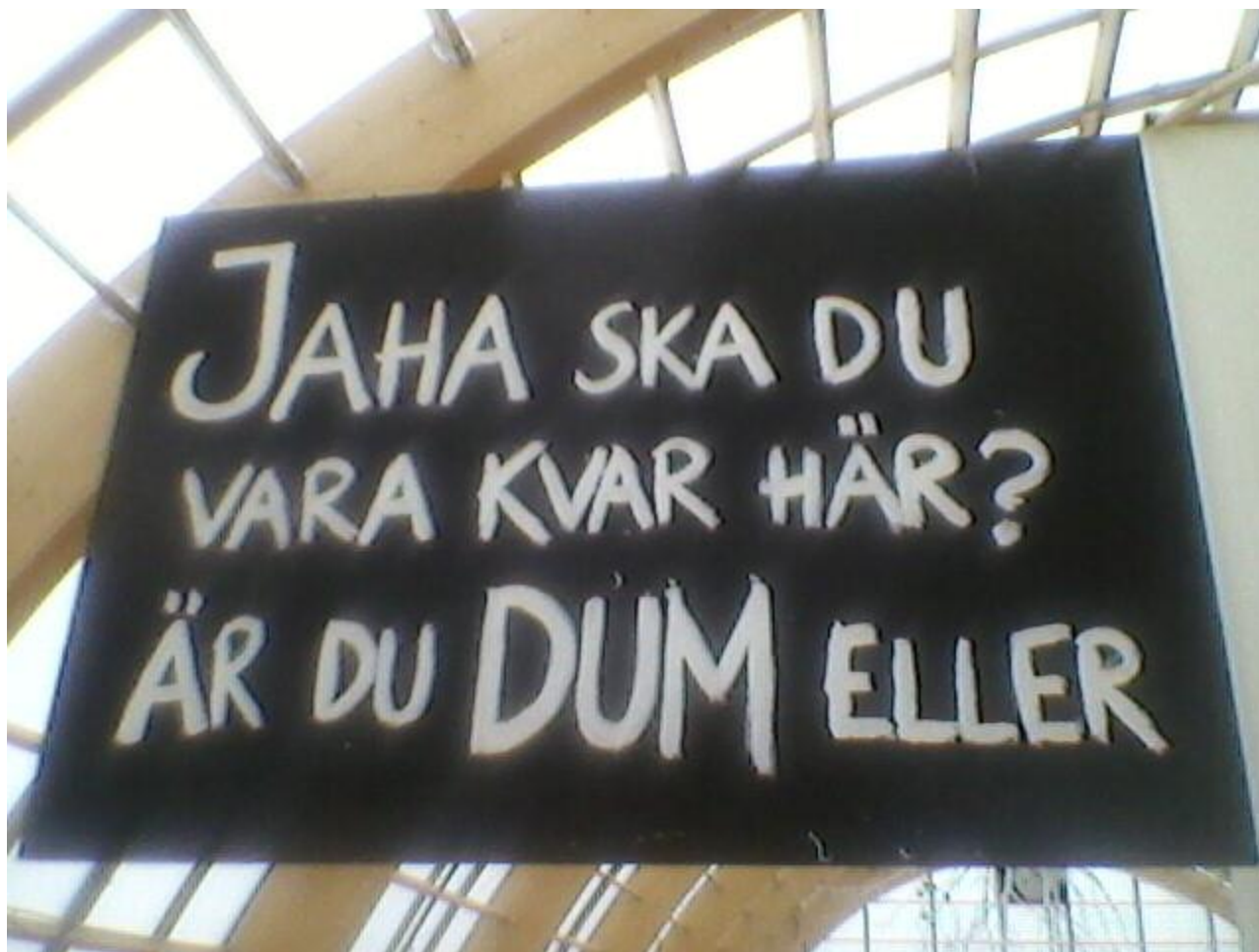
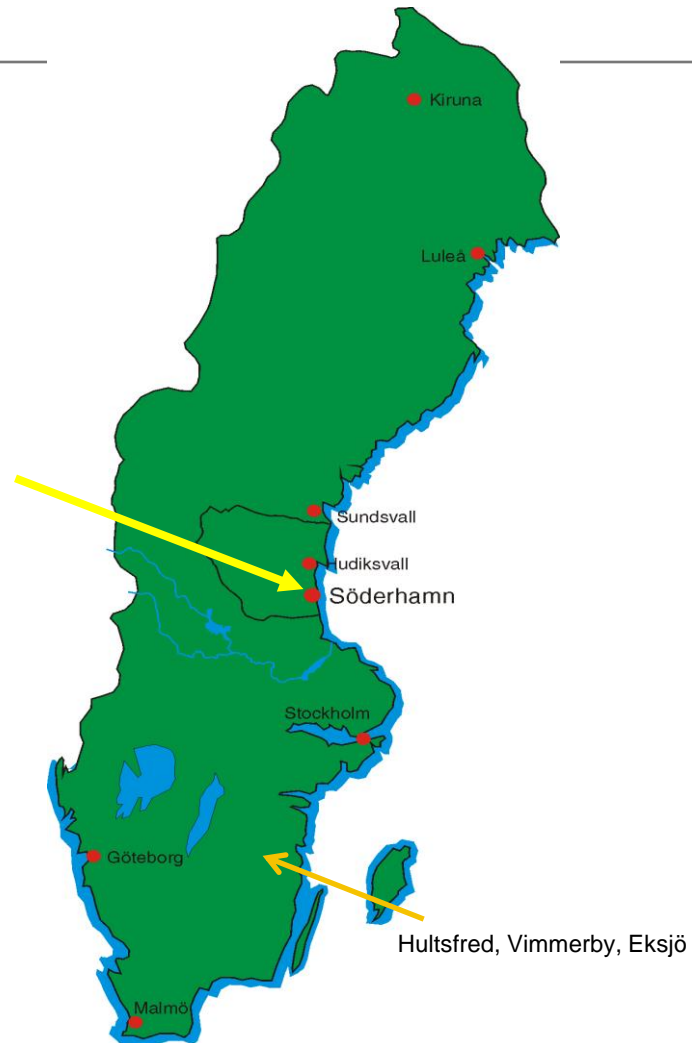


Yeah, are you staying here? Are you stupid or what



Söderhamn, in the middle - but still in the periphery ...



A local/regional problem:

Young people moving away and don't come back
(but is that the only problem?)

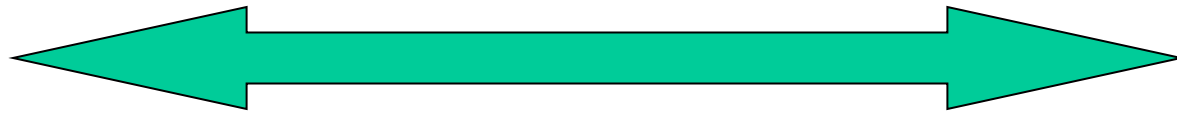
Move/stay? What do young people think before they know what they will do? And what do the adults think?

- How to know anything about it?
- Interviews, essays, group discussions, school work, survey, participation and observation – mostly among young people but also adults

Interviews and essays: Attitudes towards a future in the small municipality

positive

negative



girls,voc.

boys,voc. & theo.,

girls,theo.

Friends,family,
security and
trust is
important

Work is most
important, live
where
education/work
is available.

To influence, own
development. Get
out, get away, try
something new.

The survey confirms that social background and gender is important.

<p>Boys from workingclass: Wants to stay but are uncertain if it is possible</p>	<p>Girls from workingclass: Ok to stay but can leave too, are flexible</p>
<p>Boys from middleclass: Hometown is ok, but good work and status is somewhere else</p>	<p>Girls from middleclass: Hometown doesn't fit me, it's dull and boring</p>

Group discussions among youngsters

- Strong group norms became visible, especially in the theoretical groups.
- "Will you stay here? Don't you want to do something with your life?!"
- "I like it here, I don't request so much ..."

("Proper/normal") young people will move, according to the adults.

- - It is good and healthy that young people move away.
- – We will definitely not stop anyone from moving.
- – It is absolutely natural that young people move away.
- – It is not those who moves who is the problem, it is those who stays.

(Too) simple conclusions

- Young people are not interested in local/regional issues
- It's no use to get young people into local politics, they will move anyhow in a few years.
- Those young people who have some ambition are moving away from here.
- The only hope is that we can tempt them to come back when they start a family.

How do these expectations affect the youngsters?

- Survey: Do you think that the local politicians wants you to continue to live in the municipality?

Answering Yes, %	Boys	Girls
Established middleclass	69	67
Workingclass	28	31

A regional problem and a regional possibility?

One group of young people think they have some opportunities to influence, and are seen as youth with resources.

This group says to a high degree that they will leave the region.

One group of young people says that they have no influence – and they are not expected to have such ambitions or resources.

These young people shows the biggest interest for, and a will to stay in, the region.

Regionally rooted research contributes to development

“We got a kind of confirmation that something is really at stake now: we can lose an entire generation if we don’t get our act together. And what is our future? We can’t just invest in eldercare and see this as a right for those who built up our society, we also have to think about who it is who will make sure that we have a good and worthwhile society in the future.” (Municipality Commissioner of Söderhamn)

Söderhamn is staking 25 miljons skr (about 2,5 milj Euro) for youth projects and activities, 2008-2011(now regular), and starts a big project of entrepreneurial learning involving all levels of education. (www.soderhamn.se)

And it made a difference!

Young people have a more positive view of the municipality.

18-19 year	2003	2009
% who want to leave and probably not come back	31	21
% who want to stay "for the time being!"	3	26
% who think it could be a positive alternative to continue studying in Söderhamn	31	60
% who think it could be a positive alternative to live in Söderhamn with a "good enough job"	39	54

Young, rural AND proud!

- And now there is a group of young (and older) proud people meeting at a facebook, with over 2000 members!
- Purpose: to be a place for positive views of the municipality and to develop ideas and actions to make it even better.
- Lots of positive information, pictures, discussions
- Results (IRL), examples: Meeting with local politicians, Café open at evenings 3 days a week, Drive in cinema this summer, Picnic in city park in spring, Go to theater in company

Notice

The Urban norm affects us all!

- Rural youth don't feel that they can participate and influence.
- Values and norms directs decisions and actions.

It matters what the society does!

My new research: How to make young people involved in regional development. Who and how?

- What makes a difference – for different groups?
- What is needed?
- What is present when it happens?

Trying to contribute to answer that persisting question: So what shall we do then?



From "booring"to "making a difference"... by participation and influencing... is there a path to find?

Some clues ...

- Local conditions as a starting point, real problems
- Political awareness in visions and actions
- Adults are engaged in many levels
- Municipality levels are cooperating, all signs pointing in the same direction
- Long term expectations – sustainability and patience - and eagerness
- Early start, pedagogical awareness
- I keep searching ...

Want to read more?

- www.soderhamn.se/lottasvensson