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School of Planning and Media Design

European Spatial Planning and Regional Development

Masterthesis in European Spatial Planning and Regional Development

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Master thesis

The demographic decline
- The case of Sweden

The shrinking process in remote rural areas

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I Abstract

Keywords: counterurbanization, demographic decline, national equalisation policy, national regional growth policy, Norrland, urbanization, remote rural areas; rural restructuring, sparsely populated areas

In Sweden, growing processes and shrinking processes take place simultaneously since decades. The following thesis deals especially with the decline process in the remote rural municipalities in Sweden. The central question of the thesis is: how the national and municipal level in Sweden is dealing with the demographic decline in remote rural regions.

To answer this question, the thesis includes three parts. The first part is the theoretical framework the thesis. The second part analyses the measures at the national level with a focus on the national regional growth policy as a support measure and the national equalisation policy as a compensation measure. The dealing on the national process is characterized by policies to reverse the decline and to compensate the negative impacts. The third part analyses the dealing process on the municipal level. Thereby, the dealing process has more a practical nature. This shows the two selected case study of the municipalities Arjeplog and Jokkmokk. It seems very common that the Swedish municipal measures are characterized by a two-way dealing namely reverse the decline and secure the municipal basic services.
# Table of Contents

1. Abstract .................................................................................................................. 2
2. Table of contents ...................................................................................................... 3
3. List of illustrations ..................................................................................................... 4
4. Acknowledgement ..................................................................................................... 6
5. Glossary, nomenclature and acronyms .................................................................... 7
6. Introduction .............................................................................................................. 10
   1.1 Thesis background ............................................................................................... 10
   1.2 Goals primary research questions and limitations ............................................ 12
   1.3 Structure of the thesis ....................................................................................... 12
   1.4 Semi-structured qualitative expert interviews .................................................... 13
   1.5 Selection of the case studies ............................................................................. 14
7. Theoretical background ............................................................................................ 17
   2.1 The ageing challenge - a lower fertility meets a longer life expectancy .......... 17
   2.2 Rural restructuring ............................................................................................ 28
   2.3 Polarisation process with winners and losers .................................................... 40
8. The decline dealing process on the national level .................................................. 42
   3.1 The national regional growth policy ................................................................. 42
   3.2 The national equalisation policy ....................................................................... 44
   3.3 Critiques on the regional growth policy and the equalisation policy ............... 52
9. The decline dealing process on the municipal level .............................................. 54
   4.1 Population development on the local level ....................................................... 54
   4.2 Strategies to reverse the decline ....................................................................... 59
   4.3 Practical dealing process .................................................................................. 61
10. Concluding discussion ............................................................................................ 67
11. References .............................................................................................................. 72
   6.1 Literature ........................................................................................................... 72
   6.2 Online references ............................................................................................. 79
   6.3 Interviews .......................................................................................................... 81
12. Appendix ............................................................................................................... 82
   7.1 Pictures ............................................................................................................. 82
   7.2 Summary ........................................................................................................... 82
   7.3 Questionnaire .................................................................................................... 83
   7.4 A personal reflection ....................................................................................... 84
III List of illustrations

Figure 01: The different types of declining regions in Sweden .................................................. 11
   Nilsson, J.-E. 2010

Figure 02: The selection of the municipalities Step 1 ............................................................. 15
   Own figure on basis SCB. 2011a

Figure 03: The selection of the municipalities Step 2 ............................................................. 16
   Own figure on basis SCB. 2011a

Figure 04: The selection of the municipalities Step 3 ............................................................. 16
   Own figure on basis SCB. 2011a

Figure 05: Total fertility rate in European countries, 1960–2000 ........................................... 18
   Leridon. 2005:70

Figure 06: Mean age at first birth in European countries, 1960–2000 .................................... 20
   Leridon. 2005:71

Figure 07: Ideal family size in European countries, 1960–2000 .......................................... 21
   Leridon. 2005:72

Figure 08: Three dimensions of rural reconstruction ......................................................... 29
   Own figure on basis Pettersson. 2002:16

Figure 09: Responsibility fields of Local governments .......................................................... 45
   SKL and Ministry of Finance. 2008:18

Figure 10: Local revenues in Sweden .................................................................................. 46
   Rudebeck. 2008:2

Figure 11: Income equalisation for municipalities in 2008, outline diagram ....................... 46
   SKL and Ministry of Finance. 2008:12
Figure 12: Outcome of income equalisation for municipalities in 2008 SEK/inhabitant per municipality group, weighted average ................................................................. 47
SKL and Ministry of Finance. 2008:15

Figure 13: Cost equalisation for municipalities in 2008, outline diagram ......................... 48
SKL and Ministry of Finance. 2008:17

Figure 14: Extra structural costs by category ........................................................................ 48
SKL and Ministry of Finance. 2008:18

Figure 15: Outcome of cost equalisation for municipalities in 2008 SEK/inhabitant per municipality group, weighted average ................................................................. 49
SKL and Ministry of Finance. 2008:23

Figure 16: Structural grant 2008 SEK/inhabitant .................................................................. 50
SKL and Ministry of Finance. 2008:26

Figure 17: Local government financial equalisation 2008 ..................................................... 51
SKL and Ministry of Finance. 2008:7

Figure 18: Example of outcome of the equalization and structural grant system .................. 52
SCB. 2011c, SKL and SCB. 2009: 35

Figure 19: The municipalities Arjeplog and Jokkmokk .......................................................... 54
Own figure on basis SPGA. 2011

Figure 20: The population development of Arjeplog and Jokkmokk ....................................... 56
SCB. 2011a

Figure 21: The population pyramid of Övertorneå 2003 and 2025 ........................................... 57
Amcoff and Westholm. 2006:10 on basis of SCB

Figure 22: Forecasts with the different responsibility fields and related age category ............ 65
Månsson. 2009:1 on basis of SCB.
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Lastly, I offer my regards and blessings to all of those who supported me in any respect during the completion of the thesis.

Martin Böhm
Classification of the Swedish municipalities after Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions and the Ministry of Finance (2008):

**Metropolitan municipalities (3 municipalities):** Municipalities with a population in excess of 200,000 inhabitants.

**Suburban municipalities (38 municipalities):** Municipalities in which more than 50 per cent of the night-time population aged 16–64 years commute to work in some other municipality. The most common commuting destination has to be one of the metropolitan municipalities.

**Large cities (27 municipalities):** Municipalities with a population of 50,000–200,000 inhabitants and an urbanisation level of more than 70 per cent.

**Commuter municipalities (41 municipalities):** Municipalities in which more than 40 per cent of the night-time population aged 16–64 years commute to work in another.

**Sparsely populated municipalities (39 municipalities):** Municipalities with less than 7 inhabitants per km² and less than 20,000 inhabitants.

**Manufacturing municipalities (40 municipalities):** Municipalities in which more than 40 per cent of the night-time population aged 16–64 years are employed in manufacturing and industrial activities.

**Other municipalities, more than 25,000 inhabitants (34 municipalities):** Municipalities that do not belong to any of the above groups and have more than 25,000 inhabitants.

**Other municipalities, 12,500–25,000 inhabitants (37 municipalities):** Municipalities that do not belong to any of the above groups and have 12,500–25,000 inhabitants.

**Other municipalities, less than 12,500 inhabitants (31 municipalities):** Municipalities that do not belong to any of the above groups and have less than 12,500 inhabitants (33).
**Escalator regions:** Fielding developed in the year 1992 the concept “escalator regions”. An escalator region is an attractive location for the youth, which provides the opportunities to develop the own career faster than other regions. Typical examples for these escalator regions are metropolitan regions (Fielding, 1992: 10).

**Finansdepartement:** Swedish Ministry of Finance

**Norrland:** This historical term is used for the northern part of Sweden. Norrland includes the fifth northernmost counties, Norbottens län, Västerbottens län, Jämtlands, Västernorrlands län and Gävleborgs län. Thereby, the classical term describes everything northern of the Darn River as Norrland (Petersson. 2002:10). These five counties represent 60 percent of the area Sweden’s. But they are only sparsely populated. Norrland contains approximately 13 percent of the inhabitants Sweden’s with approximately 1.116.000 people (Ostseenet.de. 2011).

**OECD:** Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

**Peripherality:** The term peripheral or remoteness is different used in different contexts. Thereby, it is usually connected to an understanding that the periphery is a social constructed space with a specific social situation. Furthermore, the term peripheral is in general used for the description of an opposite for the centre. It means, that both terms are related to each other. In Sweden the term peripherality is equal with the term “glesbygd”, which means low density countryside (Eriksson 2010:24).

**Postproductive countryside:** The idea behind the postproductive countryside is the rural areas should transform from a production dominated landscape to a landscape for consumption (Van Auken. 2011:67). The landscape is characterized by functions, like housing, recreation and tourism. This transformation is connected with the attempt to locate the production and consumption at one place (Pettersson. 2002:19-20).
Rural Restructuring: This approach is a holistic approach to explain the phenomenon of rural transformation (Pettersson. 2002:13). The concept incorporates various dimensions; which to each other are related. This multi-dimensionality describes complex system where the processes of changes are close linked together (Hoggart and Paniagua. 2001: 42). Thereby, they can be divided into 3 overarching groups: the political, the economic and the social – cultural dimension.

SCB: Statistika Centralbyrån: Statistics Sweden

SKL: Sveriges Kommuner and Landssting: Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions

Tätort and Småort: Population centres and smaller settlements: As one of the few examples has Sweden a statistical definition at the national level for the classification of urban (tätort) and rural (småort). Thereby, population centres have more than 200 inhabitants and not more than 200 meters distance between the houses. Smaller settlements are classified with a population between 50 and 199 and not more than 150 metres place between the houses (SCB. 2007a; SCB. 2007b; Westlund and Pichler. 2006:3-4; Petersson. 2002:11).

TFR and CFR: Total Fertility rate and Completed Fertility rate: The total fertility rate (TFR) is defined as the average number of births, which a woman would have in her reproductive phase (ages between 15- 49) and bear children at each age at the rates observed in a particular year or period. The actual childbearing of cohorts of women is given by the completed fertility rate (CFR), which measures the average number of births 50-year-old women had during their past reproductive years (Bongaarts and Feeney. 1998: 271).
1 Introduction

1.1 Thesis background

The demographic decline is a European wide phenomenon and at the same times a challenge for the EU. Currently some areas like Eastern Europe, the area of the former German Democratic Republic and the northern peripheral areas of the EU have a declining population since decades. But most of the statistics and observations are assuming that in the near future many more areas of the EU (European Union. 2010:230; Oswalt. 2004:113; Pack et al. 2000:9).

Although Sweden is a country with a deeply rooted growth policy, there is a large number of declining municipalities. In Sweden population redistribution is detectable since decades. Thereby, many regions in Sweden have a negative population development. But at the same time, Sweden has fast growing regions in the whole country. The decline increases the polarization processes between regions (Niedomysl and Amcoff. 2010:5). Sweden has some suburban municipalities which doubled their population in the last 40 years. In contrast some municipalities in rural Sweden lost nearly 50 percent of the population in the same time period (SCB. 2010). Those separate processes require an individual handling. The problem is that the main public attention is focused on growth rather than declining municipals. This means that there is only a marginal attention on an adjusted “decline policy”. The following thesis is a contribution to this research gap. The central question is how the national and municipal level in Sweden deals with the demographic decline in remote rural regions.

To face this question, it is important to understand the frame conditions of Sweden. In one hand you have the earlier mentioned processes of the polarization in Sweden. In the other hand there is a need to understand Sweden is a sparsely populated country. It is one of the most sparsely populated countries of the EU. Sweden has only an average of 20 inhabitants per sq kilometres. Thereby, Norrland is one of the regions with the lowest average in the EU (Nordregio. 2005:1-2). The common conditions for the sparsely populated areas are the sparse settlement pattern, the low population density, the long distances as well as the importance of the primary industry or the industries, which are connected to the further processing of natural resources. This condition shows unique conditions as well as special challenges for the governmental institutions (Petersson. 2002:9).

To explain more of the complexity in the dealing process, it is useful to distinguish between the different administrative levels in Sweden. The country has three administrative levels: the national, the county and the municipal level. Through the weak position of the county level, the national and county level will be treated in the following thesis as one level/unit. The
The major responsibility field of the elected assembly of the counties are the health care. Only Skåne and Västra Götaland have taken some other responsibilities from the national level like regional policy and culture (SKL. 2003:4).

The national and the municipal level are crucial in the dealing process. Both levels have a different approach in their policy. The national level has different compensation and support measures in relation to the declining regions. The municipal levels have the direct consequences of the decline. They have the pressure to deal with the decline like shortages in case of school system and care system. The decline affects the whole municipality.

In general there exist three different types of declining regions (see figure 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of region</th>
<th>Affected area</th>
<th>Period of time</th>
<th>Most probable cause</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Industrial urban region</td>
<td>Vibrant (short term)</td>
<td>Economic reasons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Rural regions</td>
<td>Vibrant (short term)</td>
<td>Change of lifestyle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Remote rural regions</td>
<td>Long-term</td>
<td>Change of lifestyle</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The process that is usually given the most attention is the industrial decline as a result of the collapsing labour market in industrial regions. The reason for the collapse of the labour market is the loss of the former economic basis. The second types of a declining region are rural areas with decline as a short term phenomena. These are regions, where shrinkage and growth processes turn from time to time. The third kind of declining regions are mostly remote rural areas. The decline by the third kind is usually characterized by a decline over decades. In Sweden especially the rural areas in the Swedish “Hinterland”, like the most municipalities in Norrland are affected from this kind of demographic change. Despite political effort to support these kinds of regions, the decline continues unabated (Nilsson, Jan-E. 2010).

The Swedish municipality represents all three kinds and every kind has different reasons and needs a different dealing strategy. Furthermore, the most forecasts show an increasing negative population trend especially within the remote rural regions (Niedomysl and Amcoff. 2010:3). The remote rural regions in Sweden are in general without some exception similar with the sparsely populated regions. (SKL and Finansdepartment. 2008: 33). Thereby, these third kind of declining regions have the most pressure to act or to deal with the decline. So, municipalities from the third kind of declining regions are the most suitable for further examination. The chosen municipalities are Arjeplog and Jokkmokk.
1.2 Goals, primary research questions and limitations

The thesis is an analysis-based work with a clear focuses on an evaluation of the Swedish administration measures, which are related to the shrinking process. The goal is to find the measures in Sweden, which dealing with the decline to show the current status of the “decline management process”. Furthermore, one aim is to get a deeper understanding of the Swedish administration levels and how the different levels namely national and municipal deals with the challenge. To understand how the Swedish administration deals with the decline the following questions are helpful:

Main-question: 1. How the national and municipal level in Sweden are dealing with the demographic decline in remote rural regions?

Sub-question: 1. What are the conditions in declining rural peripheral areas in Sweden?
2. What are the means on the national level, which are connected to the demographic decline?
3. In which way do the municipalities deal with the decline?

The thesis is limited to evaluate only the Swedish case. To evaluate the Swedish decline, the dealing process from the national and the municipal level are crucial. On the national level, the work is limited of the national regional growth policy as a support measure and the national equalization policy as a compensation measure. On the municipal level the limitation is to analyse the policies by the third kind of remote rural areas.

1.3 Structure of the thesis

The thesis starts with a theoretical background of the demographic decline in rural areas with a focus of the fertility decline and rural restructuring as main explanation models of the decline in the EU as well as in Norrland. The rural restructuring is an important model to explain the developments in rural municipalities. In this context lays the decrease of fertility rate as an overarching process in almost all regions of Europe.

Therefore, the next part focuses how the Swedish policy deals with the decline in the national administration levels. The thesis analyses in detail the national regional growth policy as a support measure and the national equalisation policy as a compensation measure.
In the fourth chapter, the focus is on the municipal level in the Swedish “Hinterland”. The thesis analyses two selected municipalities, which are located remote. To support the statement, the thesis deals with Arjeplog and Jokkmokk from the Swedish “Hinterland” as examples for a continuous decline. This part over the municipalities is focusing on the practical decline dealing processes.

The concluding discussion in the end should summarize the results from the thesis paper and answer the research question. The work will conclude with a discussion the future prospects of remote rural municipalities. The last part is a discussion about the influence possibilities.

1.4 Semi-structured qualitative expert interviews

To understand the material better and to get a deeper understanding is one suitable measure an expert interview. Experts are described by Meuser and Nagler (1991) as people, which are part of the examined field of activity and have an in-depth knowledge. The experts are directly involved in the research object (443). The experts are in the case of the following thesis all people, which deals in the policy with the shrinking process. The interviewees are persons from the municipal administration in Arjeplog and Jokkmokk. In Arjeplog, I conducted an interview with a responsible person from the Kommunalråd, Britta Flinkfelt Jansson. She has at the same time the function as the mayor of the municipality Arjeplog. Additionally, I talked with the “Utvecklingsstrateg” Ingela Edholm Fosberg and Evelina Lestander. In Jokkmokk, I conducted an interview with Stefan Andersson. He is the chairman from the Kommunuralråd. As an additional information source and as a kind of practice for me, I conduct another interview with the Kommunledningskontoret Joakim Malmdahl from the municipality Högsby.

The interviews were face-to-face interviews and each of them took between one to one and half hour. The spoken language was English. Dexter (1970) as a pioneer researches in the area of communication skills argued in his book “Elite and Specialized Interviewing” that an expert interview should be an open interview. This would to accommodate the expert and give him the chance to speak more freely about the research object (5). But despite to this more open way, there is a need to have a certain structure. Otherwise there is a threat to lose the plot. To connect these both points is the chosen interview method a semi-conducted expert interview. This method gives the researcher the freedom to expand on certain points which he thinks it is important (May. 2001:123).
1.5 Selection of the case studies

The following section deals with the selection criteria’s of the case study municipalities Arjeplog and Jokkmokk. With 290 municipalities from 25 counties, there is a need to limit the selection (SCB. 2007a:100-101). The limit in this work is to get two case studies. The first selection criterion is that the possible municipalities should have a continuous decline over the last decades. Therefore, the bases for this indicator are data from SCB which shows the population changes from 1969 - 2009. Former data are unfortunately not available in SCB. But you have to keep in mind that the shrinking process started earlier than 1969. However, the data from 1969 till 2009 is an adequate time frame and shows already the continuous decline. To choose the different categorization parameters of the percentage by the loose of inhabitants is a subjective choice. But it is arguably a reasonable one to illustrate the different importance of the shrinking process for the municipalities. As a result the selection is oriented at the municipalities with a high decline. The data highlighting that some municipalities lost in the last 40 years continuous partly far above 20 percent (SCB. 2011a). These most affected municipalities get the most attention in the work.

The second selection criterion is connected with the size of the municipality. Thereby, all municipalities over 6,000 inhabitants are sorted out. The reason is that the smaller municipalities have a larger pressure to manage the shrinking process. At some point collapses the current systems like the maintenance of the municipal basic services. For instance by too few pupil in the school system, the system has to be adjusted. These challenges are more likely in smaller municipalities. The small municipalities already reached this point. The limitation of 6,000 inhabitants is again a subjective choice. The result is that 17 municipalities fulfil criteria’s above. 12 municipalities are thereby located in Norrland. Therefore, the next criterion is that only the municipalities from Norrland are considered in the further thesis. Norrland as a region has special conditions in case of the decline. The most remote rural areas or in general called sparsely populated areas are localised in Norrland (Nilsson and Rudebeck. 2010:1).

All the selected municipalities lost over one third of the inhabitants in last 40 years. Furthermore, there was no abrupt loss of inhabitants. The municipalities have all a constant process of decline (see figure 2). But the further research is based on the municipalities Arjeplog and Jokkmokk. The pair is chosen after the administrative division. That means that the two municipalities are located in the same county, which make a comparison easier. Furthermore they are reasonable representatives for the sparsely populated areas in Norrland. Arjeplog and Jokkmokk represent ideal the sparsely populated municipalities with long distances and a remote location.
Figure 02 The selection of the municipalities Step 1

Own figure on basis SCB, 2011
### Selected municipalities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ragunda</td>
<td>8757</td>
<td>7609</td>
<td>7119</td>
<td>6489</td>
<td>5609</td>
<td>-35.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bjurholm</td>
<td>4049</td>
<td>3401</td>
<td>2991</td>
<td>2746</td>
<td>2500</td>
<td>-38.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vindeln</td>
<td>7849</td>
<td>7096</td>
<td>6632</td>
<td>6142</td>
<td>5519</td>
<td>-29.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norsjö</td>
<td>6326</td>
<td>5748</td>
<td>5349</td>
<td>4804</td>
<td>4361</td>
<td>-31.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malå</td>
<td>4595</td>
<td>4296</td>
<td>4142</td>
<td>3723</td>
<td>3295</td>
<td>-28.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sorsele</td>
<td>4438</td>
<td>3911</td>
<td>3570</td>
<td>3244</td>
<td>2743</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dorotea</td>
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<td>3935</td>
<td>3757</td>
<td>3364</td>
<td>2900</td>
<td>-32.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Åsele</td>
<td>5535</td>
<td>4744</td>
<td>4139</td>
<td>3710</td>
<td>3133</td>
<td>-43.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>4034</td>
<td>3815</td>
<td>3455</td>
<td>3143</td>
<td>-30.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jokkmokk</td>
<td>8341</td>
<td>7165</td>
<td>6815</td>
<td>6146</td>
<td>5210</td>
<td>-37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Överkalix</td>
<td>6324</td>
<td>5145</td>
<td>4724</td>
<td>4304</td>
<td>3670</td>
<td>-42.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Övertorneå</td>
<td>7683</td>
<td>6269</td>
<td>6118</td>
<td>5746</td>
<td>4920</td>
<td>-36.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 03** Municipalities which are in the closer selection

Own figure on basis SCB. 2011

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**Figure 04** Final selection

Own figure on basis SCB. 2011
2 Theoretical framework

2.1 The ageing challenge – a lower fertility meets a longer life expectancy

“Today more than half of the world population has fertility below the replacement level i.e., less than two surviving children per woman” (Lutz. 2007:15). Almost all European countries reached a final stage of the demographic transition. This final stage is characterized by a low fertility as well a low mortality (Lutz. 2007:16; The ESHRE Capri Workshop Group. 2010:591). The total fertility rate declined in whole Europe sharp in the last 40 years and is now almost in all European countries less than the replacement level of 2.1 children per women. Thereby, the fertility rate varies between 1.2 and 2.1 children per women (Leridon. 2005:68). This shows how important the decline of the fertility is for remote rural areas in relation to the population decline.

A increasing of the population is a favourable structure for the development of countries because their emerging a constant flow of young people, which enter the labour market. With the demographic transition and the decline of the fertility rate comes it to adverse conditions for the further development. At the same time declines the mortality through an increasing medical care in the developed countries. One result of the declining mortality is the increasing life expectancy. The decrease of young people and the increase of elderly persons lead to a transformation in the composition of the population. Forecasts are assuming that more than 30 percent of the European inhabitants will be over 60 years old in the near future (The ESHRE Capri Workshop Group. 2010:591).

To measure the fertility rates there are two different indicators useful. The one is the Total Fertility Rate (TFR) and the other is the Completed Fertility Rate (CFR). In the moment, the TFR is the mostly used indicator in the fertility research. “The TFR is defined as the average number of births a woman would have if she were to live through her reproductive years (ages 15-49) and bear children at each age at the rates observed in a particular year or period” (Bongaarts and Feeney. 1998:271). That means the TFR is a hypothetical measure because no real group of women has experienced or will necessarily experience this TFR rates. Another possible measure is the CFR. It detects the births which had a 50 year old woman during the past productive years. The advantage of this indicator is that it detects the true reproduction of a group of women. Nevertheless, the disadvantage is that the indicator represents only the past experience. The reason is that the currently 50 years old women did most of their childbearing some decades ago. The TFR is in contrast to CFR a measure to give up-to-date information’s on trends and developments of the fertility rate (Bongaarts and Feeney. 1998: 271). That is the reason, because the following part takes especially the TFR into consideration.
In the year 2005, the TFR was in 15 European countries between 1.31–1.50 children per women and in 10 countries less than 1.30 children per women (The ESHRE Capri Workshop Group. 2010:592). To illustrate the different developments within Europe’s, the countries are divided by the major geographical area (see figure 5). Thereby, it is noticeable the similar trends between the countries.

Figure 05 Total fertility rate in European countries, 1960–2000
Leridon. 2005: 70
All European countries detected a sharp decline of the fertility. The decline was similar between the most European countries. Only few exceptions exist. But in general the Nordic countries have not such a high decline than the other European countries. One special development was in this case the development of Sweden. Sweden had a large increase of the TFR between 1980 and 1990 and after that the TFR declined again to 1.54 children per women to the year 2000 (Leridon. 2005:69). After the downturn of the TFR, the fertility increased again to a higher level of 1.67 children per women the year 2008 (The ESHRE Capri Workshop Group. 2010:592). The other exception is France has still very high fertility rate close to the replacement level (Leridon. 2005: 69).

The CFR is in contrast to the TFR higher. For instance women belonging to the generation from 1965 and so were 35 years old in the year 2,000. This generation had an average CFR of 1.5 children per women in Germany, 1.6 children per women in Italy, 1.9 children per women in the most Nordic countries like Sweden as well in Great Britain and 2.0 children per women in France (Leridon. 2005:69).

Additionally to this point, another finding is the general increase of the mean age at birth of the first child (see figure 6). The increase of the average age of the first childbearing has large impacts. These mean age increases in every European country (Leridon. 2005: 71). For instance, the age of the women at the first birth was in most European countries 28 to 29 in the year 2,000. In contrast stands thereby 1970, where the average age of the women at the first birth was 24-25 (Frejka and Sobotka, 2008:18).

The last important development in relation to the fertility rates is the discrepancy between the desired and the realized family size. The finding was thereby that the desired family size in all countries is higher than in reality (Fahey and Spéder. 2004: 31). But decreased the desired family size in the recent decades (see figure 7). In the Nordic countries recorded thereby the smallest decrease in the desired family size. The desired family size declined in this case much more in West Europe. There exists only one exception by all European countries. France had an increasing desired family size instead of a decline. Quite the opposite is the case. In the recent decades the desired family size increased (Leridon. 2005: 71-73).
Figure 06 Mean age at first birth in European countries, 1960–2000

Leridon. 2005: 71
Additionally to these general trends, especially the rural areas were affected from a decline of the fertility rate. The cities had general a lower fertility rate than the rural counterparts. The process of rapprochement between the differences of rural and urban is called urbanization of rural areas (Ruth. 2008). The former distinct border between urban and rural becomes more and more blurred. It is possible to characterize the rural areas as well the remote an urbanized rural area. The urban lifestyle in the rural community has an increasing importance. One reason is new communication measures like television (Cloke and Goodwin. 1992: 19-40). But this means that the traditional higher fertility rates of rural areas decline converging to an urban level.

This general decline of the fertility rates led to shifts in the age structure of the population in Europe. There is an increasing of the pensioners in comparison to the workforce and the youth. Additionally this pensioners getting older through the declining mortality and need in the
ongoing age more medical care. In the European average, the life expectancy has risen from 67 years in the year 1955 to nearly 78 years in the year 2008. This in addition to the low fertility increases European wide the proportion of people over 65 from 9.5 percent of the total population in the year 1950 to 17.08 percent in the year 2008 (Davoudi, Wishardt and Strange. 2010: 795).

But why are decline the fertility rates so sharp and how can the policy effects this development. The next parts focus on these questions. Thereby the focus is especially on the fertility rates. Mortality is not considered because it is unlikely that the modern societies are willing to limit the growth of the life expectancy and the reasons are obvious. Therefore, the next part focuses only on the fertility. The decline of the fertility rate is a complex phenomenon. These reasons vary from country to country. The cultural differences, political decisions as well economic differences are possible explanations for the different developments (The ESHRE Capri Workshop Group. 2010:592). The following part deals with some approaches to explain the fertility rates. But it is only a selection and not all possible reasons and phenomenon are taken into account.

One of the first theories to explain the decline of the fertility rate is called the demographic transition theory. This theory predicts that an increasing living standard lead to a decreasing mortality through a better medical care. Later are declining than the fertility rates. The theory explain the former development in the developed countries, where the mortality rate started to decline in the 17th century and decreased more rapidly in the 18th century. This decline of the mortality followed a decline of the fertility rates 100 years later. Today this development repeats in a lot of emerging countries. Thereby, the theory explains the general developments. But the theory cannot explain what the next step is after the transformation in societies with a low fertility and a low mortality (Lutz. 2007:16).

To explain the further development in the developed countries is the low fertility trap hypothesis more useful. But at the moment, there is a lack of practical data to support the theory. In the moment there is a lack of research to support this approach. There is the assumption that the low fertility is a self-reinforcing process, which led to a bifurcation between the countries. There is the possibility to divide the countries in countries, which are only a marginal under the replacement level and the countries, which are far below the level. It means the fertility rates of first group will stabilize of a similar level like the years before (The ESHRE Capri Workshop Group. 2010:593). But the second group will become more problems because of a low fertility rate:
“Those that have been well below replacement for longer periods would enter a downward spiral of birth rates due to negative population momentum, declines in ideal family size among younger cohorts as a consequence of being socialized in a low fertility setting, and worsening relative income of young couples as compared with their parents” (The ESHRE Capri Workshop Group. 2010:594).

The transition process has different reasons. In one hand, the fertility rates are influenced through economic factors, the level of education inside the population and as well the employment and family composition. In the other hand, the values and attitudes of the men and women are changing in the last decades. Furthermore, the fertility rates reflect just as biological changes and technological changes like the availability of contraception as well new legislation about the abortion (The ESHRE Capri Workshop Group. 2010:592).

Some research focused of the theories on the economic reasons as an explanation model. The costs of children are therefore an important argument. The expansion of the women education with more employment opportunities and higher wages led to rising childrearing costs because the standard rises as well. This led to the assumption that women’s would prefer to work additional to the child care (Vikat. 2004:1-14). Thereby, the fertility rate depends on the economic costs and benefits for the children. These economic costs may differ between the income levels. For instance a middle class family has other claims for the education of children than other population groups. The weak point of the theories is the assumption that the childbearing is a rational decision making process with a clear focus on the economic basis. That means the parents calculate in advance the possible costs of a child before they make this decision. This seems not as usual (Vikat, 2004:36-38; Gauthier. 2007:324; The ESHRE Capri Workshop Group. 2010:594).

In contrast to a focus of the economic background, the social-cultural theories have the focus on changing individual values. Thereby, one central approach is the theory of the second demographic transition. This renewed transformation reflects the changes in relation to the personal goals, the relationships, the family formation and the importance of the religion. Thereby, behavioural and normative changes are taken place recently in Europe (The ESHRE Capri Workshop Group. 2010:593).

One consequence of the changing values and social conditions is the reduced desire to get children. The Finish survey from Virtala et al. (2006) shows an increasing desire under the Finish female students to have no children in the last decades. The same is detectable by the male students (315). Already mentioned was a decline in the desired family size. Additional to his point, not only more people want no child, couples want fewer children. The average family size
is continuous decreasing. It remains true that the majority of the population want to have two children (rather than zero, one or more than two) but between the desire and the reality is a difference, and this is connected to a large number of reasons and variables (The ESHRE Capri Workshop Group. 2010:594).

Another challenge of the transition is the postponement of childbearing. This delayed childbearing means that more and more women’s get’s a child in a later stage of her live. Through this postponement of the childbearing, the affect is more and more couples cannot reach the desired family size. They started too late with the child bearing (Broekmans et al. 2009: 482). With an increase of the age decreases the fertility. After 35, there is a significant reduction of the probability for a woman to get pregnant. Even this varies from women to women. But it is a general remark (Broekmans et al. 2009: 466). Data from the National Survey of Family Growth shows this development. The infertility rates increased from 6 percent by women fewer than 24 years to more than 30 percent in the group 35-44 (The ESHRE Capri Workshop Group. 2010:595).

The reasons for the delayed childbearing have various causes. Often mentioned is a change of the lifestyle as one major cause. Though changes of values, the couples have been forming stable partnerships and marrying at later ages than for instance in the 80’s. With later stable partnerships, the average age birth delayed even because the desire to fulfil a certain number of children is connected to a stable life. But today the relationships are seems less stable (Lutz. 2007: 17).

Lutz (2007) shows another important cause for this delayed childbearing, namely the increasing education: “It is widely acknowledged that the expansion of education for both men and women in most European countries has been associated with a significant postponement of childbearing” (17). Another point is the globalization, which led to an increasing competitiveness. Through the globalization there is a need to be more flexible and more mobile. The people have to be ready to work in different places. The result is that people relocate without regard to partnerships. Lutz (2006) says in connection to this: “Modern economic conditions are sometimes characterized as being structurally unfriendly to establishing a family” (29). This can be one reason for the postponement of the childbearing. But this development cannot explain the whole phenomenon for instance France is one of the countries where the average age of the first births is very high (Frejka and Sobotka, 2008: 26).

Beside the socio-cultural changes, there is another point often mentioned point in the literature namely the increase of the contraception. About the influence of the contraception have the researchers divided positions. For instance Leridon (2006) have doubts about the reduced fertility through the availability of the contraception’s. In contrast stands Lutz (2007),
who connects the availability of contraception to the reduction of the fertility rate (614-617). Lutz (2007) used to support these statements with retro perspective surveys, which shows that 10 to 30 percent of all births are classified as unplanned. Thereby, between the different countries are existing a great variation. The availability after Lutz and the use of contraception measures, reduce the possibilities of an unexpected pregnancy (17). Leridon (2006) agrees to these points, but for him the motivation is more important:

“However, motivation always comes first: when couples are not worried about how many children they have, a baby boom may occur, with many ‘not really wanted’ births. When couples want to avoid births for any reason, they can largely succeed even without elaborate contraceptive technology, even if some unwanted births may still occur” (614).

In contrast to the reduction of the unexpected pregnancies, there exists even a reduction of the fecundability. Already mentioned above, one reason of the reduced women’s fecundability is the postponement of childbearing. But there exist even a reduction of the men’s fecundability. A study in Edinburgh, Hamburg and Leipzig as well in Denmark shows all a similar result. The study shows that approximately 20 percent of the young male inhabitants are not able to be father child on the natural way. Thereby, it seems like that this trend increased in the last decades and will go on (Lutz. 2007: 17). All these points’ shows the decline of the fertility is a complex social-cultural, economic and medicinal phenomenon. Therefore, through the complexity it seems like very difficult to influence this development with policy measures.

The connection between policies and the fertility rates have a large complexity. It is dependent on the kind of policy, the level of the benefits, the conditions of eligibility, the income opportunities, norms and many more. For instance Gauthier (2007) identify three channels in which way have the policy an influence of the fertility beside the promotion of Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART) to providing treatments for the infertility. One channel is to reduce the cost for children like governmental subsidies and the second one operates with an increase of the family’s income. The third one operates through an increase of the preferences for children. Many other factors operating through the same channels which makes it difficult to isolate the impact of policies. It is hard to measure and isolate the fields with an impact. This is the reason about contradictory findings between different researchers in the research field (324-340).

In general, there exist two sides. Both have different opinions about the policy influence. Some believe in a large impact and other say that the impact is only marginal. Thereby, the EU has a strong belief in a policy impact by the fertility rate. The European Union has recognized the
problem and sees it as an important challenge for the further development of Europe’s. The section which addresses possible policies to increase the fertility rates has the supposedly euphemistic title “Promoting demographic renewal in Europe” (Commission of the European Union. 2006: 12).

One starting point for the European Union is the possible reduction of the discrepancies between the ideal family size (and in the consequence to the individual wish to have a number of children) and the reality. Already above mentioned, there exist a difference between the imagination and the real number of children in Europe. The reasons for this are various obstacles in the family planning and the EU want to reduce them (Commission of the European Union. 2006: 12; Lutz. 2007:16-17).

Even the Nordic country focuses on this approach. One measure is for instance to shape harmony between work and family life. The goal is to support the women to increase the fertility. In the most Northern countries are the fertility rates higher and more women work outside their homes. One result is thereby the public childcare is readily available (Hoem. 2005:564). In contrast stands the Southern countries like Italy or Greece. These countries have in general low levels child care support, barriers in case of the part-time work and a low state support for families. These barriers to increase the fertility existed already before the decline of the fertility rates (The ESHRE Capri Workshop Group. 2010:597).

A family friendly policy means in the case of the Nordic countries, the support of families with different measures. One measure is the compensation of child-rearing costs, the state support the of the child well-being and develops or support the female employment a gender equity. This adopted policy which should increase the fertility increases the employment of parents and reduces the gap between the desired and realized family size (The ESHRE Capri Workshop Group. 2010:597).

Another approach of the Swedish policies is the universalistic approach. In contrast to low fertility countries like Germany, the Swedish administrations are the Swedish supports rules and benefits independent of the social status, marital status and so on. They have a high flexibility and foster independent from the traditional view of family. In contrast to this support programme, the German support is strong connected to the traditional family. Germany uses a familiastic approach that means the support measures are focused on the family status and the benefits are directed to families (Hoem. 2005:566).

Even France is seen as a good example for the increase of the fertility rate through policies. France has thereby a long history of a fertility increasing policies. In the case of France, there exist large redistribution measures in the tax system as well direct child benefits from those with no or only few children to those with three or more. This system is carried out continuously.
over many decades. The development is one or the major reason that France can not the same
decline experienced like in the most surrounding countries (Lutz. 2007:17).

The evaluate the importance of policies in case of the fertility rates, there is a need to
know if the policies have an impact on the total number of births in a cohort or of the timing of
the births. Timing means in this case the tempo of the mean age at a successful parity. A policy
which influences the total number of births reflects a long-term impact, while timing reflects
more a temporary impact (Gauthier. 2007:334). Studies which using age- and parity specific
fertility rates have shown that the policies have more an impact on timing than of the total
number of births. This tempo-effect was even observed in the Swedish case. In Sweden, the
parental-leave allowances were held by 80 percent constantly only if the next child was born in
the next 24 months (or after 1986 30 months) after the prior birth. One result was a reducing the
space between the first and the second births. But it cannot mean that the total numbers of births
are increase through the measure (Hoem. 2005:565; Gauthier. 2007:334).

If there is a long-term impacts is in the moment uncertain. In one hand there is a lack of
research, which deals with the impacts and on the other hand, it is problematic to evaluate the
family friendly policies (Hoem. 2005:565). In a larger size the comparisons suggest that the policy
differences may explain the differences between countries. But on the other side, different
researches made different studies to this and see only a marginal influence (The ESHRE Capri
Workshop Group. 2010:597). It is assumed that each measure has approximately an impact of
0.02 or 1% of the total fertility rate (Sleebos. 2003: 44). But this is connected to characteristics of
the country. In some countries the implementation of new measures has an impact and in other
countries nothing or only a marginal impact happens (Sobotka et al. 2005: 134). Other elements
seems as more important like the culture and values (see for instance Blanchet and Ekert-Jaffe’.
1994; Gauthier and Hatzius; 1997; Hank and Kreyenfed 2002; Andersson et al. 2004).

As a consequence, the ESHRE Capri Workshop Group (2010) concludes:

“Government policies have only small effects on fertility rates, however, whether the
governments transfer cash to families for pregnancy and child support or provide payments for
assisted human reproduction […] Support of education and compatibility of work and family life
are the most likely strategies in the long-term to improve prosperity and allow couples to have
the family size they prefer.” (599).

This shows that it is uncertain how important the policy influence is in case of the
fertility. Nevertheless some countries have a higher fertility than others and one possible
explanation is that these reflect the national policies. One positive example is Sweden with a fertility rate close to 2.1.

To summarize it, the reasons for this process are various and interwoven. The described reasons are only a selection, which are seen as most crucial. The various reasons show the complexity of the phenomenon of the declining fertility. It seems like that the most important point is the change of lifestyle. But this point is close connected to a changing job situation and as a result comes to the delaying childbearing and of course to the cultural values in the country. But additional, other points have high significance. This complexity makes it difficult to influence the fertility rate with policy measures. The most researches see only a policy impact with a short term increase of the fertility rate. A long term effect is uncertain. Even the policy measures have an influence, the influence seems very low. Nevertheless the policy measures are a possible explanation for the different fertility rates in Europe, where France have a number close to the replacement level. Even Sweden has a relative high fertility rate. But even the fertility rate close to the replacement level, it is still under it. That means without taken migration into account, the fertility rate is still not enough to have a stable population. Furthermore, despite the Swedish fertility rate is in the moment at a level close to the replacement, for the 20-30 years it was far below this replacement level. This means that there exist today fewer potential mothers especially in areas, which have a lack of in-migration in the last decades. This means that despite an increasing fertility rates in the recent decade, the total population will decline because only fewer persons can have a children.

2.2 Rural restructuring

The above mentioned development considered here only the points of lower fertility and higher life expectancy as an overarching transformation process for the developed countries. In addition to the overall transformation process of the whole of society, there exists special developments or transformations in the rural areas. A possible explanation model for the developments in the rural areas is the concept of rural restructuring (Pettersson, 2002:13). The target is the description of the processes behind this transformation and to bases the events not only in the local context. The local developments are mostly influenced by a larger scale of events (Pettersson, 2002:13). The concept incorporates various dimensions, which are related to each other. (Hoggart and Paniagua, 2001: 42). However, the wide and vague description of the approach rural restructuring is at the same time the major critique. Through the wide and vague
use of the concept there is one danger of an almost “empty” concept (Hoggart and Paniagua. 2001: 42).

One of the main points of the concept is the multi-dimensionality. Thereby, different researches define different dimension of rural restructuring. The general view divides the rural restructuring in three fields of dimensions, the economic change, the socio-cultural re-composition and the transformation of the role of the government (Hoggart and Paniagua. 2001: 46; Marsden. 1996:250).

The following chapter uses even these dimensions to analyse the development in remote rural areas (see figure 8). These three dimensions include other concepts or theories like urbanization or counter urbanization.

The first field is the political dimension. Every political decision has an impact on the rural areas as well on remote rural areas. The focus of this part lays on the Swedish policies as well some overarching worldwide transformations like the collapse of the Soviet Union. One general trend was in this case the deregulation in the last decades. In the Swedish case is the changes expressed through the reduction of the public sector employment inside the municipalities during the 80s and 90s. Especially, small municipalities are affected from the reduction because the public sector is an important employer (Petersson. 2002: 24-25).

But at the same time, there was another important development namely a decentralisation of certain state activities. Many of these functions are located in larger cities. Similar tendencies were in the school system as well in the cultural fields which were concentrated in larger towns and new highs cools were founded to support these regional centres. This implemented or increased the development of the regional centres but on the other side, it is weakened the smaller municipalities. The infrastructural situation as well the job opportunities shifted to the larger cities as one consequence, the situation of the smaller municipalities get worse (Hallin et al. 1999. 20-34).

Furthermore the political decisions after Persson and Wiberg (1995) received an increasing market orientation. The central government decentralized more functions and responsibilities to the municipalities. This stands in contrast to the reduction of the public jobs in
the smaller municipalities. To support the developments in the smaller municipalities, the Swedish government introduced the equalisation and regional policies (102-106). Both are important for the smaller municipalities and are described in the third part of the document.

A political change with an international importance was the breakup of the Soviet Union. This change was important not only for the direct affected countries. It was important for the world economy as well the worldwide politics. Two factors were especially for Norrland important. In one hand a significant disarmament in the Western world. In the other hand there emerged new countries out the former Soviet Union and the Baltic Sea region. In Norrland, a large number of regiments were disbanded. These affected especially cities like Skellefteå and Kiruna. The other side is a shifting in the markets and economic development. New markets were opened up and new competitors grow out the former Soviet Union and the development in Sweden has shifted (Pettersson. 2002:16).

An important political change in Sweden came with the Swedish entry in the European Union in the year 1995. Through this membership got Sweden access to the Structural Funds of the European Union. This entry follows a substantial increase of the economic resources, which now available are for the regional development. Furthermore, it strengthens the regional level in the Swedish planning model. It has since the entry an increased importance because the EU fosters especially the regional level. An expression of that are the län Skåne and Västra Gotaland in Sweden, which has as a kind of experiment the regional level more responsibilities than in the traditional Swedish administration hierarchy (Nilsson, Jan-E. 2010).

Another important point of the Swedish joining to the EU was that large areas of Sweden as well of Northern Sweden have been objects of different initiatives like the INTERREG initiatives. Thereby are exists a lot of different initiatives like the “INTERREG IVA North”. This programme is attempted to strengthen the sparsely populated areas with different measures. It is a co-operation programme between the northernmost regions in the countries Sweden, Finland and Norway (Europa.eu. 2010).

This co-operation idea is a point in the “regional growth agreement” of the Swedish government. It was an ambition to introduce a more overarching approach for a regional policy with the inclusion of all regional actors and all societal perspectives. Furthermore it should create a good environment for the enterprise development. The goal was to accommodate the regions different bases for growth through co-ordinations of the regional policy with other policy areas like labour market, economic development and education. Furthermore this horizontal model has a focus on sustainable development and creates strong regions (Hudson and Ronnblom. 2007: 47-509.)
Close connected to the political dimension is the economic dimension. Today is the central term globalization. Globalisation is a widely used term for the descriptions of an all-embracing phenomenon for the current development in many fields (Marsden. 1999:505). But the term is especially used for the changes in relation to the economic conditions. One impact is an increasing international trade of primary resources and of the secondary processed products. Thereby, the local boundaries of production of resources and processing decrease. Worldwide production chains take their place. That do not mean that the distance loose completely the former importance. But they have been weakened. Another point of globalisation is the increasing number and importance of worldwide operating transnational companies, global acting finance operators, faster and cheaper transportation means, new and increasing number of communication technologies and a standardisation of commuter markets (Pettersson. 2002:16).

This decay of the primary industry has two crucial reasons. In one hand the relocation of the primary industry production to cheaper developing countries and on the other hand a rationalisation. The primary resource productions were relocated into countries, where the enterprises can cheaper produce. This led to job cuts in the developed countries in the primary production. Another impact of the increasing competition was the rationalisation of the primary industry. It came to a job cuts inside this primary production through an increase of the efficiency and therefore a decrease of the number of employments (Rodriguez-Pose. 1994:325).

The transformation has a negative impact of the economic development of especially regions with a “very narrow industrial base” like one-company towns. The rationalisation and the resulting closures of some production facilities in such unilaterally oriented areas have a large negative impact for the residents and the local economy. One example is the mining industry in Norrland. Many mining objects have to close like Laisvall in Norbotten in the year 2001. The surviving mining industry had undergone a strong rationalization and downsizing process. Even other industries are affected from this process like the manufacturing industries as well agricultural and forest industry (Pettersson. 2002:16-17). The rationalisation process reduced the employment in the agricultural sector dramatically (Van der Ploeg et al. 2000: 392). One problem is for a rural area that through long decades of focussing of primary industries, the education level is lower than in the urban counterparts. There was no need to have higher education in a primary industry dominated landscape (Pettersson. 2002:17).

The larger cities compensated this development through a growth in the service sector and other industries. The rural municipalities have even an increasing number of new industry enterprises and jobs. But the total number of jobs decreased continuous because the rural areas lost mostly more jobs in the primary industry. The emergence of new industrial jobs as well as the lack in the service sector led to a decrease in the total employment. Examples for this
development are the mono-sectoral oriented regions (Lundmark and Malmberg. 1988: 289-300). Through the reducing of the importance of the agricultural sector in the developed countries, others industry sectors like the manufacturing and service industries took their place in some rural areas. But in contrast to this development, other local services which are aimed for the residents are reduced through the increasing mobility of the private households (Marsden. 1999:506). The people can commute now longer distance. This has the consequence of a disappearing of some local bounded services like the corner shops in smaller settlements. The people drive now to the bigger shops. The problem is the reduced availability for local services for people without a car (Marsden. 1999:513). With this increasing mobility, more and more people from the rural areas work in the city and commute every day (Pettersson. 2002:18-19).

Another problem is gender specific differences in case of the job market. The lack of service jobs it affects especially the job opportunities for women. Despite the economic restructuring, the rural areas or remote rural areas are dominated from heavy industries or primary industries. It means, there only limited job opportunities in rural areas for women. The labour market for women is today the service sector and they are mostly located in urban areas. Thereby, service jobs are still important in the rural areas but this rural service jobs means especially jobs in the basic services like health care and postal service. This kind of service is in the rural areas as well as urban areas important. Furthermore the most women, who live in rural areas, still are working in such services. But you find the new attractive kinds of service jobs like in the producer services and consumer services mostly concentrated in larger towns. This leads to increasing out-migration especially from young women (Dahlström. 1996:259-262).

In this context came it to a development of a new concept namely the post-productive countryside. The decline of the economic importance of the primary industries has created space for a discussion over alternative or a complementary use of the rural areas. One idea is that the rural areas should transform from a production dominated landscape to a landscape for consumption (Van Auken. 2011:67). This kind of landscape is characterized by functions, like housing, recreation and tourism. It should be a transformation to locate the production and consumption at one place (Pettersson. 2002:19-20). Tourism seems as the future for the rural areas. This ongoing process is an attempt for a diversification of the economic basis (Van Auken. 2011:63). The countryside has capacities for the touristic development through so called “non importable goods” like the landscape or other natural values (Van der Ploeg et al. 2000: 392). This economic transformation of production to tourism shows clearly some examples in Sweden. Some areas have increasing leisure housing and an increasing number which is converted from leisure housing to permanent housing. It came to a transformation of primary resources to a tourist attraction (Lundmark. 2006:19-23). One example is the fish stocks like salmon which was
In the social-cultural dimensions have the remote rural municipalities’ different developments in the same time. The social-cultural dimension is close connected to the migration process of the population on the countryside. Fielding (1982) for instance concludes that the migration behaviour is crucial for growth or decline of the population (1-15). Migration is today a crucial factor to influence the population development of a region because of the in general low fertility in the industrialized countries. Two crucial processes have a large impact on the social development. They are directly related to the decline and growth namely the urbanization and counterurbanization. But even important are the reasons, which bounds people on certain areas (Pettersson. 2002:20). Despite a large out-migration, the largest parts of all generations stay in one rural region. One example is Sweden. In Sweden almost 98 percent of the inhabitants stay in the same labour market region from one year to another (Pettersson. 2002: part IV 4-5).

Fisher et al. (1998) have therefore introduced an approach to explain why people stay in one region. The central elements of the approach are the “insider advantages”, which describes as local bounded connections. It is not possible to transfer these connections to other places. Thereby, these special kinds of place bounded advantages are accumulated over the time. The problem is the loose of these advantages by moving to another area. These bounds are crucial for older persons because they accumulated over a long time the “insider advantages”. But this means at the same time that the youth had not enough time to accumulate this kind of advantages. Therefore, other kinds of advantages are more important for the younger generation like education or work. So, they migrates more often migrate (1-63).

A similar approach with some overlapping to the approach before is related to the specific attachment of the certain place. The inhabitants are connected to the place, where they grown up or lived for a major part of their life. People are sometimes connected to landscape features or special physical objects. Other groups are more closely linked to the social relations inside the place or the common community feelings. This “ties” are important for the youth to evaluate the consequences of staying, moving or returning. When the “roots” are long established in the areas and the parents have a strong connection to the place, the probability increases for the young person to stay in the local environment (Jones. 1999:9-14).

In contrast are standing the increased out-migration as an impact of the urbanisation process. Urbanisation describes a redistribution of the population, where large parts of the rural population migrate to the urban areas. This development was introduced in Europe by the industrialization. But the urbanization process from the middle of the century differs from the
current urbanisation process. During at the time of industrialization was borne a phenomenon by
the whole society and all generations. But today, the out-migration is borne today especially by
the youth (Matthews et al. 2000: 142; Stockdale. 2002:345).

One basis change for the increasing out-migration from the youth is the transformation
of the values. It came to a continuous change from the materialistic to the post-materialistic
values (Inglehart. 1981:882). The basis for the development of post-materialistic values is the
economic well-being as an unchangeable condition. Since the Second World War are prospering
the Western societies. Through a solid economic basis goes now all effort in the quality of live
issues and self-fulfilment. The traditional materialist values like a stable economy and secure job
getting less important. Ingelhardt introduces in this context the concept of formative security,
which refers to the degree of affluence during adolescence. The concept describes that high levels
of formative security lead to post-materialist values and low levels lead to the adoption of
materialist values (Inglehart. 1990:121–124). Thereby, that the youth is more affected from this
new value system that the change of values of older people is a long-term process (Inglehart.

The increase of the post-materialistic values changed even the cultural conditions.
Through the security in the adolescence of newer generations came it to the changes inside the
youth value system (Inglehart. 1990:121–124). The current youth have other ideas about the own
life than their parents. Mobility and education are getting more important to realize the own
ideals. Thereby, it is important to recognize that a high education is more important for the
youth as a means for the self-fulfilment.

The change of values is the reason that the youth want to live another life than the
parent’s generation. Thereby, Ziehe (1991) introduces the word “cultural release”. It means that
the youth cannot accept the traditional role model from parents for the own life (150).

Through the ongoing change of values in the rural areas, the identity building of the
youth changed. Jones (1999) describes the important step of build the own identity

“as they grow up, young people move from a situation in which their identity ascribed or
derived from their families of origin, to a situation where identity is negotiated between the self
and the other, Emancipation in youth involves the development and assertion of an
independent” (3).

The modern emancipation lead to a break of the community bounds and the individuals
set free there self from the circumstances of the birth (Jones. 1999:3). One means to break the
community bounds is to migrate to other places.
The above mentioned “ties” as a reason to stay in the community is in the same moment a reason to leave the community. “This closeness could be either comforting and friendly or suffocating and excluding; it could represent mutual help and support, or interference and gossip” (Jones. 1999: 9). The closeness means a social control of the community members and it needs a long time to be accepted as a full member in the traditional rural community (Jones. 1999:10).

In this case, there are existing two groups, which are not accepted as a full member of the community. This is the case by the most people, which move in the community as well as by women. Already above was mentioned that it takes a long time to accumulate “inside advantages”. In-migrants need accordingly to this approach a long time to be seemed as a real community member. The same happens by the children of the in-migrants, which are born at the new place or come with the parents to the new residential area. They have no strong connection to the communities in which they lived and may always fell excluded. This is a result of the long accumulation process is the exclusion of the youth in-migrants. This may leads to a later out migration of these kind of persons (Jones. 1999:20).

So, the community is connected to migration behaviour especially for young women. In general, more young women migrate than men. This is because the most rural areas are characterized by a more traditional view of the gender roles and a society which is dominated by men. Dahlström (1996) describes it in this way:

“Rural is, however, a concept that has another dimension to it than merely the settlement pattern and the tradition of primary industry. The concept has a connotation not only of traditional economic structures, but even traditional social patterns. The rural lifestyle is, especially in contrast to metropolitan areas, associated with the nuclear family and patriarchal gender relations” (260).

To break out of this traditional role means for young women to leave the rural areas. However, rural municipalities have problems to provide women related leisure activities like theatre, art exhibitions, cultural events, shopping centres and restaurants. In contrast stands the males which are satisfied with local supply of recreational activities (Dahlström. 1996:259-262; Petersson. 2002: part IV 5-6).

The last points show more that the strong communities “ties” supports partial the out-migration. The youth feel a lack of privacy and have problems with the traditional gender roles. To these points comes that more and more youths feel detached and dislocated in rural areas. They perceive the rural life as isolated, almost claustrophobic, because there live only few youths
in the rural areas. So, there is usually a lack of social contacts as well a lack of an adequate access to services and amenities. The amenity for the young generation are differs from person to person. But in general, this term is connected to the urban amenities (Dahlström. 1996:264; Kugelberg. 2000:40; Matthews et al. 2000:152; Stockdale. 2002:348). Modern media systems support the desire to a more urban way of life. “There is an obvious contradiction in the picture of the modern life communicated in mass media, the educational system and everyday rural life” (Dahlström. 1996:264).

In the point of the identity building with the following break of the community bounds as well the rejection of the rural lifestyle lead to migration behaviour. Education seems as a means to “escape” from the rural communities (Jones. 1999:1).

The above mentioned approaches have partial different explanations of the reason behind the out-migration but the common feature is the high priority of education in the concepts. But there are other arguments of the increasing importance of educations for the youth. There is an increasing need to compete on the labour market through the high education (Pettersson. 2002:23; Kugelberg. 2000:38). The impact is that the young people migrate to larger cities because of a lack of higher education facilities in rural areas (Pettersson. 2002:23; Kugelberg. 2000:38; Shucksmith. 2010:19).

Outgoing from this point developed Fielding in the year 1992 the concept “escalator regions”. An escalator region is an attractive location for the youth which provides the opportunities to develop the own career faster than in other regions. Typical examples for these escalator regions are the Swedish university regions as well metropolitan regions (Fielding. 1992: 10). Thereby, “when the person has reached a desired level in his/her career it is possible to move out of the “escalator region”, for instance to a region where the costs of living are substantially lower” (Pettersson. 2002: part IV 7).

Questionable is if the young people are coming back to the rural municipalities after they have “finished” their studies or education. In Sweden approximately 20 percent of the youth immigrants are moving later back to her home region (Pettersson. 2002: part IV 7). However, the most of young people stay after “finishing” the education in another area. A higher education results in a higher expectation of the later life of the young people. The youth want to have an interesting well-paid job that provides opportunities for the self-realisation. But there is a lack of “qualitative jobs” or job opportunities for high educated people in the rural space in rural areas. The professions demand in the field of the higher education is not as common in rural areas than in the urban areas. The too narrow economic base of the most rural areas increases the problem. That means a long education lead in the most cases that the young people never come back (Dahlström. 1996:263).
In contrast to the youth out-migration from rural areas is another development in the last 30 years important in relation to the human migration behaviour. In general is it called counterurbanization or rural-urban turnaround and emerged in the most industrialized societies. The development was seen as a break of the concentration process and an increasing dispersion of the population inside a country (Lindgren, 2003: 399). Counterurbanization was seen as an turning point away from the urban regions to the rural (see for instance Berry, 1976; Gordon, 1979; Fielding 1982; Champion, 1989).

Counterurbanization can be defined as a migration process. In contrast to the urbanization process which is a process borne by the youth, counterurbanization is a migration behaviour of many different groups with different reasons (Lindgren, 2003: 399). After Lingren (2003) which studied the Swedish counterurbanization is it more likely that the counterurban mover is an older person, a person that is born in Sweden or another Scandinavia country, less well-off, having a high education, is being outside the labour force or becoming unemployed close to the migration event (399).

Through the increasing mobility have the employees more freedom to choose the location of their residential housing. Other factors are getting more important. Today, the people have the possibility to stay in the preferred environment and commute to the work place. Daily commuting is especially the case in suburban areas. By remote rural areas is it more likely that the commuting is implemented through weekly long distance commuting (Hjort and Malmberg, 2006:57). Another approach of the reduced economic importance by the choice of migration place is a change of the values.

In Great Britain is the rural growth limited of few areas with environmental amenities (Dahms and McComb, 1998: 131-132). But the question is: what are rural amenities? Rural amenities are often close connected to the natural amenities, the “beautiful fresh environment” like a resident close to a sea (Wikhall, 2002:8). Mostly the amenities are connected to the climate. The former literature was usually oriented of only one dimension of the environmental amenities (Gottlieb: 1994: 271). For Deller et al. (2001) was this however a too broad and general description of natural amenities. Deller et al. introduce a multi dimensional system and divide the amenities in five spheres: climate, land, water, winter recreation and a developed recreational infrastructure (356). Thereby, some amenities contradict other amenities because of the different kinds of amenities for example a higher year-round temperature contradicts winter recreation.

There exist a lot of different natural amenities and the most municipalities have not only one natural amenity. Mostly they are connected to other amenities. But in the most cases every rural region has natural amenities and many regions seem like relative homogeneous by the amenities. That makes the point about the recreational infrastructure more important, because
some remote regions are more attractive than other (Deller et al. 2001:356-364). By this competition exist winners and losers and some municipalities are better situated through the amenities. Other regions cannot this conditions or have begun too late to market these amenities through develop a recreational infrastructure.

Close connected to the point of rural amenities is the idea of the rural idyll. The idea of the rural idyll is strong connected with carefree living for the own children. The parents see the rural areas “as a place which offered opportunities for a stress-free upbringing away from the dangers and spatial constraints of the city” (Matthews et al. 2000: 142). In contrast to the imagination of the rural idyll the above mentioned problems for the youth show that this imagination is far away from the reality because “the social was more important to these young people than the natural”. (Matthews et al. 2000: 145).

But despite the problems between the imagination and the consisting reality, the rural idyll is fixed in the peoples mind. The resulting imaginations are connected to specific places for example, places of the own childhood, family origins or consisting second homes. Additionally, it can be related to certain landscapes which are described in art, film and literature. Hjort and Malmberg (2006) conclude “that a great resemblance between the countryside ideal and the actual or imagined character of a specific rural area strongly influences the attractiveness of that rural district to potential migrants from urban areas” (57).

Through the increasing mobility and the seeking of the rural idylls came it to the migration in rural areas especially rural areas in commuting distance with cities. These areas are called periurban (Hjort and Malmberg. 2006:58). But rural areas with natural amenities or cultural amenities registered a positive population development (Lindgren. 2003: 402). The counterurbanization is process almost limited on rural areas close to larger cities. The statistical population development in Sweden support this assumption show (SCB. 2011a). So the counterurbanmovers seek after rural areas with natural amenities and a close location to a city.

The counterurban movers are especially people from the highly educated middle class. They settle especially in the periurban space to connect the rural amenities with the urban amenities. A migration to remote rural areas is rare the case because of the less employment opportunities for highly educated people in such areas and the loose of the urban amenities. There is only a marginal migration to the remote rural areas through the middle class. In general a university degree or an equivalent qualification reduces the likelihood to migrate into remote rural areas (Hjort and Malmberg. 2006:58-67). This condition raises the question, if the counterurbanization is only another word of the suburbanization as a result of the increasing mobility. But there exist examples of a migration into remote rural areas and population growth in these areas, which cannot be explained with suburbanization (Pettersson. 2002:18).
But not only is the middle class attracted by the rural amenities. The group of retirees are often mentioned as an important group in case of the counterurbanization. They are not dependent on the local labour market and can therefore decide more free, where they want to live. The choice of the migration place is mostly connected to second homes, to the relatives residential place, the place of birth or specific climate factors (Lindgren. 2003:409). But despite the theoretical mobility of the retirees, they are only a small part of the total numbers of movers (Hjort and Malmberg. 2006:58-70).

To summarize it, the rural areas have not the best conditions for the further development. The political dimension is marked by large support of the remote rural areas by EU and the Swedish state. Nevertheless, political changes emerged new competitors in the primary industry and a worsening of the economic conditions of remote rural areas. The economic transformations had even an influence of the development of remote rural municipalities. One crucial element for the remote rural areas is the rationalisation in the primary industry. It led to a reduction of job opportunities in rural areas. The other crucial element was the globalisation, which led to a relocation of the primary industry. One possible way to transform the economic basis was thereby the support of the development of other economic activities in the rural municipalities. The idea was to create a postproductive countryside with a focus on the touristic sector. But only few municipalities managed it to adjust their economic basis. One consequence may was an increased outmigration and an in-migration of only few people. Even the socio-cultural conditions changed in the last decades and are a reason for the out-migration. The urbanization process is close connected to an out-migration from the rural youth. The reasons are particularly changing values between the generations and different opinions about the self-realizing and a higher importance of education matters. The youth want to live another life than what the rural landscape can provide. The result is an increasing out-migration. In contrast stands the counterurbanization as a migration process by the highly educated middle class. The idea behind is to live a life close to the nature in rural landscapes. Nevertheless the most counter mover migrates to rural areas close to larger cities. Or they migrate to rural areas, which are classified as tourism resorts. Only few migrate to remote rural areas. With this theoretical analysis in the mind comes now the next parts, the analysis over the national measures in the case of Sweden and this following an analysis of the municipal measures with the case studies examples Arjeplog and Jokkmokk.
2.3 Polarisation process with winners and losers

The development in Sweden and the most developed European countries shows an increasing polarization between regions. Thereby different types of regions have usually different future prospects. The following division in "winners" and "losers" is only to illustrate the general tendencies of certain kinds of regions in case of the population development. It is possible that certain aspects are combined detectable in some municipalities.

+ Large metropolitan regions

The large metropolitan areas have since decades a positive population development through migrants. Metropolitan are in general the “escalator regions” for the youth (Fielding, 1992: 10). This in-migration of the youth led even to an increasing fertility rate. Despite an out-migration of the middle class through the counterurbanization registered the metropolitan areas a continuous growth (Amcoff. 2005:1-3).

+ Attractive larger cities

These types of cities have since decades a growing population. This statement is supported by the statistical numbers of SCB, where only two Swedish cities over 20,000 inhabitants losses in the recent 40 years population namely Boras and Karlskoga. Thereby, Boras lost only a marginal number of inhabitants. Only Karlskoga lost a large number inhabitant in the recent decades but it is the example for the industrial decline and mentioned by mono-sectoral industrial cities (SCB. 2011a).

+ Rural areas close to cities

This suburban space or sometimes called SPRAWL had in the recent year’s large increase of inhabitants. The process here is called usually suburbanization. Thereby, mostly the people from the middle class moved in this residential area. One common feature is that the residents commute daily to the workplace mostly in the near city. Additional common characteristics are the high proportion of family with children and the in general high living standard (Hjort and Malmberg. 2006:58-67).

+ Tourist resorts:

Other growing regions are in general the tourist resorts. Especially in Northern Europe at the Swedish/Norwegian border came it to the development of tourist areas. This booming tourism creates job opportunities in partially real peripheral areas. These tourism areas can be seen as “urban satellites” which attracts visitors and job seekers because of the high number of service jobs and the attractive environment (Pettersson. 2002:20).
+ Other attractive rural areas

This is a group of municipalities has a positive population development through a unique historical or cultural heritage which is often connected to a special landscape. These areas are especially attractive for leisure housing. The residents are in general not so strong dependent of the proximity to a large labour market for example distance workers and pensioners (Pettersson. 2002:67).

- Mono-sectoral industrial cities

Regions with a too narrow industrial base are mostly affected from a negative population development as a result of transformation processes of the economy as a result of downsizing and rationalisation process. The clearest example for this development is Karlskoga. Karlskoga is the only Swedish city over 20.000 inhabitants with a noticeable decline. This decline is close connected to the economic conditions in Karlskoga. The whole funding of the city is close connected to Bofors. In the beginning it was a steel producer and then it becomes one of the largest Swedish arms manufacturers. With a massive job cuts the people began to leave the city. Thereby, Karlskoga is only one example of a bulk of mono-sectoral oriented areas (Feldman. 2001:105).

- Remote rural areas

Only few sparsely populated areas reach again a growing development like the tourist resorts demonstrate. But the bulk of sparsely populated areas decline further. One central problem is thereby the loose of the youth high educated work force. It means the pensioners and lower educated people stay (Amcoff and Westholm. 2006:19).
3 The dealing process on the national level

The decline dealing process is based on two national policies. One policy is the national regional growth policy with the main task to reach new growth in the regions. The other important national policy is close connected to the idea of the equality. Every region and every person should have equal opportunities and conditions. The “Swedish model” is based on the idea of equality, which means equal conditions for all regions. The Swedish nation wants to lay similar foundations for a development of the regions, relying on their own advantages (Fredyuk and Bychenko. 2009:48).

This both policies are close connected to the decline of regions. Furthermore, it is a Swedish major policy field, which takes the demographic decline into account. It is a policy, which focuses on the compensation of the negative impacts of the decline in rural. Both policies are only representatives for a lot of other decline related policies. Thereby, other policy fields taking the demographic decline into account. But the national regional growth policy and the national equalisation policy are selected because they show the as suitable examples the dealing process. This dealing means, try to reverse the decline and compensate the negative impacts.

3.1 The national regional growth policy

The Swedish regional growth policy is a growth focused policy which is based “on the capacity of each individual to take action by himself” (Nilsson and Rudebeck. 2008:1). The idea behind the regional growth means not only regions, which growth “spontaneously” should be growing. All regions of the entire nation should grow. It means, when they growth not “spontaneously”, the state should encourage them to grow with governmental support. To reach a new growth is seen the economic performance as the basis. The idea is to support and preserve not only existing companies. Another topic should be the expansion of companies to new settlements and the support of start-ups. This should be lead to increasing incomes for the inhabitants. So this should be attract new inhabitants and should be lead that already residents stay in the region. But nevertheless, the used resources for the support were mostly generated in the growing regions (Andersson. 2005:817).

This approach is deeply rooted in the Swedish policy. Thereby, the reason to implement a regional growth policy was the structural problems in Norrland (OECD.2010:270). Through the continued decline in the 60’s of the Swedish Hinterland, the national government introduced the
regional policy. It came to a development of different support measures to reach again a growth in the declining regions (Nilsson and Rudebeck. 2008:1).

After the start of the industrial decline in some regions, the support measures were extended to these regions. The recent years will face new changes of the system. The Government Bill 2001 introduced a new direction, from being an aid based policy for historically weak remote regions to a programme for growth in all Swedish regions. The overarching objective is after the OECD (2010) to create “well functioning and sustainable labour market regions with a good level of services in all parts of the country” (270). This change is strong connected to the entry of Sweden in the European Union. Despite the new focus of all regions with the included urban areas, it came to the recognition of the need for a continuing aid especially for the “unfavourable” regions. The impact was to stimulate growth for all municipalities. Nevertheless, there are still existing special grants and support measure for the “unfavourable” regions (OECD.2010:270). There exists measures to stimulate growth in whole Sweden and there exist measures especially for “unfavourable” regions like declining regions.

The policies for “unfavourable” regions are in contrast to other support measures close linked to a certain type of region like the remote rural areas in the Swedish “Hinterland”. This kind of “unfavourable” regions receives additional support because of problematic conditions. Firm inside this area receives a high rate of support. The measure is manifested in the targeted support as well in a general support of the business. These support measures are graded. Regions, which have the support status A, receive the highest support. For instance a firm in these kinds of municipalities receives the highest rate of grants. There exists even a support area B. These areas are located close to the support area A. Thereby the area B reaches a support but not as high as in the region A (Nilsson and Rudebeck. 2008:2).

This special support for unfavourable regions is divided into a transport subsidy and a pay subsidy for small and medium sized firms. The transport grant receives the firms which are located in these regions. The support measure is that the firm receives a subsidy by the transportation of goods to and from this firm location. One example is the municipality Dorotea in Norrland. The enterprise receives 30 percent of the transportation costs of goods, when they transport the goods over 400 kilometres and respectively 25 percent of the transportation costs by raw materials. An enterprise in Sorsele receives even 40 and 35 percent of the transportation costs. The second subsidy consists out a tax subsidy. Thereby, the located firm pays 10 percent less of the general tax (Nilsson and Rudebeck. 2008:2, Fedyuk and Bychenko. 2009:51).

Additionally, these two specific measures, the municipalities with population decline have access to other measures, which are related to a targeted support of individual firms. Two
examples are the regional investment grant and the employment grant. For both measures receives the “Hinterland” areas of Norrland the maximum grant (Nilsson and Rudebeck. 2008:2).

The regional investment grant is to subsidized new investments. The enterprise receives the grant for new investments in machinery, equipment and building up of new firm with less than 50 employees. Than the grant are maximum 35 percent of the approved expenditure costs. By an enterprise with less than 250 employees is the support grant 25 percent of the approved expenditure costs and by an enterprise with more than 20 employees 15 percent of the approved expenditure costs. Thereby, a small firm receives under special conditions even 50 percent of the expenditure costs as a grant. The grant for a small and medium sized consulting enterprise is maximal 50 percent of the previously approved expenditure costs. In the consulting sector larger consulting enterprises are not eligible for the grant system. The grant for small and medium sized enterprises in the field of education is 40 percent of the approved expenditure costs. A large enterprise receives 30 percent of the approved expenditure costs in this kind of field (Nilsson and Rudebeck. 2008:3).

Another grant is the employment grant. The grant is foreseen for companies, which want to make new investments in buildings, consulting services, education of the labour force and for machineries. To receive this grant; the firms have to apply for this subsidy. The next step is an individual assessment for each application. The approach is to select the eligible applications after the importance of the investment for the society, growth and for an increased employment. Thereby, the factors of the type and cost of investments are important, the size of the enterprise and the location of the enterprise (Nilsson and Rudebeck. 2008:3).

This kind of grant is related to the employment. It is even support grant eligible for all enterprises in the whole country. Even here, the firms have to apply for this kind of subsidies. Therefore, the individual assessments consider the effects of the grant on the employment and the economic growth and the importance of this kind of business for the society. The grant is connected to different requirements like a satisfactory work environment, a skills-enhancing education and training and equal job opportunities for men as well women. This kind of employment grant not available for agricultural jobs, jobs in the transport sector and firms with services only for the local market (Nilsson and Rudebeck. 2008:4).

3.2 The national equalization policy

The idea of the equal access of the welfare is deeply rooted in the Swedish administration is. Therefore, the Swedish government introduced different measures to compensate at least the
negative effects of decline. Because of the since the 60s continuous problematic situation of the sparsely populated regions in Norrland, it came to a development of different compensation measures. This idea is strong connected with the transfer of resources from better situated regions to regions with a lack of revenues. The compensation systems are applied on the municipal level as well as on the county level. Thereby, the measures are in general the same with only few exceptions (SKL and Ministry of Finance. 2008:8-9). The following chapter deals only with the compensation measures which are applied in the municipalities.

In the year 1966 the first compensation measures were introduced. In the beginning phase the model was relative easy to calculate. Sweden was divided into five regions. In the year 1988 the number already increased from five to twelve regions. In the year 1993, the division in regions was abolished. Instead of this division, every municipality gets now the own calculation and grants. Seven years before introduced additional the national government a new part of the system. From this point the charge system was introduced (Johansson. 2001:888). The current equalisation system was introduced on the 01. January 2005.

The aim after SKL and the Ministry of Finance (2008) is “to put all municipalities […] on an equal financial footing to deliver equal levels of services to their residents, irrespective of the income of local authority residents and other structural factors”(5). The idea behind this statement is that every municipality can chose the own taxes due other reasons as the different structural costs of the responsibility fields. The responsibility costs should be for no local government the major reason about the decision of the own taxes (SKL and Ministry of Finance. 2008:5). Responsibilities of a municipality are the areas where the municipality has to provide public services (see figure 9). These responsibilities are in general the same in whole Sweden (Rudebeck.2008:1-3). The responsibility fields show the bulk of expenditures for the service delivery from the local governments. But it means that the local governments have to pay the major part of the whole expenditures of the Swedish nation (SKL and Ministry of Finance. 2008:8).

To ensure this basic care the municipalities have the right to raise taxes, impose fees and receive grants. The major part of the money comes out the tax revenues (see figure 10). At the local tax base, the municipalities can tax only personal incomes (salaries and pensions). Here the municipalities decide for the own area about the percentage of the tax (Rudebeck.2008:2).
The challenge by the tax revenues is that the revenue differs from municipality to municipality. Some municipalities receive not enough money to be able for the maintaining of the social services at a basis level (Rudebeck.2008:3).

There exist varieties between the municipalities between the Swedish municipalities by the taxable income per inhabitant (tax capacity) through the different conditions like percentage of elderly people the municipality, etc. In the year 2008 the highest tax capacity had the municipalities Danderyd with 177 percent of the national average (taxable income of 310,600 SEK per inhabitant) and the lowest by 78 percent of the national average was Årjäng (SEK 136,900 per inhabitant) of the Swedish average (SKL and Ministry of Finance. 2008:8). This shows how different are the revenues between the municipalities and makes a support of the municipalities with only a low number of own revenues important. To equalise the conditions between the municipalities, there exist 4 measures namely the income equalisation, the cost equalisation, the structural grant and the adjustment grant/fee. Additionally, through the introduction of the new system, were another measure temporarily introduced the transitional grant. This measure already ended now and will in the further analysis not be taken into account.

The income equalization is the distribution mechanism based on the difference between the taxable incomes of the municipalities and the national average tax capacity. The border between the municipalities, which have to pay a charge, and the municipalities, which receives a grant, is at a level of 115 percent of the national average (see figure 11). That means all municipalities under 115 percent receive money and all which exceeds the level have to pay an income equalisation charge (Fedyuk and Bychenko. 2009:49). The grant for the municipalities is based on a calculation which takes 95 percent of

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<th>Revenues by type</th>
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<td>Tax revenues</td>
<td>68%</td>
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<td>General government grants</td>
<td>11%</td>
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<td>Specific government grants</td>
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<td>Fees and charges</td>
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<td>Sales of activities and contracts</td>
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<td>Rents and leases</td>
<td>3%</td>
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<td>Grant for pharmaceutical benefits</td>
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<td>Other revenues</td>
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the national average tax rate from 2003 into account. The calculations for municipalities which have to pay the charge are based on 85 percent of the national average for the year 2003. This numbers are locked (SKL and Ministry of Finance. 2008:11).

The equalisation level for each municipality stands in relation to the national average. This is for the municipalities which receives a grant between 113 and 115 percent. It means; the local municipality receives so much money to come up at a certain level in relation to the average. This measure minimise the gaps of revenues between the different municipalities. (SKL and Ministry of Finance. 2008:15-16). In the year 2008, the total cost of the distribution within the municipalities was 52 billion SEK. From this money the central government paid 48.3 billion SEK. The charge paying municipalities were forced to pay 3.7 billion Swedish SEK. The income equalization is based mostly on state charges and only two percent is paid by the municipalities (SKL and Ministry of Finance. 2008:7).

This is reflected in the distribution of the municipalities which have to pay a charge and the municipalities which receives a grant. In the year 2008 only 11 municipalities paid a charge to equalize the income. The rest receives grants (Rudebeck. 2008:4). The municipalities which received a largest grant were the sparsely populated municipalities especially from Norrland and at the same time other small municipalities (see figure 12). Thereby, the main charge payers were

\[ \text{SEK/inhabitant per municipality group, weighted average} \]

Figure 12 Outcome of income equalisation for municipalities in 2008
SEK/inhabitant per municipality group, weighted average

SKL and Ministry of Finance. 2008:15
the suburban municipalities in the region of Stockholm. The municipality of Stockholm is the only metropolitan area in Sweden that paid a charge in the year 2008. Even Gothenburg and Malmö received a grant (SKL and Ministry of Finance. 2008:14).

In contrast to the income equalisation, the cost equalization is a zero sum game, redistribution between municipalities. The national government pay no money in this equalisation system. It is a compensation of the costs that the municipalities cannot influence by itself. An unalterable cost means costs which are necessary to maintain the responsibilities (see figure 13). For instance the municipality has to keep the roads passable. The municipality can do it on a basis level or on an improved level but in both cases the municipality has unchangeable basis costs to keep the street passable. These bases costs can not influence the municipality by their own (SKL and Ministry of Finance. 2008:16).

The basic principle is that the municipality with low costs in the fields of responsibilities to municipalities with high costs in order to maintain their responsibilities (Fedyuk and Bychenko. 2009:49).

Thereby, the standard cost method is used. It means, the overall cost calculation is based on a number of separate models to calculate the standard costs for each responsibility field. Thereby, these structural costs are related to the varieties in the fields of age structure, ethnicity, socio-economic conditions and geography. These factors are considered by the further calculation for each separate model. Thereby, the used scattered models describe one service factor which has in some fields extra costs (see figure 14). This result has to be multiplied with the different variables by the national average cost for

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<th>Service</th>
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Figure 13 Cost equalisation for municipalities in 2008, outline diagram
SKL and Ministry of Finance. 2008:17

Figure 14 Extra structural costs by category
SKL and Ministry of Finance. 2008:18
the separate service. The results of the calculation for each sector are the standard costs which is expressed by the unit of SEK/inhabitant (SKL and Ministry of Finance. 2008:17-18).

This cost equalization calculation cannot take into account the real costs of the municipalities. The standard cost means in that case, the costs what the municipality would have, when the costs of the responsibilities are on the average level but under taken into account of its own structural conditions (Rudebeck.2008:6).

At the end, all the separate structural field costs for one municipality are added together. After that, the municipalities with lower structural cost pay a charge corresponding to the difference to the average. The municipality with higher costs as the average receives a grant which corresponds to the difference to the average level. You can describe the cost equalization as an exchange between the municipalities (Rudebeck.2008:6).

Important by the cost equalization system is to understand that the system is depended on the municipal structure in relation to the structure of the whole country. That means in the cost equalization is no direct link between of the demographic structure in the municipality and an increasing support. It is in this system not sure that by an increasing number of elderly people even increase the grants. When the numbers increase in the whole country the average stay the same. That means cost equalisation is an equalization system and not a system to support specific areas (SKL and Ministry of Finance. 2008:20-21).

The region which receives the major grants are the remote rural municipalities as well as other small municipalities (see figure 15). But Stockholm and the two other metropolitan regions

![Figure 15 Outcome of cost equalisation for municipalities in 2008](image)

**Figure 15 Outcome of cost equalisation for municipalities in 2008**

SEK/inhabitant per municipality group, weighted average
receive a grant like the most suburban municipalities in the Stockholm region. The main charge
payers are the larger cities in Sweden (SKL and Ministry of Finance. 2008:23-24).

Beside the two major systems, there exist some complementary measures. One of this is
the structural grant. The structural grant was introduced through the last reform of the
equalisation system. Thereby some support measures are not any longer included in the cost
equalization. Some points of the former compensation measures are in the current system
excluded. To compensate the possible lack of revenues for the affected municipalities the
structural grant was introduced (SKL and Ministry of Finance. 2008:24-25).

The grant has two basis factors to receive
this grant. The first basic factor is connected to
the business and the employment promotion, for
the municipalities with a “weak population base”
as well small county councils (see figure 16). The
second possibility to receive this grant is the loss
of revenues for the municipalities as a
consequence of the reformed equalisation system

In the year 2008 the structural grant
received 94 municipalities. Thereby, the grant
goes mainly to the municipalities in the remote
rural areas. But other parts received a grant like
Malmö because of the weak numbers of
employment (SKL and Ministry of Finance.
2008:25).

The last important equalisation measure is
the adjustment grant/charge. It is a measure from the government to influence the total grant
budget of the local governments. This grant/charge is strong connected to the system of the
income equalisation. Thereby one problem for the government is that the paying grant increases
with the growth of the local tax base. This means that the government do not know how much
the income equalization costs in the next year. Thereby the government wants to be able to have
influence of the equalization and this is manifested in the adjustment grant/charge (SKL and
Through the different measures emerged an opaque and complex system of an equalisation policy. Thereby, the central government as well the municipalities and the county level are involved. In this construction the government paid a total of 62.5 billion SEK in the year 2008 (see figure 17). Thus, the government pays at the same time the largest amount by far in the equalisation system (SKL and Ministry of Finance. 2008:6-7).

The overall outcome shows a different picture by the absolute and the relative numbers. Despite the large differences between the different parts of Sweden like the demographic differences, the socio-economic conditions and the geography is the driving force in case of the redistribution especially the ability of levy tax (SKL and Ministry of Finance. 2008:28).

The absolute numbers of the grants and charges shows that the most grants are received in Southern Sweden followed by Northern Sweden. In the relative ranking the Northern part of Sweden receives the most grants. The region of Stockholm is the only region which has to pay a charge through the county level. The region of Stockholm is the only area in Sweden, which have no use of the equalisation system. The sparsely populated regions receive the most equalisation grants proportional. Therefore, especially these kinds of municipalities are depended on the equalization measures (SKL and Ministry of Finance. 2008:28).
The case study municipalities Arjeplog and Jokkmokk show in this case, how dependent they are on this equalisation measures (see figure 18). In comparison to the next larger and growing city Luleå receives relative more grants through the equalisation system (SCB. 2011c, SKL and SCB. 2009: 35). It is an important measure to keep the municipal basic services on a stable level in both municipalities (SKL and Ministry of Finance. 2008:26).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local authority</th>
<th>Arjeplog</th>
<th>Jokkmokk</th>
<th>Luleå</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of inhabitants (basis year 2007)</td>
<td>3089</td>
<td>5406</td>
<td>73146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tax capacity</td>
<td>88,30%</td>
<td>89,40%</td>
<td>100,10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income equalisation grant; SEK per inhabitant</td>
<td>9.485</td>
<td>9.100</td>
<td>5.276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost equalisation; SEK per inhabitant</td>
<td>5.855</td>
<td>3.730</td>
<td>-2.960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structural grant; SEK per inhabitant</td>
<td>2.714</td>
<td>4.771</td>
<td>2.197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjustment charge/fee</td>
<td>368</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>402</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitional grant; SEK per inhabitant</td>
<td>-458</td>
<td>-458</td>
<td>-458</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall outcome out the equalisation system; SEK per inhabitant</td>
<td>17.964</td>
<td>17.518</td>
<td>4.457</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 18: Example of outcome of the equalization and structural grant system
SCB. 2011c, SKL and SCB. 2009: 35

3.3 Critiques on the regional growth policy and the equalisation policy

The growth policy and the equal access to the services are deeply rooted in the Swedish system. But there exist critiques on this kind of measures. One major critique of the entrepreneurial support is connected with the question after the impact. For instance, the municipality Arjeplog see only a marginal impact of the growth support measures in the recent decades. After the majors experience are settle some entrepreneurs in the municipality, receive grants and after some years they move away. Only the last time, the trend was detectable that more people from Arjeplog using the measures to start-up own entrepreneurial activities (Jansson. 2011). In Jokkmokk was the impact not clear detectable too (Andersson. 2011).

Likewise the researchers found no clear support that the regional growth policy supports the development of a region which is connected to a reverse of the decline. Some researchers like Roland Andersson (2005) argue for that “Subsidies to companies in problematic regions have uncertain or even negative effects” (811). Even NUTEK (2000) see a negative impact on the
development of all regions through this growth policy (33-34). This is closely connected to the problem of the inadequate evaluation to show, how the growth policy is successful in the region. It is still not clear what they want to reach. Furthermore, there exists always a risk of direct subsidies. The bureaucrats, who select the supported projects, need a deep knowledge and experience to evaluate projects and the expected profitability. Otherwise, they should be deciding it independently, which is often a problem in smaller communities. (Andersson. 2005:824).

Altogether, the impacts of regional growth policy are uncertain. It is still not clear if they have any positive impacts of the development of declining municipalities. But in the moment, the researchers as well the affected municipalities have seen only a marginal impact on the labour market. Furthermore the growth policy focuses only on the economic growth. The population growth is seen as a consequence of an increasing economic performance of the “unfavourable” regions. Other conditions like changing values are not taken into account by the growth policy. The conclusion is that the growth is a too one-dimensional oriented support measure and cannot get more important changes into account.

In contrast, the major critique of the equalisation system is that the compensation measures lead to a loose of incentives for the further development of local municipalities. Karin Rudebeck (2008) describes in this way:

“The system whereby the local governments with higher tax capacity have to pay a fee that reduces their revenue advantages is sometimes questioned with reference to its negative impact incentives. The equity ambition is difficult to fully combine with the ambition to create incentives for local economic growth and tax collection” (4).

The major problem is that the compensation or equality policy may reduce the dynamic development in Sweden. There is no pressure to change something, improve a situation etc. Regional imbalances shape the pressure to change something. This pressure is lacking through the equalization policy (Andersson. 2005:825).

In contrast stands the equalization policies. It is a measure that the declining municipalities can survive. Without this distribution measures the declining municipalities will not be able to secure the basis services. These measures decelerate the declining process, but cannot stop it. But it can not the task of it. It has not the function to reach growth. The measure is to give every inhabitant in Sweden an equal access to the services. Therefore, it is an important measure in case of the decline dealing process. In difference to the growth policy, which wants to break the decline, the equalisation policy compensates the impacts. Both policies are large redistribution measures of resources to the declining regions.
4 The decline dealing process on the municipal level

4.1 Population development on the local level

To evaluate the municipal level is it an opportunity to select some municipalities for a case study. In the following section, the considered municipalities are Arjeplog and Jokkmokk. But other municipalities like Övertorneå and Högsby are taken into account as representative examples. The case study municipalities Arjeplog and Jokkmokk are located in the Swedish Hinterland in Norrland and are located to the border to Norway (see figure 19). Thereby, a major part of the municipalities is located in the mountainous region in the county of Norbotten. The main village form the municipality Arjeplog is the homonymous called tätort Arjeplog. This tätort contains over two thirds of the inhabitants. Thereby, the settlements outside the main village have only a small population with some hundred inhabitants in each village. A similar structure has the municipality Jokkmokk (SCB. 2008; SPGA. 2011).
Both municipalities have a large area with only a small population density. Arjeplog has for instance a population density of 0.25 inhabitants per square kilometre and Jokkmokk has a similar density with 0.3 inhabitants per square kilometre (SPGA. 2011). To show this more obvious Jokkmokk has the similar size like the Skåne, Blekinge and the Hallands län together (Andersson. 2011).

Furthermore, a traditional strong connection to the primary industry and Sami culture is detectable in Arjeplog as well as in Jokkmokk. Each of these two municipalities is bounded on the Sami as the natives of this region. The next larger city is Luleå, which is several hundred kilometres away. Additionally, both municipalities are promoted as the last wilderness Europe’s. These remote locations of Arjeplog and Jokkmokk as well of the most municipalities in Norrland in connection to a hard climate are unique conditions inside the European Union (Arjeplog Kommun. 2011; Jokkmokk Kommun 2011). To summarize it, Arjeplog as well Jokkmokk are sparsely populated remote rural areas.

Arjeplogs early economic basis are the primary industry especially the reindeer herding and the silver mining. The original inhabitants of the Arjeplog were Sami and later followed Swedish settlers. Some of them were miners and they found in the 17th century silver close to the border to Norway. For this silver is Arjeplog local famous. This traditional industries came as already mentioned above into a restructuring process with a reduction of the work force starting in the middle of the 20th century. With this restructuring the last mine in Arjeplog closed in Laisvall. One new industry branch was introduced in Arjeplog in the 80s. Some German car-testers came to Arjeplog and tried to make a test driving track on the ice of the lake Hornavan in Arjeplog. The local people supported this development and this co-operative arrangement began (Nilsson. 2000: 138-139; SPGA. 2011). Today, the car testing sector is still growing in Arjeplog and over the season from December to May there comes over 3,000 people to Arjeplog to tests cars (Jansson. 2011). In the moment almost 50 percent of all winter automotive and component testing takes place in Arjeplog. Thereby, people from overall of the world coming in the winter time to Arjeplog. The car-testing industry is in the current status of Arjeplog a pillar for the economic condition of Arjeplog. The tourism sector especially the winter tourism was expanded in the recent years (SPGA. 2011).

Jokkmokks development was in the early age quiet similar to the development of Arjeplog. The town was founded as a Swedish settlement as a Swedish trading place with the Sami. Since 1605 were held every year the winter festival in Jokkmokk and is one of the oldest indigenous festivals, which still exists in the world (Müller and Petersson. 2006:61). Additionally, the early economic basis is as well in Jokkmokk connected to the primary industry like in Arjeplog. But Jokkmokk was not a place for the mining industry and have acutely no mining
industry. The forest and the reindeer herding was the dominant industry by a high number of small-scale business activities (Nordregio. 2009:9). Between 1910 and 1915 was the first Swedish hydroelectric power plant constructed in Porjus in the Municipality Jokkmokk. This led to a lot of changes in the municipality. This power plant is still a crucial element for the development of Jokkmokk. This power plant created 800 work places (Vattenfall. 2011). With the construction increased the population at the double from approximately 3,000 to more than 6,000. But the rationalization process didn’t stop at the power plant. Today the water power plant is beside the municipality still the largest employer but with only 200 employees. This reduction led to a starting decline inside the municipality Jokkmokk (Andersson. 2011).

The municipality Arjeplog declined in the sharp in the last decades. Arjeplog had in the year 2010 3,161 inhabitants. Thereby, approximately 2,000 inhabitants live in the main village. The whole municipality Arjeplog lost between 1968 and 2010 1520 inhabitants which are 29.8 percent of the population from the year 1969. Despite this large loose of population recorded the municipality since 2008 a new population growth (see figure 20). This is the first time since over 40 years where the municipality have plus a population gain (SCB. 2011a). The reason for it is in the year 2008 that all migrants received a grant to move to Arjeplog of 25,000 SEK per person. This led to an increase of the population. In the year 2009, it is possible to explain the increasing population through an increasing number of refugees to the municipality. In the municipality Arjeplog is one refugee home locate for young people (Jannson. 2011).

In contrast Jokkmokk is a municipality with nearly double as much inhabitants as Arjeplog. In the year 2011 Jokkmokk had a population of 5,170 people. Thereby, Jokkmokk lost between 1968 and 2010 3,550 inhabitants which are a percentage loose of 40.2 percent. In comparison to Arjeplog is Jokkmokk harder affected of negative population decline (SCB. 2011a).
However, already above was a further characteristic element mentioned that primary industry dominated rural areas have in general a higher male proportion in comparison to the female proportion. In contrast to this general point of view, these municipalities have in comparison a relative high proportion of women. It stands in contrast to other municipalities in Norbotten, which are still dominated from the mining industry and the resulting higher male proportion. The male proportion is only slightly higher in the Arjeplog and Jokkmokk as a result of the lack of large mining industries in both municipalities (Andersson. 2011; Jansson. 2011; SCB. 2011a).

It seems that the problems of a declining population will go on in the remote rural municipalities in Norrland. The forecasts expect even a further decline. One representative example from Norrland is the municipality Övertorneå, which stands for similar future developments like the most remote rural areas in Sweden. Övertorneå as the similar population like Jokkmokk is located in Norbotten. Forecasts are assuming that the municipality will decline from 5,500 inhabitants to 3,500 inhabitants in the year 2025 (figure 21). The forecast shows a transformation from a population pyramid to a mushroom shape. Very few young people are staying in Övertorneå. This means the average age will increase and means in the case of Övertorneå that 45 percent of the population will be 65 or older and only 13 percent of the population will be between 0 and 19 with large impacts on the municipalities (Amcoff and Westholm. 2006:10-12). This forecast illustrates the further development of remote rural areas like Arjeplog and Jokkmokk and the pressure to deal with the decline. Furthermore, this seems as the most likely variant of the further development of this kind of municipalities. Of course it is only a forecast and this figure looks different in Arjeplog and Jokkmokk but the tendency are the same and create a large challenge.

Despite large parts migrates out from the youth inhabitants, the decisive element is the decline of the fertility rate. Both municipalities have every year approximately the same amount

![Figure 21 The population pyramid of Övertorneå 2003 and 2025](image)

Amcoff and Westholm, 2006:10 on basis of SCB
of in- and out-migrants. It is an out-migration of the youth and an in-migration of people, which are already working (Andersson. 2011; Jansson. 2011). In case of the fertility rate reflects both municipalities the negative fertility development like in whole Europe. The average completed fertility rate per women between 1970 and 1980 1.98 children per women in Arjeplog and 1.77 children per women in Jokkmokk. This means that Arjeplog is above the Swedish national average from 1.93 children per women. At the same time, Jokkmokk has a lower CFR. In comparison to the next larger city Luleå, you can see that the CFR between 1970 and 1980 were 1.81 children per women. In the time period between 2000 and 2010 the national average of the CFR is 1.78 children per women and in comparison Arjeplog, is really close to the average with 1.79 children per women, Jokkmokk has only a CFR with 1.45 children per women and the nearest larger city Luleå is under the average with 1.66 children per women (SCB. 2011b). There is no obvious correlation between these rural areas or urban areas and a higher fertility rate in Norrland. But perhaps a difference is the mean age of the childbearing. It seems that in rural areas because of a lower education, the average age is not so high than in urban areas (Andersson. 20011). Thereby, Arjeplog is a municipality with an in comparison high fertility rate for rural areas and Jokkmokk in contrast, has a very low fertility rate. But despite the differences, both fertility rates declined between 1970 and 2010.

Another process close connected to the decline is a small-scale concentration in both municipalities. Thereby, in the last decades was there an out-migration from the smaller settlements in the both municipalities to the particular main settlement of Arjeplog and Jokkmokk. Furthermore, this development is in other Swedish municipalities detectable in Norrland as well in South Sweden. This leads to a higher housing demand inside the main settlement. Mostly the demand is even higher than the offering in the centre of the municipality (Andersson. 2011; Jansson. 2011; Malmahl. 2011). At the other side, this special migration behaviour leads to an increasing decline in the smaller settlements.

The smaller settlements have the most pressure with the declining population. There exists a bulk of empty houses. But these empty buildings introduced a new development. Especially foreigners started to buy these houses for residential housing or as a cottage. Migrant especially from the Netherlands, Germany and Great Britain buy in general these houses for residential housing. But another group foreigners are important namely the Norwegians because almost every remote rural area in Sweden is located nearly the Swedish-Norwegian border (Andersson. 2011; Jansson. 2011). One example is Laisvall in the municipality Arjeplog. After the closure of the mine, the most Swedes moved away because of a lack of opportunities in the village. Now the village is mostly owned by Norwegian and the inhabitants of Arjeplog. They call
it jokingly “little Norway” (Jansson. 2011). But despite the foreigners buy some houses, the demand is low. So the original home owners cannot sell the houses (Dubois. 2011).

The development in both municipalities is multifaceted with more than only one affected dimension. The municipalities have growing processes as well shrinking processes. But despite the multi-dimensionality, the decline process is the dominant process in the municipalities. Furthermore, the case study municipality shows in one hand similar tendencies in comparison with other remote rural municipalities in Europe. But in the other hand, there are some unusual developments in the Swedish municipalities. One is the small-scale concentration. It is like urbanization inside the municipalities beside the large-scale urbanisation of the whole country. Other unique conditions for these municipalities are the economic basis. Arjeplog has the car testing industry and in Jokkmokk the water power plant. Especially in case of Arjeplog is the car testing industry a potential basis to reverse the decline. The following two chapters deal especially of the municipal reactions of the overarching phenomena of the decline. This are reflected in one side in a pronounced policy to reach an increasing population development in both municipalities. On the other side, there exist practical policies to react of the decline or to manage it.

4.2 Strategies to reverse the decline

One way to dealing with the decline is the attempt to reverse the decline. Already in the part of the growth policy mentioned, the growth idea is a central element in the policies. Both municipalities have the belief that more and more humans want to live a more on the natural amenities oriented life. It means to life a life close connected to the environment with spell time activities like hunting, fishing and hiking. Both municipalities have a strong belief that people want to life in this “rural idyll”. Despite this belief, they was not until now affected from the counterurbanization process (Andersson. 2011; Jansson. 2011).

Both municipalities developed for a strategy to implement new growth in the municipality and reverse the decline. Thereby, the population decline has a central position. Both municipalities focus of an economic development to reach the break of the decline. Additionally, the strategies seems as essential for an increased population development the natural conditions (Arjeplog kommun. 2008:1-11; Jokkmokk kommun. 2009:1-23).

One approach is close connected to the educational system. Both municipalities try to increase the educational level and to offer opportunities for the youth to educate themselves inside the municipalities. One measure to reach a better educational situation is the
“Kommunalverbund”, which means an association of municipalities. Some municipalities co-operate to reach common goals. For instance, Arjeplog co-operate with eleven other municipalities from Norrland for a better educational level. Now the municipalities have the possibility to offer distance learning courses inside the municipality. Similar happens in Jokkmokk. Jokkmokk co-operate with the three northernmost municipalities in Sweden namely Gällivare, Kiruna and Pajala to offer a greater range on educational measures. So they can provide further education activities for the residents. Thereby, helpful are the new media technologies like internet with the possibility of video conferencing. The idea is to moving knowledge but not the teacher. Through this education measures now exist in Jokkmokk possibilities to finish a university degree (Andersson. 2011). Similar is possible in Arjeplog (Jansson. 2011). It is an attempt to reduce the youth-outmigration because of education matters.

Another approach to reach a population turnaround in case of education matters is in Arjeplog close connected to the car-testing industry. The local high school Hornavan offers an upper secondary education with focus on the car-testing industry (Hornavansksolan Arjeplog. 2006). The municipality is aware of the chance of the car testing industry for Arjeplog but as well of the challenges. It is a real opportunity to offer jobs for highly educated people in the municipality, which will shape further conditions for the development of Arjeplog. But on the other side, by international operating companies is always the risk that they find another place to tests the cars. One measure to bind the car-testing industry is thereby this kind of education and provides highly educated specialists in the municipality for this kind of economic activity (Jansson. 2011).

The general attempt is to offer more jobs in both municipalities for higher educated people. Therefore, both municipalities support the development of certain economic activities. Especially, the tourism sector is seen as an important sector. One example is Polcirkeln as a common platform for the touristic promotion between the municipalities Arjeplog and Arvidsjaur. The attempt is to promote successful the own municipality as a touristic attractive location (Polcirkeln.nu. 2011). Even in Jokkmokk is the touristic attraction an important step for the further development. With this kind of service jobs, the municipalities should be more attractive for highly educated people and to provide them the chance to have the job opportunities (Andersson. 2011).

Another decline oriented policy is thereby the support of economic activities in both municipalities. The goal is to foster the economic developments of the municipalities through the support of different activities like start-ups of new entrepreneurs. Thereby, examples are the development offices Argentinis in Arjeplog and Strukturum in Jokkmokk. Both support
Further policy to support the economic development and the population development are the expansion of the infrastructural development as well as the promotion of the municipality in other countries. For instance in Jokkmokk started already for some weeks a new project to promote Jokkmokk in other countries like the Netherlands for residential housing. Thereby, the municipality marked themselves with the natural amenities like nature, wildlife, fresh water and a good air quality. With this amenities and many others promotes Arjeplog for the municipal development (Andersson. 2011; Jansson. 2011).

Despite great efforts to be attractive place to live through different measures is the impact uncertain. But the history shows in general marginal impact of the measure. Despite large effort in the recent decades, the municipalities decline further. There was indeed a small growth of the population in Arjeplog but only through temporary measures. Even uncertain is the educational effort, which should give the youth as well older generations to educate themselves in the municipalities. It seems so that the decline turnaround seems as a common goal and the affected municipalities co-operate to reach this goal. To attempt to offer more job opportunity is realistic. Already in the theory part were mentioned that even they want to move in remote rural areas, they find no jobs because the remote rural areas offer not enough jobs for highly educated people. Nevertheless, it is still uncertain if this effort of a population turnaround will happen in both municipalities. But it seems in case of Arjeplog a realistic chance to reverse the decline. The car-testing industry can work as hub for the further development. It is a kind of industry, which needs highly educated people and it is it a good marketing in other countries for possible foreign migrants. A result can be that possible new foreign migrants can be activated to migrate to Arjeplog. In the moment, Arjeplog has a realistic chance for the reverse of the decline with a possible increasing migration. This seems more unlikely in case of Jokkmokk because the lack of municipal hubs.

4.3 Practical dealing process

Despite the policies to reverse the decline, the municipal level has to deal with the impact of the demographic decline. This is a more practical oriented dealing process. This part takes especially the material from the interviews into account because these measures are dealing more in an informal. It means the dealing process is not obvious and formulated as a strategy. The interviews are the only suitable measure to get this information’s.
One impact of the declining population is an increasing demand of elderly care because of the lower mortality and the increasing life-expectancy. This means that the people need an increasing care which ended up in a general extension of the elderly care system (The ESHRE Capri Workshop Group. 2010:591). In contrast to this development stands a reduction of the total numbers of children in both municipalities. This reflects the decline of fertility rate in both municipalities (Andersson, 2011; Jansson. 2011).

This means, there is a need for an extension of the care system in the next years as well a reduction of the school system. Already some schools in Arjeplog and Jokkmokk reached a small number of pupils like in Arjeplog the school in Slagnäs with not more than 20 pupils. Thereby, a general reduction of the number of pupils was detected for instance Arjeplog has previously more than 400 pupils and today they have only 200 (Jannson. 2011). Similar happens with the school system in Jokkmokk. Especially, the schools outside the main village are affected from this decline process and have an overcapacity (Andersson. 2011).

Close connected to this point comes stands the centralisation of the school system in both municipalities. More and more pupils have to go to the main village in case of the education matters (Andersson, 2011; Jansson. 2011). This ends often in a migration inside the municipality from families, which migrates from the smaller to the main settlement to provide their children the opportunity to go close to their home to the school (Jansson. 2011). This produces in connection with the low birth rate am overcapacity of the schools in the smaller settlements and it would be a logical conclusion to close some schools down. This happened already sometimes in the municipality. But this is not possible for all schools outside the main village. Some schools are too remote and in the consequence, they are too far away from the main village. The daily commuting distance seems than unacceptable for the pupils (Andersson, 2011; Jansson. 2011).

In this regard Jokkmokk tries to have the schools for children between six and nine close to the settlements in the smaller villages. For older children it is reasonable to have longer commuting distances. One example is the village Vuollerim, in which it should the municipality wanted to a close down of the school building for all pupils over nine. They should commute to Jokkmokk, which is not too far away from Vuollerim. But before this happens, one private school opened in the village and the problem was solved for the municipality (Andersson. 2011).

Similar happens in Arjeplog for instance in the settlement Slagnäs in the South-West of Arjeplog. In the current situation has the school only a large overcapacity pupils but the municipality cannot close it. Thereby, one reason is that Slagnäs is too far away from Arjeplog. Another reason is the political resistance because of the fear that they perhaps loose voters. The most efficient way to deal with the problem will be a co-operation with Sorsele to educate the pupils in the nearer Sorsele. This attempt failed till the moment because of political challenges.
The problem is that both municipalities cannot agree in the point, which municipality should pay (Jansson. 2011).

Another attempt in Arjeplog is a system called B-form to adjust the class system in case by the smaller number of pupils in smaller settlements. The classed and courses are combined between the different classes and ages and have a common class by a teacher. For instance the third class of Slägnas are eleven pupils and the fourth class have only 6 people. Both classes were combined and had together the third and fourth school year. One problem for this system is that the Swedish government want to change the law. As one consequence the teacher cannot it anymore allowed to teach when he cans not the right education. This means, it will be much more difficult to find a teacher who has the education to teach at the same time two classes in a small village like Slägnas (Forsberg. 2011).

The care system has stands in front of the new conditions, which the demographic decline are triggered. It comes in the care system to a centralisation in the larger settlement of the municipalities (Andersson, 2011; Jansson. 2011). The elderly people move to the centre and leave there home in the smaller settlements to get a better access to the care system. Or they have to go in a nursery home inside the larger village because there cannot care stations located close the smaller settlements (Jansson. 2011).

A special adaption which takes the decline into account is a new campaign which started only for some weeks in Jokkmokk. One problem is for the municipality that in three or four years a lot of employees in the care system will go in the retirement. This means in three or four year the municipality has a lack of skilled workers in the care system. To work against this development, the municipality Jokkmokk started already now a programme, which tries to animate younger people to work in the care system. The municipalities tried to promote the care jobs by young people, which leave the school now to get they employed in some years. As one result, this will increase the current costs of for the care system but as another result. They compensate already the following lack of employees before this lack started (Andersson. 2011).

Strong connected to this point is another political measure to take the decline into account namely an increasing co-operation between the municipalities. Already was mentioned, the attempt between a co-operation of Arjeplog and Sorsele in case of the school redistribution. Arjeplog as well Jokkmokk are seeing for the further development co-operation as a crucial element (Andersson, 2011; Jansson. 2011). The attempt is to divide the social services between the municipalities. It is a realistic approach to connect some services like the Arbetsförmedlingen (employment service) or the Sjukhus förvaltning (hospital administration) in one place (Jansson. 2011). Another example of this co-operation is the fire department in Jokkmokk. The
municipality have a part-time staff member as the head of the fire department in Jokkmokk (Andersson, 2011).

One common feature of this both municipalities in Norbotten is that they want a further co-operation in a lot of responsibility fields but are strictly against a general connection of different municipalities to one larger. The problem is that it is not a real opportunity because they are already municipalities with a large area and large distances between the settlements. A further enlargement would increase the distances (Andersson, 2011; Jansson, 2011). This seems only a realistic option for smaller municipalities like Högsby. There the administration started already to combine some departments with the adjacent Hultsfred like the housing department and some other departments. Furthermore by a decline of the municipality Högsby, it seems as the most likely variant to secure the basic services for the inhabitants in these municipalities. But it is only a realistic approach for the small size municipalities (Malmdahl, 2011). Co-operation seems the more suitable approach for the sparsely populated areas.

Another decline related measure is close connected to the school- and care system, the tax redistribution. Through the changing conditions of the needs for different service responsibilities, there is a need to redistribute the money for this measure. For instance a declining school systems means theoretical a declining need for the received money. Even an increasing care system has an increasing demand for more money. Of course this increase/decline aren’t so proportional related to each other because the costs increase or decreases not to the same extend as the number of consumer increase/decrease. But there is a need to redistribute the money (Malmdahl, 2011).

To redistribute the money, the municipalities Arjeplog as well Jokkmokk regulates every New Year the expenditures between the different responsibility fields (Andersson, 2011; Jansson, 2011).

Some few municipalities developed this model even further like the municipality Högsby in South-East Sweden. This kind of forecast model is called demography model. It is based on the population forecasts from SCB. Thereby, different municipal responsibilities are divided into the fields: förskola (preschool), fritidshem (recreational activities), grundskola (primary school), gymnasieskola (high school) and äldreomsorgen (elderly care). The forecasts shows how the needs for this responsibility fields will change over the time which is resulting out a population change inside the municipality (figure 22). In the next step are the average costs calculated for each responsibility. With this model is it possible to make long-term decisions in relation to the demographic decline and it allows a long term planned redistribution of resources.
The affected responsibility fields have time to adjust it in a long-term process (Månsson. 2009:1; Malmhdahl. 2011). This demography model is a special form and used only from few municipalities. In general it seems that more municipalities do it in the same way like Arjeplog and Jokkmokk (Malmhdahl. 2011).

In Arjeplog as well in Jokkmokk was detectable a changing housing demand and some adaption measures. The housing demand differs in the different parts of the municipalities. During the smaller settlements there is an increasing percentage of empty houses, the tätorter Arjeplog and Jokkmokk have higher demand as they can offer (Andersson, 2011; Jansson. 2011). In the case of Arjeplog means it that the municipality are already started to plan the construction of new buildings for apartments. The empty houses in the smaller settlements are almost unused. Only few were bought by foreigners (Forsberg. 2011). Jokkmokk goes another way. The municipality demolished empty buildings, which are in the hand of the municipality. But it means not that whole neighbourhoods were demolished. It is about only few demolished buildings in such a small municipality. Now they added this policy with a new element namely the conversion of empty buildings. The reason is the concentration process, which led to higher demand inside the tätort Jokkmokk. But the municipality hesitate to build new houses because it is an expensive venture and the future demand is uncertain. One impact is that the municipality started to converse old empty municipality buildings to new apartments like the conversion of an old kindergarten to new apartments. So the municipality demolished in the one hand empty old

**Figure 22** Forecasts with the different responsibility fields and related age category

Månsson. 2009:1 on basis of SCB

The affected responsibility fields have time to adjust it in a long-term process (Månsson. 2009:1; Malmhdahl. 2011). This demography model is a special form and used only from few municipalities. In general it seems that more municipalities do it in the same way like Arjeplog and Jokkmokk (Malmhdahl. 2011).

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buildings without any chance of a later conversion and secure in the moment buildings which are possible conversion projects (Andersson. 2011).

This practical dealing process can be divided in the municipalities Arjeplog and Jokkmokk is an active dealing process to secure the basic services. The handling is divided into four parts, the adjustment of the school- and care system, an increasing co-operation between the municipalities, the tax redistribution between different responsibility fields and an intervention in the housing market. The practical measures are characterized by focus to adjust especially the school and care system to the new conditions. As the crucial element is thereby seen an increasing co-operation between the municipalities. Tasks between the municipalities are divided, which should guarantee to secure the basic services. Furthermore tax redistribution should guarantee the basic services. To adapt the housing market to the new conditions, building of new houses as well demolishing and conversion is the important dealing. Altogether the practical dealing is focussed on compensation and secures the municipal basic services.
5 Concluding discussion

The population decline in the Swedish remote rural municipalities is a rather complex phenomenon. The reasons for the decline are multifaceted with an uncertain policy impact. One reason is the decline of the fertility rate. It is an embracing phenomenon as a result of different transformation in the fields of economy, socio-culture and medicine. Some changes are for instance level of education, employment, family composition, changing values and attitudes, reduced desire to get children, postponement of childbearing, availability of contraception and reduced men fecundability. Through the complexity is the policy influence uncertain. National policies can have a short term effect. But a long-term impact is in the moment unlikely. In general, the most researches expect only a marginal policy influence of the fertility rate.

Beside the declining fertility rate, there exist a lot of other reasons, which are summarized in the concept rural restructuring. It embarrasses three fields of transformation namely political, economical and social-cultural changes. It is useful to describe the changes, which lead to the decline in remote rural areas. All this three dimensions influenced the development of remote rural areas. Thereby, it seems that the political dimension has not such a large impact than the other two dimensions. This shows the marginal influence of the decline in remote rural areas. The economic dimension is important that the most remote rural areas can not have the job opportunities for highly educated people. Only the tourist resorts were able to attract highly educated people. But the most remote rural municipalities were avoided by highly educated people because of a lack of job opportunities. This is even reflected in the social-cultural dimension. The youth migrates out the municipality and only few counterurban movers migrate to the remote rural areas. The most counterurban mover migrates to rural areas close to the larger cities or to the tourist’s resorts.

This multi-dimensional reasons lead to a specific character of the decline. The decrease of the population started with the decline of the fertility rate. It seems that this decrease of the fertility rate is the deciding factor. Former was the fertility rate high enough to compensate the out-migration. But through the decline of the fertility rate in the 60’s started even the decline process of the remote rural municipalities. The in-migration was not able to compensate. Furthermore it seems unlikely that this will change in the most remote rural areas. Nevertheless, the numbers of in- and out-migrants are almost equal at the total number of the migration. But even, there exist a difference of the age groups, which migrates out and to the municipalities. The tendency is that especially young people migrates out the remote rural areas. This stands in contrast to the person, which migrates into the municipalities. Mostly people in the workforce migrate to rural areas. Young people migrate out and older migrates to the municipalities.
This migration behaviour undermines additional the fertility rate and gives the municipalities an unfavourable condition for natural growth. The result is that the decreases of the fertility rate in connection with a too small number of in-migrants lead to a decline of the total number of inhabitants of the municipalities since decades. But even the different policy levels shape the conditions for an increasing the fertility rate, the population will decline further. To summarize it, the declining remote rural areas have unfavourable conditions of a natural population growth with an insufficient migration. One special characteristic in the Swedish case is the small-scale urbanization. Despite the general decline of the municipality, declines the major settlements to a smaller extend than the surrounding settlements. This comes through an inner-municipal movement of the inhabitants. The inhabitants migrate of the smaller settlements to the main settlement because a better access to the basic services. So the main settlements declines not to the same extend than the smaller settlements.

The most literature about the decline in remote rural areas highlights the youth migration as the crucial process of the decline. The findings in the thesis are confirming this assumption but only in connection with the declining fertility and the lack of counterurban mover in the most remote rural municipalities. That is the difference to the former researches. The former research highlights almost only the youth-outmigration (see for instance Matthews et al. 2000; Stockdale. 2002 and Muilu. and Rusanen. 2003). But the decline is a result out these three circumstances.

The policy was despite efforts not able to reverse this development. But they introduced a complex system out support and equalisation measures. The national regional growth policy and the national equalisation policy are two policies to take the decline into account. The dealing process on the national level is close connected to the idea of the Swedish administration that all inhabitants should have an equal access to services and every region should have the opportunity to grow. The Swedish dealing policy is characterized by stimulating growth with the regional growth policy and compensates the negative impact of the decline with the national equalisation policy. Both measures are an allocation of money to support regions with structural problems. It is a passive or indirect way to deal with the decline. The national administration wants to offer the affected municipalities the best conditions for a positive development of the declining areas.

However, the impacts of the growth policy and the equalisation policy are uncertain for the development of the declining municipalities as well for the prosperous municipalities. There exists currently a lack of an evaluation of impacts of both measures. It is still not clear, which field should be receiving the most intensions and what are the indicators to measure the impacts. Nevertheless the lack of evaluation seems the researchers only a marginal impact of the economic development of the declining areas (Andersson. 2005:825). This reflects even the opinion of the municipal administration, which sees only a small impact. In contrast are standing the
equalisation measures. They are essential for the secure of the basic services for the declining municipalities. Without them, the municipalities would be notable anymore to keep a basic level of the municipal responsibilities. Or they have to reduce the scale of the services for instance concentrate all basic services in the main settlement. However, for the affected municipalities are the equalization measures an important system to keep the municipality is able to act and offer an “equal” access to the basic services.

Despite the large subsidies for the remote rural areas, the municipalities decline unabated. Therefore, the affected municipalities developed different measures to handle the situation. The municipalities have usually a two-part way to dealing process like the national level. In one hand is the continuous effort to reverse the decline and shape conditions for the further development. On the other hand, practical measures exist to adapt the new conditions with a declining population. A policy to reverse the decline is deeply rooted in the most policy areas. Beside the normal measures to reverse the decline like to support start-ups or the development of strategic documents, the remote rural areas uses the measure of the co-operation between the affected municipalities. Through the co-operation they have more opportunities to reach a goal. Thereby, it seems that with a smaller size, the pressure to reverse the decline increase.

The other side of the dealing process is connected to the secure of the basic municipality responsibilities. This adaption process can divided into four fields, the adjustment of the school- and care system, the increasing co-operation between the municipalities, the tax redistribution between different responsibility fields and the intervention in the housing market. Thereby, this policy is close connected to the concentration process. It is a policy to should offer the remaining residents in smaller settlements an equal access to the basic services. Thereby is detectable co-operation seems as an important measure in the policies to reverse the decline as well to secure the basic services. But a connection of different municipalities is no opportunity because this would worsen the situation additionally. The policy dealing on the municipal level is characterized as a policy to reverse the decline and a policy to secure the municipal basic services. It means the policy measures on the municipal level are an active handling of the situation.

To summarize it, the Swedish dealing process is focused on the reverse of the decline and on the compensation of the negative impacts. All measures reflect this endeavour in the national as well in the municipal level. The goal is to offer all municipalities the chance for a positive development. If the measures are suitable to reach this is uncertain especially by the growth measures. But the historic development of the most remote rural municipalities shows that these measures have only a marginal influence of the decline process. So the question, how the national and municipal level in Sweden is dealing with the demographic decline in remote rural regions can be answered as following. The decline dealing is on the national level a passive process with a
focus on the reversal and the compensation. The municipal level deals because of a higher pressure in a more active way with the challenge. They developed different measures to take the demographic decline into account. But despite this practical dealing, the remote rural areas focus as well on a reversal of the decline. The whole measures have the goal to support the developments inside the municipality and to compensate the impacts.

Despite all this effort to reverse the decline and to adapt the new conditions, it seems in general as unlikely to reach new growth. Not all municipalities have the conditions. Only few will get a chance to break out like through special development inside the municipality. But this seems in the moment as unlikely. Nevertheless, the future is uncertain and nobody knows the further development of the human society. Perhaps in the near future, it comes really to an extended migration movement to the remote rural areas because of the natural amenities. These can indeed the hope of the affected municipalities. But the remote rural areas are not anymore able to reach a population growth without an increasing immigration. This will only be possible with a high increase of the fertility rate and this seems as an unrealistic scenario. To stabilize the population development means a fertility rate far above 2.1 children per women. Thereby, the most researches will agree that this cannot happen (see for instance Leridon. 2005; Lutz. 2007 and The ESHRE Capri Workshop Group. 2010). Even in the current situation are unlikely an increased in-migration and a decline of the out–migration.

But how will be the future prospects in further declining remote rural areas? One step to manage the decline is to accept them. In general, the term shrinking or decline is strong connected in the mind of the people with something negative. But as well as the shrinking process has a negative acceptation in the population and policy, the growth processes 200 years ago were a problematic challenge. Housing shortage in the beginning of industrialization, pollution and urban are only some examples. Thereby, the demographic decline has negative as well as positive aspects (Oswalt. 2004:12-14). To accept the decline in the case of remote rural areas means that every settlement will decline. The administration has to move away from the idea that every settlement should grow. It can not mean that all areas will decline. Perhaps the main settlement will have again an increasing population. But it is nearly impossible that all settlements will grow again. When you accept the decline, you can find new opportunities in the decline especially in the related concentration process. For instance, the concentration process leads to a saving of public resources because of fewer costs in the education or in the traffic system. After all is an alternative approach to handle the decline and to foster the concentration. Thereby, one possible way to support this development is to offer apartments for the migration inside the municipality or tax subsidies for migrants into the main settlement.
On other side, the smaller settlement receives the chance for new developments. They cannot disappear. In the one hand, not all residents will leave there homes in the smaller settlement. In the other hand, some houses may attract foreign migrants for residential housing or conversion to cottages. Thereby, the shrinking process can attract the empty buildings so called “space pioneers”. Space pioneers are a person from other regions, which brings new ideas to the shrinking region like new functions for the buildings. They are converting the empty buildings use them in another way. There exist various examples in the rural areas in Germany (for further information sees for instance Ulf Matthiesen. 2004:378-379).

Even these empty buildings are perhaps attractive for a special use, which received in the recent years an increasing attention. This is idea of an ecovillage. The ecovillage is a kind of the intentional community. It means the people came together because they have the same values and ideals. They start a new life in the community with people, which have the same values and work and live together. In the kind of the ecovillage means it that the common values are based on a more ecological oriented life. The size varies of an ecovillage with inhabitants between 50 and 150. These kind of symbiotic communities have an ecological oriented lifestyle, which can be based on rural amenities. Furthermore, they work also in the community and not so bounded on larger jobs markets (for further information sees for instance Intentional Community 2011). The remote rural municipalities are an attractive location for this kind of groups. So, one possibility is that the smaller settlements are an attractive location for an intentional community. They want to live a more “natural” life and the remote rural areas can offer this kind of life.

This means a possible conversion. One obstacle will be there the fear of the house owners to sale their houses. The municipalities may be able to manage it to take the home owners the fear to sale the houses. Than one possible effect will may the increasing numbers of foreigners. But this has to include a large publicity campaign in other countries like the Netherlands and Germany. To summarize it, the shrinking process provides in the same time opportunities for the further development of remote rural areas.

But despite different reversion approaches, the decline will likely continue. Even the possible in-migration of foreigners will not be able to reverse the decline in the whole municipality. But with a concentration to the main village, the municipality will survive even the total number decline.
6. References

6.1 Literature


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6.2. Online references


6.3 Interviews


Dubois, A. 2011. “E-mail message to author with the Research Fellow by Nordregio”. Karlskrona, Sweden, January 17.


7. Appendix

7.1 Pictures

Picture collage 1: The municipality Högsby .............................................................. 86
   Own pictures

Picture collage 2: The municipality Arjeplog ......................................................... 87
   Own pictures

Picture collage 3: The municipality Jokkmokk ..................................................... 88
   Own pictures

7.2 Summary

In Sweden, growing processes and shrinking processes take place simultaneously since decades. The following thesis deals especially with the decline process in the remote rural municipalities in Sweden. The central question of the thesis is: how does the national and municipal level in Sweden is dealing with the demographic decline in remote rural regions.

To answer this question, the thesis includes three parts. The first part is the theoretical framework the thesis. This part shows the theoretical conditions for the remote rural municipalities for the further development. To summarize the part, the most remote rural areas will decline further. Only few will reach a population turnaround.

The second part analyses the measures at the national level with a focus on the national regional growth policy as a support measure and the national equalisation policy as a compensation measure. These development- and compensation measures are not only used in declining regions. But both policies were original developed to support the declining regions in Norrland. Additionally, they show representative the handling process on the national level. The Swedish dealing policy is characterized by stimulating growth with the regional growth policy and compensates the negative impact of the decline with the national equalisation policy. Both measures are an allocation of money to support regions with structural problems.

The third part analyses the dealing process on the municipal level. Thereby, the dealing process has more a practical nature. This shows the two selected case study of the municipalities
Arjeplog and Jokkmokk. It seems very common that the Swedish municipal measures are characterized by a two-way dealing. In on hand, the municipalities try to reverse the decline through a growth policy. These growth strategies are close connected to the natural amenities, which should attract new residents. In the other hand, they developed a practical decline policy to reduce the negative impacts of decline. This adaption process can divided into four fields, the adjustment of the school- and care system, the increasing co-operation between the municipalities, the tax redistribution between different responsibility fields and the intervention in the housing market. Nevertheless the central focus lays on a growth policy. A crucial element for both dealing process is the mean of co-operation.

To summarize it, the Swedish dealing process is focused on the reverse of the decline and on the compensation of the negative impacts. All measures reflect this endeavour in the national as well in the municipal level.

7.3 Questionnaire

1. What is your role in the municipality?

2. How do the municipally look upon the ongoing population decline? Do you personal expect it to continue?

3. What do you consider to be the most important causes for the demographic decline?

4. Are some areas of the whole municipality more affected by the decline as others? Which and why?

5. How is the fertility rate in your municipality in a nationwide comparison?

6. Which groups is particular leaving the municipality?

7. Why are leaving some groups Arjeplog/Jokkmokk?

8. Is the migration of people to the municipality increasing?

9. What kind of peoples is settling in Arjeplog/Jokkmokk?
10. What are the most important impacts of the population decline especially in Arjeplog/Jokkmokk?

11. What are you doing in order to manage the impacts of the demographic decline?

12. In which manners are influencing the peripheral location the task fulfilling of your municipality?

13. How does population decline influence different local tasks?

14. Do you have any measures which are aiming at breaking the population decline? What is needed in order to succeed with that? (The role of the municipality and the role of the national government)

15. How the economic structure does changed over the time in your municipality?

16. In which way the national regional growth policies are influencing economic development of Arjeplog/Jokkmokk?

17. What the equalisations policy means for your municipality?

18. If you cannot succeed breaking the ongoing population decline what would Arjeplog/Jokkmokk be like in 25 years?

19. Is there anything else that didn’t come up which you think is interesting or important?

7.4 A personal reflection

Additional, this topic is not connected to the analytical or empirical part. It is a subjective description and reflection based on my own perception of the municipalities Arjeplog, Jokkmokk and Högsby (see pictures 1, 2, 3). I visited the considered municipalities to get a deeper understanding for the region beside the statistical data and the theoretical elaboration.

My first trip was to Högsby “close” to Kalmar. I was surprised about this tätort. I came to Högsby with a certain imagination of declining municipalities. But what I saw differed to a large
extent from my imagination. My imagination was before the arrival in Högsby oriented on the German industrial decline. The decline in Germany is obvious through empty buildings and a perception of emptiness. In contrast stands the Swedish declining municipalities. I perceived Högsby as vital. I saw people from all age groups, only few empty houses, and a crowded market place. Furthermore I perceived this city as quiet nice place to live with a beautiful landscape and the typical village feeling.

I have the same impression about Arjeplog and Jokkmokk. I perceived both of them as beautiful, vital cities in a unique landscape. Both cities have for me different natural conditions and are located in a different landscape. The trip to Arjeplog and Jokkmokk was an adventure because of a train and bus journey of almost 22 hours. These large distances between the municipalities are something special for a person from continental Europe. In Germany you can walk one hour and you are in the next settlement. Here you can walk the whole day and you will not arrive any settlement. But that’s perhaps the reason, why the Dutch and Germans love this region.

I was not only surprised from the landscape, the low density and the municipalities. Even the inhabitant differs from my imagination. I expected friendly but no talkative people. But the people in Norrland are very talkative and cordial. I talked with some Swedes in Arjeplog as well in Jokkmokk and cannot confirm the general opinion. Thereby, I talked especially with some younger persons and asked them, why they are staying or came back. The answers were mostly similar, they like the atmosphere, their friends and family are living her and you know each other.

Unfortunately I could not talk to people, which migrates out the municipality. But despite I talked with no person, I observed an interesting behaviour of the local youth. You cannot generalize this example but it for me a representative example of the spell-time opportunities in these remote rural areas. At my last evening in Arjeplog, I walked through the city and perceived that two cars full with young people drove the whole evening through the city with their cars. At this point I recognized that not all generations like this rural “idyll” lifestyle. Perhaps it is a perfect place to life here, when you have already seen something from the world. But for the youth which want to see more from the world, it seems as a not the best place. Altogether, this journey to the northern polar circle was important for me to get a deeper understanding why people leaving or staying in the perceived end of the world.
Picture collage 1: The municipality Högsby

Own pictures
Picture collage 2: The municipality Arjeplog

Own pictures
Picture collage 3: The municipality Jokkmokk

Own pictures