11. Migration in the municipality of Enköping

*Urban or countryside living - two ways to pursue sustainability*

Wendelin Müller-Wille

11.1 Urban or countryside living

11.1.1 Growth on countryside

The population of the municipality increased up until 1994 (35,597 inhabitants) and then stagnated until 1998. Now the growth is on the increase again (172 people during the first six months of 2000 and a total population of 37,181 in the end of 2001, Fig. 11.1-11.2). However, the trend shows that the growth is taking place in the countryside. After the building boom of 1990 and the decline until 1996, a positive trend can be seen concerning new buildings in the countryside. On average, 25 houses per year are built in the countryside (Fig. 11.3). In the town of Enköping, there are about 300 empty flats (March 2000).

11.1.2 Commuting in both directions

11.1.3 “Settling in the country” - a local questionnaire

11.1.4 Conclusions

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**Figure 11.1** Population of Enköping.

**Figure 11.2** Age groups of Enköping in 2000.

**Figure 11.3** New houses in the countryside of Enköping municipality built 1980-2001. Each dot on the map is a house. A majority was built outside the city centre.
ENKÖPING

The slogan “Enköping – Sweden’s closest town” has existed since 1964 and describes the central position of the municipality in the Lake Mälaren valley. Good communications by both car and train make Enköping an attractive place in which to live and work (Fig. 11.5).

The municipality of Enköping developed during the Middle Ages, when the infrastructure was dominated by shipping. Today there is a great deal of manufacturing industry in Enköping, a hospital, an upper secondary school, and a regiment of the Swedish armed forces that focuses on information technology. Of the about 2,900 companies in Enköping, 2,000 are one-person firms with no employees, 15 companies have 50–199 employees and only two have more than 200 employees, the rest have fewer than 50.

Enköping is still a pronounced farming district, and encompasses 1,185 square kilometres, consisting of arable land (46%), forest (37.5%), other land (16%), and watercourses (5%). However, a structural change is in progress within the fields of farming and forestry. Farms are being merged and many farmers run companies in addition to their farms. People make their living in the towns but live in the country to a greater and greater extent.

11.1.2 Commuting in both directions

The number of job opportunities and the number of people with gainful employment changed a great deal between 1989 and 1998. Despite an increase in population, the number of job opportunities went down from 15,416 to 12,942 during this time, and the number of people with gainful employment went down from 18,267 to 16,397. This means that people were employed outside the municipality. During the same period, gainful employment outside the municipality rose from 2,851 to 3,455.

On the other hand, people who do not live in the municipality also work in Enköping. This means that people commute into and out of the municipality (Fig. 11.6-11.8). Commuters to Enköping come chiefly from Uppsala (23%) and Västerås (14%). Commuters from Enköping chiefly commute to Greater Stockholm (32%), Uppsala (30%), and Västerås (12.5%). It would be interesting to know in what professions people commute most.

The employment structure of Enköping shows that 40% of the women are employed within the health, medical, and
social services. The hospital and the office for municipality committees may explain this distribution.

Men are employed in trade and communications (18%), the extraction of minerals and the manufacturing industry (17%), public authorities and the armed forces (16%), and the building industry (15%).

Compared with the employment structure of the region as a whole, Enköping is above average as regards the health, medical, and social services fields, trade and communications, public authorities, the building industry, and agriculture, forestry, and fishery. The extraction of minerals, the manufacturing industry, credit agencies and real-estate management, research and education, personal and cultural services, and energy, water, and waste disposal management are less well represented.

11.1.3 “settling in the country” a local questionnaire

In order to find out why people move out of the municipality, people who had moved away from the town were asked for their reasons and for their opinions considering the best and worst aspects of Enköping.

The most prominent reasons for moving were the job market, family reasons, and the pursuit of studies.

Communications and housing were less important, and only a few gave the environment and taxes as reasons.

The worst aspects about the municipality were the choice of job opportunities, the Enköping spirit, the cultural activities, and the commercial service.

The size of the town, the sense of solidarity and safety, the schools and communications, the leisure activities, the health and medical services, and the care for children, the elderly, and the handicapped were approved of.

The municipality was praised for its housing environment, its position in the region, and its nature areas and parks (Fig 11.9-11.10).

Enköping’s population growth is more pronounced in the countryside. “settling in the country” was a questionnaire designed to clarify the motives for this (Tab. 11.1).

It was surprising that 69% had lived in the municipality before they moved to the countryside, 35% came from the town of Enköping, 29% were already living in the countryside, and 5% came from other towns in the municipality of Enköping.

Only 31% came from outside the municipality of Enköping, distributed as follows: Greater Stockholm (16%), Uppsala (5%), Västerås (1%), and other places (9%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is best or worst in Enköping</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>residential comfort</td>
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<td>3,2</td>
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<td>recreation, leisure activities</td>
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<td>employment possibilities</td>
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</table>

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11.1.4 Conclusions

Most of those who live in small houses built during the past ten years were already living in the municipality of Enköping.

The great majority of families were families with children.

Living in the country required a good many trips by car.

Half of those asked had gainful employment within the municipality, which is a smaller proportion than for the municipality overall. In other words, these people commuted to a greater extent.

The advantages of living in the country are the access to nature, peace and quiet, fresh air, and a good environment for children to grow up in.

The drawbacks are the distance to services and the state of the roads in the winter.

A total of 16% can work from home and 44% have an Internet connection.

Here it would also be interesting to know which occupational groups move to the countryside, divided according to entrepreneurs, employees, gender, and age.

How does the migration affect the finances of the municipality?

The report produced by the Swedish Association of Local Authorities, Growing and Shrinking, claims that it is difficult to prove that bad finances are related to a decrease in population. It is difficult to isolate the effects. In fact, it is the hard demographic pressure that causes the rise in costs. Figures show that costs for schools increased by twenty thousand million kronor between 1990 and 1998 owing only to increasing numbers of schoolchildren. The explanation offered in the report is that political ambitions concerning schools and day-care centres control the development of costs.

It is thus important that statistical facts be combined with political ambitions in order to make it possible to outline paths to a durable development of our society.

A personal note

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References


Enkätsvar “Att bosätta sig på landsbygden i Enköpings kommun” nov 1999 [Answers to the questionnaire “Settling in the countryside in the municipality of Enköping”, November 1999]