

Division of Human Work Sciences, Luleå University of Technology

# Mobility in the Arctic North

*-Labour market perspectives in the Northern most North*

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## **Preface**

Writing this report is a part of the sum up of the secondary data collection about transnational labour market mobility within the project Academic (Un)employment and Mobility in the Arctic North – A Joint Socially Responsible Approach (Academic North). This has been instructive but also challenging to get an overview of the mobility and its complexity in an extended labour market in the Arctic North. The project is financed by Interreg Nord, Region Norrbotten and Lapin Liitto and is a collaboration between Oulu University, Luleå University of Technology and the University of Tromsø.

I want to thank all the participants who contributed with information and knowledge from various activities during this project. Special thanks to the council for skills supply at Luleå Näringsliv for sharing your knowledge and experiences about skills supply in the northern most Sweden. Thank you Maria Udén and Paula Wennberg for introducing me to your networks. Thanks also to Katariina Huikari who contributed with further knowledge from The North Calotte Cross-Border Advice during the pandemic that affected the cross-border labour market mobility in many ways. I also want to thank Helena Louhela and Daniela Kangnissoukpe for their contribution in Arctic Attractiveness and Academic mobility in Finland.

Finally, I would like to thank our financers, stakeholders and steering group members for all your valuable knowledge you shared with us. Finally, yet importantly, I also want to thank all of our all team members. It has been a new and valuable learning experience and a wonderful cross-border co-operation.

*Saila Piippola*

## Summary

Nordic countries faces major challenges to manage skills shortage in the labour markets. Demographic change and young people moving out contribute to an imbalance in the labour markets in the northernmost north. A common Nordic labour market, with its cross-border mobility, shows that there is an extended labour market in the northernmost Arctic region. This also means that if there is no available work in the local labour market, there might be an opportunity to work across the border in the neighbouring country. The common Nordic labour market has its own agreements and regulations for Nordic citizens and has roots reaching back to 1954. The revision of these regulations is a work in progress designed to facilitate cross-border mobility. From a Nordic context, the challenges presented by the common labour market relate both to the demographic character and the depopulation of the northern most peripheral regions. The biggest threat is the out-migration of young people, but challenges are also closely related to a segregated labour market.

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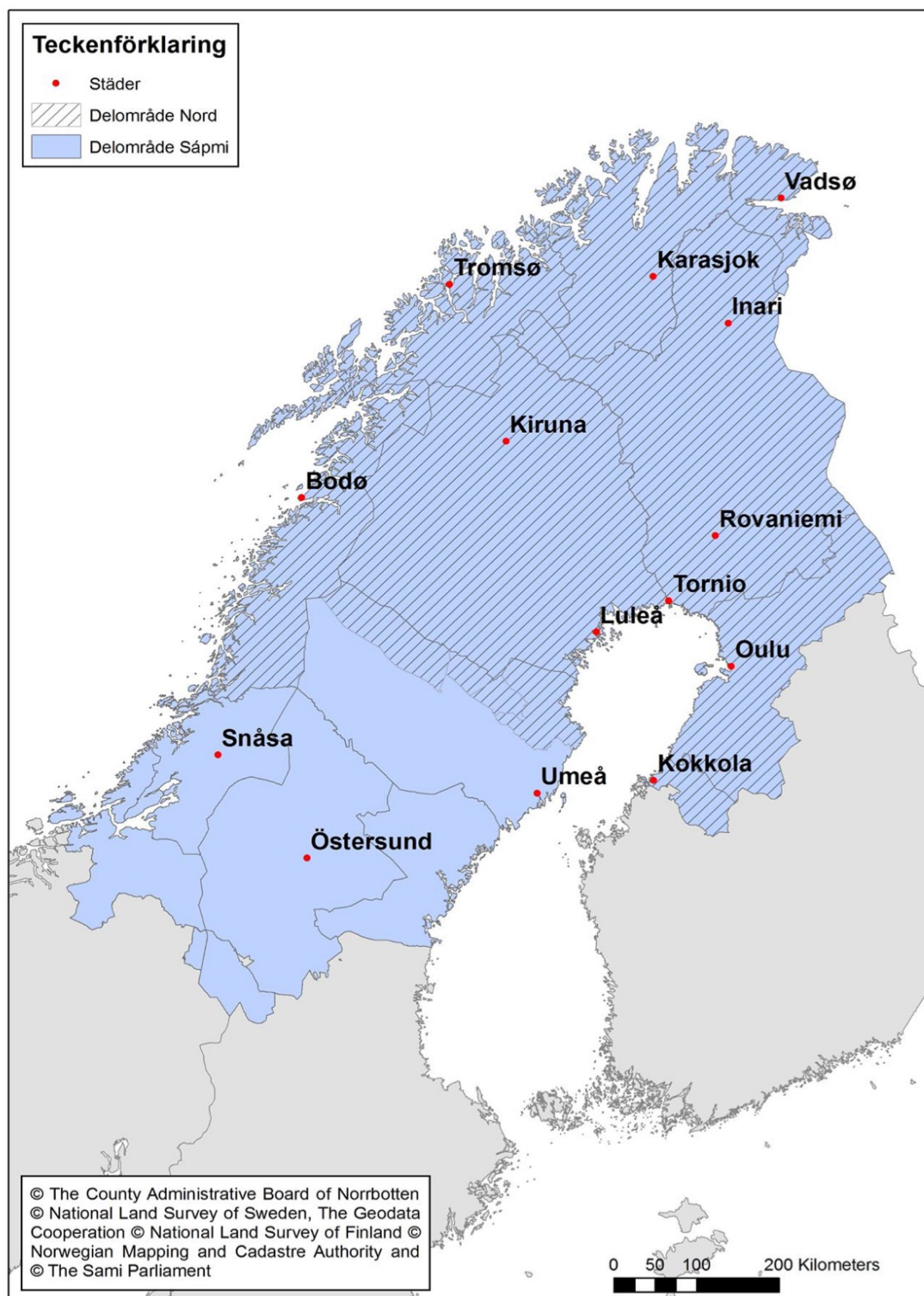
This report has shown that there is a lack of official statistics about cross-border mobility in the three northernmost regions studied in Finland, Sweden and Norway. Our findings have shown that knowledge about cross-border mobility is largely based on local knowledge, which makes this region even more visible as its own extended labour market. Experiences from this project shows that there still exist obstacles with cross-border mobility, even when working from distance in another Nordic country. This project, as well as the collaboration between the Nordic countries, also shows the importance of collaboration between the Arctic Five (Arctic5) universities in attracting and maintaining competence in the region.

*Keywords; migration, immigration, commuting, gender, labour-market, unemployment, employment, cross-border, work, Nordic Region.*

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## The Northernmost Arctic region



## **2. Introduction**

Nordic countries faces major challenges to manage skills shortage in the labour markets. To meet the challenges with competence supply, measures are required in the short and long term where both state and the municipalities need to work strategically with efforts to succeed with recruitment (SOU 2020:8). A common Nordic labour market, with its cross-border mobility, shows that there is an extended labour market in the northernmost Arctic region. This also means that if there is no available work in the local labour market, there might be an opportunity to work across the border in the neighbouring country. The objective of the Nordic labour market is to keep unemployment rates low in the geographic area, and the driving forces behind cross-border mobility are concerned with the availability of cross-border work opportunities, which is a question of free cross-border mobility rather than free migration (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2007, TemaNord, 2008:523). This represents the common Nordic model known as the cornerstone for full employment among the Nordic countries (State of the Nordic Region, 2020). This Nordic model refers to the working age population between 15-64 years in the available workforce in the region. The unemployment and employment rates are the indicators that show the available working age population (Ibid).

The common Nordic labour market has its own agreements and regulations among Nordic citizens and has roots stretching back to 1954. The revision of these regulations is an ongoing work in progress in order to facilitate cross-border mobility. The agreements for the common Nordic labour market also take into account bureaucratic differences between the Nordic countries. This does not mean that all bureaucratic obstacles have been removed to support the mobility of citizens in the Nordic countries (Joona & Wadensjö, 2011, North Calotte Cross-Border Advice, 2020). During the period from 1950 through the 1970s, large-scale income disparity was the driving force behind labour mobility in the Nordic labour market (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2008, Joona & Wadensjö, 2011). The cap on wages between the Nordic countries has since taken effect, and the common extended labour market is more important than ever (Ibid). From a Nordic context, the challenges in the common labour market relate to both demographic characteristics and the depopulation of the northernmost peripheral regions (SOU 2020:8). A specific demographic threat in this region is the out-migration of young people (Ibid, Nilsson et al. n.d).

Sweden and Finland became a part of the European Union (henceforth EU members) in 1995. In the preceding year, 1994, all EU member countries also became a part of the EU's common labour market as members of EES<sup>i</sup>. Norway is not a member of EU but has signed on to the EES agreement. This agreement extends the inner market and the four freedoms: *free mobility of goods, services, staff and capital*. In exchange, Norway contributes financially to support the EU budget. Even if the obstacles to mobility were eliminated within the EU, there are still differences in language, social security, taxes-and education systems as well as labour market laws, meaning that the cost of moving is higher between the member states and is therefore seen as an another obstacle to cross-border mobility (North Calotte Cross-Border Advice, 2020).

Work migration between the Nordic countries has periodically been high since the 1950s. Until the 1990s, Sweden was far and away the biggest receiving country for work migration, while Finland was the biggest sending country (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2018). Very few workers from Finland moved to Denmark or Norway. One important reason for this labour migration to Sweden was the Second World War, which did not affect Sweden the same way it affected Norway and to an even higher degree, Finland (Persson L, 2020). During this time, Sweden was instead in the middle of a period of urbanisation and industrial growth. Trade unions and the labour movement became central for the growth of the Swedish model, which has later come to be called the Nordic model and the rise of Nordic co-operation as a political idea (Kuivalainen S & Nelson K, 2010). Unlike other countries in the region, Sweden saw peak emigration to America at the end of 1800s, but this period of emigration ended in the 1930s.

Statistics show that emigration from Sweden has increased again. In the first half of the 2000s, about 45,000 persons per year emigrated from Sweden. This is reminiscent of the large-scale emigration in the 1800s when Swedes left for North America (SCB 2012, Wahlbeck Ö, 2015). This new emigration trend is attributed to the fact that cross-border mobility has increased and many young Swedes choose to move abroad to build a career and study abroad (Ibid).

The next biggest migration flow between the Nordic countries was during the 1980s when workers from Finland returned home from Sweden (Ibid). The work flow between Denmark, Norway and Sweden amounted to about 2,000-6,000 persons per year in the years after the Second World War and decreased since. There seems to be two separate episodes. The first is migration from Denmark to Sweden in the mid-1970s, which was about 12,000 persons per year. The second is migration from Norway to Sweden during the late 1980s. Data about re-

migration has shown that work migration was only temporary (Arbetspendling i Norden, 2014, TemaNord 2008:523, Nordic Council of Ministers, 2007).

The group from Finland in Sweden is much bigger than groups from the other Nordic countries. However, this number is reducing continuously. The main reason for this is that the elderly population has increased and people are dying each year. Overall, there are more Finnish women than men from in Sweden due to the fact that women have a longer life expectancy. This is also true of Norwegians living in Sweden, where the majority are women. According to Andersson Joona and Wadensjö (2011), the difficulty from a gender perspective is finding the number of people who moved from Norway to Sweden, since it has increased during the last century.

The aim with this report is to summarise secondary data collection about transnational labour market mobility within the project Academic (Un)employment and Mobility in the Arctic North – A Joint Socially Responsible Approach (Academic North).

The questions that this report will answer:

- What is known about labour market mobility in the northernmost Arctic region ?
- What can available statistics and other knowledge explain about this region, its labour market and cross-border mobility?
- What do the labour markets look like; what are the dominant structures that can help explain these cross-border labour markets ?
- Who are the people living here or commuting for work in the region ?
- What is considered attractive about this region ?

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### **3. Method**

Literature, peer-reviewed articles and publications from the Nordic Ministry were reviewed. Surveys have been conducted mainly via the Library open access appliance/database and research publications via Luleå University of Technology, the University of Tromsø and Oulu University as well as open source available statistics from this region, Statistiska Centralbyrån (SCB), Eurostat, Regionfakta, Nordic Region, register-based labour market statistics, Tilastokeskus and Statistisk sentralbyrå (SSB), Nordic Statistics 2018, Nordic Ministry's publications and other published data. Unpublished statistics from various sources have also been considered, including radio interviews, newspapers, documentaries and e-mail correspondence with authorities working with cross-border mobility. Keywords used are migration, immigration, commuting, gender, labour-market, unemployment, employment, cross-border, work, Nordic region.

### **4. Central concepts**

A central word we use in our everyday life is work or job, a concept we take for granted and do not question. What we usually refer to as work is paid work, an activity we do to support ourselves under which we include everything that contributes to making a living, regardless of whether it is legal or not (Furåker B, 1991). In this report, we are not going to take into account unpaid work since it is not considered relevant. It can be difficult to find an exact definition of a labour migrant, but in this report, we have chosen to include persons who enter or leave Sweden, Norway or Finland to work and who have permission to work or live across national borders in the Nordic countries. Nordic labour migrants are free to enter or leave countries for work and are free to remain for shorter or longer periods of time as guest workers as well as commuters. They may have low levels or higher levels of education and come from somewhere in the North in search of work (SOU 2006:86). A cross-border work commuter is a person who receives his or her income from one country, lives in another country and spends most of the time in one country. The frontier worker as a concept is often mentioned in public documents such as Cross-Border Advice guides and refers to a political term that can be understood as a worker who crosses national borders (North Calotte Cross-Border Advice, 2020). A so-called frontier worker is any worker who pursues his or her occupation in the territory of a member state and resides in the territory of another member state to which he or she returns to daily or at least once a week (Ibid). Mobility across borders is defined in line with the Nordic Council of Ministers definition as cross-border movements of people, capital, goods and services (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2020).

## **5. The context of Northernmost region**

According to the State of the Nordic Region (2020), this geographical region is the world's most integrated region (Nordic region, 2020). In the Nordic context, the depopulation of peripheral regions has resulted in challenges attracting a workforce with suitable competencies as well as managing demographic imbalances in order to recruit a workforce in the local labour market. A specific demographic threat for the Nordic region is the out-migration of young people (Ejdemo and Parding, 2018, SOU 2020:8, Nilsson et al. n.d.). According to Nilsson et al. (n.d.), one pull factor, and the continued migration from the region are closely related to factors within the segregated labour market. In this region, the segregated labour market is linked to male dominated industries such as mining, fishing and the industrial sector, while education and healthcare is closely linked to the female dominated labour market that can be seen as an important motivation for women to leave the region to work in the southern parts of these countries (ibid).

A number of approaches and models have been developed and applied in the Nordic countries to measure the regional “attractiveness” on the one hand, with its own natural resources and environments, but also the vulnerability of the municipalities in this region (Tillväxtanalys, 2012, ,Nordic Council of Ministers, 2020). Attractiveness has been studied with the belief that globalisation and external factors have different consequences for the municipalities in terms of how they operate or what they are able to influence. A number of case studies have investigated how municipalities have worked to increase their attractiveness. These studies have shown that it is not enough to have work opportunities available. There also needs to be people living in a given municipality and the municipalities need to be attractive enough for potential new residents to ultimately settle down (Ibid). There are also other reasons why people migrate to places – ranging from service availability, low housing prices, access to cultural and natural amenities and participation in local democracy as well as other quality of life issues. People do not usually move alone when they have partners or families. The attractiveness of a location is a combination of an attractive place is because of job availability, or how attractive conditions are for business or career development and how attractive the place is for living (Ibid). These meaningful tools have also become visible in our work with this project, in terms of what is attractive and how this is mediated to attract people back north.

## 6. Indigenous population in the Arctic - borderlands

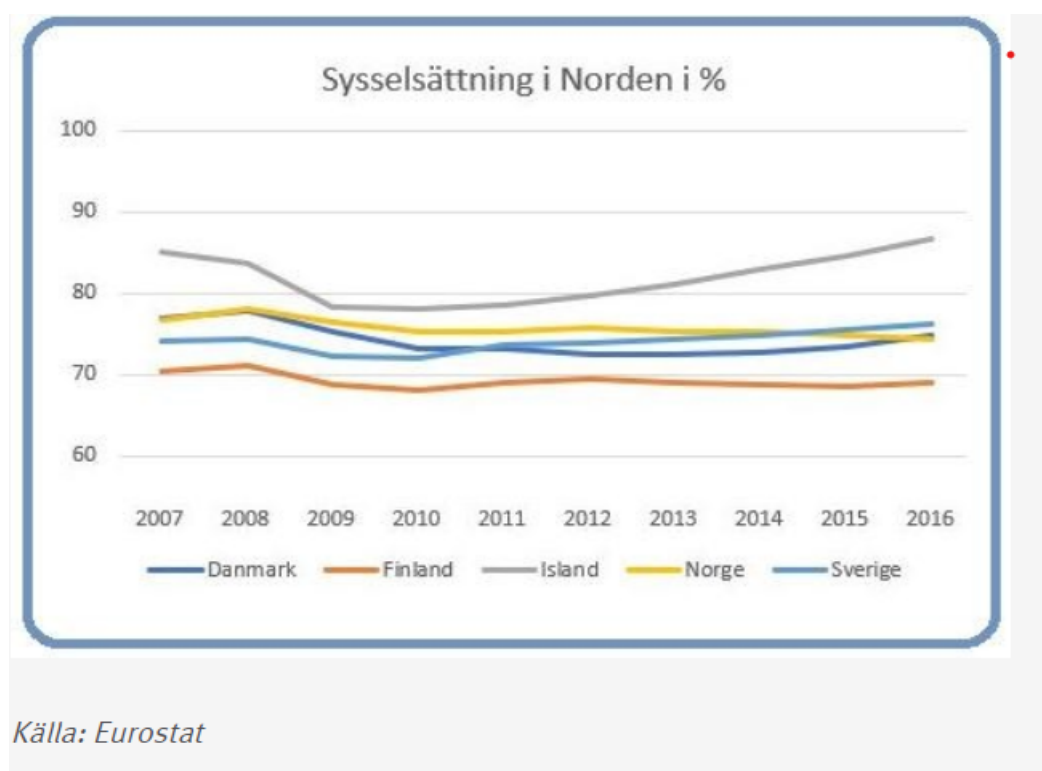
According to Nordregio (2020), the entire population of the Arctic region is indigenous, meaning that the population reassembles more than 40 different ethnic groups. In terms of statistics, there is no circumpolar definition of an indigenous person and the number of indigenous people is therefore based on different national definitions; this is because official statistics do not necessarily recognise the indigenous population separately (Ibid). The United Nations (UN) defines the concept “*indigenous people as inheritors and practitioners of unique cultures and ways of relating to people and the environment*”. They have retained social, cultural, economic and political characteristics that are distinct from those of the dominant societies in which they live. Despite cultural differences, common problems are related to the protection of minority rights, and indigenous peoples have sought recognition of their identities, way of life and their right to traditional lands, territories and natural resources in recent decades and throughout history. In some cases, rights have been violated. The history of the cross-border region between northernmost Finland, Sweden and Norway is one example of this, where people were not allowed to speak their common language Tornedal-Finnish or Meänkieli and Sápmi (SFS:2009:724, Pohjanen B, 2014, 2015, Elenius L, 2006). Sápmi today encompasses large parts of northern Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia; Sápmi languages are classified as the Uralic language family. The international community recognises the fact that special measures are required to protect the rights of minority groups and to maintain their distinct cultures and way of life (SFS:2009:724). It is a territory with cultural similarity, a shared language and economic necessity for people in their everyday life (Piippola, 2003, Tornedalsrådet, 2020). According to Tornedalsrådet, which was established in 1987 as a cooperative, interest monitoring body for the municipalities at the Finnish-Swedish-Norwegian border, there are no symbolically visible national borders in this territory. This territory, which lies between three countries, has a historical tradition where people have lived as a community across national borders, which also means that kinship across national borders is very extensive and people have close contact in their everyday lives. This northernmost Arctic region serves as an expression of cultural ambition and affects both domestic and foreign relations. Similar findings about life in border regions in Canada, the United States and South America have been found by New W.H (1999) and Anzaldúa G (1999).

In Olsson E et al. (2011) and their research about borderless life in border municipalities in Swedish Värmland, they showed that ties to a place where people are anchored in the home municipality counteracts relocation but at the same time leads to forced commuting caused by labour market demands. This is

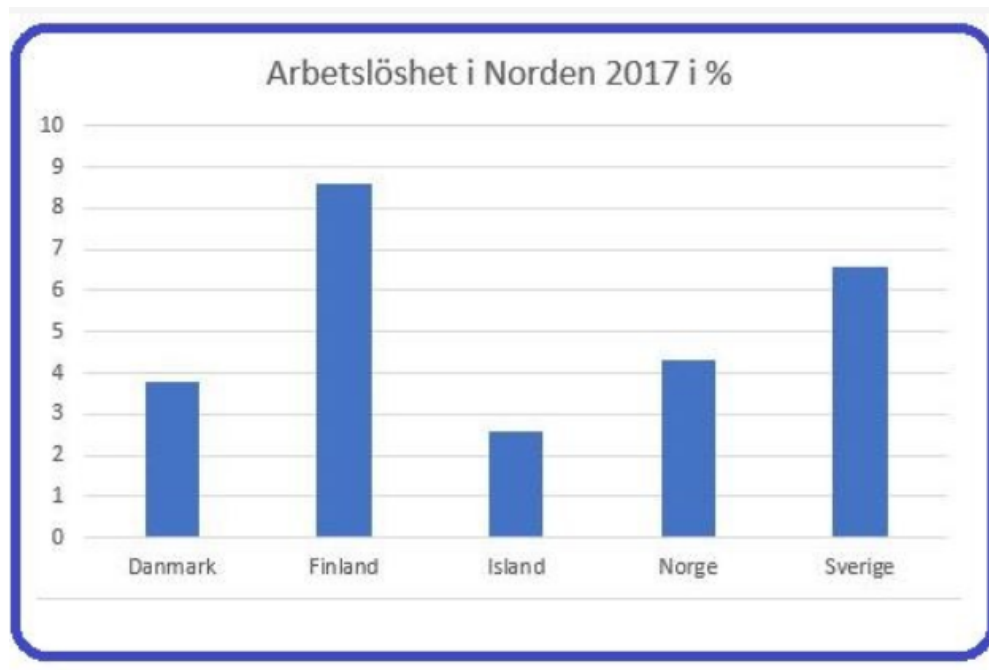
in line with Piippola's (2003) research, and it can be suggested that it also reinforces the local identity and place of belonging. Mobility can also be motivated based on historical patterns, i.e. "it has always been this way", meaning that people in border municipalities have always been cross-border commuters. This is a part of the culture and language among the indigenous people with roots in this region.

## 7. The northernmost labour market structures

The unemployment rate in the Nordics is rising during the time of writing this report due to the Covid-19 pandemic that is affecting the whole world right now. The Nordic labour markets had strengthened and the unemployment rate was lower than it had been for the last three years in every Nordic country when this project started in 2018. The figures vary locally between 2.9 to 8.6 per cent (Nordic Economy Outlook, 2017). The Nordic countries are in different stages in the business cycle but have one thing in common - the outlook was bright before the pandemic. Table below shows employment percentage in the Nordic countries;



The heavy decline in employment that was seen during the financial crisis of 2007–2008 had recovered in several countries. The span is large: in Finland, the level of employment in 2016 was 69.1 per cent compared to Iceland at 86.6 per cent.



Källa: *Nordic Economic Outlook 2017*

The Finnish upswing is in an earlier stage. It is strongly driven by exports of the country's traditional products, such as paper, industrial exports and chemical products. In addition to the registered unemployment, employment rates there do not reflect a high degree of hidden unemployment. Together, this figure is about 8.8 per cent (Nordic statistics, 2020). This is two times more than the rate in Norway, where the unemployment rate, despite lower investment in oil, did not increase to more than 4.7 per cent in 2017. Unemployment rates also decreased in the south and west of Norway, where the oil industry is strongest (Arbeidsforskningsinstituttet, 2018). Within Norrbotten County in northernmost Sweden, the unemployment level was 6.8 per cent, the seventh lowest level compared to other counties in Sweden. It is also worth mentioning that unemployment rates vary locally in each municipality, depending on the labour market structures (referring to dominant businesses).

## Unemployment, per cent of population aged 15-64 years (2017)



(Source; Nordic Statistics 2018); Male & Female

### Northernmost Norway

The Troms og Finnmark region's business is dominated by the fishing industry, which accounts for a large proportion of the county's economy. Other important industries are agriculture, the industrial sector and mining. The modern labour market has changed, and a large portion of residents now work in the public and private service sector or business activities; tourism has also become an important part of the business sector year round. The total number of inhabitants in the county is 166,322 distributed across 24 municipalities. At the end of April 2019, there were 5,139 people registered as fully unemployed in this region. Unemployment comprised 1.8% of the labour force in Troms, 1.9% in Nordland and 2.9% in Finnmark (Eures portal, 2020). The business structure is characterised by a large public service sector. This is because there are many educational institutions as well as a large hospital. In total, 45% of inhabitants are employed within the public sector, while health and social services accounts for over 25%. A portion of the private sector also exports goods and services for use in the public service. The second biggest industry is building and construction at 8%, while the industrial sector in the county employs 5% of the workforce with most businesses related to fishing industry, which employs a large proportion of the population. Trade sector is the largest employer at 12%. The most populous municipalities are Tromsø and Harstad. The service sector including retail stores has the highest numbers of unemployed persons. The overall impression is that Tromsø will have

an increased need for labour supply in the coming years. The biggest lack of labour supply is among nurses, health and social work and the tourism sector, which is growing in Troms leading to difficulty recruiting a workforce with the right competencies (Johnsen N A, 2019).

### **Northernmost Sweden**

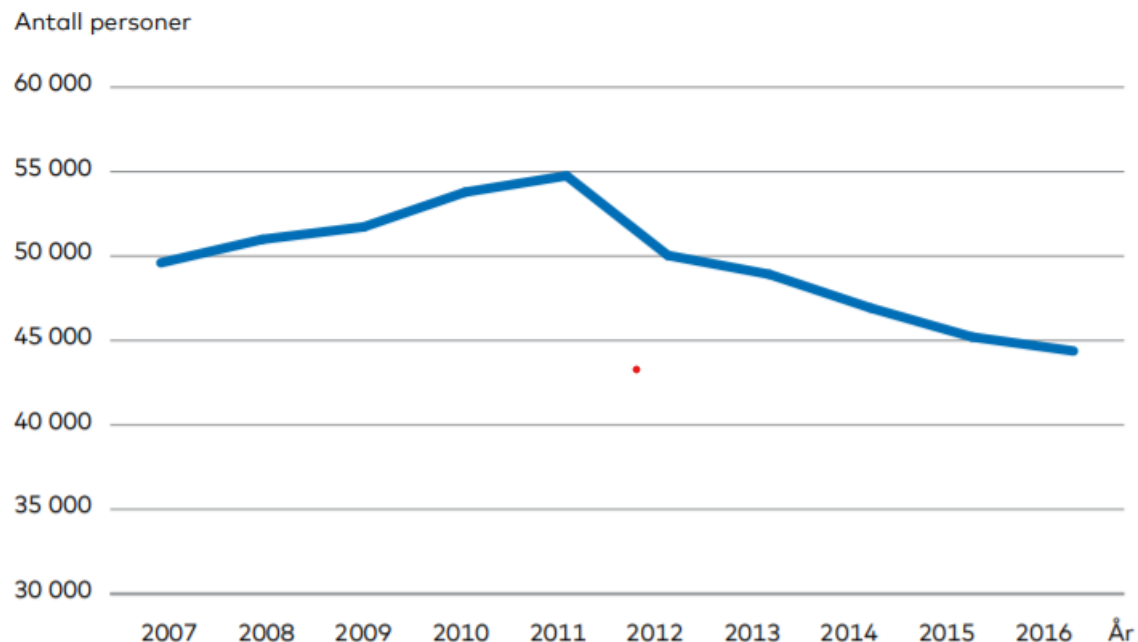
The total number of inhabitants in Norrbotten county is 250,093 persons and the number of inhabitants in Västerbotten county is 270,154 (Regionfakta, 2019). The labour market in Norrbotten county is expected to decrease marginally in the coming years. Within Norrbotten county, different labour markets are dominant in each local municipality. For instance, the mining and steel industry is a large branch in Norrbotten that more or less affects other parts of the county. Unemployment in Norrbotten county totalled 3.0%; the highest level of open unemployment in the county was in Haparanda municipality at 5.1% (Regionfakta, 2019). In the Nordic region as a whole, unemployment was 8.8 % (Nordic Statistics, 2018). The labour supply shortage is mostly in the health care, business services, transport and construction industries. At the same time, forecasts show that growth will slow down. The labour supply shortage is still a barrier for job growth in several branches, especially in the mining, information and communication (ICT) and construction sectors. Employment rates are high among people born in Sweden, and the labour reserve mostly consists of people born abroad, but there is also a need for training (Arbetsmarknaden i Norrbotten 2019-2020). In 2019, people moving from the county totalled 6,134, distributed on 2,869 women and 3,265 men (SCB, 2019).

### **Northernmost Finland**

The number of inhabitants in Lapland county is 185,497. The number of unemployed in the labour market in Lapland county is quite high compared to rest of Finland at 10.7%, (compared to Östrobothnia county where unemployment rate is 6.6%). Lapland has a high unemployment rate of about 14.3% (Lapin Liitto, 2020). Open positions in the labour market in 2019 amounted to 50,000. The northernmost region has developed its infrastructure for year-round tourism. In addition to tourism, other important sectors are trade, manufacturing and construction. There is a labour supply shortage in the health and social care, transport, construction and service sectors as well as among special education teachers (Ammattibaromeetteri, 2020). Statistics show that migration to Lapland decreased in 2018, decreasing 19% compared to last year. The net number of inhabitants who moved increased migration from abroad by 31,106 persons in 2018. Moving abroad from Finland the same year was 19,148 persons (Tilastokeskus, 2020).

## 8. Migration between the Nordic countries

Figure 3: Migration to one Nordic country from another Nordic country by year.



Kilde: Nordic Statistics, MIGR01. Statistikken omfatter ikke-nordiske borgere som får en oppholds- eller arbeidstillatelse lengre enn tre måneder, og nordiske borgere som flytter permanent til et annet nordisk land. Registreringsmetodene varierer fra land til land.

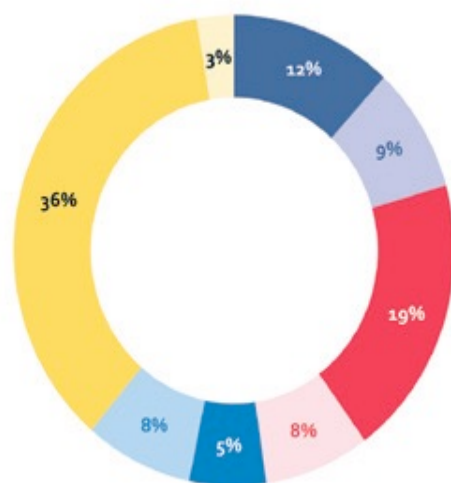
<sup>5</sup> Nørgaard og Rønning (2013): "Er det arbeid til alle i Norden?", Samfunnsspeilet 4/2013, Statistisk Sentralbyrå.

Figure 3 above shows that migration in the Nordic countries increased between 2007 and 2011, with a peak number of 54,757 persons. After 2011, migration has decreased every year. In 2016, 44,377 persons migrated from a Nordic country to another Nordic country. The strong fluctuations in migration from Nordic countries to Norway has contributed to large variance in the total amount of migration in the Nordics. The migration to Norway increased from 10,453 in 2007 to 15,958 in 2011 and decreased to 8,178 in 2016. The explanation is likely that the Norwegian labour market was less affected by the financial crisis of 2007-2008, which was a reason that people migrated to Norway for work.

The biggest labour receiving country was Norway. In 2004, almost 18,000 persons commuted to Norway from neighbouring countries. The biggest flow of commuters went from Sweden and Finland; 24,100 persons commuted from Sweden to Norway, while 4,900 commuted from Finland to Norway.

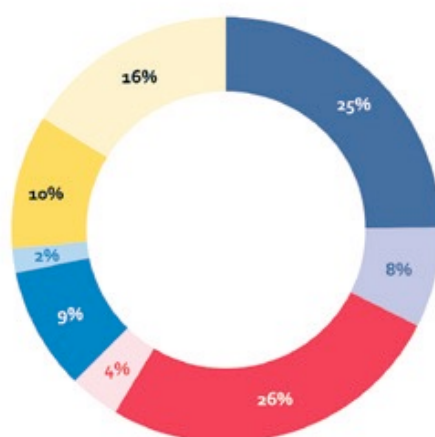


## Migration to the Nordic countries 2016



**Figure 1 above** shows that 12% migrate inside the Nordic countries, 9% from Poland and the Baltic states, 19% from EES countries<sup>1</sup>, 8% from other parts of Europe, 5 % from United States 8% from Africa, 36% from Asia and 3% from other countries (Nordic Statistics, 2018).

## Immigration from the Nordic Countries 2016



**Figure 2 above** shows that 25% move between the Nordic countries, 8% move to Poland and the Baltic states, 26% move to other EES countries, 4% to other parts of Europe, 9% to United States, 2% to Africa, 10% to Asia, 16% elsewhere (Nordic Statistics, 2018).

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<sup>1</sup> **EES countries;** Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Ireland, Iceland, Italy, Croatia, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, the Czech republic, Germany, Hungary and Austria.

## 9. Cross-border commuters

There are no current statistics available on the extent of cross-border commuting in the Nordic countries. Previous statistics were based on a collaboration between the statistical authorities in the Nordic countries. After this collaboration ended, there are no longer a comprehensive account of cross-border commuting in the Nordic countries. Due to problems with data exchange between countries, data is not been updated in recent years (Ylivainio L, 2019, Åberg B, 2018).

During certain periods, work migration between Nordic countries dominated the cross-border mobility. This also seems to be what most of the research has focused on. In more recent years, commuting between the Nordic countries has become more attractive to residents. At the time of writing this report, there is an ongoing co-operation to produce statistics on commuting between the Nordic countries (Tema Nord 2008, 2018). The main reason that commuting research has become important is to meet the needs and demands of the common extended labour markets (Ibid, Piippola, 2003). Reports also show that housing construction differs between the Nordic countries. In Sweden, there is a much bigger housing shortage problem than in Norway and Finland (Noro K, et.al, 2014).

Research also shows that a lack of housing can be a problem in the working municipality, thereby creating increased housing costs both on the national and local level. For instance, 2006 forecasts from Tornedalen/Tornion laakso and the rural areas of Norrbotten County show that there is a growing need for labour caused by a demographic imbalance, i.e. more elderly people living in these areas. The labour shortage in elder care, for example, is expected to increase mobility in the labour market and increase demand for better commuting options. There are also signs that good commuting options cause people to move and commute back to their own housing. The free cross-border mobility labour force has several options. A person can apply for work in a bigger labour market, thereby shortening periods of unemployment and securing a stable income over the long term. Cross-border co-operation is already being used and has been shown to lead to welfare gains both at the individual level as well as the regional and municipal levels.

Between Finland and Sweden, commuting flows increased about 50 per cent in both directions between 2001 and 2004 (see table below). Table 1 shows the number of income earners, total number of commuters across national borders and per cent of commuters at different commuting flows from housing country to work country in 2001 and 2004.

Table 1;

Bostadsland	Arbetsland	Antal inkomsttagare			Därav antal pendlare			Fördelning av pendlare	
		2001	2004	2005 <sup>3,3</sup>	2001	2004	2005	2001	2004
Danmark	Norge	9735	8842	-	3370	3303	-	11,6	9,0
	Sverige	1712	3751	3867	1410	1831	1839	4,9	5,0
	<i>Totalt</i>	<i>11447</i>	<i>12593</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>4780</i>	<i>5134</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>16,5</i>	<i>14,3</i>
Norge	Danmark	2275	1641	-	798	494	-	2,8	1,4
	Finland	-	655	-	-	214	-	-	0,6
	Sverige	4291	4177	4834	1300	1725	1987	4,5	4,7
	<i>Totalt</i>	<i>6566</i>	<i>6473</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>2098</i>	<i>2433</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>7,3</i>	<i>6,6</i>
Finland	Norge	-	2369	-	-	1152	-	-	3,2
	Sverige	6335	6182	-	2525	3784	-	8,7	10,3
	<i>Totalt</i>	<i>6335</i>	<i>8551</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>2525</i>	<i>4936</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>8,7</i>	<i>13,5</i>
Sverige	Danmark	7082	11483	13911	4583	8496	10463	15,8	23,22
	Finland	4206	4571	-	1599	2360	-	5,5	6,4
	Norge	28285	27722	27599	13343	13223	13240	46,1	36,15
	<i>Totalt</i>	<i>39573</i>	<i>43776</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>19525</i>	<i>24079</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>67,4</i>	<i>65,8</i>
<i>Totalt</i>		<i>63921</i>	<i>71393</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>28928</i>	<i>36582</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>100%</i>

Table 2: commuting from home country to work country, distributed by work country

Bostadsland	Arbetsland	Antal inkomsttagare		Därav antal pendlare		Fördelning av pendlare	
		2001	2004	2001	2004	2001	2004
Norge	Danmark	2275	1641	798	494	2,8	1,4
	Sverige	7082	11483	4583	8496	15,8	23,2
	<i>Totalt</i>	<i>9357</i>	<i>13124</i>	<i>5381</i>	<i>8990</i>	<i>18,6</i>	<i>24,8</i>
Danmark	Norge	9735	8842	3370	3303	11,6	9,0
	Finland	-	2369	-	1152	-	3,1
	Sverige	28285	27722	13343	13223	46,1	36,1
	<i>Totalt</i>	<i>37660</i>	<i>38933</i>	<i>16713</i>	<i>17678</i>	<i>57,7</i>	<i>48,2</i>
Finland	Norge*	-	655	-	214	-	0,6
	Sverige	4206	4571	1599	2360	5,5	6,5
	<i>Totalt</i>	<i>4206</i>	<i>5226</i>	<i>1599</i>	<i>2574</i>	<i>5,5</i>	<i>7,1</i>
Sverige	Danmark	1712	3751	1410	1831	4,9	5,0
	Finland	6335	6182	2525	3784	8,7	10,3
	Norge	4291	4177	1300	1725	4,5	4,7
	<i>Totalt</i>	<i>12338</i>	<i>14110</i>	<i>5235</i>	<i>7340</i>	<i>18,1</i>	<i>20,0</i>
<i>Totalt</i>		<i>63291</i>	<i>71393</i>	<i>28928</i>	<i>26582</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>100%</i>

Källa: Nordisk pendlingskarta (2007), SCB.

Source; Nordisk pendlingskarta (2007), SCB.

The Nordic Council of Ministers (2018) has summarised the number of persons that have migrated from one Nordic country to another Nordic country each year over the last ten years. This provides an overview of how migration has developed in the Nordics over time.

## **From Sweden to Norway**

Norway is the country that seems to have the most attractive labour market among the Nordic countries. A third of the commuting is from Sweden to Norway. In total, 13,200 persons commuted from Sweden to Norway in 2005; these numbers appear to have been steady between 2001 and 2005 and seemed to have decreased two years ago. The most commuters are not from cross-border municipalities, they instead come from other parts of Sweden. In 2004, the biggest group of commuters were between 25-54 age years, while 16-24 year-olds accounted for 25%. Norway is an important commuter country for many young people (Nordisk pendlingskarta, 2014).

## **From Norway to Sweden**

About 2,000 persons commuted from Norway to Sweden in 2005. Most commuters were between 25-54 years of age (55%) with most being towards the younger end of the spectrum. About half were born in Norway and about 34% were born in Sweden. Among Swedes who commute to Norway, the majority have completed secondary education and 25 % had a University-level education. The public sector was a common work place among Norwegians who commute to Sweden (Nordisk pendlingskarta, 2014).

## **From Finland to Sweden**

Almost 3,800 persons, of which 50% were women, commuted from Finland to Sweden in 2004. Almost 20% were between 25-54 years of age with most being towards younger end of the spectrum. Among commuters from Finland to Sweden, about 75% work in the industrial sector and about 20% within the public sector. Finnish commuters are represented in all Swedish regions and they seem to be the group that is the most geographically widespread – according to place of living and workplace (Ibid). Commuters to Sweden are mostly in the public health care sector (Eero E, Lapin Radio April 2020). In the healthcare sector in Norrbotten county, about 50% are recruited from Finland (Myrberg Kajsa, Norrbottens kommuner, 3 April 2020 press conference on Webb tv). These statistics are locally known and not official public statistics (Nordisk pendlingskarta, 2014)

## **From Sweden to Finland**

The number of commuters from Sweden to Finland increased by almost 800 persons between 2001-2004. Up to 35% were young people between 15-24 years of age. Almost 80% of all those commuting to Finland are also born there. The majority of Swedes working in Finland work in the public sector (65%). Almost 40% have a post-secondary education (Nordisk pendlingskarta, 2014). In Finland,

commuters from Sweden work in the steel industry(such as Outokumpu) and mining industry in northern Finland, The statistics also show that women and men commute to different labour markets; from a cross-border and regional perspective, there are cohesive labour markets that extend over national borders that affect people's everyday lives (Ibid).

### **From Finland to Norway**

In 2004, 1,152 persons commuted from Finland to Norway. Almost 50% had a post-secondary education. Similar to commuters from Sweden to Norway, 20% of commuters from Finland to Norway, worked in the construction sector and the remainder in the industrial and public sectors. Among these commuters, more than 50% were men, 22% were between 15-24 years of age and 70% between 25-54 years of age. The group working in health care sector accounted for (18%) but most commuters worked in the industrial sector and accounted for 60% (Ibid).

*In summary*, the geographical connection between place of residence and work has stretched over the last 40 years. One reason is that it has become easier to commute by car because there are bridges between countries such as Finland and Sweden. This also means that extended labour markets are harder to illustrate due to existing administrative obstacles. One such example of this borderless labour market is the so-called “twin city”, Haparanda – Torneå. The two towns are in different countries, Sweden and Finland, and together form a single market place with the shopping mall “På gränsen” in the middle of these two cities. It has come to be called the world's friendliest border (Haparanda fakta).

There are no official or complete statistics to be found for this cross-border mobility between the Nordic countries in the northernmost regions. People living in this region largely know the extent of cross-border mobility. There are statistics about commuting between Sweden and Denmark (SCB, 2018), but the statistics are focused on the southern regions between the Nordic countries. In the following statistics, the number of commuters in the region has reduced from 17,053 in 2012 to 15,182 in 2015; the majority are persons living in Sweden who commute to Denmark. There are statistics on commuting between Norway and Sweden between 2010-2014 that show the number of commuters from Sweden to Norway. The statistics show that commuting from Norway to Sweden went up and down during this period and that commuting to Sweden was slightly lower (Ibid).

## **10. Gender segregation in the Nordic labour market**

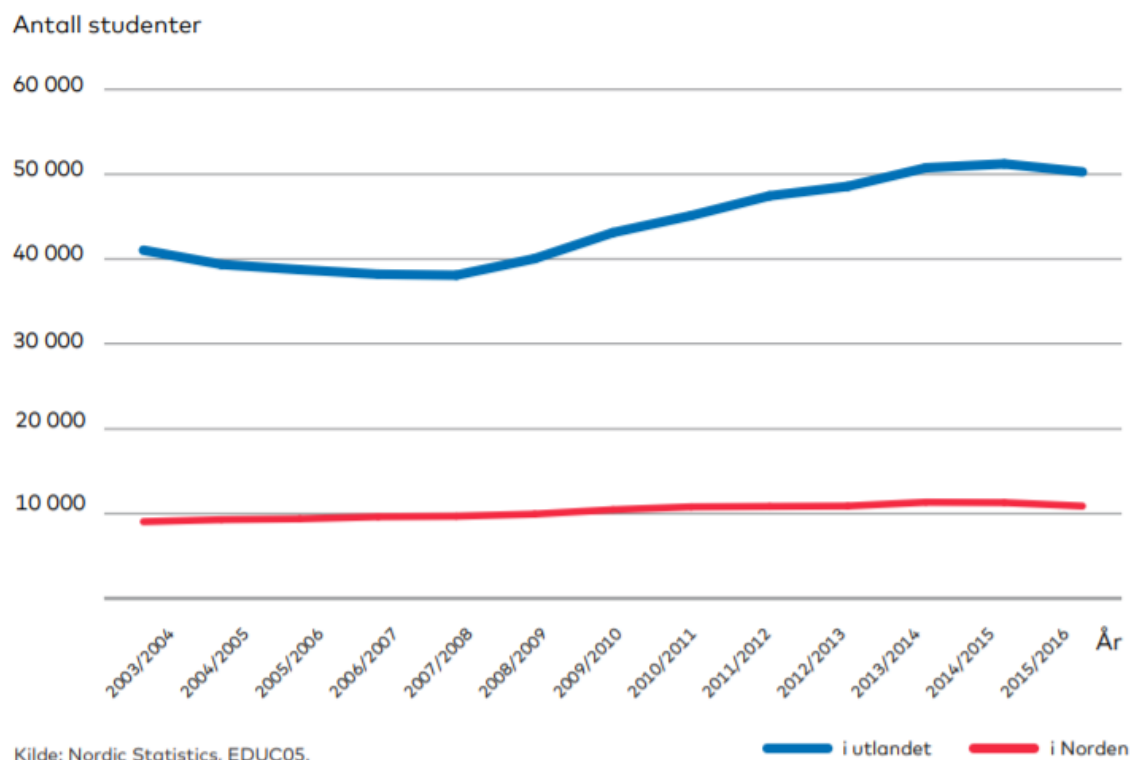
The Nordic region has one of the world's highest employment and education rates for women. Women mainly work in the public sector, often in education, social care or health care, while the private sector is dominated by men, who mainly work in production and engineering (SOU 2004:43, Wium Olesen et al., 2019). Gender segregation exists at all educational levels even when women and men have the same educational background. According to Wium Olesen et al. (2019), there is no single factor that can explain the gender segregation in the Nordic region, neither vertically nor horizontally. Vertical segregation refers to the fact that Nordic women statistically work in lower status and lower paid positions than their male counterparts, but vertical segregation varies across the Nordic region. Finland and Denmark are close to the EU average, whereas Sweden, Norway and Iceland have a lower degree of vertical gender segregation than the rest of the EU. Horizontal segregation refers to the fact that most Nordic women still work in different occupations than men, leading to segregation between the genders (Ibid)

Organizational research has observed a so-called “sliding gender segregation of labour”, meaning that women and men with the same job position and workplace tend to end up doing different tasks, for instance in the ICT sector (ibid, Roos Englund, 2019). In contrast to earlier research, one explanation we believe needs to be examined more closely to understand the differences in labour market structures according to labour needs and demands, and its structures to understand what kind of labour force is demanded. These structures can vary between regions and local municipalities. This means that the labour markets can be male or female dominated and therefore create segregation and inequality. In terms of gender equality, this is interesting to examine since labour market structures can change and unemployment can have a structural reason (Gonäs L & Karlsson J CH, 2009, Piippola, 2010). According to Siim (2013), diversity and gender equality are contextual and dynamic, and inequalities are embedded in national histories, institutions and policies. This demonstrates that the discourse around gender equality has become an intrinsic part of Nordic identities and belongings.

## 11. Student mobility

Both economic and social factors, as well as parental education level, influence Nordic students in their choice to study abroad (UHR, 2019). A comparison of student mobility between the Nordic countries shows that Swedish students study or practice abroad to a lower degree than neighbouring countries. The goal for Sweden and the EU is that at least 20 percent of all students who graduate in 2020 should have studied or practiced abroad for at least three months. The trend has been positive so far, but it needs ongoing work to reach the goal (Ibid). There are some statistics available regarding how many students study abroad. These statistics only include students who have graduated, and students who do not receive study benefits are not counted in the statistics either. The trends for the total number of Nordic students from abroad are included as well as those who study outside the Nordic countries and how many of these study in a Nordic country. The figure includes students from Nordic countries, including Greenland and Åland, and a few students from Färöarna who are only counted during 2015/2016.

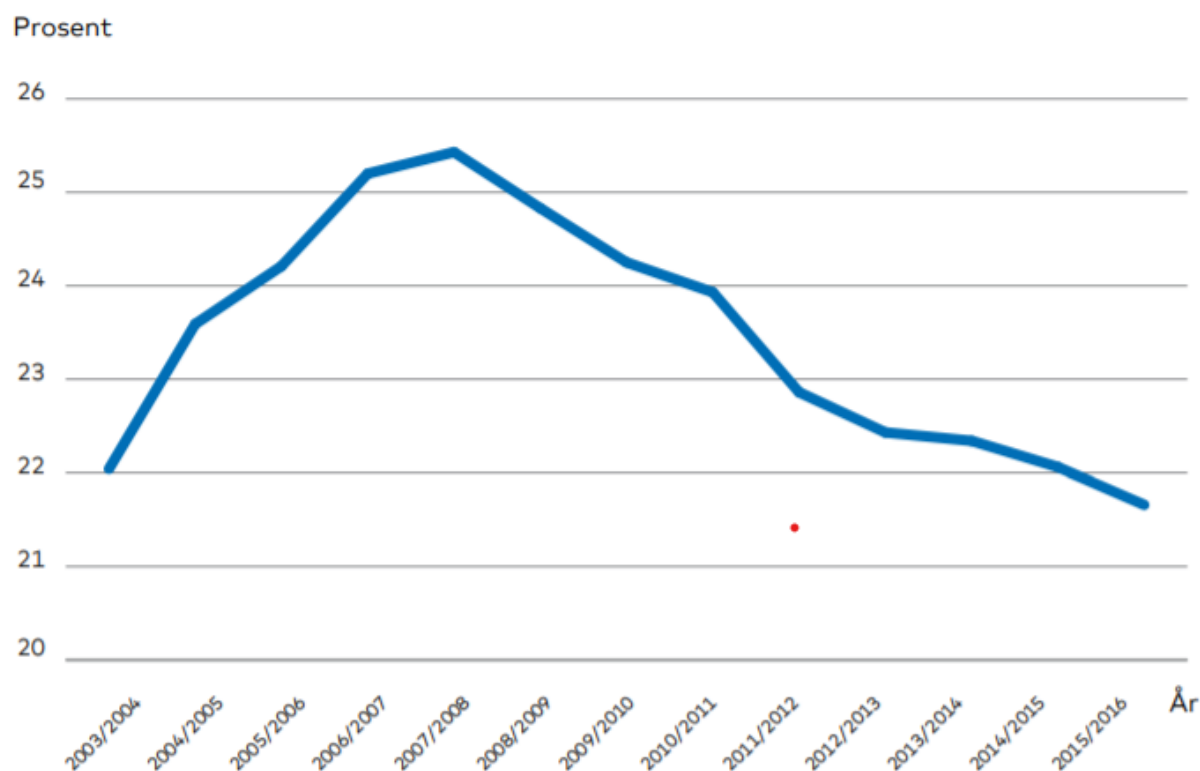
**Figur 2: Nordiske studenter som studerer i utlandet (inkludert Norden) og i Norden**



<sup>8</sup> I 2015/2016 var det 1435 studenter fra Færøene i andre nordiske land.

Nordic students studying in another Nordic country of all students studying abroad. Figure 3 below, shows that the percentage of these students reached a peak in 2007/2008 at 25.4 per cent. After 2007/2008, it fell to 21.7 percent in 2015/2016. This shows that the number of students from the Nordics who study abroad has increased vigorously.

**Figur 3: Andelen nordiske utenlandsstudenter som studerer i Norden, andel studenter/år**



Kilde: Nordic Statistics, EDUC05.

<sup>9</sup> Mobilitetsrapport 3/2016 - Elev og studentmobilitet til og fra Norge, side 19.

### **Arctic attractiveness – voices from students in academia**

During this cross-border mobility project, we arranged two different events to try to gain an understanding of what is attracting students to this northernmost region. We organised two events: The Arctic Attractiveness - Researchers' Cross-Border Mobility, organised in Oulu on 03/12/2019 and the other in Tromsø on 28/01/2020. The planned event in Luleå was unfortunately cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Our findings from the previous survey showed that PhD students and postdoctoral researchers are potentially the biggest group going abroad for mobility periods as part of their doctoral studies, and they tend to do this in their postdoctoral research phases. They are also very enthusiastic about being a part of building better practices for cross-border mobility, as the reality is



that they have had bad personal experiences. The events also contained panel discussions “Mobility Stories – Living in North”, where panellists shared their experiences of being mobile, mainly coming from elsewhere to live in Oulu and Tromsø but also one case of leaving Finland to study abroad. Panellists presented themselves with their full names and affiliation. However, since the panellists talked about their private matters, these panel discussions were not recorded but we did take notes.

The main reason for choosing the University of Oulu as the mobility location was access to free education. Panellists described how amazed they were to learn that free education is possible. The main reason for choosing the University of Tromsø was mostly a coincidence via friends and personal networks. The geographic area was not sought out, it was seen more as a personal investment and experience but also a fascination with the natural surroundings and space. In addition, the access to free childcare in Finland was brought up as something unique – *“somebody takes care of your children while you can study for free”*. However, all the different Finnish or Norwegian practicalities and benefits are not familiar in the beginning. For example, in case of a medical situation, it is not clear where to turn and who to approach and what the cost will be. In Tromsø, it also became clear that there is a need for personal guidance through the Norwegian benefit process and help with accommodation, as well as a need to get to know people in a smaller municipality and knowledge about how the labour market in the local municipality works. *“You don’t know your options. You need support and to know how the education system works. In Norway you are both an employee and a student at the same time”*. Panellists in Finland also brought up the challenges of finding proper housing before coming to Oulu, and they have been forced to stay in very low quality living conditions, for example without furniture. In addition, the confusing guidelines in different rental practices (such as extra rental payments and changing apartments) created serious financial problems.

Panellists had mainly continued their careers when transitioning from Master’s studies to PhD research, therefore, they had been able to arrange their research funding while they were in Oulu. Successfully finding funding was a crucial matter for being able to stay in Oulu. Panellists also talked about the difficulties finding a job outside of the university in Oulu. They all considered this to be due to their foreign names and appearance, and they are not even called in for job interviews even though they are Finnish. One panellist reported that her children also experienced social exclusion and she therefore considered this to be one of the reasons she and her family may not want to live in Oulu permanently. In Norway, one of the panellists said that *“I have stayed in Norway and now I have two children with a man from Sweden working in Norway”*. Panellists reported that there was very little practical help when entering Oulu as well as Tromsø, and language difficulties were mentioned as one main obstacle. One panellist, for

example, described the difficulty of grocery shopping and the need to use a Google Translate to be able to find the right products. It was said that life becomes easier when you are able to find “your community”, which referred to other foreign Master’s and/or PhD students in the same situation.

All the panellists saw the value in their mobility experience, and they also considered it to be a huge value for their careers. They wished more assistance for foreign students and workers from the University. It was highlighted that the University of Oulu indeed offers a great facility and PhD education internationally, however, it does not matter if the PhDs are not paid for their PhD studies and work. In the Norwegian panel, it became clear that *“You need to be lucky if you know someone who can guide you in the system”*. For instance, it was brought up that if you do not know the system, it can lead to unwanted experiences: *“With no salary for six months, it is difficult to orientate in the payment system and accommodation system, fortunately, I had saved money”*. They also reported that they felt lucky and grateful to have support from kind and warm people, since it is difficult to understand a foreign language but also to learn how to cope with the darkness and cold as well as the cultural differences, especially if you come from outside the northern region. In conclusion, the experiences of academics in their mobility experiences show that there are things that the Arctic Five Universities should consider to facilitate mobility.

### **Arctic attractiveness recruitment – an example from northernmost Sweden**

There are several examples of how people are attracted back to north or to Sweden for work. A practice that has been used in the past that continues today is that employers organise recruitment fairs to attract the necessary skills. This recruitment strategy is common in Sweden. Piippola’s (2003), research is one concrete example of the labour market situation in northernmost Sweden and northernmost Finland, where there is a lack of nurses in the health care sector even though there are many qualified, unemployed nurses in northernmost Finland. This is a concrete example of competition in a limited labour market, where the alternative can be to move or commute. When faced with unemployment, a person has to decide whether to continue to be unemployed, to take temporary work or to educate oneself to do something else. The most important thing that became visible in Piippola’s research was that these persons felt that they belonged in the northernmost region. What mattered most was their place of birth, being familiar with the surroundings and that they felt safe with and were offered a secure position in a Swedish hospital. This mobility was important, that they are asked to practice their new skills as soon as possible after graduating with a nursing degree. During this project, Piippola came in contact with Luleå Enterprises

network after a recommendation from a college, since they are working with a common problem: skills supply in the northernmost Sweden. Participants in the project “Hemlängtan” (Home sickness) are recruited via e-mail, networking, friends and media about upcoming events. These events take place in the south of Sweden, in the biggest cities such as Stockholm and Gothenburg. This project started in 2013 and is an ongoing project in Luleå. It has provided good examples of successful recruitment strategies. The project is mainly financed by Luleå Municipality but also other surrounding municipalities in Norrbotten County. The rest of the funding is co-financed by company membership in the network. This project has highlighted how important employer branding is when competition is high in the local labour market. Companies need to take into account spouses and children when they recruit employees to fill a skills gap. These experiences have also shown the importance of being an attractive employer and how important social and cultural values are in everyday life for successful recruitment. This networking approach among companies and organizations is a good example of best practices: how they manage to recruit couples, singles and families to northernmost Sweden. They have, for instance made films to assist others in their recruitment campaigns to attract skilled people to return north or to move as a newcomer.

## **12. Frontier workers - The North Calotte Cross-Border Advice**

The North Calotte Cross-Border Advice Service guides individuals and enterprises, who commute, work, live, study or do business across the border in Finland, Sweden and Norway. The Nordic Council of Ministers finances the service. The North Calotte Cross-border Advice Service is one of the three cross-border information services in the Nordic countries, together with Öresund direct, which focuses on cross-border questions between Sweden and Denmark, and Grensetjänsten, which focuses on cross-border questions between Sweden and Norway. So-called “Frontier workers” means any worker who pursues her/his occupation in the territory of a member state and resides in the territory of another member State (political criterion) to which he/she returns daily or at least once a week. This service is for people who, for example, have their social security and pension paid by a country different from the one that they currently lives in, or people who are planning to move across the border, or whatever they can do to help people and guide them through border obstacles ([www.Nordkalottens.granstjanst](http://www.Nordkalottens.granstjanst)).

At the time of writing this report, there are about 3,000 so called “Frontier workers” or commuters between Finland and Sweden (SVT 200401), about 9 medical Doctors, 50 nurses, 120 assistant nurses plus an unknown number of

people working in elder care in the cross-border municipalities in Sweden (Elisabeth Eero interviewed in LapinRadio 200331).

### **13. Cross-border mobility during spring 2020**

The events of the spring of 2020 and the global COVID-19 pandemic is something that we cannot dismiss in this report, since it has had a significant impact on cross-border mobility. Borders between Finland, Sweden and Norway have become extremely visible and exclusionary, which is something completely opposed to the usual, invisible borders. The nature of borders has altered in a short timeframe, and everyday life in the border regions has changed completely. The strict restriction on freedom of movement is something that has never been seen before in the inner borders of the Schengen area. The situation began in mid-March 2020 when Finland and Norway started to restrict the movement across their borders. Sweden has followed a completely different strategy compared to Finland and Norway and has not closed its borders at all. However, since the borders are closed from Finland's and Norway's side, the effect is the same

Finland closed its borders on 19 March at midnight, and since then, cross-border mobility has only been allowed in special cases. Essential commuter travel and other essential travel has been allowed, and this includes, for example goods transport and logistics personnel. Health and rescue personnel have also been allowed to continue commuting as are the employees who, based on a permanent employment contract, work in the intrinsic travel-to-work area on the border with Sweden or Norway ([www.raja.fi/current](http://www.raja.fi/current) issues/guidelines for border).

Although restrictions have been in force for a few months, the guidelines and regulations have changed multiple times. Constant changes have made it difficult to keep up with the current situation, which in turn has caused the spread of disinformation and uncertainty amongst cross-border commuters. National taxation and social security officials, not to mention border control officials, have seen a remarkable surge in contacts and requests for information. One of the key players is the North Calotte Cross-Border Advice Service, which aims to share current information about the rules and regulations. The need for more information was so substantial that they even had to hire a person to assist with their daily tasks.

Different approaches in dealing with the pandemic also resulted in certain disagreements and heated discussions between the Finns and the Swedes. Some people, including Finnish health care workers, demanded that the borders should be closed altogether without the possibility to commute over the border. However, this would have caused great problems in the health care sector on the Swedish side of the border, since a significant number health care workers in Sweden live

in Finland. According to the Finnish Public Broadcasting company YLE's report on 4 May, 20 out of the 50 health care workers in Haparanda's health centre alone live in Finland. As of 5 May, the current guidelines state that people commuting over the border must present an employer's certificate regarding the necessity to cross the border for work reasons. In their freely worded written statement, the employer must explain why the employee's commuter travel in the intrinsic travel-to-work area on the border with Sweden or Norway is essential. Regulations have cut down the traffic across the border drastically: compared to normal situation cross-border traffic has diminished by 97 per cent (<https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-11327093>). There were no universal guidelines as to what counts as a good enough reason to cross the border, but it comes down to the individual border control officer to determine whether the person is allowed to cross the border or not.

In addition to tremendous financial losses for the local economies, restrictions have caused immense individual problems. Not being able to get to work because of the restrictions might lead to lay-offs or even terminated contracts. At the moment, people are advised to avoid crossing the border even for work, and if they are required to cross the border, health authorities in Finland have advised them to stay in quarantine-like conditions for two weeks after returning to Finland. However, self-quarantine is a tricky question since there has been a lack of clarity about who is responsible for income losses during self-quarantine – the employer or the national social security services. The biggest concern has proven to be the health care situation in northern Sweden, a region that is dependent on health care personnel from Finland. Border communities are dependent on staff from Finland in hospitals in northern Sweden. Pajala municipality, for instance has about 50 cross-border workers from Finland both in mining and in health care (Sturk M, 2020)

If the restrictions are in place for a long period, it could result in an extremely difficult financial situation, especially in the border regions that depend largely on cross-border mobility. Border regulations have brought shopping, which normally is the most important financial activity in Haparanda, to a halt. But this also has an impact on small grocery stores along the border region in Sweden, Finland and Norway, which in the worst case scenario could lead to bankruptcies. If the jobs are lost even temporarily, gaining them back might be an almost impossible task and it will surely take considerable effort.

There are also some bureaucratic repercussions from the situation. For example, a lot of people have had to work remotely from their homes, which has an effect on health insurance, for example. If a person is living in Finland and working in

Sweden, but doing their work from home more than 25 per cent of their working hours, he or she has to fill in the A1 form to determine which country will cover his/her social security ( <https://www4.skatteverket.se/rattsligvagledning/1358.html>)

During the early summer, the restrictions have been eased somewhat. People with relatives and family matters and property in Finland have been allowed to cross the border from Sweden and Norway. During this entire time, the borders to enter Sweden have been open, since Sweden has taken a different strategy compared to other European and Nordic Countries to manage Covid-19, while other countries chose the lock-down strategy. Over the last few months, this has also revealed growing hostility and tensions between people living near the borders; for instance, there has been reported sabotage of cars and people being hostile to each other.

## **14. Discussion**

This report aimed to describe the existing knowledge about the northernmost region in terms of labour mobility between northernmost Finland, Sweden and Norway.

The questions that this report set out to answer:

- What is known about labour market mobility in the northernmost Arctic region?
- What can the available statistics and other knowledge explain about this region, its labour market and cross-border mobility?
- What do the labour markets look like? What are the dominant structures that can help explain these cross-border labour markets?
- Who are the people living here or commuting for work in the region?
- What is considered attractive about this region ?

This report has shown that there is a lack of official statistics about cross-border mobility in the three northernmost regions in Finland, Sweden and Norway studied in this report. This is unusual due to the fact that there are official statistics reported in the southern parts of these three countries, even though available statistics was not up to date. Previous statistics were based on a collaboration between the authorities in the Nordic countries. After this collaboration ended, there are no longer a comprehensive statistics of cross-border commuting in the Nordic countries. Due to problems with data exchange between countries, data is not been updated in recent years.

Our findings in this project during the pandemic have shown that the knowledge of what is happening in the north is based on local knowledge as its own extended labour market. Different nations were dependent of employees who commuted from other countries.

Local companies and authorities are aware of the importance of cross-border mobility in this extended labour market as well as the importance of border trade for the region. Our findings show the importance and the need for the North Calotte Cross-Border Advice Service centre, who are able to help commuters with problems related to cross-border mobility, as commuters are still limited by bureaucratic national taxation systems. Experiences from this project show that there still exist obstacles with cross-border mobility, even when working from distance in another country, in this case Sweden. This became visible when we temporary hired a Norwegian citizen living in Norway for distance work in Sweden. The same thing happened when we temporary hired a person with Swedish citizenship with a Swedish bank account living in Finland.

Cross-border mobility can be characterized both as forced and voluntary. Forced, since it is the labour market and its demand of labour force that affects cross-border mobility. As Olsson E, Berger S and Gottfridsson O (2011) have shown in a study about borderless life in border municipalities in Swedish Värmland, ties to a place where people are anchored in the home municipality counteract relocation, but at the same time, forced commuting occurs due to labour market demands. This is in line with Piippola's (2003) research, and it can be suggested that it also reinforces local identity and sense of belonging to the region. Mobility can also be motivated by the fact that it has historically always been this way that indigenous people in border municipalities have always commuted across the border. This is a part of the culture and language among indigenous people with roots in this region.

Our findings have also shown that labour market structures vary within the region, and we have clearly shown that the labour market is gender segregated, with male dominated industries such as steel, mining and the fishing industry on the one hand, and the female dominated education, health and social care sector on the other hand. The statistics also show that women and men commute to different labour markets; from a cross-border and regional perspective, there are cohesive labour markets that extend over national borders that affect people's everyday lives. This, in turn, can explain why women tend to move away from some municipalities in the area to a greater extent than men, if women do not choose to commute to another nearby labour market.

Further findings have also shown what affects the attractiveness of this region, that we called Arctic Attractiveness. This has been considered both from the students' point of view but also from a good example of how it is possible to attract people who have already migrated away back to the region. From the students' point of view, one reason for studying abroad was related to career planning, another was curiosity, but it also revealed that there is a lack of support from the universities in the Arctic North in lending a helping hand when arriving to a new country. Brain circulation among students is highly valued at universities, and refers to gaining experience from other universities, especially when there are no open positions at the student's university after completing a PhD degree. This has shown the importance and a need for collaboration among the Arctic 5 universities.

During this project, we all were affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, which in turn taught us even more about the Arctic region and cross-border mobility. These are three countries that have a historical and cultural tradition where people have lived in a community that extends across national borders. In the Arctic region, there were no obvious symbolic borders until the spring of 2020. This pandemic caused almost all Nordic countries to "lock down" and close their borders, except Sweden. The closed borders has brought insight into how people's everyday lives became limited and unusual in several ways, in opposition to how people were accustomed to living and working across borders. These different national strategies have caused tensions between people living close to the borders in our Nordic countries. One question that remains unanswered is if the pandemic has caused a lasting social change and therefore presented new challenges for cross-border mobility in the future.



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