

The effects of residential mobility of dual career families to the employment stability and job access

Taru Järvinen



The importance of the human capital component for the operation of the economy has been widely recognized in recent decades. Specifically, human investment is seen to contribute to economic growth not least through its effects on productivity, earnings, job mobility, entrepreneurial skills, and technological innovation. Yet, the need to build up human capital is no new message. It has been noticed already at the end of 18th century (Adam Smith 1776) that improvements in the skills of workers are a critical source of economic progress (Asplund 1989, 7).

The demographic trends, with declining fertility rates and longer life expectancies, have important implications for the changing numbers and composition of households as well as to the labour force structure. Especially the fertility rates decline has particular relevance with respect to dual career households. The restructuring of the labour market and of households has culminated in an increase of no-earner and multi-earn-

er households. Most families consist of two working spouses who both need a specialised job. The changes in household structures and in educational level have implications for the forms of tension and compromise inherent in household migration decisions.

There are important economic reasons why it is particularly appropriate for researchers, policy makers and employers to derive a greater understanding of the compromises inherent in the location and mobility decisions of dual career families. In so far this scope has been slightly done in Finland and Scandinavian countries. Those countries differ in many respect of the Anglo-Saxon countries where the research has been done since 1969, the year when Rapoport & Rapoport defined the term dual career couple.

In comparison with other European countries women's participation in wage employment is traditionally very high in Finland, which is sequel of the political decisions. In many central European countries families will survive fine with only one wage earner. In Finland and in other Nordic countries there are required two wage earners to obtain a satisfactory living

standard. In Nordic countries political interventions has enabled two earner families by organising for example day care system which release both parents for the needs of labour markets.

Data and methods

Dual career families cover 22 % of two parent families in Finland. Because dual-career families are special group that official statistics doesn't separate is the analysed data collected by questionnaire.

The data is longitudinal sample data of highly educated families where both spouses are in professional occupation and of age 28-45 years. The response rate was 31 %. Of the responses 41 % was men and 59 % was women.

Event history analyses prove to be useful while analysing residential mobility and migration between regions. The usual way to study migration at the individual level is to focus on whether a move has taken place over some period of time. Consequently, the dependent variable is a measure of whether the individual is a migrant or not. Such analyses ignore the fact that some individuals change their living environment once,

M.Sc. Taru Järvinen is working as a Researcher at the Institute of Migration, Turku.

while others may migrate several times during the period of time under consideration. Event history analyses, however, takes into consideration by allowing account for migration activity throughout the period in question. This is accomplished by utilizing the instantaneous rates of inter municipality and interstate migration as the dependent variables.

Migration propensity

All movement in the labour market is part of a continuous matching process where employers and employees should be linked in a way that is rewarding for both parties. Efficient matching of local demand and supply of labour force at different qualification levels is considered to be an important prerequisite for both economic growth and social cohesion in every region. Most people try to find job opportunities where they live. Since jobs are not available everywhere one may have to accept daily commuting in order to find a suitable job or one may have to relocate oneself. All central places with their surrounding local labour market regions cannot have a complete set of positions in all branch-

es nor a labour force suitable for all kinds of work.

Career dilemmas occur when there are conflicts between the needs of one career and those of the other. When both require time commitments that do not allow either spouse leeway for handling unexpected complications in domestic and child care arrangements, there can be disagreement as to whose needs should be sacrificed to handle the situation. Another major dilemma can occur if a geographic relocation is required for the further career development of one spouse. This type of transition can require major adjustments in the couple's life-styles or the other spouse's career. As a sequel of the complex and pressing migration process many Finnish dual-career families will choose to stay where they are. The regional needs for balanced development and the needs of companies for skilled employees in smaller cities will suffer from the cumulative deprivation.

Labour mobility of dual career families is complicated by the need to find specialised jobs for both spouses when moving. This phenomenon tends to favour large labour market areas, which can provide a satisfying situation for most

dual career households. In the peripheral and sparsely populated areas local labour markets are often too small and isolated which presents severe recruitment problems particularly within specialised fields. However, 58 % of inter municipal migrations of dual career families comes from centers of city areas and 16 % comes from rural areas near of cities (Table 1). The direction of these flows concentrate also to these municipality types; 38 % to the centers of city areas and 32 % to the rural areas near of cities. The net migration balance is negative for centers of city areas as total. The reason why dual career families are directing away from biggest centers is most often the question of good environment for family. While career is stabilized in centers of city areas the families are feeling more stable and then starts to look other possibilities to get better environment that corresponds their values. For employers to obtain competent employees, the labour market often has to be fairly large to be able to offer a suitable job for the spouse of the new employee but in the more versatile labour markets families tend to appreciate more rural environment and closeness

Table 1. Migration flows of dual career families.

		From							Total
		Center of city area	Other city	Rural area near of city	Nuclear rural	Remote rural	Abroad	Missing	
To	Center of city area	22.0	1.6	7.3	2.7	2.2	1.1	1.2	38.1
	Other city	4.0	1.2	1.0	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.2	7.4
	Rural area near of city	21.4	1.6	4.7	2.9	0.8	0.8	0.2	32.4
	Nuclear rural	7.3	0.9	2.2	3.3	1.5	-	0.3	15.5
	Remote rural	3.7	0.1	0.7	0.7	1.1	-	0.3	6.6
Total		58.4	5.5	15.9	9.9	6.0	2.2	2.2	100.0

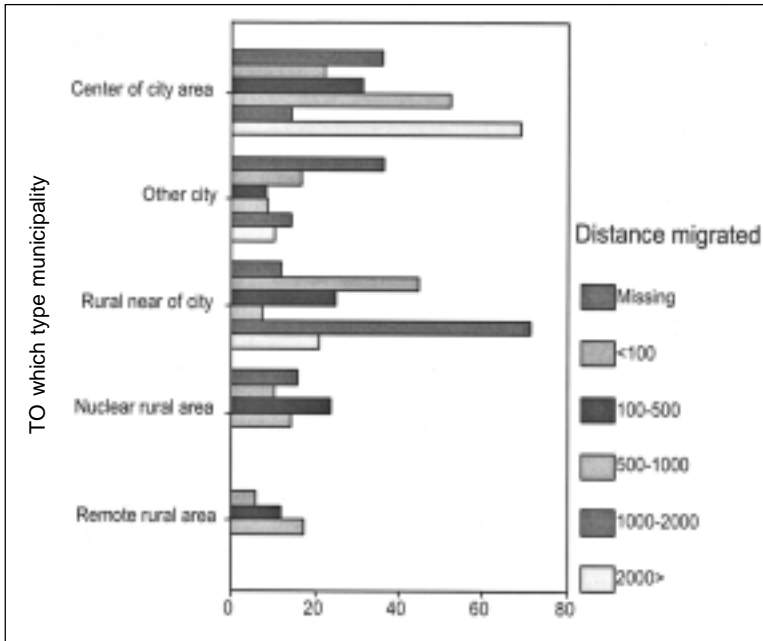


Figure 1. Distance migrated by the type of target municipality.

of nature, relatives and friends. This seems to be an even greater incentive than the salary (see Chapple 2001, Jansson 2000, Niivalainen 1999).

There is a dominant consensus in the international labour migration literature that the employment characteristics and quality of life of female partners often suffer as a result.

While comparing the municipality types with each other the proportion of highly educated people increases when the municipality is more urbanized and local labour market area is more effective and versatile (Data: SVT 2000 & Statistics Finland 1995 & query data). The rural areas close to the versatile labour markets are progressing because of their good combination of nice environment and good job access. The decision making process of family relocation is compli-

cated while there is need to optimise the best solution and combine the needs of three careers (three careers meaning the working careers of both spouses and the shared family career).

Migration flows of dual career families coming from abroad are most often (70 %) locating themselves to the centers of city areas and to the rural areas near of cities (figure 1). Over half of the long distance flows in Finland goes to the centers of city areas. The likelihood of receiving short moves is greatest in the rural areas near of cities to where almost 45 % takes place. The probability of long distance out migration increases with the share of labour force working in industry, which is in line with the development of one-sided industrial regions, that are losing their population (see Vartiainen 1997; Laakso 1998). Industry has

had already some serious problems to recruit new skilled employees.

According to the statistics 50 % of families where both men and women had higher education in 1995 concentrated to the 8 biggest Finnish cities, while only the local labour market area of Helsinki included already 39 %. Dual career families live in the best functioning and versatile local labour markets.

Migration activity of dual career families was about 7,2 % in 1999-2001 which is only slightly higher than the migration rate in general for the age group 25-45 years that was 6,98 % for both men and women in 2000. For total population migration propensity was only 5,44 % but it is known fact that young people are most mobile. The needs and age of children influenced strongly to the timing and also to the decision of destination area of dual career families beside of the job access. Of the latest inter municipal migrations only 36 % had directed to the same local labour market area than the previous location of family's residence had been and correspondingly 64 % of dual career families have migrated to current home municipality from another labour market area.

Gender in the labour market

The theorists have studied the flexibility of labour and pointed that women form the peripheral labour force where quantitative flexibility is directed (e.g. Atkinson 1984, 1989). This kind of inspection does not notice the changes of educational level and doesn't

correspond to the Finnish situation. Most women provide for themselves economically. As women's participation in paid work continues to be very high in Finland, and more women are employed in managerial, professional and associated occupations while they are going to be more educated, the number and significance of dual career households is set to increase. Employed women are a few more educated than employed men. At the end of 1999 of labour force 76 per cent of women and 72 per cent of men had some degree after the primary education. 35 per cent of women and 27 per cent of men had academic degree or upper secondary education (SVT 2002).

In comparison with other European countries, women's participation in wage employment is traditionally very high in Finland. Finnish women have rather stable position on the labour market: they have long careers, averaging about the same length as those of male workers (Heiskanen et al. 1990:5). In Finland 57 % of women aged between 15 and 74 years were in wage employment in 2001 (SVT 2002). Part-time employment is comparatively rare in Finland, but still more general among women (13 %) than among men (3 %). In this regard the dynamics of Finnish local labour markets differs clearly from the conservative welfare states. In European Union the comparative numbers are 37 % for women and 9 % for men. The generality of part-time work is depending on the concealing supply and demand effects. In countries where female part-time work is widespread, increasing numbers of men are also seeking part-time

Table 2. Employment of dual career spouses before and after relocation.

Before relocation / After relocation		Permanent	Periodical	Parttime	Total
Men	Permanent	77	4	-	81
	Periodical	6	11	1	17
	Parttime	1	1	0	2
	Total	83	16	1	100
Women	Permanent	57	8	1	66
	Periodical	7	21	2	30
	Parttime	-	1	2	3
	Total	64	30	5	100

Table 3. Employment status of spouses of dual career families before and after relocation.

Before relocation / After relocation		Employee	Self-employed	Unemployed	Student	Family leave	Total
Men	Employee	87	-	1	1	1	90
	Self employed	1	1	-	-	-	2
	Unemployed	4	-	-	-	-	4
	Student	3	-	-	-	-	3
	Family leave	1	-	-	1	-	2
	Total	96	1	1	2	1	101
Women	Employee	52	1	5	2	9	69
	Self employed	0	1	-	-	-	1
	Unemployed	1	-	2	-	-	3
	Student	-	-	0	-	-	0
	Family leave	8	1	0	-	17	26
	Total	61	3	7	2	26	99

employment, since it has become more accepted employment form and at that time firms are changing their personnel strategies. (Bielen-ski et al. 2000, 50–51).

Among women of dual career families was often mentioned the desire for reduced working hours specially while they had small children. In general there was men-

tioned the hope for wider possibilities to choose how many hours one is ready and eager to use in work both among men and women. The family and working life combination seems to be most difficult among life science and health professionals that have women majority. In addition in this sector is more common to have shiftwork.

Table 4. Employment versus education and the use of knowledge capital they have.

		Before relocation / After relocation	
		Yes	No
Men	Yes	96	-
	No	3	1
	Total	99	1
Women	Yes	87	5
	No	3	3
	Total	90	8

The families, where is shiftworker, underline the importance of stability of other spouses working hours, short working distances, and closeness of support networks.

In theory most of the long-distance migrations are connected to regional differences of the supply and demand of labour force. The labour force is assumed to migrate, as a result of rational decision, away from areas where there is high unemployment, only few well paid jobs and excessive representation of reducing fields of industry. Survey evidence of Green et al. (1999: 79) suggests that the ability of working trailing partner to find suitable alternative employment in the destination area is an important influence on the overall success of the relocation. Approximately two-thirds of those whose partners had found alternative employment relatively easily rated the move a success. On the other hand, amongst those whose partners had experienced difficulties in obtaining suitable employment only 38 per cent felt the relocation had been successful.

According to the answers I have analysed the women's employment differs of men's but at the same time it keeps at the level of the pre-migration employment (Table 2 and 3). It is more common for women to stay home with children after family relocation than for men. Women seem to take up attitude that unemployment or family leave for a short period with children at home is an acceptable situation as far as it is seen as temporary solution. Most often the migration is timed to the period while spouse is at home with children either at maternity leave or at home with under 3 years of child. The mean of unemployment rate in different types of municipalities is highest in sparsely populated areas and centres of city areas.

Women's post-migration employment is at a lower level than men's (Table 3 and 4) and returns take longer to accrue for women while regarded the quality of work they are doing. After relocation men have kept the work as comparable to their abilities and even approved it while women have slightly dropped down in short term. Those men whose work didn't response to their abilities have find such work after relocation.

For women instead only 90 % have work where they can use their knowledge, and those who before had use for their abilities few have dropped down the level.

The dual career families give most importance to the employment possibilities while thinking about the residential relocation. The job access for both women and men is prioritized while the economical situation has only a few importance. In addition to the fruit-

ful work 85% of respondents give importance to the family and friend relations at the nearby living area. For 86 % it is important to reach easily the basic services at the living area.

Job access

The labour markets have concentrated to the growth centres while the employees have spread to the vast surrounding areas. On the average every third Finnish wage earner commutes nowadays outside of their own municipality. The change has been rapid because in 1960 every tenth were commuting and in 1970 the amount was every fifth. From 1980 to 1995 the average work trip length of those under 100 km distance grow up from 5 km to 8 km in Sweden with which the Finnish situation is around the similar (see Krantz 1999). According to the mean work trip length in general already the distance of 20 km is long but most often the 50 km has been used as the limit of long work trip. The mean work distance for the members of dual career families is 22,3 km (the mean work distance of women is 20,7 km and of men is 24,3 km) and 8,6 % of dual career family members have the work trip over 50 km. The dual career family members are active commuters, 27 % of dual career family members are working outside of their own local labour market area.

The local labour market area of Helsinki includes 19 municipalities and covers 39 % of dual career families. The employment self-sufficient rate (the proportion of work places in relation to the amount of the employed living in municipali-

ty) of Helsinki is 132.8% that is the fifth highest rate in Finland (Siukonen 2002).

In the centres of city areas the proportion of inter-municipality commuters as per cent of employed persons is smallest and in the rural areas near to the cities the largest (Data: SVT 2000a). From the nuclear areas and sparsely populated areas the inter-municipality commuting lose some of the importance. The dependency ratio increases towards the group of municipalities of sparsely populated areas.

The job search behaviour is good to analyse through the model of van Ommeren (2000) that takes into account the interaction between the wage earners of the same household. The mean angle α between the work trip of spouses is 58 degrees and in about 77% of the cases α is smaller than 90 degrees (Figure 2) which means that spouses are working often at the same direction. The distance between the workplaces were in 50% of households 10 km or smaller and only in 5% of households it was bigger than 100 km (Figure 3). The Finnish job search has much in common with that in Netherlands irrespective of the fact that in Finland the jobs are heavily concentrated to few local labour market areas in sparsely populated country.

While studying with the non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis test the possible inter-dependencies of α and the distance of spouse's workplaces on the different municipality types there wasn't any statistically significant differences between groups. Between the commuting distance and sex is neither significant difference. The α

Figure 2. The distribution of the angle α between the work trips of spouses, %.

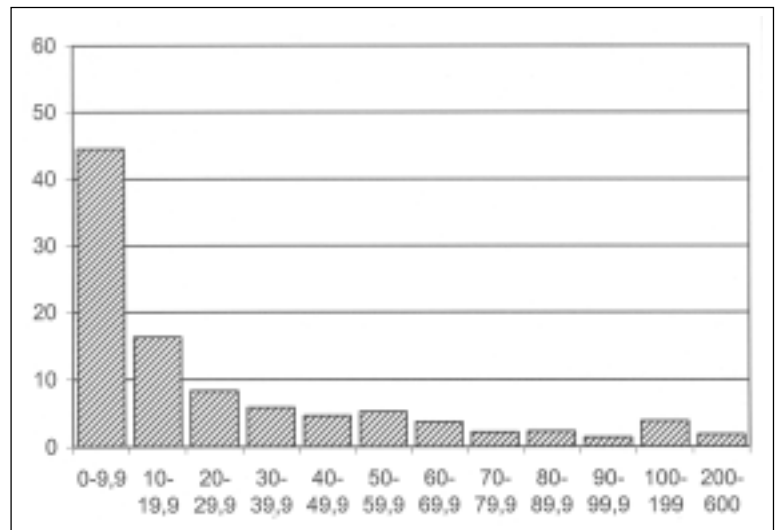
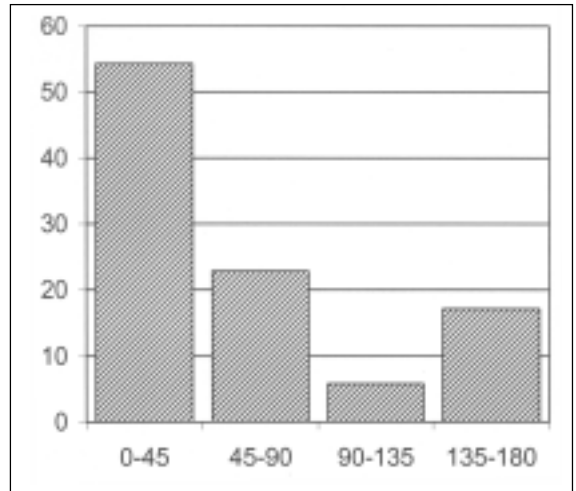


Figure 3. The distribution of distance between the workplaces of husband and wife, %.

does not have statistically significant impact to the propensity of migration while migration propensity is defined here by the future plans that families have told. The commuting distance does not have impact to the migration propensity neither.

As a total 37,9% of respondents felt that their family had had

long distances between home and work between 1999 and 2001. In reality, some of them regarded that already 20 kms was long distance to commute. For 29% of dual careers had over 50 km distance to travel from home to work. While studying the frequencies of work trip lengths was in remote rural area and in the centers of city areas

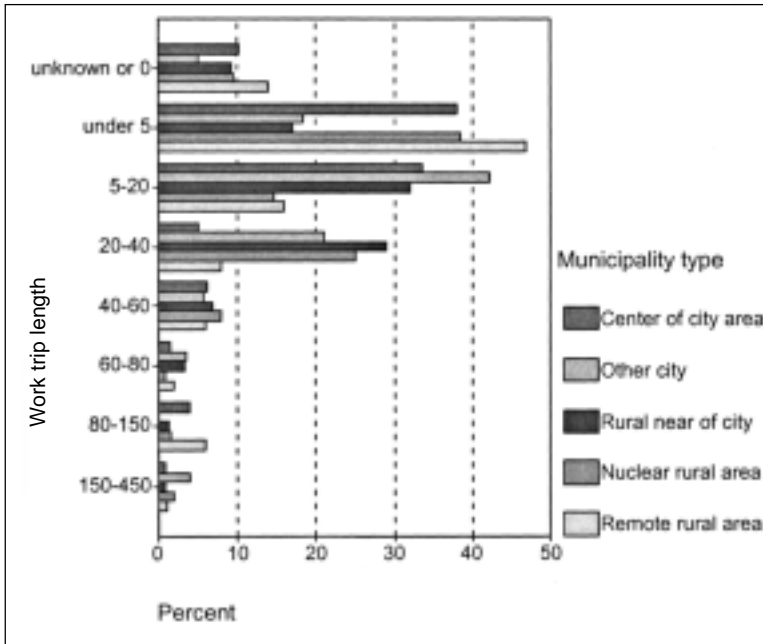


Figure 4. Moving and travel patterns by municipality types.

most common to have under 5 km way to go while in rural areas near of cities the distances grew to be between 20 and 40 km. Instead there wasn't remarkable differences between the means of work trips as total. In city centres it was 19 km. In rural areas near of city and in other cities than centers of city areas, there was the longest work-trips to travel (Figure 4).

The concentration of population in larger urban areas continued in the late 1990s. Skills required by new technology have increased the selectivity of demand for employees. This selectivity can in turn be seen in the components of population changes (net birth, migration and immigration rates). The four southern regions, which are the top regions of technological development, increased their population in all three components. The regions of

Lapland in the north and the region of Kainuu in the north-east experienced just the opposite development in the three components (Kultalahti 2001, 108).

Whereas earlier people escaped from the countryside, now there is also a threat of desolation of some cities. The exchange of population produced by inter-provincial migration weakens the development potential of depressed areas both quantitatively (decrease in population) and qualitatively (decrease in human capital). According to Konttajärvi (2000) one of the most significant changes in the regional structure is going to happen specifically in the job quality. Jobs of a performing level have decreased in number and been increasingly replaced with so-called information work occupations. This is going to affect regional structure and commuting in a way that time and place

will diminish in significance in the location of organizations and in doing the work. The wider use of telecommuting might change the central regional structure of the last decades and curb the acceleration of commuting.

Conclusions

There is a dominant consensus in the international labour migration literature that the employment characteristics and quality of life of female partners often suffer as a result of long-distance family migration.

The municipality type effects to the employment and so, to the possibilities to use the knowledge capital. Relocation process has been timed often to the maternity leave or to the period while youngest children is under 3 or at latest before the oldest one is starting the school. The career of husband is prioritised, while both spouses highlights that they are equal.

The taxation and unemployment money kind of tightens people to their living districts and there isn't immediate need for relocation after unemployment. The maternity leave and children's best plays important role and tool for timing of family's relocation. Children ties up families to certain area after they have started their school and then commuting becomes more common for parents.

In the future the ascent of the level of education can mean an even larger need for labour force mobility so that the supply and demand of the ever more differentiated labour force would meet. To succeed the regions must be able to attract and maintain a sufficient

population, as well as encouraging young people to choose an education that corresponds with the needs of the local labour markets.

There are only small variations in the young people's preferences with regards to education, place of work or residence according to

where in the country they live. Thus the challenges are more or less the same for all regions.

References

- Bielenski, Harald & Gerhard Bosch & Alexandra Wagner (2002). Working time preferences in sixteen European countries. European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions. Office for Official Publications of the European Communities. Luxembourg, p. 164. <http://www.eurofound.ie/publications/files/EF0207EN.pdf>
- Chapple, Karen (2001). Time to work: Job Search Strategies and Commute Time for Women on Welfare in San Francisco. *Journal of Urban Affairs* 23 (2), 155–174.
- Green, A. & I. Hardill, S. Munn (1999). The employment consequences of migration, Gender differentials. In Boyle, P. & K. Halfacree (eds.): *Migration and Gender in Developed World*.
- Jansson, B. (1995). Long Distance Commuting: A Strategy for Imbalance on the Labour Market. Paper presented at the International Conference on Population Geography. 9 pp. University of Dundee.
- Konttajärvi, Tiina (2000). 'Pitkän matkan työssäkävijöiden muutto- ja etätyöpotentiaali Suomessa', Helsingin yliopiston maaseudun tutkimus- ja koulutuskeskus B 20, Seinäjoki. p.124.
- Krantz, L-G. (1999). Rörlighetens mångfald och förändring. *Befolkningens dagliga resande I Sverige 1978 och 1996. Meddelanden från Göteborgs Universitets Geografiska Institutioner, Serie B, Nr 95.*
- Kultalahti, Olli (2001). Internal Migration and Specialising Labour Markets in Finland. *Yearbook of Population Research in Finland XXXVII 2001*, 103–125.
- Laakso, S. (1998). Alueiden välinen muutto Suomessa. Muuttajien sopeutuminen työ- ja asunto-markkinoille vuosina 1993–1996. Helsingin kaupungin tietokeskus, Tutkimuksia, 1998 (4), 1–92.
- Nivalainen, Satu (2000). Migration and post-move employment in two-earner families. Paper presented in Congress of European Regional Science Association 2000.
- Ommeren van, J. (2000). Job and residential search behaviour of two-earner households. *Papers in Regional Science* 79, 375–391.
- Siukonen, T. (2002). Pendelöinti lisääntyy taas kasvukeskusten ympärillä. *Helsingin Sanomat* 22.4.2002, A7.
- SVT (2000). *Statistical Yearbook of Finland*. Helsinki 2000.
- SVT (2002). *Statistical Yearbook of Finland 2002*. Statistics Finland. Helsinki.
- Vartiainen, P. (1997). Muuttoliikkeen uusi kuva. Sisäasiainministeriö, aluekehitysosaston julkaisu 4.