers for mobility are very strong among older people but retirement is a situation where counter-urban migration can be considered and where advantages and disadvantages between different places can be evaluated (Lindgren 2003). Lindgren's study of counter-urban migration showed some moves in connection with retirement, but numbers were relatively small. It is especially 'younger' pensioners that migrate and place attachment either to the place of residence or to other places will be of great importance.

#### *Desire to go back*

'The rural idyll' and 'countryside ideal' draw people to rural areas seeking a quiet, friendly and safe environment often based on nostalgic impressions (Ni Laoire 2007). Others having grown up in the countryside return to their rural roots whereas cheaper and better housing conditions are also important for moving into the countryside (Stockdale et al. 2000; Ni Laoire 2007). A Danish study (Ærø et. al., 2004) showed that place attachment also draws people back if they have strong bonds to a particular place or region as well as family and a social networks where they grew up. The study by Ærø et. al., 2004 showed that a considerable percentage of people who moved to rural, peripheral areas

were born there. It was especially younger people who 'returned home' after finishing their education, but also retirees and changes in family situations such as divorce are basis for 'returning home' or to other places of attachment. Another Danish study (Nørgaard forthcoming) found that only a minor part of rural migrants had grown up in the particular area where they chose to settle but also that some grew up in the countryside and favoured the qualities of countryside living but did not wish to 'return home'.

*Demands for changed or improved housing and neighbourhood, or for a change of life style*

These motives are often identified in the more general literature on counter-urbanisation (Champion 2001). The housing market in the more urbanised parts of Denmark and especially in the Greater Copenhagen Area has been under pressure resulting in high house prices and housing shortage. This makes it difficult for the middle class to obtain its most preferred housing – the detached house with garden, which is preferred by 80 per cent of the population (Kristensen and Skifter Andersen 2009). The lower prices in the less urbanised parts of the country led many to settle in rural areas while housing prices were at a peak (Nørgaard, forthcoming) however, migration studies show that most people prefer to commute to their job in the city. A qualitative Danish study of movers to peripheral areas (Ærø et al 2004) showed that housing issues was a motive which was often combined with two other motives: to get closer to the nature and to get a change in life style. Also Swedish studies have showed that counter-urban movers often try to fulfil a particular goal in life, which is mainly housing related (Lindgren 2003).

*Demands for cheap housing – the “income transfer” hypothesis*

A commonly proposed factor for explaining urban to rural migration (Lindgren 2003) is the so-called 'income-

transfer' hypothesis (Hugo and Bell 1998). It implies that people, who permanently receive public transfer payments and thus are independent of the labour market, have incentives to migrate to rural areas where housing is much cheaper. People with low incomes can more easily afford a place to live in the countryside compared with locations in urban areas. Lindgren's study in Sweden partly supported this hypothesis by indicating that households with less income from work were more likely to make counter-urban moves. The study also refers to Australian and American studies supporting the hypothesis.

### Who moves to the Danish peripheral areas and why?

In the study by Nørgaard et al. (2010) migrants were asked why they moved to peripheral areas by use of an internet based survey. The survey further showed where newcomers moved from in terms of city size and where they settled. The study also drew on socio-economic register data of the newcomers in terms of age, gender, education, employment status etc. Register data which was available of the time of the study is from 2002. In this study the definition of in-migrants or newcomers were those who had changed municipality of residence and moved distances of more than 50 km to their new address thereby focusing on long-distance moves.

A random sample of in-migrants was selected for each area with help of Denmark Statistics. The sample contained 2500 in-migrants and the survey had a response rate of 916 incomers (37%). Based on register data the responds were weighed to resemble the total population of in movers concerning family type and social group. Each respondent completed a detailed questionnaire covering a variety of topics, such as motivations for moving, perceived migration impacts on social life, participation in the local community and how integration processes took place (Simon & Nørgaard, forthcoming). Focus here is on motivations for moving and background characteristics of rural migrants.



Table 1. Reasons to move to a peripheral area

<b>Background for moving (more answers possible)</b>	<b>Very important</b>	<b>Less important</b>	<b>Not important</b>
Green surroundings	71.8	15.5	12.7
Safe surroundings	52.5	26.3	21.3
Lower housing cost	32.9	26.7	40.4
Close to family/friends	27.5	20.5	52.0
Larger house	26.5	22.2	51.3
In relation to retirement	24.6	10.1	65.2
To live close to work	21.5	15.3	63.2
Closer community ties and relationship	17.4	39.3	43.4
Moving back (self/partner)	15.5	12,0	72,6

Source: survey among migrants to peripheral areas, 2010.

In the survey the newcomers had an option to choose a variety of factors for settling in the countryside. As shown in Table 1, green and safe surroundings are the most important reason to settle in rural areas but also lower housing cost was a factor for moving to the countryside. The figure further shows that being close to family and/or friends was very important to more than ¼ of the migrants but also that it was not important to more than half of the settlers. On the question of moving back to where the newcomers themselves or their partner grew up more than 70 percent answered that this was not important. Only about 1/5 of the newcomers appeared to move in relation to work and answered that living close to work was very important but for more than 60 percent this was not important. This could be a reflection of at least two situations namely that workplace is not important due to unemployment but it could also indicate that living in a rural setting is most important and that this outweighs the disadvantage of a long commute to work. And as shown in Table 4 more than 50 percent of the migrants are employed and have jobs.

Various background characteristics of the respondents were included in the study such as previous and present living area, demographic characteristics etc. The characteristics of the living area are distinguished in the urbanization degree of rural areas as defined by Statistics Denmark: small towns (1000-5000 inhabitants), rural villages (200-999 inhabitants) and the countryside (less than 200 inhabitants). Additionally, five demographic characteristics were distinguished: age, gender, family type, social-economic status (income level and job-situation) and education level and we also distinguished the type of housing.

Table 2 shows the distribution of migrants in terms of type of living area and city category that newcomers moved from. From this it is clear that some had a rural background moving from rural districts (14 percentage) or villages (18 percentage) but that larger groups moved from mid-sized and larger cities i.e. from and an urban to a rural environment.

The study showed that the age distribution of migrants (Table 3) was rather mixed with young sing-

Table 2. Distribution on degree of urbanization at residence before move (per cent)

Cities with more than 50,000 indb.	29
Mid-size city (15,000-50,000 indb.)	23
Small town (2,000-15,000 indb.)	16
Village (200-2,000 indb.)	18
Rural districts (areas with large less than 200 indb. )	14
Total	100

Source: survey among migrants to peripheral areas, 2010.

les and couples making up 24 percent, families with children another 22 percent, middle-aged couples and singles were 24 percent and older couples or singles made up for 8 percent of the newcomers as shown in Table 3. The remaining groups of newcomers make up 22 percent and is a mixed group including young people attending and moving to 'folk high school' which typically takes place after graduating from primary school. Attending 'folk high school' is time limited to duration of one year. Compared to all households moving more than 50 km it can be seen that young people are much under-represented and elderly overrepresented but also that families with children as well as middle-aged singles and

couples are overrepresented.

Table 4 shows employment status for the newcomers where - as mentioned earlier - more than 50 percent were employed. The table, however, also shows that a large share of the newcomers received various types of social benefits; 11 percent had unemployment benefits, six per cent early pension and another 13 percent collected social security. In addition, 9 percent were retired and 13 percent of the settlers were students. Compared to all movers more than 50 km, all the groups without work are overrepresented. But the employed are not underrepresented, only students are underrepresented.

Educational background of the migrants is shown in

Table 3. Movers 50+ kms to peripheral areas distributed on life-cycle groups compared to all movers 50+ kms.

	Movers to peripheral areas	All movers > 50 km	Over-representation
Young single <30 years	11	18	-38
Young couple <30 years	13	15	-14
Families with small children (youngest child <7 year)	13	10	25
Families with children and youngest >6 year	9	6	50
Middle-aged single(30-60 years)	12	8,5	39
Middle-aged couple (30-60 years)	12	8	41
Older couple (>60 years)	4	2	80
Older single (>60 years)	4	2,8	61
Mixed households incl. 'folk high school'	22	29	-23
Total	100	100	

Source: Register data 2002



Table 4. Movers 50+ kms to peripheral areas distributed on social groups compared to all movers 50+ kms.

	Movers to peripheral areas	All movers > 50 km	Over-representation
Early pension	6	3	100
Social security recipient	7	5	40
Retired	9	5	80
Unemployment benefits	11	8	38
Student	13	26	-50
Employed	51	49	4
Other	4	4	0
Total	100	100	

Source: Register data 2002

Table 5. Movers 50+ kms to peripheral areas distributed on educational level compared to all movers 50+ kms.

	Movers to peripheral areas	All movers > 50 km	Over-representation
University level	10	12	-17
Less than 4 years education	16	16	0
Vocational education	38	33	15
High Scholl	4	5	-20
Primary school	32	34	-6
Total	100	100	

Source: Register data 2002

Table 5 where the largest group namely 38 percent has completed vocational education and 32 percent had finished primary school. Only

4 percent has finished high school and 10 percent has university level education. Compared to all movers, migrants holding a university degree are underrepresented while movers with vocational education are overrepresented.

### Grouping of movers to peripheral areas by use of cluster analysis

The study by Nørgaard et al. (2010) shows that migrants to rural, peripheral areas are not a homogeneous group but rather consist of many different people. The study however does not show the relation between socio-economic

characteristics of the migrants and background for settling in rural areas. This was the purpose of two different studies by Skifter Andersen (2009 & 2010) in which different groups among the movers were identified in a two-step cluster analysis. The TwoStep Cluster Analysis procedure is an exploratory tool designed to reveal natural groupings (or clusters) within a dataset that would otherwise not be apparent.

Based on data from public registers in Denmark a database was created containing all persons, who moved (changed their address) in the year 2002. The database contained data on their situation both at the beginning and at the end of the year; so that changes could be identified. These changes shed light on the motives for moving. There were data on:



- Age, sex, education, income and income transfers
- Family situation (including data on other members of the household who did not move)
- Housing and location of the home (GIS data)
- Work/education and location of the workplace (or place of education) (GIS data)
- Place of birth (GIS data)

For each moving household a 'head of household' was identified as the person with the highest income in 2002. The statistical analyses were conducted on these persons. The outcome of the analysis is very dependent on what variables are used as inputs to the grouping procedure. It is therefore important that the selection of variables is based on specific hypotheses in order to identify motives for moving to rural, peripheral areas. It was assumed that possible motives for moving to peripheral areas were the ones discussed in the initiation theoretical part of the article.

The analysis was based on register data on all movers to peripheral areas moving more than 30 km. Some special binary variables were defined describing the changes that occurred in connection with the move. They were:

1. *Job changes*: Going from unemployment or education to work, shifting place of work or shifting location of work more than 100 km
2. *Finishing education*: Going from being a student to either work or unemployment and moving closer to the place of birth
3. *Leaving work*: Going to unemployment or pension
4. *Improving housing and being in employment?*: People in employment moving from apartments to detached houses
5. *Improving housing and being unemployed?*: People without employment moving from apartments to detached houses
6. *Going home?*: Moving to a place less than 30 km from the place of birth

Other binary variables used in the analysis were:

7. *Couple? (married, or living together with a person*

*of the opposite sex with an age differences less than five years, at the end of 2002)*

8. *Children? (Did the family have children?)*
9. *Wage-earner? (Is not self-employed, pensioner or out of work)*
10. *Higher education? (Has long or middle length education)*

Other continuous variables were:

11. *Age* (divided by 10)
12. *Income* of head of household (DKK divided by 100.000)
13. *Increase in commuting* distance after move in km
14. *Increase in distance to place of birth* in km

The results are shown in table 6. For logical variables, the proportion (per cent) for which the variables are true, is shown for each cluster. For continuous variables the average value for each cluster is shown. Furthermore, values in per cent of some other variables, which were not used to cluster movers, are shown in the lowest part of the table.

As a result of the analysis seven clusters were identified. They can be described as:

*Job movers (Cluster 7)*: This is a group that have changed job in connection with the move and most often to a place near their new residence in the peripheral areas because their residence is closer to their job than before the move. Some of them – but not so many as all counter-urban movers - have also made a change from apartments to detached houses. There has often been made fundamental family changes in connection with the move - divorce or moving together with a new partner (40 per cent). About half of them have children. Their income is above the average of movers to peripheral areas. They are an important group making up 26 per cent of movers to peripheral areas.

*Finishing education: (Cluster 2)*: This is a more mixed group with many people leaving education and some



Table 6. Results of cluster analysis of movers to rural, peripheral areas. Percentage of cases in each cluster where logical variables are true and average value of continuous variables

	Computed clusters							All
	1. Low- incomes	2. Educ. finish	3. Going home	4. Housing commuters	5. Leaving work	6. Income transfer	7. Job movers	
<b>Per cent of movers in clusters</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>100</b>
<i>Logical variables in the procedure</i>			<i>per cent of cases with yes</i>					
Job changes?	0	67	35	0	0	0	100	33
Finishing education?	0	60	0	0	0	0	0	5
Leaving work?	0	1	12	0	100	0	0	10
Improving housing? Employed	0	0	5	24	0	0	0	5
Improving housing? Unemployed	0	1	4	0	0	100	0	5
Going home?	0	21	100	0	0	0	0	9
Couple?	0	51	49	91	44	36	53	43
<i>Continuous variables in the procedure</i>			<i>Average value of other variables used to cluster</i>					
Age	32	29	30	37	41	46	33	34
Income 100.000 DKK	1,2	3,4	1,8	2,1	1,6	1,3	2,6	2
Increased commuting distance km	10	-5	13	30	19	2	-4	9
<b>Other variables not used in the cluster procedure:</b>			<i>per cent of cases with yes</i>					
In employment before moving?	15	79	47	50	0	0	98	49
Student?	37	2	20	19			2	15
Pensioner?	22	0	10	14	19	48	0	13
50+ years?	18	7	10	21	33	42	10	18
With children?	0	51	49	91	44	36	53	43
From parents?	15	5	1	0	5	1	9	8
Marriage?	1	10	6	32	15	16	18	14
Divorce?	16	14	21	5	17	9	12	13
Living in detached house before move?	61	37	38	50	54	0	50	49
Living in detached house after move?	39	68	65	78	71	100	66	63

Source: Skifter Andersen 2009

of them going back to the place where they grew up; or getting a new job in the peripheral areas. They are younger, half of them are couples with children, 34 per cent are getting married or divorced; and they have high incomes. They make up eight per cent of movers.

*Going home to the place of origin (Cluster 3):* Other, mostly younger, people who move back to the place where they grew up. Many are couples with children moving to detached homes. Another large group is divorced (21 per cent). Some change job (35 per cent) in connection with the move and some are leaving employ-

ment (12 per cent). There are also some students and pensioners in the group. They have lower incomes than the average mover. They constitute eight per cent of movers.

*Leaving work (Cluster 5):* Mostly people who become unemployed (80 per cent) or retired (19 per cent) who want to go to less urbanised parts of the country; some of them for housing reasons. They are quite old and have lower incomes. Quite a lot of them are couples with children (44 per cent). They constitute nine per cent of the moving households.

*Housing demand commuters (Cluster 4)*: This is a group of middle aged couples with children with middle incomes moving – often together (32 per cent) - to gain access to house and garden in the peripheral areas without changing place of work. Some are pensioners and some still students. The price for many of them is a drastic increase in commuting distance. They make up 18 per cent of movers.

*Housing demand from people outside the labour market (Cluster 6)*: This is a group of unemployed, mostly single, who move to improve their housing situation by obtaining a detached house. Another motive could be, what we have called, income-transfer moves. That is people moving to peripheral areas to get lower housing costs. It is the group with the oldest people – half are pensioners - and with low income. About one third is couples with children. It is five per cent of the movers.

*Students and other low-income groups (cluster 1)*: This is quite a large group (28 per cent) of very low-income single people moving to the peripheral areas. Most of them are young people and many of them are students moving to the – few – educational centres in the peripheral areas (37 per cent). Some are pensioners – mostly with early pension. Some of these could be income-transfer movers. This is the only group where the share of people living in detached houses is decreased during the move. Explanations are that many are moving away from parents or are getting divorced.

## Summary and conclusions

The purpose of the paper was to explore which groups of people move to rural, peripheral areas from other parts of the country and why they choose to do so. A related purpose was to test the role of employment and the so-called income transfer hypothesis that assumes unemployed as a group who are gaining advantage and are more inclined to migrate to peripheral areas compared with employed populations.

The paper draws on two studies on migration to rural, peripheral areas, which both have data and infor-

mation on where the settlers moved from and to, what their socio-demographic background was and why they choose to move to the countryside.

An important motive for all movers to rural areas is green and safe surroundings and characteristics associated with rural living. But other motives or reasons to move such as housing cost and, for some, place attachment are clearly added and decisive for people actually taking steps to move to these areas.

As both the survey and register data show the labour market is of minor importance for migrants to peripheral areas. One third of the in movers change job, but only 21 per cent states that living close to the workplace is a very important motive. Some of these movers are people moving back to where they have lived earlier after finishing education perhaps due to place attachment but for most settlers, green and safe surroundings and lower housing cost are the most important reasons for moving to rural areas.

About ten per cent of in movers are people in employment, who do not change job. Some of these increase their commuting distance. Many of them move from apartments to single family houses, which indicate that housing demand is an important motive. These could be families, who have difficulties in finding adequate housing that fulfils their housing needs in the cities or who have a strong preference for living in a single family house with garden, which they cannot afford in metropolitan areas.

Major shares of the in movers, however, are people without employment (about one third). They are a diverse group with different motives. Some of them (6 per cent) are just moving to better housing in a one family house. Half of them are pensioners; others families on welfare and who have children. Another group is those, who move in connection with unemployment or retirement (9 per cent) where both place attachment and housing demand could be important. Finally there is a group with very low incomes and who were unemployed



before the move and who did not change housing type.

It can be concluded from the studies that migrants to rural, peripheral areas in Denmark are a very diverse group. Labour market conditions seem to play a minor role for in migration, but could be important for outmigration and for young people due to the lack of educational institutions in the peripheral areas. In the two studies, migration is explained by preferences for living in the countryside combined with housing issues and for some also place attachment. This is also the case for unemployed and retired households although these factors seems to be of a greater importance for these two groups when moving to peripheral areas compared with other long distance movers.

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