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Från Sorgedalen till Glädjehöjden – omgivningens betydelse för socioekonomisk karriär

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ABSTRACT

Andersson, E, 2001: Från Sorgedalen till Glädjehöjden – omgivningens betydelse för socioekonomisk karriär. (From Valley of Sadness to Hill of Happiness – The Significance of Surroundings for Socio-economic Career) Geografiska regionstudier 44, 236 pp. Uppsala. ISBN 91-506-1489-4. Swedish text with a summary in English.

The aim of the study is to analyse the significance of surroundings for an individual's socio-economic career in the form of education, occupational status and income. Guided by a social theoretical perspective the study reveals *places of good fortune* and *places of few opportunities*.

The approach uses two empirical data sets. The first is a register database with individuals in the Swedish municipalities of Gävle, Jönköping and Västerås. A cluster analysis was conducted and forms the physical and socio-demographic context of the 248 areas. The survey cohort consists of individuals born 1970, who lived at least five years in the same area during their adolescence. The most important finding is that the socio-demographic and physical context of the residential area of adolescence affects the subsequent socio-economical career. The second data set includes data from an interview study carried out with residents in the three municipalities. Interviewees speak to contextual effects on their socio-economic career and emphasised the importance of surroundings, especially for children.

More specifically, the quantitative multi-level analyses showed that the individual's socio-demographic context during 1985-89 was significantly associated with his/her *education* in 1995. The individuals who lived in dwellings built during the Million Programme era had fewer years of education than others did and lower chances of being *employed*. Favourable places for a socio-economic career are those dominated by middle-class families where contextual effects towards higher education are evident. The *income* of an individual though can not be clearly considered as effected from the context in the residential area.

The political implications of the study should be considered together with the numerous area-based programs in Sweden directed to improve conditions such as degree of occupation, education and income. Further studies on contextual effects can help to guide allocation of resources to schools and education in certain residential areas.

Key words: contextual effects, residential segregation, social justice, socio-economic career, welfare, Gävle, Jönköping, Västerås, Sweden.

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