

'Brain drain' increases genetic inequality between wealthy, poor regions in UK study

An unintended side effect of merit-based social mobility is that it stimulates selective migration; people with a higher education are more likely to move to regions that offer better living conditions and professional opportunities. This “brain drain” may be increasing inequalities between regions. There are large regional inequalities in wealth and health within Great Britain, and in the last [30 years](#), regional educational inequalities have reportedly grown.

A study from one of us (A.A.) published in [Nature Human Behaviour](#) [October 21] shows that these regional inequalities have a genetic component that is becoming stronger over time. Data on about 450,000 British people of European descent illustrate that people who have more genetic variants linked to higher levels of education are on average more likely to live in wealthier areas of Great Britain, whereas people who have fewer of these variants are on average more likely to live in regions that have faced economic challenges, such as coal mining regions.

The study reveals that these regional genetic differences have been increasing due to migration: people are more likely to leave the poorer regions of the country if they are born with a genetic predisposition for higher educational attainment.

Read full, original post: [The Nature of Social Inequalities in Great Britain](#)