Ethnic Return Migration: An Estonian Case[1]

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ABSTRACT

Recently there has been growing interest among scholars in ethnic return migration. This article examines return migration during the post World War 2 period of descendants of Estonians who emigrated to Russia at the end of the nineteenth and at the beginning of the twentieth century.

A case of return migration of West-Siberian Estonians from the Omsk province is used as an example. Structuration theory is adopted and return migration is treated as a behavioural norm that evolves, spreads and becomes embedded within an ethnic minority living outside its homeland.

The research shows that in the case of West-Siberian Estonians the main carrier of the migration behavioural norm is a generation. The behavioural norm of Estonians born in the 1910s-1920s has been return migration to Estonia, while the migration behaviour of the 1930s-1940s and the 1950s-1960s generations can be characterized by urbanization in West Siberia.

Behind these inter-generational differences in migration behaviour can be found the different socialization of the generations, appearing largely on the level of practical consciousness.

The results give reason to assume that ethnic return migration over a long period depends neither directly nor indirectly on momentary environmental changes, but rather on changes in people's values, habits, identity etc., which in the case of an ethnic minority living outside its historical homeland may be followed generation by generation.

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INTRODUCTION

A characteristic of migration studies in Europe in the 1990s has been the growing interest in ethnic return migration which had been a poorly investigated topic for a long time (King, 1978: 175). Most attention had been paid to overseas emigration from Europe in the second half of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, or to immigration into Western and Northern Europe from Southern Europe and Third World countries in the 1950s and 1960s. Return migration was treated only as a by-product of these migration processes. Referring to Ravenstein's (1885, 1889) works, the phenomenon was conceptualized simply as a "counterstream" (Tedebrand, 1976; Virtanen, 1979).

Political, social and economic changes in Eastern and Central Europe since the end of the 1980s identified return migration as a widespread social phenomenon and topical theme in migration studies. On the one hand, it involved World War 2 political refugees and their descendants who returned to Eastern and Central European countries; on the other hand, it involved representatives of ethnic minorities living in Eastern and Central Europe, whose historical homeland was Northern, Western or Southern Europe (e.g. Germans, Finns, Greeks, also Turks and Jews).[2]

The situation in Estonia is interesting in the context of European return migration in the 1990s. Among return migrants are descendants of persons who had left for Russia at the end of the nineteenth and at the beginning of the twentieth centuries, as well as political refugees from World War 2 and their descendants.[3] Even more important, Estonia, unlike many other European countries, already had a return migration experience in the post-war period. About 52,000-54,000 descendants of Estonian emigrants returned from the Soviet Union to Estonia between 1940 and 1989 (Kulu, 1997a: 146), thus enabling us to study ethnic return migration (and the adaptation of return migrants) over a long period. In this article, the experiences of West-Siberian Estonians from Omsk province (Russia) (Figure 1, page 331) are used as an example to explain return migration and to draw conclusions based on results of the research.

BACKGROUND

While Ravenstein (1885 and 1889) was the first scholar to try and systemize migration experience and to devise "laws" that direct migration processes, since the end of World War 2 there has been a remarkable growth of interest in migration as a social phenomenon among social scientists, including human geographers. Classical treatments of migration in geographical literature are based on behaviourist or behaviouralist methodology (White, 1980). From the 1940s to the 1960s, behaviourist methodology was dominant in geographical

migration studies (Stouffer, 1940; Zipf, 1946; Olsson, 1965; Lee, 1966; Claeson, 1969). In the second half of the 1960s behaviourism was joined by the behaviouralist methodology (Wolpert, 1965; Brown and Moore, 1970). The starting points of behaviourists and behaviouralists differ. Behaviourists focus their attention on migration streams which are explained by using "push" and "pull" factors. The aim is to find the environmental determinants which push or pull people to move (push-pull theory), or to conceptualize the influence of the determinants by using categories such as "distance" and "size" (gravity model) or "opportunities" (intervening opportunities model). The main idea underlying behaviourist tradition is that individuals react to environmental determinants as "rational economic man".

Behaviouralists, in turn, focus their attention on the human migration decision. Their objective is to discover the mental states (motives, desires, beliefs) which lead people to make a migration decision and to migration behaviour. Behind the behaviouralist tradition is the idea that people with different mental states react to environmental determinants differently. In addition, in their behaviour, people are "satisfiers" rather than "maximizers". Thus, in studying migration, attention is focused on the aggregate level in the case of behaviourism, and on the individual level in the case of behaviouralism. The different starting points of behaviourists and behaviouralists are known as the macro *versus* micro dilemma (Clark, 1982: 10; Cadwallader, 1989a: 494; Halfacree and Boyle, 1993: 333).[4]

During the first half of the 1970s behaviourist and behaviouralist research traditions developed relatively independently. The dominant trend in geographical migration studies was towards the introduction of more detailed and complex methods of analysis (Golledge, 1980: 18). At the end of the 1970s, scholars saw the need for a "general" migration theory, combining the visions of both behaviourists and behaviouralists, (White, 1980; Clark, 1982; Zelinsky, 1983). During the 1980s a synthesis of different approaches in migration studies occurred, including attempts to combine behaviourist and behaviouralist methodologies (e.g. Cadwallader, 1989a; Cadwallader, 1989b). The starting point was that environmental determinants influence human migration behaviour which was seen as a reaction to environmental impulses, including both "objective" and "subjectively" perceived counterparts (Cadwallader, 1989b: 92-93). The 1980s may also be seen as a culmination of the naturalist tradition in geographical migration studies originating with Ravenstein: the desire to create a comprehensive migration theory (model) which would enable us, in addition to describing and explaining, to also predict and control migration.

Yet in the 1990s the naturalist tradition has been increasingly criticized in geographical literature (Findlay and Graham, 1991; Halfacree and Boyle, 1993). At the same time, there has been support for contextual approaches

based on anti-naturalist methodology, in which the explanation of human migration proceeds, in contrast with the behaviourist-behaviouralist stimulus-response framework, from a more holistic (non-atomistic) concept of social action (Gutting, 1996: 482). Examples can be drawn from the biographical approach (Halfacree and Boyle, 1993; Gutting, 1996; Findlay and Li, 1997) and the structuration perspective (Goss and Lindquist, 1995)

The structuration theory developed by Giddens (1979 and 1984) is an interesting and well-founded vision which aims to combine individualistic (micro) and holistic (macro) research traditions. Giddens criticizes both individualistic and holistic methodologies in social sciences. In studying and explaining social phenomena, functionalist and structuralist approaches are concerned mainly with the "logic" of social phenomena, and leave little role for people. On the other hand, hermeneutic approaches simply reduce everything "social" to human experience. In structuration theory, the starting point is neither "social totality" nor "human experience", but the social practices ordered across time and space (Giddens, 1984: 1-2).

The main novelty concepts underlying structuration theory are "structure", "duality of structure" and "practical consciousness". By structure Giddens (1979: 66) means those constitutive properties of society that appear to us as rules and resources. However, in contrast to the functionalist-structuralist point of view, those rules and resources not only constrain and determine human action but also enable it. The structure not only sets a basis for human action, but also changes as a result of the action. Therefore, structure is the medium and outcome of human action; on the one hand it enables and constrains human action, on the other hand people produce and reproduce society by the structure (Giddens, 1979: 69-70). This is the basic idea behind the concept "duality of structure".

While treating beliefs and knowledge behind the rationalization of human action, it is important, according to Giddens (1979: 2), to make a distinction between the two levels of human consciousness in which those beliefs and knowledge are stored. The first level is "the discursive"; the other is "the practical" (Giddens, 1979: 2). By the discursive level of consciousness, Giddens (1979: 56-58; 1984: 3-7) refers to beliefs and knowledge which people bring out as reasons for their action. The practical level of consciousness, in turn, refers to the beliefs and knowledge which are "taken for granted" on rationalization of the action, and are not usually "verbally expressible". Giddens (1979: 57) reaches the conclusion that, on rationalization of the action, people use the beliefs and knowledge from both the discursive and the practical level of consciousness. Therefore, in analysing and explaining human action we have to listen to what people tell us about the action but also, and often more importantly, to what their "characteristics" and the social context behind them "tell" us.

STRUCTURATION THEORY AND ETHNIC RETURN MIGRATION

The ideas of structuration theory are a good starting point for studying ethnic return migration. First, the concept of the duality of structure helps overcome the accentuation of behaviourist and behaviouralist migration theories, in which social structure is understood to be only a constraint and human migration behaviour is viewed on the voluntarism-determinism axis. The structure conceptualized here is a rule or simply a behavioural norm (= rule) which both constrains and enables migration behaviour.[5] Moreover, return migration may hypothetically be treated as a behavioural norm – the property of a social system which develops as a result of the interaction of people and their social context. It is simultaneously "contained" in society and in people's consciousness, although it is not reducible to either of them.[6] Second, the concept of practical consciousness helps clarify the mechanism by which the norms constrain and enable human migration behaviour. Practical consciousness is a place where knowledge of various behavioural norms is stored.

In order to analyse and explain ethnic return migration by use of structuration theory, we need first to clarify the population amongst whom return migration as a behavioural norm emerged, spread and settled, and then to know under what conditions, and how, return migration evolved as well as the triggering mechanism behind the phenomenon. Against this background, the focal question is why return migration as a behavioural norm emerged and spread, although the answer presupposes knowledge of both the discursive and practical consciousness as well as the surrounding social context of return migrants. We must listen on the one hand to what return migrants and their "characteristics" tell us about the phenomenon, and on the other hand to what the social context and its history "tell" us.

The empirical section of the article begins with an overview of the rise and development of Estonian settlement in West Siberia, followed by changes which took place in Estonian settlements and villages over the course of time. The focus is on return migration, providing an overview of the streams of return migration, and analyses of the migration behaviour of Estonians in West Siberia.

Data used to explain return migration include: (1) archive data on the history of the Estonian settlement in West Siberia from Omsk (Russia) and Tartu (Estonia) archives; (2) 1989 Soviet census data on return migrants in Estonia; (3) questionnaire data on 314 and interview data on 20 return migrants in Estonia; (4) household registration book data on age structure by gender of Estonians in six West-Siberian Estonian villages from the period 1940-1995 (for more details, see Kulu, 1997a: 72-80).

ESTONIAN SETTLEMENT IN WEST SIBERIA

The settlement of Estonians in West Siberia began as a result of deportation and two emigration waves. The deportation of earliest resettlers from Estonia to Siberia was systematically arranged in tsarist Russia.[7] Until the 1890s, deportees comprised the majority of 1,600-1,700 West-Siberian Estonians and their descendants. Their main centres were the Ryzhkovo and Om colonies. The first emigration wave during the last decade of the nineteenth century took many South-Estonian peasants to West Siberia. A number of Estonian colonies emerged in Tara county, 250 kilometres north of Omsk. An estimated 1,500-1,600 Estonians emigrated to West Siberia in the 1890s. The second wave reached a peak in 1907-1909 and was even greater than the first. In a couple of years, about 4,000 persons from Estonia resettled to West Siberia. Many of the earlier established colonies grew considerably, and several new Estonian villages were formed in the Omsk and Tara regions in West Siberia.[8]

Estonian settlement in West Siberia had already begun by the middle of the second decade of the twentieth century. More than 20 Estonian villages and colonies had been set up with more than 7,000 Estonian inhabitants.[9] Villages and colonies were the cornerstone of "Estonianness", and became centres where tradition and language from Estonia were maintained and passed on to younger generations. Although the road to Siberia was long, the ethnic and social environment of the emigrants changed only slightly. As a rule, a village consisted only of Estonians, and if there were representatives of other ethnic groups in the village, then each group usually had its own territory and living space. As the core of the village was usually people from the same county or even rural municipality, this facilitated adaptation and increased the feeling of belonging together. Also, by the second decade of this century, most of the inhabitants of Estonian villages in West Siberia had managed to build decent houses for their families and slowly but surely produce enough food to feed the village.

World War 1, the Russian Revolution (1917) and civil war, however, delivered a severe blow to Estonian settlement. Many men from the villages were mobilized; some did not return. The colonies were ravaged by red and white terror; emigrants' horses and provisions were requisitioned and whatever was left was eaten up by the policy of War Communism (1918-1921). Years of hard labour in the new homeland were reduced to nothing. After Estonia became independent (1918), emigrants were given the opportunity to take Estonian citizenship and repatriate. Under the circumstances many filed for repatriation, but not many returned; only about 7 per cent of West-Siberian Estonians returned to independent Estonia in 1920-1923.[10] Many could not afford to return as they would have had to give up the property they had acquired over many years, even though it had been ravaged by war. Nor did they know what

was waiting for them in Estonia. Most decided to stay in Siberia, hoping that the worst was behind them and that there would be better times ahead for Russia.

As a result of World War 1, the Russian civil war and repatriation to Estonia, the number of Estonians in West Siberia declined. However, the 1920s could be considered the heyday of the Estonian villages both in West Siberia and elsewhere in the Soviet Union. By the mid-twenties, most emigrants had recovered from the wartime difficulties, and the development of villages was enhanced by the New Economic Policy (NEP) (1921-1927), initiated in Soviet Russia in 1921 and which, as opposed to previous War Communism, provided emigrants with relative economic freedom. The requirement that surplus agricultural products be given away was replaced by relatively low taxes which encouraged small-scale production (Nove, 1992: 78-114). Pre-war educational and cultural life was also restored; Estonian schools which were closed during the war reopened, and many new ones were founded. By the end of the 1920s it was possible to receive an Estonian primary education in all the larger villages. Generally, the educational and cultural situation in the Soviet Union in the 1920s was good for ethnic minorities. Religion was prohibited but the government supported primary education in the mother tongue of minorities and the elimination of illiteracy (Kurs, 1994a: 110-111; Kurs, 1994b: 448, 453).

The Soviet Union's steps towards collectivization at the end of the 1920s brought about a number of changes (Viola, 1990: 106). First, the form of ownership changed: individual peasant farms were replaced by collective farms (Nove, 1992: 173). Joint undertakings were already widespread among emigrants. Cooperatives, founded on a voluntary basis, had been created to help emigrants overcome problems such as marketing agricultural products and served individual farms as the primary unit of production. Collectivization, which aimed to create collective farms where property was owned jointly (Nove, 1992: 162, 170), was both a psychological and an economic blow to emigrants. They had to give up the land and household for which they had come to Siberia. Moreover, this occurred at a time when the emigrants had already witnessed the decline of communes (the first collective farms).

Second, the status of emigrants also changed. They were classified into three groups: *kulaks* (better-off peasants), *srednyaks* (mid-level peasants) and *bednyaks* (poor peasants). Collective farms were intended for *bednyaks* and *srednyaks*. The *kulaks* as a class had to be liquidated, their property confiscated and families deported (Maamägi, 1980: 146; Hosking, 1985: 160; Nove, 1992: 164-168). In 1929-1930, a wave of purges and deportations occurred in West Siberia and the Soviet Union as a whole (Viola, 1990: 114-116). Depending upon the village, up to 15 per cent of West-Siberian Estonians were classified *kulaks* and deported to the Vasyugan swamps in North-East Tara region. Third,

Estonian settlement in West Siberia changed as a result of collectivization. Smaller Estonian villages disappeared as did the unique form of settlement characteristic of Estonians in the Tara region where most of the emigrants lived some hundred metres to several kilometres away from the centre of the village.

In 1936-1939, West Siberia and the Soviet Union as a whole was subjected to a new wave of purges (Nove, 1992: 238-241). Whereas a few years before, imprisonment and deportation affected only wealthier rural people, now *srednyaks* and *bednyaks* fell victim to violence. Twenty to 30 per cent of Estonians were deported from West-Siberian Estonian villages, accused of counter-revolution and anti-Soviet propaganda. Local leaders were imprisoned, and there was no escape for the others. The purges struck a severe blow to the educational and cultural life of Estonian colonies (school-teachers were among those purged in many villages). In 1937, native language education for ethnic minorities was discontinued in the Soviet Union and teaching in schools was converted to Russian. In addition, newspapers, magazines and journals in the languages of ethnic minorities were closed (Lallukka, 1990: 183; Maamyagi, 1990: 190; Kurs, 1994a: 109-111; Kurs, 1994b: 448). The ousting of Estonian from educational and cultural life at the local level marked the beginning of its expulsion from the everyday life of Estonians and created the basis for the linguistic assimilation of the younger generation and the gradual disappearance of Estonian traditions in West Siberia.[11]

RETURN MIGRATION TO ESTONIA

World War 2 triggered the return migration of Estonians. The first to arrive in Estonia from the Soviet Union were those sent to work in 1940-1941 (after occupation and annexation of Estonia by the Soviet Union). In autumn 1943 the German Army evacuated some of the Trans-Peipus Estonians to Estonia (Arens, 1966). A year later, in the second half of 1944, Estonians from the Soviet Union arrived in Estonia as staff members of Soviet operative groups, as well as re-evacuated persons. The first major group of return migrants, however, comprised Estonian men from the Soviet Union who arrived in Estonia in the autumn of 1944 as the Estonian Rifle Corps of the Soviet Army.[12] Many of these persons remained in Estonia following demobilization in 1945-1946. This triggered return migration and they became key contacts for other Estonians who returned in the 1940s and later.

It is clear from data on the return migration of West-Siberian Estonians that the first to return arrived in Estonia from West Siberia in 1941 (Figure 2, page 331). An even larger number returned to Estonia in 1944-1947 with the peak in 1946. In addition to demobilized soldiers, West-Siberian Estonians arrived in Estonia as the result of work appointments, family reunification and invitations from relatives. Thereafter, return migration decreased and in the

1950s there were only a few returnees. An increase, although more moderate than the previous one, occurred in the 1960s. In the second half of the 1970s the number of return migrants decreased again and in the 1980s there were only occasional returnees. Thus, although the return migration of West-Siberian Estonians has continued throughout the post-war period, the middle and second half of the 1940s can be clearly distinguished as the period in which the majority of post-war return migrants arrived in Estonia. About 1,370-1,420 Estonians, born and brought up in West Siberia, returned to Estonia between 1940 and 1989. The total number of Estonians from the Soviet Union at this time is at least 52,000-54,000.

Aggregate data provide an overview of return migration streams and their fluctuations in different years. In order to understand the essence of the phenomenon it is most important to analyse the migration behaviour of rural Estonians in West Siberia by birth cohort and gender.[13] It became clear that the migration behaviour of different generations differs in relation to both migration intensity and destination. First, on the basis of data on out-migration from the villages, Estonian generations in Siberia can be divided into those who were born in 1891-1910 (and before), and those born after 1911. Older generations are characterized by the fact that the numbers of a generation in the villages has not changed much as a result of out-migration since 1940 when it became possible to return to Estonia (Figure 3, page 332). While deportations, purges and the war forced many persons of these generations out of the villages, a majority of any one generation (especially those born before the turn of the century) stayed put. However, the migration behaviour of generations born in the second decade of this century (and later) differs significantly from the earlier generation. Between 40 and 80 per cent of the members of any one generation left the villages over the course of the years, the younger the generation the greater the number who left (Figures 3, 4 and 5, pages 332-333).

Second, the representatives of different generations have had different destinations after leaving the villages. For West-Siberian Estonians born in the second decade of this century and later, there are three generations with different return migration intensities. Twenty-five to 35 per cent of the 1911-1930 generation have returned to Estonia. The majority arrived in Estonia in their adult years (Figure 6, page 333). As regards the 1931-1950 generation, 10-20 per cent have returned to Estonia, and 5-10 per cent returned in their adult years. Of the generation born in the 1950s and later, return is so far less than 10 per cent. Only a small percentage of these returned to Estonia as adults. If we take into account that 40-70 per cent of the 1911-1930 generation left the villages, but 60-80 per cent of the 1931-1950 and the 1951-1970 generations left, the differences in the migration behaviour of the generations become clear.

Cohort is the main determinant of return migration. Return migration to Estonia was a common goal for just a single generation. Those born before 1930 were

the primary source of the return migration of Estonians from West Siberia. After leaving the villages, about half were destined for Estonia. The migration behaviour of Estonians born in the 1950s and later can be characterized by urbanization in West Siberia. A majority settled in Siberian cities, while a negligible number returned to Estonia. Those born in the 1930s and 1940s form a transition generation but are closer to the 1950s and later generation than to the generation born before 1930. There are a number of returnees among them but the urbanization process in West Siberia has still been the prevalent trend. Thus, the three generations that have shaped the migration processes in West-Siberian Estonian villages during the post-war period differ from each other as regards both the intensity and the destination of out-migration from villages. The situation was more or less the same in other places in the Soviet Union (Kulu, 1997a: 186-188).

EXPLAINING RETURN MIGRATION

Socialization was the main factor accounting for return migration among Estonians born in the 1910s and 1920s. The 1911-1930 generation grew up at a time when Estonian villages were starting to fall apart and Estonian traditions to vanish in West Siberia. Yet at the same time, this was the generation in whom "Estonianness" had been "instilled". The Estonian tradition and language were an integral part of the everyday life of this generation. The 1911-1930 generation became ever more aware of the gulf which quickly evolved between their home life and the increasingly alien environment. This created a sense of frustration among young people and additional insecurity about the future. In their attempts to find their place in this world, the children of those labelled *kulaks*, and the repressed, eventually resettled in Estonia when it became possible. This triggered return migration amongst their peers and return migration became the behavioural norm of the generation.

Return migration of the 1911-1930 generation was not confined to the 1940s when some West-Siberian Estonians arrived in Estonia. Their numbers were also relatively large in the 1960s and 1970s. By that time many were already into their forties and fifties (Figure 7, page 334). Thus, return of the generation born before 1930 is characterized by the fact that return migration was an ongoing process, further confirming the point that it became the behavioural norm of the generation born before 1930. Following the war, the norm evolved and in time became fixed in the consciousness of the generation. Communication with Estonia and the chance of one day going back to Estonia became a part of the everyday life of the generation and was "recorded" in the consciousness of its members, at both discursive and practical levels. Any important event (e.g. retirement, death of spouse) or other factors (e.g. conflict with the leader of the village) later became the incentive for return migration.

The migration behaviour of the 1931-1950 and especially the 1951-1970 generations differs significantly from that of the 1911-1930 generation. While representatives of the older generation, irrespective of their age, were destined for Estonia after leaving their home villages, the younger generations generally moved to Siberian cities and towns. Thus, the migration behaviour of the younger generations increasingly resembled the migration behaviour of the West-Siberian non-Estonians of the same generation. It has become a norm of the rural youth of the West-Siberian generations born in the 1930s to later go to the cities in order to study or work, irrespective of their ethnic origin (Lydolph, 1989: 726-727). Behind this, the socialization of Estonians from younger generations could be seen. Estonians born in the 1930s and later were brought up in the Estonian villages and in an Estonian-language environment but, unlike the generation born before 1930, they were educated in Russian schools. In those Russian schools, their values, beliefs, habits etc. became closer to those of non-Estonians of the same generation and this is reflected in their migration behaviour.

While the migration behaviour of different generations of West-Siberian Estonians differs significantly, generation is the main carrier of return migration as a behavioural norm. First, persons who grow up at the same time and under similar conditions have similar values, norms, habits, etc. This means that they have a common consciousness that exists at both the discursive and the practical levels. Common socialization and consciousness imply similar motivational background and knowledge, a prerequisite for similar migration behaviour. Second, return migration became a common goal of a generation because of social changes that occurred in the Soviet Union in the 1930s. Those changes did not just shape the consciousness and migration behaviour of the 1911-1930 generation of West-Siberian Estonians, but also drove a wedge between the Estonians of this and younger generations on the "Estonian ethnicity scale".

The generation born before 1930 is the last generation of West-Siberian Estonians that actively carries and transmits "Estonianness". Those born in the 1930s and 1940s are already different. This generation is still a carrier of Estonian traditions and language but has not passed them on. They are therefore passive, rather than active, on the Estonian ethnicity scale. The generation born in the 1950s and later has been even more passive. The members of this generation only carry what was passed to them in their childhood by their grandparents. One important reason for these sharp differences across generations is lack of Estonian-language education in schools for these younger generations. This made the generations born in the 1930s and later passive on the Estonian ethnicity scale and curbed their desire and opportunities to come back to Estonia. Russian education has, in turn, brought them closer to non-Estonians of the same generation. These inter-generational differences have been reflected both in the migration behaviour, and also in the marriage behaviour and language use on the part of Estonians (Figure 8, page 334).

CONCLUSION

The research confirms structuration theory as a valuable starting point for analysing and explaining ethnic return migration. In addition, the research highlights those focal parts of structuration theory which are important in examining the return migration of Estonians and which may also have wider application in other return migration studies. The research supports the hypothesis that ethnic return migration can be conceptualized as a behavioural norm which evolves, spreads and becomes embedded among an ethnic minority living outside its historical homeland. This argument is supported by the empirical results. Neither environmental determinants, nor the reasons for migration named by migrants on the discursive level of their consciousness, can exhaustively explain the rise and evolution of the phenomenon.

On the one hand, by referring to environmental changes (deportations, purges, the war, etc.), the causes and the course of return migration in the 1940s may be explained quite well, but, more important, it does not answer why the streams of return migration increased again in the 1960s, when the political, economic and cultural situation of the Estonians in Siberia (and elsewhere in the Soviet Union) improved considerably, and why the majority of return migrants at that time also originated from a single generation. On the other hand, the reasons for return migration given by return migrants to questionnaires and in interviews provide an overview of the context in which the migration decision was made, and that of the life events (marriage, divorce, leaving school, starting work, etc.) which played a role in the decision, but these do not exhaustively answer why members of different generations acted differently in similar life situations and why members of one generation returned to Estonia, while members of another moved to the cities and towns of Siberia. Thus, the central role of the cohort on return migration refers to return migration behaviour as a way of behaviour which evolves and becomes embedded among the members of part of an ethnic minority. Therefore, return migration can be treated as a behavioural norm, a phenomenon which grows out of the interaction of people and their social context, but at the same time lies outside the "direct control" of environmental changes and people's discursive consciousness.

The research also supports the view that practical consciousness plays an important role in human migration behaviour. Generation has been the main carrier of return migration as a behavioural norm and its members have reproduced this norm in practice. The central role of generation in return migration is connected with the fact that, in the case of Estonians from Siberia, it unites people with a similar socialization. However, the importance of practical consciousness is greater than generally thought. It means that values, norms, habits, etc. that unite people who have grown up at the same time and under similar conditions are taken for granted by them rather than being verbally expressed as guidelines in everyday life. It can be concluded that

practical consciousness is both the uniting factor between people with a similar socialization, and also the factor that separates them from others. Thus, the focal role of generation in return migration suggests the importance of practical consciousness in human migration behaviour. This is the place in the human consciousness where knowledge about migration behavioural norms is stored as guidelines for action.

These conclusions are highly consistent with viewpoints which have appeared in geographical migration literature in recent years, in which migration is understood as a contextual cultural phenomenon and the central role of socialization and practical consciousness on the human migration decision is emphasized, seeing migration behaviour as the mirror of a person's values, habits, identity etc., which have been formed during a lifetime and are largely taken for granted (Halfacree and Boyle, 1993; Li et al., 1995; Findlay and Li, 1997; Gutting, 1996). The results of this research, provide reason to assume that ethnic return migration, although triggered by environmental changes, soon becomes a phenomenon whose course, over a long period, no longer depends on momentary environmental changes directly or indirectly, but instead on changes in people's identity, which in the case of an ethnic minority living outside its historical homeland may be followed generation by generation.

NOTES

1. I wish to thank two anonymous referees for their valuable comments. The research for this article was supported by the universities of Tartu and Helsinki.
2. On ethnic return migration, see Efrat, 1991; Vergeti, 1991; Voutira, 1991; Jones and Wild, 1992; Vasileva, 1992; Klüter, 1993; Aktar and Ögelman, 1994; Bernstein and Shuval, 1995.
3. On Estonian emigration to Russia at the turn of century and emigration to western countries during World War 2, see Parming, 1972: 54-56; Raun, 1986; Kulu, 1993; Kulu, 1997b.
4. Outside the geographical tradition of migration studies, the macro *versus* micro dilemma may be associated with the contradiction between theories/models based, on the one hand, on the neo-Marxist-structuralist approaches and on the other hand, on the microeconomic or rational choice theory (Wood, 1982: 300-312; Hammar et al., 1994: 7-30; Goss and Lindquist, 1995: 319-325).
5. The expression "migration behaviour" is used in this paper, although it refers to human action, not mere behaviour.
6. In contrast with the viewpoint presented here, in the Giddensian version of structuration theory, structure refers not only to rules (both the constitutive and the regulative), but also to resources. Thus, here I do not follow the standard argumentation of the structuration theory, but use the ideas of the theory selectively and in simplified form. The contribution of structuration theory stressed here is the possibility to conceptualize human migration, in contrast to traditional naturalist

viewpoints, as a normative-cultural phenomenon (see also Hafacree and Boyle, 1993: 338, 341). On the use of the structuration theory in the detailed analysis of migration, one may refer to the paper by Goss and Lindquist (1995). The authors conceptualize international labour migration as a institutionalized phenomenon, "sedimented" social practice – a complex articulation of rules and resources which present constraints and opportunities to individual action (Goss and Lindquist, 1995: 345).

7. Estonia was a part of Russian Empire from 1710-1917, an independent state from 1918-1940, and then occupied by the Soviet Union from 1940-1991.
8. On the demographic background of Estonian emigration to Russia, see Katus (1990: 52-55).
9. Altogether, there were about 200,000 Estonians and more than 300 Estonian villages in the Russian Empire (not including Baltic, Finnish and Polish territories) at the end of the 1910s (Maamägi, 1980: 34-35; Raun, 1986: 354; c.f. Nigol, 1918: 9-10).
10. However, altogether 37,578 Estonian emigrants returned from the Soviet Russia to Estonia between 1920 and 1923. Most of them came from urban areas; there were not many rural inhabitants among them (*Valitsusasutiste...*, 1934: 210; Kulu, 1997a: 108-109).
11. In the case of Estonians, language is one of the most important characteristics on which ethnic identity has been founded (Laar, 1990; Lotkin, 1996: 195-198).
12. The Estonian Rifle Corps of the Soviet Army was formed in 1942 and included Estonians from Estonia mobilized by the Soviet Army while retreating in 1941 and Estonians from the Soviet Union. Russians were also represented (Kulu, 1997a: 136-137).
13. Data on age structure by gender of six West-Siberian Estonians villages from the period 1940-1995 were used as a basis (Kulu, 1997a: 146-156). Migration data for different birth cohorts by gender were calculated using the survival ratio method (Hamilton, 1967; Rikkinen, 1969; Rikkinen, 1974). To illustrate the main trends, Kovalyovo village is used as an example.

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FIGURE 1

THE STUDY AREA

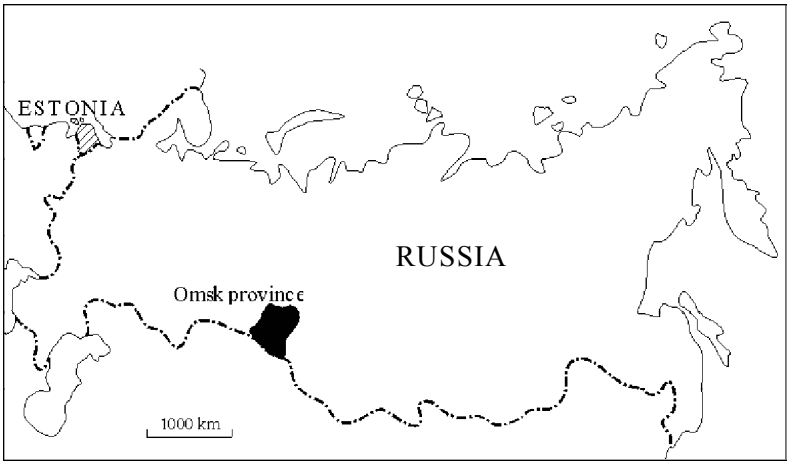
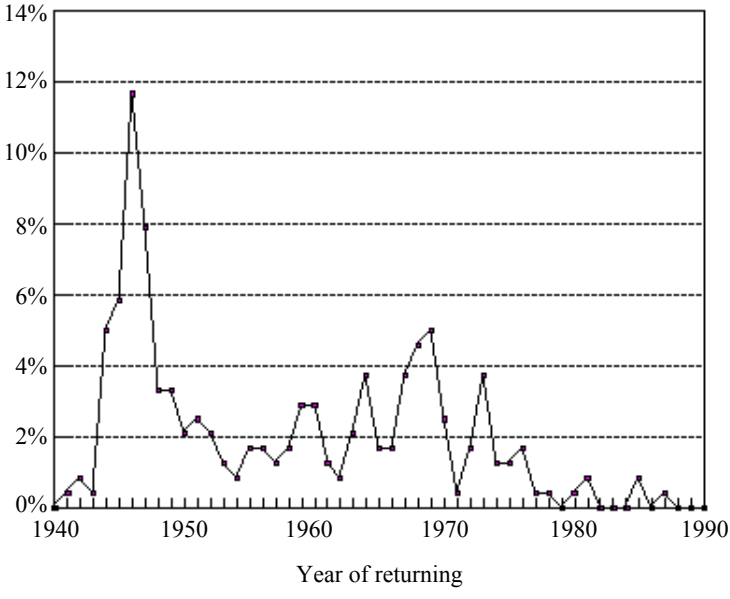


FIGURE 2

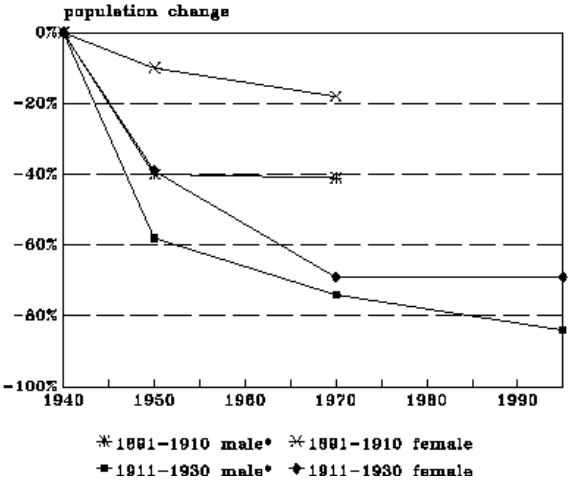
DISTRIBUTION OF RETURN MIGRANTS FROM THE OMSK PROVINCE BY YEAR OF RETURNING



Source: Kulu, 1997a: 145.

FIGURE 3

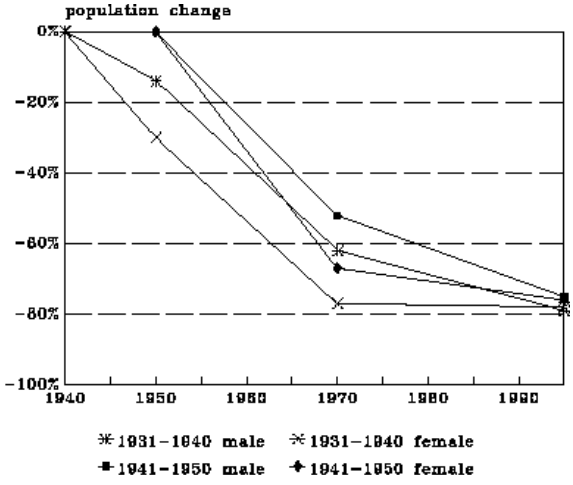
POPULATION CHANGE BY MIGRATION 1940-1995:
KOVALYOVO VILLAGE (I)



*also includes those men who were killed in World War 2 (20-30% of the cohort).
Source: Kulu, 1997a: 150.

FIGURE 4

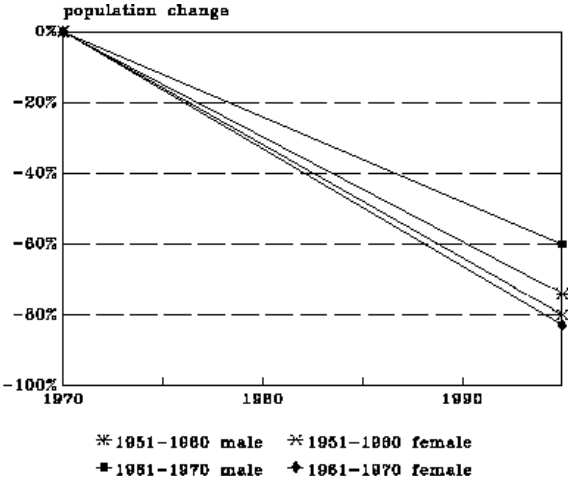
POPULATION CHANGE BY MIGRATION 1940-1995:
KOVALYOVO VILLAGE (II)



Source: Kulu, 1997a: 152.

FIGURE 5

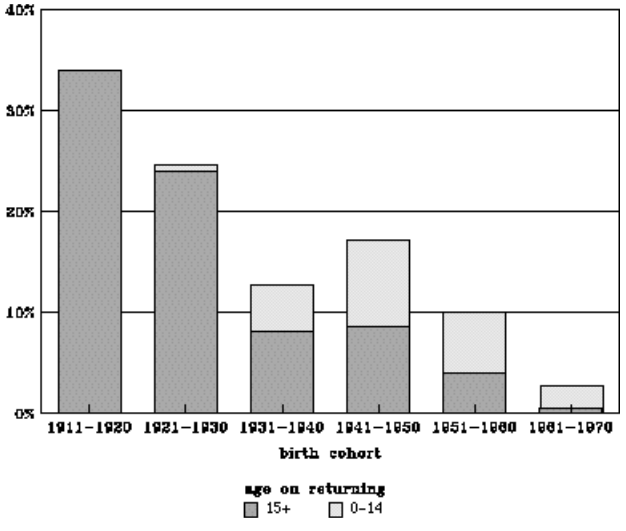
POPULATION CHANGE BY MIGRATION 1970-1995:
KOVALYOVO VILLAGE



Source: Kulu, 1997a: 153.

FIGURE 6

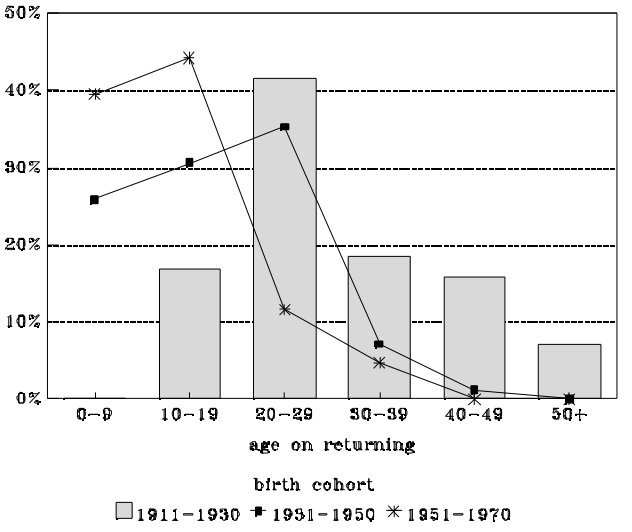
SELECTIVITY OF RETURN MIGRATION FROM THE OMSK PROVINCE
BY BIRTH COHORT AND AGE ON RETURNING



Source: Kulu, 1997a: 158.

FIGURE 7

DISTRIBUTION OF RETURN MIGRANTS BY AGE
ON RETURNING TO ESTONIA



Source: Kulu, 1997a: 157.

FIGURE 8

DIFFERENCES OF "IDEAL TYPE" BETWEEN GENERATIONS
OF RURAL ESTONIANS IN WEST SIBERIA

Year of birth	Migration behaviour	Ethnic origin of spouse	First language	Place on the "Estonian ethnicity scale"
1911–1930	Return migration to Estonia	Estonian	Estonian	Active: carriers and transmitters of "Estonianness"
1931–1950	Urbanization in West Siberia	non-Estonian Estonian	Estonian Russian	Passive: carriers of "Estonianness", not transmitters
1951–1970	Urbanization in West Siberia	non-Estonian	Russian	Passive: neither carriers nor transmitters of "Estonianness"

Source: Kulu, 1997a: 250.

MIGRATION EN RETOUR CHEZ LES GROUPES ETHNIQUES: LE CAS DE L'ESTONIE

Depuis quelques temps, les chercheurs s'intéressent de plus en plus à la migration en retour chez les groupes ethniques. L'article examine la migration en retour pendant l'après-guerre chez les descendants d'Estoniens qui avaient émigré en Russie à la fin du 19ème siècle et au début du 20ème.

L'auteur prend comme exemple le retour d'Estoniens de la Sibérie occidentale depuis la province d'Omsk. La théorie de la structuration est appliquée à ce phénomène et la migration en retour est traitée comme une norme de comportement qui évolue, s'étend et s'enracine dans une minorité ethnique vivant en dehors du pays d'origine.

Les recherches montrent que dans le cas des Estoniens de la Sibérie occidentale le principal porteur de la norme de comportement migratoire est la génération. La norme de comportement chez les Estoniens nés entre 1910 et 1920 est la migration en retour vers l'Estonie alors que le comportement migratoire des années 30 et 40 et de la génération des années 50 et 60 est celui de l'urbanisation en Sibérie occidentale.

Derrière ces différences entre générations dans le comportement migratoire on peut trouver la socialisation différente des générations, qui se manifeste principalement au niveau de la conscience pratique.

Les résultats portent à croire que la migration en retour chez les groupes ethniques en longue période ne dépend ni directement ni indirectement de changements temporaires dans le milieu ambiant, mais plutôt de changements dans les valeurs des peuples, leurs habitudes, leur identité, etc., ce qui, dans le cas d'une minorité ethnique vivant en dehors de son foyer ancestral, peut être suivi de génération en génération.

MIGRACIÓN ÉTNICA DE RETORNO: UN CASO DE ESTONIA

Recientemente se ha acrecentado el interés de los académicos por la migración étnica de retorno. Este artículo examina la migración de retorno, en el período consecutivo a la Segunda Guerra Mundial, de los descendientes de los estonios que emigraron a Rusia a finales del siglo XIX y a principios del siglo XX.

Se utiliza como ejemplo el caso de migración de retorno de los estonios de Siberia Occidental provenientes de la provincia Omsk. Se ha adoptado la teoría de estructuración y se trata la migración de retorno como una norma del comportamiento que evoluciona, se difunde y se arraiga en una minoría étnica que reside fuera de su tierra de origen.

La investigación realizada demuestra que en el caso de los estonios de Siberia Occidental el principal portador de la norma de comportamiento migratorio es una generación. La norma de comportamiento de los estonios nacidos entre 1910 y 1920 ha sido la migración de retorno a Estonia, mientras que el comportamiento de las generaciones nacidas entre los periodos de 1930-1940 y de 1950-1960 puede caracterizarse por su urbanización en Siberia Occidental.

Detrás de estas diferencias intergeneracionales del comportamiento migratorio se halla una socialización diferente de las generaciones, que surge principalmente a nivel de la conciencia práctica.

Los resultados permiten suponer que la migración étnica de retorno, durante un largo periodo, no depende directa o indirectamente de cambios de entorno momentáneos, sino más bien de cambios en los valores, costumbres, identidad, etc. de las personas, que en el caso de una minoría étnica residente fuera de su tierra histórica puede seguirse de una generación a otra.