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Preliminary title of paper

The Impact of Migration Flows on the Population Structure of the Northern Swedish Inland, 1900-1950

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Abstract

Urbanization can have a significant impact on the demographic profile of rural regions. Large scale rural to urban migration will over time lead to an overall population decline in rural areas but has also been shown to affect other population structures such as the composition of age, gender and socioeconomic status. In Sweden the process of industrialization and subsequent urbanization began in the late 19th century, one region particularly affected by increased outward migration was the largely rural northern inland region. The overall aim of this paper is to analyse how migration flows influenced the population structure of the northern Swedish inland, 1900-1950. The study is based upon historical population data comprised of digitalised parish registers from the county of Västerbotten. The county was divided up into three regions based on occupational structure of the inhabitants: *rural* (consisting of all inland parishes and one coastal parish), *semi-industrial rural* (consisting of coastal parishes in close proximity of urban centres) and *urban* (consisting of the two larger coastal town parishes in the region, Umeå and Skellefteå). These regions are compared with regards to the aforementioned factors of age structure, gender composition and socioeconomic status. This longitudinal comparison will show the characteristics of the migration patterns as a result of early urbanization and how these affected long term population structures in regions with close geographical proximity but different economic structures.

Extended abstract

Background

During the 20th century Sweden experienced a process of population concentration, mainly as an effect of industrialization and subsequent urbanization. This concentration process was very prevalent during the 1960s and after the 1990s (Borgegård, Håkansson, & Malmberg, 1995; Bylund, 1966; Lundholm, 2007a; Pettersson, 2002). The largely rural northern inland region was particularly affected by this process which caused declines in population size, aging of the local population and a substantial male surplus (Löfgren & Thuresson, 2015; Nilsson, 2001; Pettersson, 2002). The overall progression of the Swedish industrialization and urbanization are well researched. Likewise migration trends of the last 30 years wherein migration motives as well as consequences for migrants, the localities they left behind and the ones they moved to have been described and analysed (Hansen, 1998; Håkansson, 2000; Lundholm, 2007b; Pettersson, 2002). However, historical migration have for the most part focused on the large overall societal causes and consequences of the outward migration during the 20th century (Bäcklund, 1983; Rolén, 1979; Söderberg, 1982; Winberg, 1977). We therefore only have a limited general knowledge about the characteristics of rural to urban migration during the first half of the 20th century.

Aim

The overall aim of this paper is to analyse how migration flows influenced the the population structure of the northern Swedish inland during the time of industrial breakthrough and increasing urbanization in northern Sweden. This is done by comparing the historic effect of migration on age, gender and SES structures in rural, semi-industrial rural and urban regions in the county of Västerbotten, 1900-1950.

Method

The source material of this paper consists of digitalized parish registers from the county of Västerbotten, 1900-1950, obtained from the POPLINK database.¹ The registers contain a wide array of information at the micro level for every year and individual. A total of 306 554 individuals are found in the data across the 14 investigated parishes, of these 181 153 have at least one recorded migration. As this paper focuses on migration flows as a result of urbanization moving is only registered as a migration if it crosses a parish boundary, internal migration within parishes is therefore omitted in this study.

For clarity the 14 parishes have been gathered into three regions depending on the HISCO, i.e. occupational, make up of each parish. Firstly, the two parishes that includes the cities of Umeå and Skellefteå had a very different HISCO composition than all other parishes, these two therefore make up the *urban region*. The rest of the parishes were for the most part dominated by agriculture and forestry as the single largest HISCO sector. However, parishes

¹ The registers have been digitalized by the Demographic Data Base (DBB), Umeå University, (Westberg, Engberg, & Edvinsson, 2016)

where over 50% of the occupational activities were related to agriculture and forestry were classified as *rural*, if less than 50% of the working population were occupied in these sectors the region was classified as *semi-industrial rural*. The characteristics of the migration flows in these regions will be analysed by the net effect of migration on the population structure in relation to age, gender and HISCO composition where after a comparative analysis can be formed as to discern how the regions were affected differently by migration over time. We will also in relation to this analyse variations in migration by gender, region and socioeconomic status, over time using discrete time event history analysis

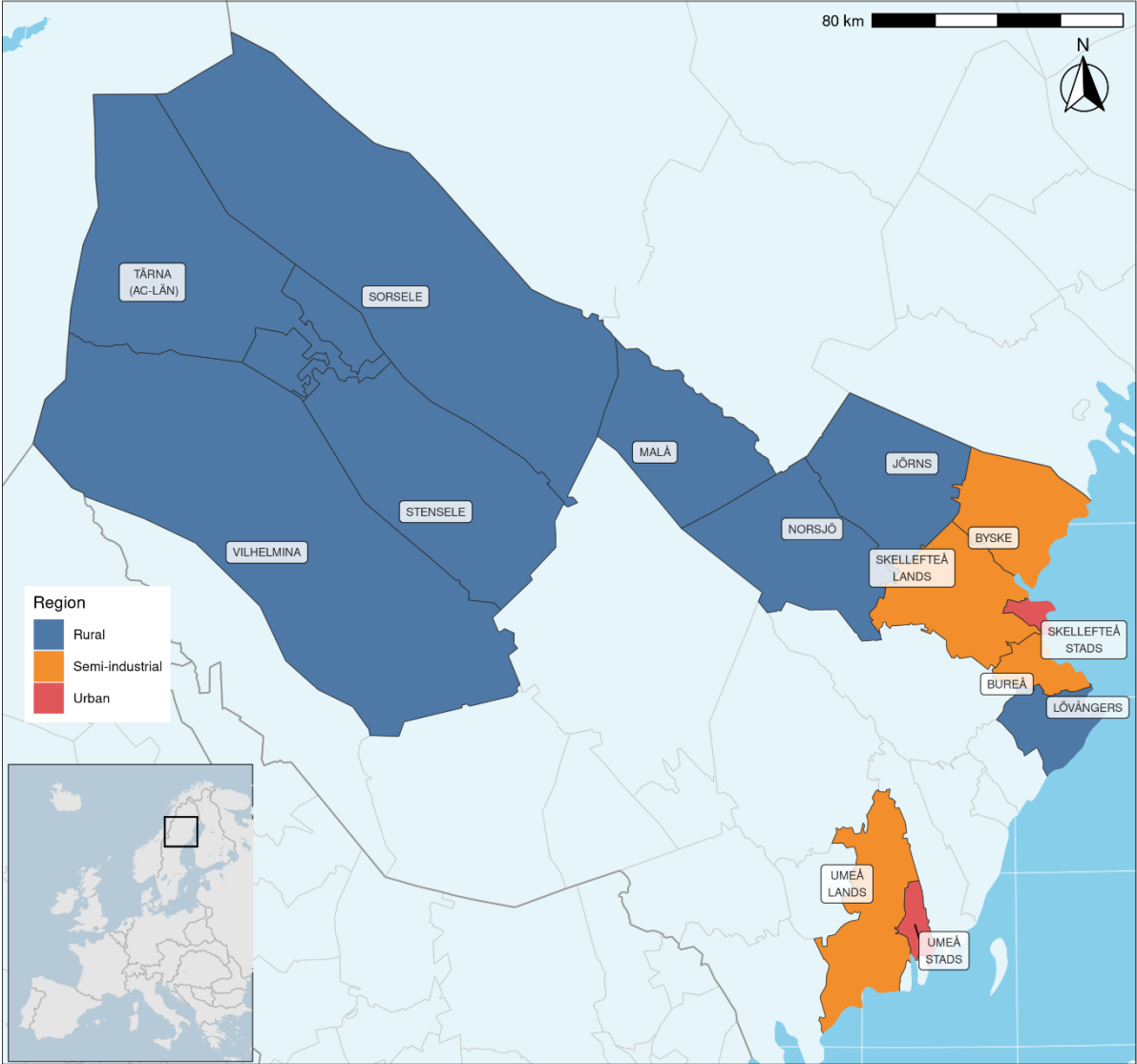


Figure 1. Regional division of the parishes in the study.

Preliminary results

As to determine trends over time the data have been divided into five-year periods from 1900-1950. As can be seen in figure 2 the *rural* and *semi-industrial rural* regions are characterized by high natural growth during the entire investigated period whereas the *urban* region is characterized by high migration growth spiking in the mid-1920s. Furthermore, the total population net change per 1000 inhabitants is well above the natural change in the urban region but mostly below the natural change of the other two.

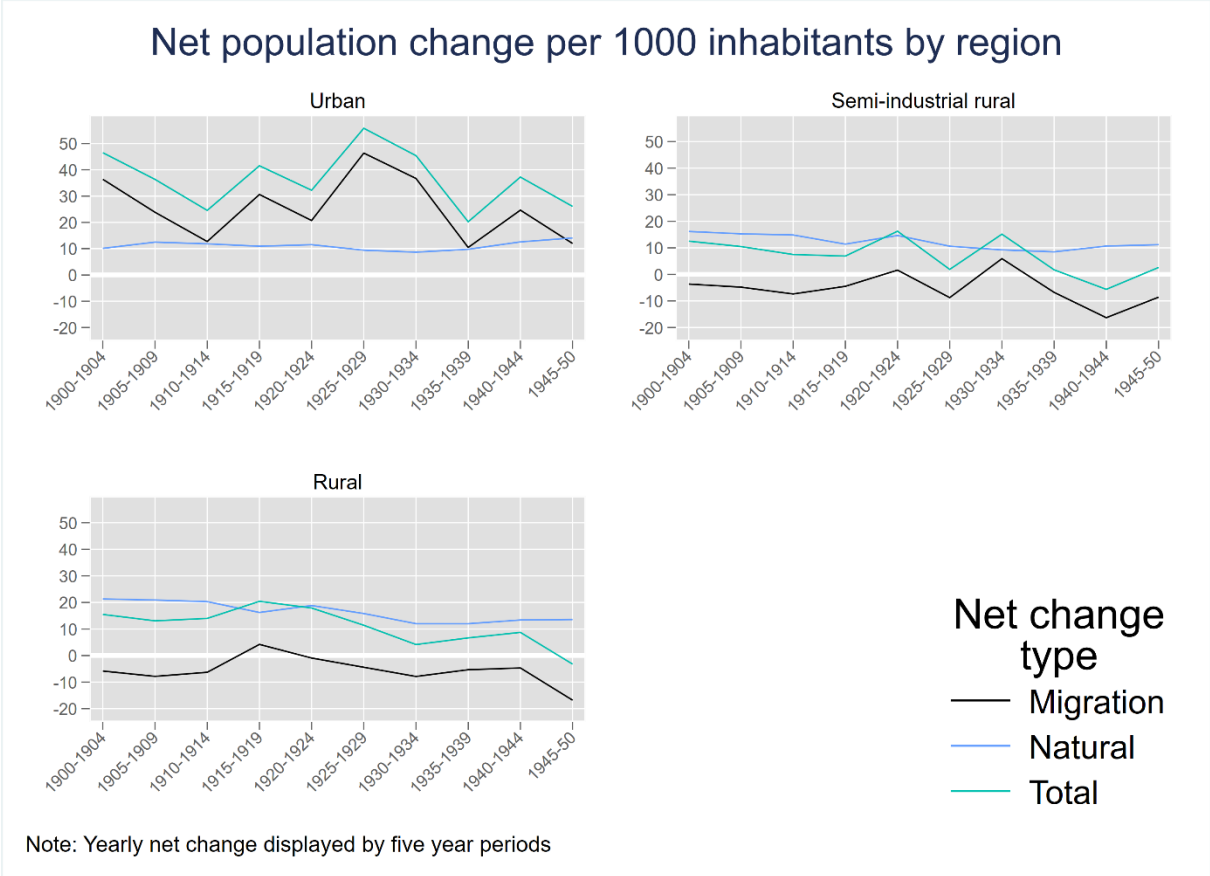


Figure 2.

Regarding the impact on the age structure, young people of working age are shown to have been the most likely to move into the *urban* region and most likely to leave the two others. The other age groups are overall very close to each other in regard to net changes with the oldest age group of 60- often contributing the least to net change as seen in figure 3.

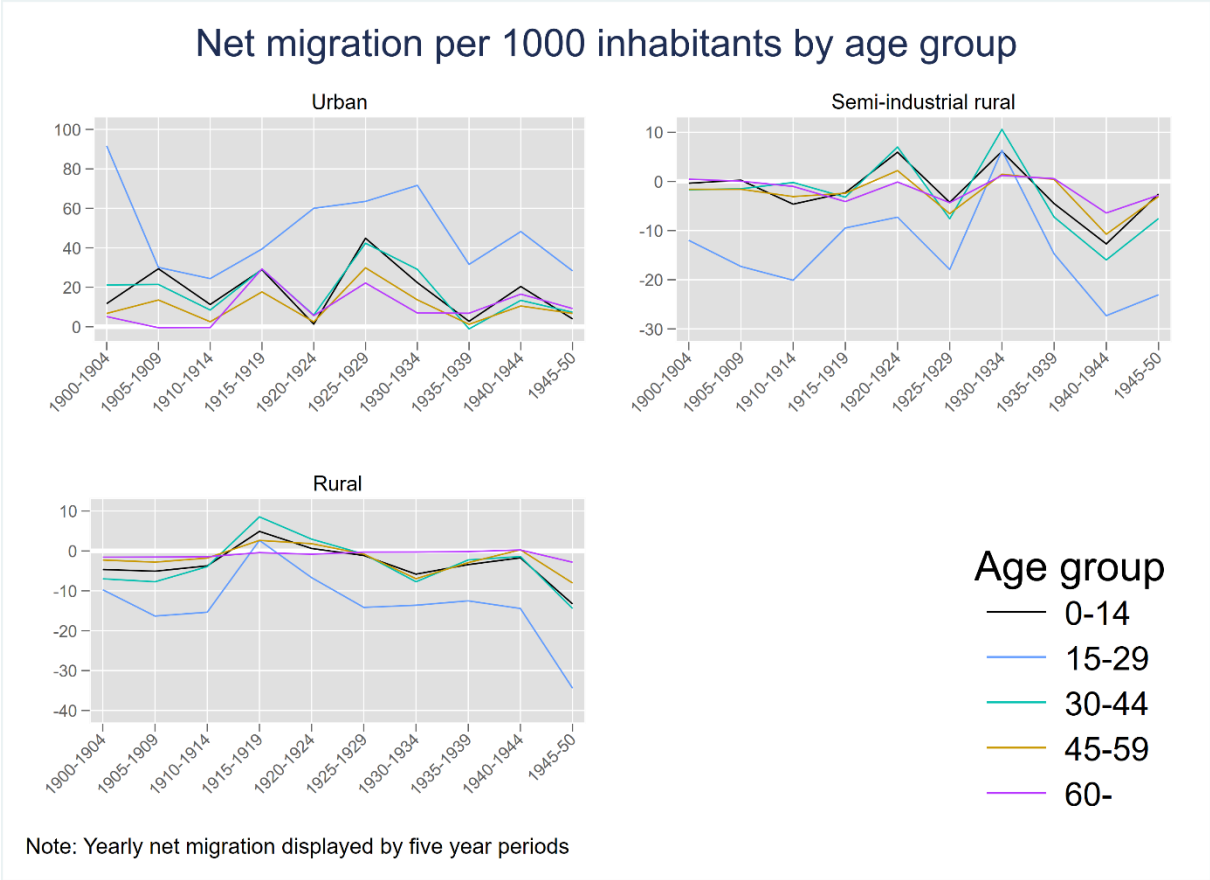


Figure 3.

There does not seem to be a large difference in the overall migration patterns of men and women, save for a large spike in male in-migration to the *urban* region in 1900-1904 and in the *rural* region where women had a slightly higher tendency to move out, especially after 1920 (figure 3), which is an early sign of the development of the contemporary pattern where young women move out of rural areas to a much larger extent than young men.

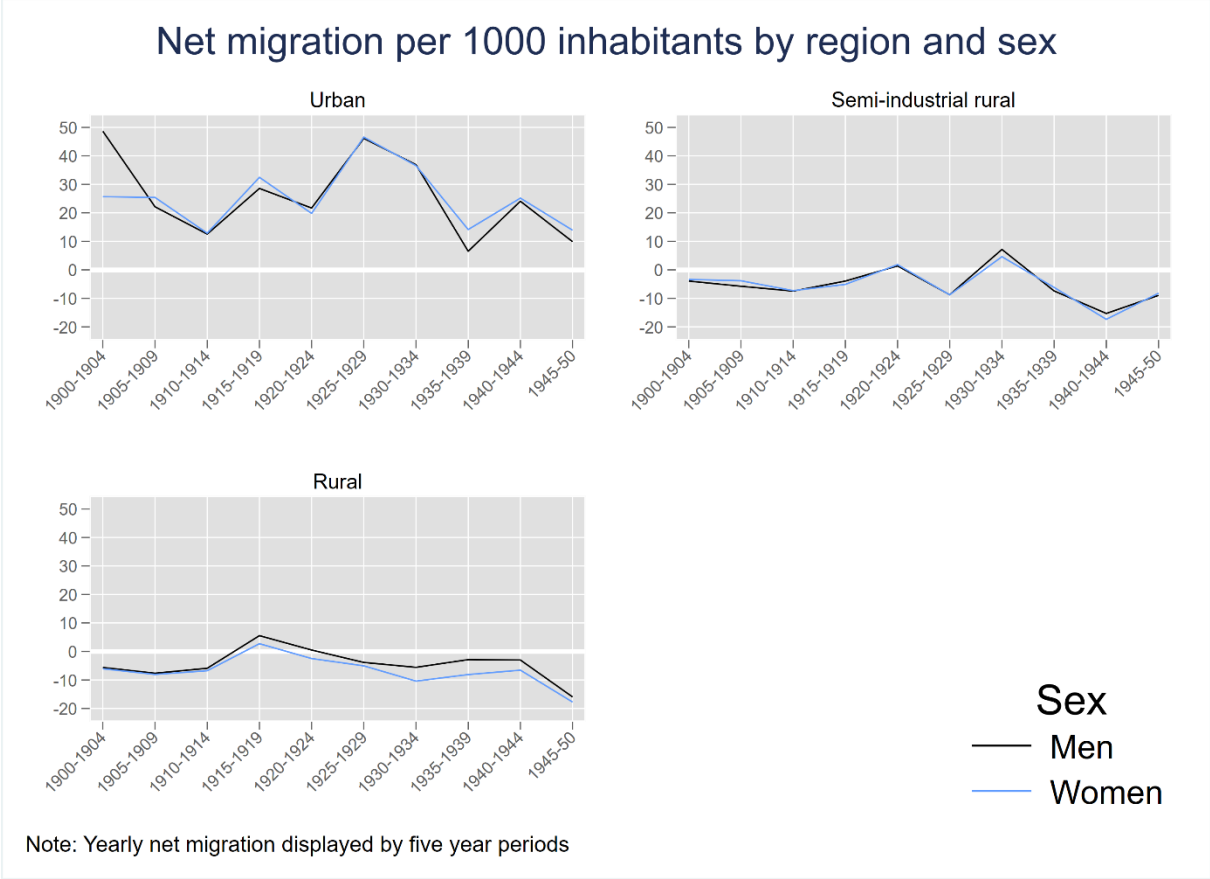


Figure 4.

Expected results

Our exploratory and descriptive findings so far suggest a number of expected patterns in terms of high net immigration to urban areas strongly contributing both to the overall population increase in these areas as well as working to shift the age-structure towards young working ages. Rural areas on the other hand exhibit marked net out migration already during the first half of the twentieth century in this region and population increase is completely driven by relatively high fertility compared to urban areas well into the twentieth century. The larger net deficit migration among women in the rural region suggest that the contemporary patterns of high female outmigration from rural areas causing skewed sex ratios has a long history that began to form already during the early twentieth century in this region. Questions that remain to be addressed pertains to the socioeconomic characteristics of individuals that migrated. This analysis will allow us to form some conclusions about how economic restructuring and industrialization influenced push and pull factors for migration and how they potentially changed during the first half of the twentieth century in Northern Sweden.

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