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## **‘I had to move somewhere:’ Leaving Finland to study in Sweden**

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Sweden has been a long-standing destination for Finnish migration, but recent years have witnessed an increase in youth migration from Finland to Sweden (Kepsu and Henriksson, 2019). Contemporary media discourses talk of ‘brain drain’ and young, supposedly well educated, people ‘fleeing’ Finland to find their future elsewhere (e.g. Nyberg, 2016). This chapter is focused on young adults from the Swedish speaking minority, who left Finland to pursue higher education in Sweden between 2010 and 2017. The aim is to map and analyse causes and motivations for moving in the light of this contemporary media discussion, where the exit of a linguistic minority has become a concern (e.g. Övergaard, 2016). Previously, migration to Sweden mostly contained low qualified people finding employment in industry (Svanberg and Tydén, 1992; Häggström et al., 1990), while those leaving now are thought to be highly qualified and working in high status professions (cf. Kepsu, 2016). In this study, migrants have the opportunity to tell their stories of moving from one country to another: their own motives for moving and their experiences of migration. The analysis thus focuses on their own interpretations of mobility, using the theoretical category of young (or emerging) adults as an analytical tool (Arnett, 2004; cf. Zackariasson, 2001).

## **Young Adults and Finnish migration to Sweden**

Sweden has been one of the main targets for Finnish migration since the end of the Second World War. Between 1945 and 2000, over half a million Finns moved to Sweden (Korkiasaari, 2001; Korkiasaari and Tarkiainen, 2000; Björklund, 2012). Finland is also a bilingual country with Finnish as one language and Swedish the other. The Swedish speakers of Finland (5.2% of the population) have the legal right to use their mother tongue; for example, in contacts with authorities, in public service and in education at all levels. Today, around 150,900 persons born in Finland live in Sweden (Statistiska centralbyrån, 2018) and around 25 per cent are believed to belong to the Swedish speaking minority of Finland (Parkvall, 2009).

While overall Finnish migration to Sweden has decreased, the Swedish speakers of Finland are experiencing an outward migration boom, with a peak in 2016 (Kepsu, 2016; Kepsu and Henriksson, 2019:10), especially among young people (Kepsu and Henriksson, 2019). Two thirds of Swedish speaking migrants end up in Sweden, while only one in five Finnish speaking migrant moves there (Kepsu and Henriksson, 2019: 15–16). Currently, most Finns decide to live abroad for the sake of their studies, work and life experiences, and intend to stay to only temporarily (Heikkilä and Alivuotila, 2019). Contemporary migration between Finland and Sweden can thus be seen as a form of highly skilled migration (Koikkalainen, 2011), including people who already have tertiary education and students without degrees. The open labour market in the Nordic countries for citizens since the 1950s, and the larger range of interesting positions and study programmes in Sweden, make it an ideal target for Finnish migration (Kepsu and Henriksson, 2019: 22). Of these migrants, young adults from Ostrobothnia (North east coast of Finland) and the Åland Islands mostly leave Finland to study in Sweden, while

those leaving the south (Turku and Helsinki regions) go west to find work (Kepsu and Henriksson, 2019: 14).

This article is focuses on what Arnett (2004) calls emerging adults, the period of life between adolescence and adulthood, marked by searching for and experimenting with identity. By focusing on this cohort, we can gain new knowledge, since every generation has its own experiences. Even if life can be seen as a continuing process of change and movement, some periods are characterized by more and deeper change, and for many people the time spent as a young adult is such a phase, filled with reflections about education and future professions, and the consequences of following these choices on the future (Zackariasson, 2001: 30).

### **Migrants' life stories**

The research material analysed for this article is part of a bigger project on young adult migration to Sweden from Finland, called 'Go West! Life is Better There? – young Swedish-speaking Finns in Sweden tell about their migration,' conducted by Blanka Henriksson. For this chapter, 18 interviews out of a larger body of source material have been analysed. The informants were aged between 18 and 30 at the time of interview (2016–2017), and were all Swedish-speaking Finns who moved to Sweden between 2010 and 2017 to pursue higher education. All names used in this text are pseudonyms.

These interviews can be characterized as semi-structured (Fägerborg, 2011), with a focus on the informants' own experiences of being Swedish speaking and moving to Sweden, and identity creating processes wherein language and cultural belonging can be important components. What we have are biographical stories formulated by the migrants themselves, or life stories. Birgitta Svensson (1997) define life stories as 'a story where you present yourself from a structured self-understanding' (my translation) to illustrate how people create meaning

and identity. These stories are produced in dialogue with society and as a comment on society (Nylund Skog, 2005: 149). This is especially apparent when the interviewees talk about their move in relation to the prevailing discourses of young people fleeing their home country.

It is important to acknowledge that narratives ‘reproduce what has happened, but the stories are not the events that they reproduce’ (Palmenfelt, 2017: 33). The event, and the story of the event, are two different phenomena and between them is a long process. The informants had lived in Sweden for half a year to several years when the interviews took place, which will also affect their life stories. The time passed in Sweden has made them re-evaluate and analyse their decision to move; sometimes the move becomes even more self-evident than it was in the beginning, while in other cases, a decision that felt simple in the past becomes more ambivalent now.

## **Studying in Sweden**

Being an emerging adult means living in a period of instability, with frequent moves within a country or smaller geographical areas. Research show that young adults (20–30 years old) from a general point of view are more inclined to move house than any other age group (Hedberg and Malmberg, 2008: 8ff). The reasons for moving are often practical (labour market, education, family) but an international move can also be inspired by the fact that global mobility has become an important part of the identity process for young adults (Hedberg and Malmberg, 2008: 9). Young adults in the Nordic countries leave home relatively early compared to the rest of the world. In for example Slovakia and Slovenia, 70 per cent in the age group 18–34 still live with their parents, while only 20 per cent are doing the same in Norway, Sweden and Denmark (Boverket, 2013).

All persons interviewed moved to Sweden in order to pursue higher education. Where study is the main goal for the move, it is often because certain study programmes cannot be found in Finland, or there is high competition in local study programmes. Swedish education becomes enticing with educational programmes believed to be better than corresponding Finnish programmes, or even lacking in Finland. Rosa, for example, moved from a small city in Southern Finland to study something that cannot be found in Finland: ‘This subject [I am studying]. There is nothing in Finland. I would really have liked to study in Finland if there was a possibility to do so.’ Nevertheless, immediately after that statement was made, she said that living in Sweden had for some time been a dream for her. Even when a very specific educational course is the goal, there can be other factors contributing to the decision to move away.

Different education courses mentioned by the young adults in this material not found in Finland can be everything from musical education and marketing to language technology and nutrition studies. Some Swedish universities, for example, Umeå university, are also actively recruiting students from Finland (Kepsu and Henriksson, 2019: 36). For the student the aim is to find the education with most potential to offer in terms of knowledge, skills and employability. This corresponds with the idea of emerging adulthood and the ideal of self-realization, where studies and future career development are important parts (Arnett, 2004).

One particular group of student migrants are those aiming for a specific education, such as medicine, dentistry and law. Some very popular programmes in Sweden have been easier to be access with a foreign high school diploma. This quota has been adjusted from 2017 (Universitets- och högskolerådet, 2017; Ibid., 2018), which might affect the number of Swedish-speaking Finns in Sweden (Söderlund, 2017), a fact mentioned by some interviewees. It is also simpler to apply for higher education in Sweden, especially compared to Finland (cf. Kepsu and Henriksson, 2019: 34–36). Several talk about the lack of an entrance examination in Sweden; you just ‘send in your papers’ and your application is done. In Finland, some study

programmes require thorough preparations in order to pass the entrance examination. This system is now under reform (Rönnerberg, 2018), and the results may change the patterns of where students apply.<sup>1</sup>

One of the interviewees applied to several study programmes in Finland after graduating secondary school, but also realised how ‘easy it is to apply for Sweden,’ so she sent her applications to several Swedish universities as well. As she puts it: ‘you don’t lose anything by applying to Sweden’ (Agnes). Stella had similar thoughts when answering the question of why she ended up in Sweden:

Because of my studies, and because it has been easier to be accepted to programmes like medicine and dentistry here in Sweden. That is why I applied here. Because it felt a convenient way, when you just send in your [high school] diploma and are spared [laughing] the entrance exam. It felt an easier way to go. I didn’t believe I would be accepted to Helsinki [University in Finland]. But I knew I had good enough grades to get in here [in the Swedish university].

### **Sweden as ‘close’**

When choosing to study in Sweden instead of Finland, the migrants often talk about Sweden as something ‘close.’ Distance is not always about national borders. It is also about what feels near. To many young people, the step to adulthood includes moving away, not just from the childhood home, but from a home district, in search of education or work. What then becomes close or far away varies. To Ellen, Sweden was not far away when she moved across the water from Vaasa to Umeå:

I was 19. I had never lived away from home. Umeå was sort of close. It is just, what is it, 8 miles across Kvarken [the narrow region in the Gulf of Bothnia between Finland and Sweden].

It is easy to take an airplane or the ferry, not just for the young adult who moves away, but also for the family still living in Finland. There is a feeling of proximity expressed in the life stories where people move in a space that, for different reasons, is easy to grasp. The different modes of transportation are many, comfortable and economically manageable even for students. Sometimes Sweden is even described as geographically closer than other (Finnish-speaking) parts of Finland, and statistically, Swedish speakers move less within the country. Instead of moving to the bigger cities in southern Finland, they move within a cultural sphere, but abroad, to Sweden (Finnäs, 2013: 20; Kepsu, 2016: 6). Iris describes her feelings of distance after moving from the Helsinki area to Stockholm for formal education: ‘It is still so close [to home] and the fact that it is only a 45 minute flight back home feels safe in some way. You are not that far away.’ (Iris)

Sweden is also culturally close because of the knowledge the young adults have before moving. They talk about watching Swedish television, listening to Swedish popular music and even having a knowledge of Swedish politics. There is a perceived cultural similarity based on mutual frames of reference (e.g. Henriksson, 2017; Klinkmann, 2011: 241-242). The conception of Sweden is not only based on personal experience, with school trips and shopping sprees, and popular cultural references. Many times there is a direct connection via other Swedish speaking Finns who have lived, or are still living, in Sweden (cf. Hedberg, 2004). Migration feeds migration, and in many cases, we can talk about migrant networks where earlier



migrants make way for new migration (Castels et al., 2014). Otto for example was explicitly enticed by his older sister to come to Sweden to study:

It was partly my sister [that was the reason for moving to Sweden]. My older sister that was studying here to become a doctor of medicine. And she had been studying for five years already. And she was on me all the time about coming here. She said it was so good, and that Finland couldn't offer such a study milieu at all. So I thought I'll try it out then.

Other times the personal connection is not so strong. One young woman stated that she 'didn't really have any contact' with Sweden before she moved there to study, but before that, she talked about friends, acquaintances and relatives from Finland who have migrated there. She tells about watching Swedish TV programmes and 'growing up with this [Swedish] culture' which makes it 'not feeling so different.' The closeness to Sweden is a mixture of cultural knowledge, short vacation trips and having acquaintances or relatives who have settled there.

When they actually move to Sweden, the closeness is not only constructed out of distances measured in kilometres, mentality or language, but through what is often daily contact with friends and family in Finland, especially among the generation that grew up with the internet and different forms of social media (Bolton et al., 2013; Tapscott, 1998). Many interviewees describe how physical distance diminishes through frequent contact through text messaging, phone calls, Skype and social media. It is also common not to feel ties to only one country (cf. Povrzanović Frykman, 2015). Instead, these young adults move freely between countries to work, study and be together with friends and family; they do not see themselves as

nation bound but maintain strong ties, ‘transnational networks,’ with family and friends through social media wherever they live in the world (Goulbourne et al., 2010).

The interviews show clear patterns of behaviour about when the migrants travel to Finland. Those studying in Sweden go ‘home’ during summers, often to work, and celebrate Christmas with the family at home. Agnes, studying in Sweden to become a doctor, says: ‘I will go back now for the summer also, and all of last summer I was at home in Finland.’ Other students travel back even more often during longer weekends in autumn and spring. Since this era of life is a period of movement, many of the informants point out that they are not the only ones that have moved away. Their friends from childhood have often also migrated somewhere to study or work, even if it is not abroad. Going back to Finland to your childhood area does not automatically mean meeting friends where you left them. Many young adults have several places to call home, as both family and friends may be scattered around the country.

### **Education in your own language**

Agnes answers the question of her relationship to Sweden before the move by describing Sweden as ‘a neighbour-country. [...] Maybe a bit more open than Finland, but not that much. A neighbour country, where they speak Swedish.’ Her last statement is one of the keys to many young adults’ migration stories. Sweden is a well-known neighbouring country, but it is also the country where the mother tongue is the main language spoken. The ‘pluricentricity’ (Soares, 2014) of Swedish becomes a major fact in the migration process.

The construction of Sweden as something well known and safe is of course partly based on a mutual language. Growing up as a Swedish speaker in Finland is mostly growing up as part of a minority meaning that not everything can easily be done in your mother tongue. Sweden is a society where Swedish can be used, and is used, everywhere. The majority of the

interviewees cite language as either the sole reason, or at least partly a reason to move to Sweden. Living a life totally in Swedish, studying, maybe working part-time, but also having everyday communication in Swedish feels attractive. Several persons in the material express a feeling of relief when Swedish can be used in all situation without being called in question or misunderstood.

It is sometimes stated that migration from Finland to Sweden, when it comes to Swedish speakers, maybe is more of an internal migration than migration abroad, since to many migrants it is easier to move across the national border to Sweden than to cross the linguistic and cultural borders to Finnish-speaking Finland (Hedberg, 2003; Kepsu, 2006; Kepsu and Henriksson, 2019: 7). The move to Sweden for some becomes a move *to* Swedish; for others it is more of a move *from* Finnish. Finding higher education in Sweden, rather than studying at the Swedish speaking Åbo Akademi University in Finland, makes it possible to avoid Finnish altogether as the surrounding society demands knowledge in Finnish. Ellen explains her choice to go to a university in Sweden instead of Åbo, Finland:

But I chose [the subject] partly because I was tired of Finnish I think. I was very bad at Finnish in school, and I felt like I needed a break. To let my head rest from the Finnish language, which wouldn't be possible in Åbo.

Language is closely connected to studies for the young adults examining themselves and their abilities to study in a language other than Swedish, and also the possibilities to reach their full potential when using something else than Swedish. Language is a part of their cultural identity and the migrants often talk about being able to 'be themselves,' e.g. living their life in

their mother tongue. Studying in Sweden becomes a part of a bigger identity project where the young adults are trying to find their place to be and become who they want to be.

### **Sweden as ‘something else’**

If Sweden is close and familiar in some respects, it is also exiting and different in others. Being a young adult means searching for identity and ways of fulfilling oneself. One way of doing so is by looking for adventure and personal challenges. Travelling is not only an obvious part of being young, something ‘everyone’ does, it is also seen as a means to get to know yourself and become an adult (Tolgensbakk, 2014: 191). The gap year is an example of this normalized travelling, from the beginning, meant to break free from education and a career focus. The concept of ‘abroad’ can be seen as something structuring young adults’ way of relating to the surrounding world, which makes it interesting to look at national migration compared to international migration (Frändberg, 2015: 4). Living abroad for a period of time becomes part of shaping one’s own identity and fulfilling oneself, and it might not always be a specific country that pulls, but the idea of exploring the world.

Several of the interviewed young adults express the idea that their move to Sweden was a yearning away in one way or another. They talk both about challenging oneself and escaping something too safe and secure, and sometimes too small and narrowminded. Some want to leave a small society or a feeling of living in a Swedish-speaking bubble in Finland, in the same way as Ida Tolgensbakk (2014: 188) writes of young Swedes moving to Norway in order to ‘get away’ from small town life. Iris went to Sweden together with her partner, in order to study, but she also describes other motivations:

What made us come [to Sweden] was also to escape this small bubble of Finlandswedishness. Where it feels like you know everyone, and everyone knows you, and you have seen it all. It felt like you had seen Finland. It feels different now of course [laughing]. But I think that was it. Partly a small flight too. To see something new, but still really safe with the same language and the same culture, sort of.

This longing away can be expressed as a longing, ‘To travel, to break up from your local connection and go off on the big adventure has become a central part of many contemporary young adults’ identity-projects’ (Lalander and Johansson, 2002, 2006: 94). The move to Sweden can then be formulated and experienced as the big adventure. Taking the step to another country can become a way of affirming dreams and plans for the future, irrespective of whether it includes a sought after education or a more existential maturing as a human being.<sup>2</sup>

Moving to Sweden in this material becomes a way of challenging yourself by going out into the world (cf. Tolgensbakk, 2014: 192), but still keeping it relatively safe by not going so far away geographically and culturally. Alternatively, as Ellen describes her choice to study in Sweden:

But I wanted to get away from home. I was looking for adventure. I wanted to see more of the world. And that was of course something that could have led me anywhere [in the world]. At the same time, I was, and am, a bit cautious as a person, otherwise I could have gone to a university in, I don’t know, the US for example.

In the life stories analysed, Sweden is presented as being safe and exciting at the same time. By moving to the neighbouring country, you can both expand your horizons and stay close to friends, family and other points of attachment. Otto explains his view:

So, I thought, well I have to try it [move to Sweden]. At the same time, I felt that I have lived all my life... I mean... [my hometown] felt so, I have been there all my life, and it felt fun to see something new and widen my views. It sounded good to go to Sweden, so I thought 'yeah, why not?' It's close to my family in Finland anyway. It seemed like a natural choice.

Emerging adults are in many ways very aware of being in an identity shaping period of life (Tolgensbakk, 2014: 196). A move abroad can be motivated as a way of challenging yourself, with personal development as a goal rather than following surrounding expectations. Even if the expectation of a good education exists, it is also seen as normal to set aside a period of life for exploring and trying out when it comes to work, lifestyle and sexual relations, before you become fully adult, says Tolgensbakk (2014: 198). Living abroad becomes a way of doing something different when you do not have fixed plans. 'I didn't really know what to do with my life,' Asta explains her decision to move to Sweden, and to Amanda, it is definitely a search for an alternative lifestyle, not as simple and obvious as staying in Finland, that made her move to Sweden to pursue her Master's degree:

I think I felt like I wanted to move abroad and to check out some other alternatives. And this [Master's programme] in Gothenburg felt so exciting. And I also wanted to move to Sweden, because it felt less... sort of easy.

## **Sweden as something ‘better’**

In pursuit of the big adventure abroad, the idea of the country you are choosing to move to plays an important role. Many informants tell of their ideal picture of Sweden before moving there. In these life stories Sweden is described as a country being ahead, especially when it comes to trends, fashion and popular culture. Linda explains that to her ‘Sweden always felt a little bigger, and ahead of Finland. [...] Finland is always a step after.’

On the other hand, there seems to exist a widespread apprehension of ‘international Sweden’ (e.g. Felicia) or in some cases, ‘international Stockholm,’ a more open country, with the Swedes as more social and welcoming than Finns. The interviewees speak in terms of mentality, disposition and approach to life. This perceived mentality is not necessary what makes them move to Sweden, but several mention this as something positive and desirable. Even if more self-centred than earlier generations, they are also, at least in Finnish urban contexts, eager to strive for authenticity and to be honest to their true self (Mikkola et al., 2007: 24). Some claim to feel more at home in Sweden culturally and mentally. Frida for example says that she fits into the Swedish society better because of being ‘very spontaneous and open,’ which, according to her, made her a misfit in Finland.

Experiences of mental climate are also named as a pull factor to leave Finland. Many ‘global professionals’ are not only attracted by well-paid positions but also driven away by a perceived stifling and not encouraging atmosphere in Finland (Kiriakos, 2011). More personal reasons are not always distinctly separate from professional reasons. Emerging adults are also affected by the situation they are in when it comes to experiences and interpretations. A real adventure presupposes some kind of exoticism and differences, and these are often connected to stereotyped ideas and narratives about the country of origin and the country of destination.

## **Moving back to Finland?**

How does the future look for these young migrants? Are they planning on staying in Sweden, move back to Finland, or maybe even away somewhere else? Just like when it comes to motivations to move to Sweden, there are no easy answers. An eventual 're-move' is dependent on both outer circumstances and the individual's own point of view. It very much has to do with the reasons to move away in the first place as well. For a person in the middle of an adventure, where circumstances dictate the direction, the future often feels abstract and very far away. A decision concerning where to live after graduation is not very urgent; who knows what will happen in life before then? Agnes answers the questions on where she sees herself in the future like this:

I think that the future will show me. You just have to see. At the moment I could very well move back to Finland [after graduation], but just as well stay here. Because I like it in both places. [Interviewer: What would make you decide, do you think?] It is going to be work, or friends, or family, or something. You will see when that day comes.

Other informants have a clearer view of finishing the big adventure and then moving back home. If the goal, apart from studies, was self-fulfilment, challenging yourself or maybe moving away from a too ingrained life, maybe a couple of years in Sweden are enough. A finished education may force decisions of whether life will continue in Sweden or in Finland. For some the decision is easy – they never meant to stay in Sweden, as Linda also expresses:



I don't know about the others, but when I moved here it was because of the education. It was – 'well now I move there [to Sweden] and then I get my degree and then I move back home.'

If studies have prepared someone for a certain line of work and career, this might hinder a future re-move, even if they would like to move back. In some cases, the language makes it more difficult. Some express feelings of losing their knowledge of the Finnish language, or that they do not know the right terminology in Finnish. Other times they fear not getting the right employment or work they feel deserving of, or even no work at all (cf. Heikkilä, 2011). Only half of the migrant Finns studied by Elli Heikkilä and Maria Pikkarainen (2008) anticipated finding a job in Finland without any problems.

Being educated in Swedish might close some doors in Finland, or make it more difficult at least. Studying law in Sweden means that you have to do complementary education in order to practice in Finland; at the same time, law work demands skill in Finnish. However, moving to Sweden to become a dentist means starting work immediately after moving back according to Stella:

If you are a dentist, you can communicate in other ways [...] it doesn't matter if you say something in the wrong way, and you don't really talk so much with the patient.

One of the consequences of a life in Swedish also seems to be that people get used to it, which makes it hard to move back. In another study, Finns living in Europe enjoyed themselves partly because of the positive and warm atmosphere, the friendly people and an international

living environment in their new home countries (Haanpää and Laine, 2013). In addition, the Swedish speaking migrants not only feel that their Finnish deteriorates, but they become used to the feeling of ‘being oneself’ as several informants formulate it. Other things might also have happened in Sweden that affect the decision to move back or stay. Sometimes the equation now holds more than one person, and a new Swedish partner with no knowledge of Finnish can for example be a hindrance for a remove (cf. Heikkilä, 2011; Haanpää and Laine, 2013). Personal reasons like strong home longing, or close family members becoming ill are also motives that come up in the interviews. This complies with similar research on young adults and return migration, showing that relationships and family ties influence young migrants when it comes to moving away to another country, and in moving back again (Krasteva et al., 2019; Yehuda-Sternfeld and Mirsky, 2015).

These young adults have not returned, and at the moment we don’t know if they will do so. Nevertheless, return migration is something they deal with or think of every now and then. None of the interviewees planned to migrate when they moved to Sweden. For some it was clear they wanted to stay a couple of years, while others had no actual time schedule. Most talk about circumstances, some want to move back, for example, if they have children (or in one case when the child starts school), but they admit to themselves that it might not be so easy to uproot again and leave their life in Sweden. The thought of leaving a social life and a feeling of belonging for something unknown once again is scarier than it was several years ago when the first decision to move was taken.

## **Concluding discussion**

The life stories of these young migrants show how different conceptions of mobility are at work. Moving to another country might be a big step, a migration process for some, but more of a

natural life change for others. While some migrants have education as a goal, others talk more about finding themselves, moving away from a small community, or being able to study in their mother tongue. These life stories are often easy to fit into conceptions of what it means to be a young adult today. There is often no single factor driving the migration trajectory forward, but rather a feeling that there is the existence of something else somewhere else. One way or another, these young adults stand at a crossroads, with many ways to go and many decisions to make, but it might be hard to even grasp what is waiting in the future. And this period of life, marked by a search for the right place, occupation and identity, can lead to a longer or shorter stay abroad.

Moving to Sweden is in most cases in the analysed interviews not a definitive decision. We are not dealing with classical 'migration' where the old home country is left for good; instead, the informants are in a place in life where circumstances are allowed to define the future. Factors like career and family are something the young adults expect will matter in the future, but not right now (cf. Smith and Snell, 2004). But Sweden might be just be one alternative among others. If you are looking for good education, you might have to move to find what you are really looking for. Agnes, who moved from a small municipality in the archipelago to a big city in southern Sweden to study medicine, says: 'I had to move somewhere. So, if it happened to be Turku or Helsinki or Gothenburg or somewhere else... It didn't really matter.' If you have to move anyway, Sweden might be, as another informant puts it, 'suitably far away.' It is abroad, but not as much abroad as moving south to continental Europe or a country with a totally different language. Moving to Sweden is 'simple.' Simple because others have done it before you, simple because you know the country from earlier visits and its popular culture, simple because you know the language, simple because travelling there is cheap, fast and convenient.

## Notes

1. The media in Finland has paid attention to the fact that young people look for education in Sweden in order to escape entrance exams (e.g. Savonius, 2016).
2. Greg Madison introduces the concept existential migration meaning that migrants rather than being drawn by work, career or a better economic situation, seek bigger opportunities to self-realization, and in order to achieve that explore foreign cultures (Madison, 2006). Russell King writes about self-fulfilment where the driving force for migration might be more than a dream for a better life economically (King, 2002).

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