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Research Article

**Ethnic differences in integration levels and
return migration intentions:**

A study of Estonian migrants in Finland

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Ethnic differences in integration levels and return migration intentions: A study of Estonian migrants in Finland

Kristi Anniste¹

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Abstract

BACKGROUND

Immigrants' desire to stay in the host country or return to the country of origin depends largely on the balance between their degree of integration in the host country and their level of attachment to the country of origin. Ethnic diversity is growing rapidly in European countries, including in migrant-sending countries. It may be expected that members of the ethnic minority population and the majority population have different degrees of willingness to engage in return migration depending on their different levels of attachment to their country of origin.

OBJECTIVE

This study examines differences in the return migration intentions of members of the ethnic minority population and members of the majority population in the sending country. Specifically, we seek to answer two main research questions: (1) To what extent do members of the sending country's ethnic minority and majority groups differ in their desire to return to the sending country? (2) How does the degree of integration in the host country shape differences in the return migration intentions of members of the sending country's ethnic minority and majority groups?

METHODS

We use representative survey data on Estonian migrants in Finland and apply binary logistic regression on our data.

RESULTS

Results suggest that there are important differences in the integration levels and in the return migration intentions of the ethnic Estonians and the ethnic Russians from

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Estonia living in Finland. Despite being much better integrated into Finnish society than ethnic Russians, the ethnic Estonians are much more likely to want to return to Estonia. Indeed, our study shows that ethnicity is one of the most important personal characteristics predicting return migration.

CONCLUSIONS

There is no obvious negative relationship between integration and return migration. Being a member of the sending country majority population is associated with a stronger intention to return, even when the migrant is well integrated into the new homeland.

1. Introduction

Migration from eastern to western Europe has led to a considerable loss of population in some eastern European countries over the past two decades (Apsite 2013; Anniste et al. 2012; Kahanec 2012). As Ivlevs and King (2012) have noted, many eastern European countries that won independence at the beginning of the 1990s have since lost a share of their people. Furthermore, since the individuals who leave the new member states of the European Union (EU) are more likely to be highly educated than those who stay, the discussions on east-west migration in Europe tend to revolve around the issues of brain drain, brain gain, and brain waste (Kahanec et al. 2010; Olofsson and Malmberg 2011; Olofsson 2012). The grim reality of high emigration rates can, however, be relieved by return migration, ultimately leading to a brain gain for the sending countries rather than for the receiving countries³ (Mayr and Peri 2009). This paper brings the ethnic dimension—i.e., being a member of a majority population or a minority population of the sending country—into the discussion on return migration. At the broadest level, the decision to stay or return depends on the balance between an immigrant's degree of integration in the host country and the strength of his or her attachment and ties to the country of origin. While there are studies on the onward migration of immigrants from one EU member state to another (e.g., Aptekar 2009; Nekby 2006), there are almost no studies on the extent to which members of minority ethnic groups and members of the majority population of the sending countries differ in their desire to return to the sending country. This trend is, however, a new and very interesting layer in the European migration system that is emerging in the

³ We use the terms “sending country” and “origin country” as synonyms, and the terms “receiving country” and “host country.”

context of the free labour movement framework and the increased ethnic diversity in the EU. For onward migrants, their new homeland is a third country because the country of origin is not their historical homeland⁴. Members of sending country minority groups are more footloose (Ivlevs 2013): because they are less attached to the countries in which they live, they tend to be more responsive to welfare differences between European countries in the context of the free movement of labour within the EU. Members of minority groups may therefore be more likely to “trickle up” into more attractive destination countries in Europe than members of the majority populations of EU countries.

Ethnic differences in return migration intentions are also closely related to the relationship between integration and return migration, a topic of migration research that has recently been revived by de Haas and Fokkema (2011). The integration of an immigrant into the host country evolves alongside his or her decision about whether to stay or return. Furthermore, the literature has identified a number of dimensions of the integration process, including the distinction between structural and sociocultural integration (Heckmann 2005; Fokkema and de Haas 2011). Because of these different dimensions the relationship between integration and return migration is complex, and both negative (a higher level of integration is related to a lower degree of willingness to return) and positive (a higher level of integration is related to a higher degree of willingness to return) associations between the two processes can emerge (de Haas and Fokkema 2011). It is therefore reasonable to expect that the balance of these factors can differ between members of the sending country’s majority and minority ethnic groups, and that these differences can have varying effects on the migrants’ intentions to return to the home country.

This study examines the differences in the return migration intentions of members of the ethnic minority population and of the majority population of the origin country, taking into account the extent to which they are integrated into their new homeland/host country. The central research questions this paper seeks to answer are therefore as follows:

1. How great are the differences in the return migration intentions of the members of the sending country’s ethnic minority and ethnic majority groups?

⁴ We will not use the term “third country” since it already has a different meaning in migration research. We refer to this third country as the host/destination country, and the country the migrants left as the country of origin, even though the latter is not the historical homeland of the immigrants/ethnic minorities residing there.

2. How does integration in the host country shape differences in the desire to return for members of the origin country's ethnic minority and majority groups?

Within the context of east-west migration in Europe (Castles and Miller 2009; Cook, Dwyer, and Waite 2011; Kopnina 2005), the ethnic dimension is an important consideration for the Baltic countries (Ivlevs 2013; Anniste et al. 2012). Recently, King and Raghuram (2013) have also highlighted the need for quantitative survey-based studies that are specifically designed to examine the different types of migration. In our analysis, we use data from a representative survey to study immigrants in Finland who come from Estonia. Ethnically, these Estonian origin migrants fall into two main groups: ethnic Estonians and other (minority) ethnic groups, most of whom speak Russian or other Slavic languages as their mother tongue. Estonian, unlike Russian, is very similar to the Finnish language (Praagli 2011). Ethnic Russians living in Estonia face integration problems, and their level of attachment to Estonia is thus weaker than that of ethnic Estonians (Vihalemm 2012). However, Russians also have greater difficulties than Estonians in integrating into Finnish society, because of the relatively small linguistic distance between the Estonians and the Finns (Sarvimäki 2011). Thus, the case of Estonian migrants in Finland can provide us with interesting insights into how the issues of sending country ethnic minority-majority status, integration, and return migration interact with each other in increasingly complex ways within the emerging European migration system that allows for free labour mobility.

2. Diverging views on integration and return migration

Ethnic differences in return migration intentions are closely related to the degree of integration in the host country. The concept of integration is highly complex, and it is not our aim to wade into the debates surrounding the issue. It is, however, important to be aware of the normative, contested, and politicized nature of the topic (Fokkema and de Haas 2011). In this paper, we define integration as the inclusion of immigrants into all spheres of the host society. Following Heckmann (2005) and Fokkema and de Haas (2011), we distinguish between sociocultural and structural integration. *Sociocultural integration* entails cognitive, behavioural, and attitudinal acceptance along with adaptation to the norms of the receiving society (cultural integration or acculturation); acquisition of the majority language; and having friends and/or being married to a member of the host country (social integration). *Structural integration* entails having outcomes similar to those of the majority group

in important life domains, such as the labour market (economic integration), living conditions (housing integration), and the acquisition of citizenship (political integration). Neither sociocultural nor structural integration necessarily require immigrants to give up their cultural and ethnic identities in a way of assimilation, but they do imply that immigrants are included in the majority society of the host country (Arends-Tóth and van de Vijver 2006). Usually, a negative relationship between integration and return migration is assumed: the greater their degree of integration, the less likely immigrants are to want to return. However, a recent study by de Haas and Fokkema (2011) called into question this intuitively appealing view by showing that a positive relationship between integration and return migration might exist as well: immigrants who are structurally better integrated into the host society may also be more willing to return home.

2.1 Integration and return migration: A negative relationship

Proficiency in the majority language (cultural integration) is often considered the most important alterable factor that contributes to the social and structural integration of immigrants (Dustmann and van Soest 2002). Thus, many policies focus on helping immigrants improve their level of proficiency in the majority language (Triadafilopoulos 2011; Goodman 2010). People who emigrate in early childhood (Bleakley and Chin 2004) and whose mother tongue is similar to the majority language (Chiswick and Miller 2001) are generally more successful in acquiring the local language. It is generally assumed that being able to speak the local language provides these immigrants with important advantages in terms of their ability to integrate into different life domains. Research on migrant integration has suggested that another important factor in integration is the number of years since migration: i.e., the longer migrants stay, the more they become integrated into the receiving country, and the less likely they are to return to their home country (de Haas and Fokkema 2011). For example, a study by Bratsberg, Raaum, and Sørlie (2007) of immigrants in Norway showed that the probability of return migration is high during the first five years after arrival, but decreases quickly thereafter. One of the key indicators of integration is, however, whether an immigrant marries a member of the host country, as marriage is an important aspect of social integration (Alba and Nee 2003; Koelet and de Valk 2013; van Ham and Tammaru 2011). The integrative benefits of intermarriage include, for example, that the immigrant tends to learn the host country language and absorb the unwritten rules of the society more quickly, and that he or she is helped in establishing a position in the labour market (Dribe and Lundh 2008; Ellis, Wright, and Parks 2004; Kantarevic 2004; Meng and

Meurs 2009). Thus, immigrants who marry a member of the host society tend to be more willing to stay.

While intermarriage is an important indicator of integration, research on return migration—especially in the context of east-west migration in Europe—has shown that the degree of skills and labour market integration also plays a major role in an immigrant’s decision about whether to stay or return (Zaiceva and Zimmermann 2012; Olofsson and Malmberg 2011; Mayr and Peri 2009). In general, having a full-time job has a negative effect on return migration, and unemployed immigrants (i.e., those who fail to integrate economically) are more likely to return to their country of origin (Constant and Massey 2002; Schmidt 1994; Velling 1994; Jensen and Pedersen 2007; Bijwaard, Schluter, and Wahba 2011).

Thus, return migrants are, in general, less successful economically than “the stayers” (Borjas 1989; Massey 1987; Lindstrom and Massey 1994; King 2000; Jensen and Pedersen 2007; Bijwaard, Schluter, and Wahba 2011), and return migration could be seen as a corrective move resulting from “failed migration” (DaVanzo and Morrison 1981, 1982; Massey and Espinoza 1997). Economic integration facilitates homeownership, which in turn further facilitates permanent settlement in the host country (Alba and Logan 1992). According to neoclassical migration theory, immigrants become less willing to return as they make greater investments in human capital. After successfully navigating the process of sociocultural and structural integration, immigrants become increasingly productive, and their contributions to the labour market of the host country become comparable to those of the natives. At the same time, their ties to their country of origin gradually weaken (de Haas and Fokkema 2011).

2.2 Integration and return migration: A positive relationship

In recent years, the assumption that there is a negative correlation between integration and return migration has been challenged in the literature on migrant networks, transnationalism, and the mobility patterns of university graduates (Bijwaard 2010; de Haas and Fokkema 2011). Budget airlines that offer cheap travel (Zientara 2011), internet-based social networks that link people living far away from each other (Apsite 2013), and new and cheap means of video and audio communication through internet-based services like Skype (Bates and Komito 2012) allow immigrants to maintain close and intimate links with their relatives and friends in their country of origin to a much greater extent than was possible in the past. Maintaining close contact with one’s homeland—transnationalism—is one of the most important factors associated with return migration (de Haas and Fokkema

2011). De Haas and Fokkema argued that being better integrated into the host society, especially economically, provides immigrants with more resources for communicating with and visiting friends and family in their home country.

Studies on the mobility patterns of highly skilled workers and university graduates who study abroad have provided further evidence of a positive relationship between integration and return migration. For example, Jasso and Rosenzweig (1988) and Gundel and Peters (2008) found that highly qualified immigrants are more likely to return than less skilled migrants. Findlay et al. (2012) have even suggested that an international, highly mobile class of managers and professionals have emerged whose skills are in high demand, and who are willing to move to pursue interesting career challenges. These highly skilled migrants are economically successful and are well integrated into the labour market of the host country, but they are not necessarily more willing to settle in their new homeland than less skilled migrants. Furthermore, they are not necessarily well integrated from a sociocultural perspective. The situation is often different for students, a category of international migrants that is growing all over the world (Findlay et al. 2012; King and Raghuram 2013). Students are often well integrated socioculturally (they use local social networks and are often proficient in the local language), which should make it relatively easy for them to establish themselves in the host country labour market. However, research has shown that most foreign students return to their homeland after finishing their studies (Bijwaard 2010).

De Haas and Fokkema (2011) offered two explanations for this somewhat surprising and counterintuitive positive relationship between integration and return migration. First, instead of seeing return migration as a corrective move in response to “failed migration” due to “failed integration,” return migration could be seen as a strategy pursued by the most capable migrants who have few problems integrating into new environments, but who are also spatially very mobile. Thus, an important factor could be a lowering of the obstacles to moving for less skilled migrants, rather than the level of integration in the host country, as is the case with more skilled migrants. For example, a study by Strömberg et al. (2011) in the Swedish context found that immigrants from the less developed countries of the global south are much more willing to stay in Sweden than migrants from the highly industrialised countries of the global north, despite the fact that the latter are better integrated in the Swedish labour market. Second, de Haas and Fokkema (2011) pointed to the conceptual importance of the new economics of labour migration (NELM) framework in explaining the positive relationship between integration and return migration. According to NELM, migration is a family, household, or even a community strategy, rather than an individual strategy. In this framework, the most able individuals with the highest integration and earnings potential are sent abroad

in order to get a job, earn higher wages, or diversify the household's income sources (Castles and Miller 2009). This theory further asserts that these migrants and households have an interest in the migrants being well integrated in the host country so they can reap the maximum benefits from the higher earnings of the household members living abroad (de Haas and Fokkema 2011). The money these immigrants earn is generally remitted back home, and is often used to improve the living conditions of families, households, and communities in the country of origin (Elrick 2008; Vullnetari and King 2011). During times of economic crisis and increasing unemployment in the origin countries, these kinds of household strategies might be especially important (cf. Apsite 2013). De Haas and Fokkema (2011:24) therefore concluded:

“Importantly, this turns conventional interpretations of return migration upside down; that is, from an indication or result of integration failure to a measure of success. Particularly within a NELM perspective, non-achievement of the goal of return migration due to low income, unemployment or high costs will then lead to a prolonged stay. Permanent settlement then becomes the end result of repeated postponement of return because of integration ‘failure’.”

In this paper, our goal is to bring the ethnic status of migrants in the sending country—i.e., whether they were members of the majority or the minority population—into this interesting, emerging debate on whether the relationship between integration and return migration is positive or negative. We will explore this debate in the following section.

2.3 Ethnic differences in integration and return migration

The dimension of ethnicity in the debate on integration and return migration is important because ethnic minority populations are growing rapidly worldwide as a result of immigration, and because there are many reasons to assume that the processes of integration and return migration differ between ethnic groups. The reasons for the initial out-migration might differ between migrants from the same country of origin depending on whether they are members of the majority or the minority population. Research has shown that members of ethnic minority groups emigrate much more often than members of the majority population because they are disadvantaged economically. Other reasons include a lack of integration, discrimination, feelings of bitterness or insecurity, and a lack of attachment to the country of origin (Aptekar 2009; Cook, Dwyer, and Waite 2011; Crul and Vermeulen 2003; Thomson and Crul 2007; Ivlevs and King 2012). In short, ethnic

minorities tend to be less attached to their sending country than members of the majority population.

For the immigrant sending countries with large ethnic minority populations, research on the emigration and return migration patterns of these groups is essential if we are to understand the relationship between integration and return migration. For the immigrants and ethnic minorities of the sending country, the new country of residence is the third country (see also footnote 2). Their weaker personal ties to a country of origin that is not their historical homeland, and their lower degree of attachment to this country relative to that of the majority population, could reduce their willingness to return, especially if the country to which they moved is more prosperous. Furthermore, large-scale disruptions of the political order, such as the end of the Cold War can lead to a redrawing of political borders, and the carving out of new ethnic geographies within the new nation states may further weaken such ties. The break-up of the Soviet Union and of Yugoslavia are the most important recent political disruptions that have shaped the evolving east-west migration system in contemporary Europe. For example, Hughes (2005), in a study of the Russian-speaking minorities in Estonia and Latvia, asserted that the emigration of these minorities from these former member states of Soviet Union was likely to increase. He further predicted that members of ethnic minority groups who have weaker historical roots to the country they left behind, and who experienced discrimination in the sending country, are also less likely to return. In the following section, we will discuss the context of Estonia in greater detail.

3. Emigration and the formation of the Estonian diaspora in Finland

Estonia, like many other former member states of the Soviet Union, has inherited a large stock of ethnic minorities, mainly ethnic Russians, from the Soviet period (for an overview, see Tammaru and Kulu 2003). According to a 2011 census, members of ethnic minority groups make up 31% of the population of Estonia, and Russians make up 79% of the ethnic minority population (Statistics Estonia 2013). The latter figure was almost unchanged from the 2000 census. Russians constituted the majority ethnic group in the Soviet Union, and Russian was the main language of inter-ethnic communication, including in the non-Russian republics of the former Soviet Union. Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, the status of ethnic Russians has changed completely: overnight, they went from being a privileged ethnic group in the Soviet Union to being an often unwelcome minority ethnic group in the countries that regained their independence (Kaiser 1995). Thus, in

Estonia, Russians experienced a significant loss of political, managerial, economic, social, and cultural status (Lindemann and Kogan 2013; Lindemann and Saar 2009; Ohliger and Münz 2003; Vishnevsky 2003). According to the 2011 census, unemployment was 9% among ethnic Estonians and 17% among ethnic Russians living in Estonia (Statistics Estonia 2013).

Until the very end of the Soviet Union, Estonia—a country which was grouped together with the two other Baltic countries of Latvia and Lithuania under the heading of the “Soviet West”—was a country of immigration. But after the break-up of the Soviet Union, Estonia became a country of emigration (Anniste et al. 2012; Tammaru, Kumer-Haukanõmm, and Anniste 2010). Many members of ethnic minority groups saw emigration as a means of escape from discrimination in Estonia. In the 1990s, especially at the beginning of the decade, the ethnic Russians who migrated mainly returned to Russia. Based on census estimates, 24% of the ethnic minority population, or about 144,000 people, left Estonia in the 1990s. The net migration of ethnic Estonians was negative 1%, or about 11,000 people (Table 1). The emigration pattern of Estonia changed completely in the 2000s, especially in the second half of the decade. Estonia joined the European Union in 2004, which significantly simplified moves to older EU member states. Although the negative net migration of the ethnic minority population (-25,000 people, or a loss of 6%) was lower than it was in the 1990s, members of ethnic minority groups were still overrepresented among the emigrants.

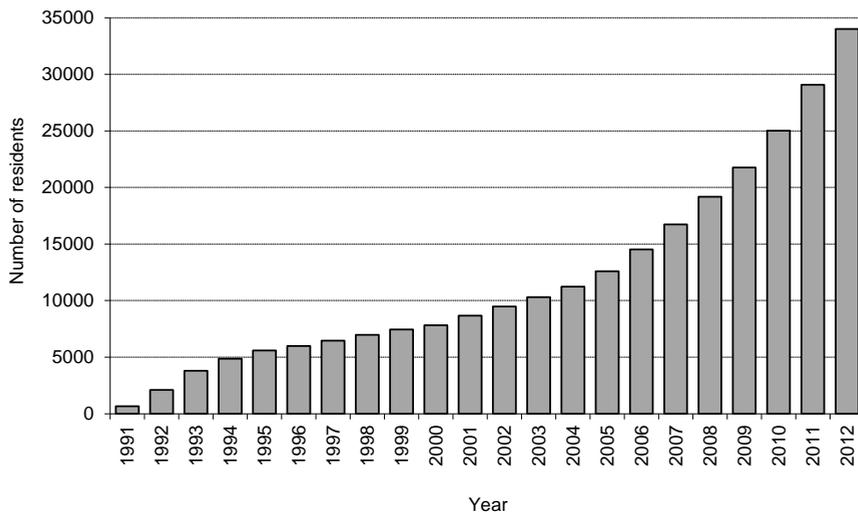
Table 1: Components of population change, 1989–2000 and 2000–2012 (numbers are rounded)

	Ethnic Estonians	Ethnic minorities	Total
Population 1989	963 000	602 000	1 565 000
Population 2000	930 000	440 000	1 370 000
Change 1989–2000	-33 000	-162 000	-195 000
Natural change	-22 000	-18 000	-40 000
Net migration (residual)	-11 000	-144 000	-155 000
Population 2000	930 000	440 000	1 370 000
Population 2012	902 000	392 000	1 294 000
Change 2000–2012	-28 000	-48 000	-76 000
Natural change	-10 500	-23 000	-33 500
Net migration (residual)	-17 500	-25 000	-42 500

Source: Statistics Estonia.

In the 2000s, the dominant migration trend among members of ethnic minority groups in Estonia was no longer to return to their historic homeland, but rather to emigrate to western countries, mainly to one of the older EU member states. While the bulk of eastern Europeans who have been migrating within Europe have been heading to the United Kingdom, Finland continues to be by far the most important destination for Estonian migrants (Anniste et al. 2012). There were almost no Estonian migrants in Finland in 1991, but today they constitute the largest Estonian migrant community in the world. Moreover, since 2010, Estonian migrants have outnumbered Russian migrants in Finland (Statistics Finland 2013). Estonian migration to Finland started immediately after Estonia regained its independence in 1991, but it increased dramatically after Estonia joined the EU, and has grown further since start of the economic crisis in 2008 (Figure 1). Since 1991, a total of around 43,000 individuals have emigrated from Estonia to Finland; and about 8,000 individuals, or 19%, have returned to Estonia. Thus, at the end of 2012, around 35,000 Estonian migrants were living in Finland. Furthermore, many Estonians live and work in Finland on a temporary basis, since it is easy and relatively cheap to commute between the countries (Ahas 2012).

Figure 1: Changes in the number of Estonian immigrants in Finland



Source: Statistics Finland.

The popularity of Finland as a destination country for Estonian migrants can be explained by the following factors: first, Estonia and Finland are neighbouring countries; second, there are significant wealth differences between Estonia and Finland; and, third, the Estonian and Finnish languages are very similar. However, members of Estonian ethnic minority groups have not shown the same interest in emigrating to Finland as ethnic Estonians (Anniste et al. 2012). This is probably because the Russian-speaking minority population of Estonia do not have the linguistic and cultural similarities with the Finns that attract the ethnic Estonians.

However, the fact that Estonians and Russians are the largest immigrant communities in Finland suggests that Russian speakers from Estonia may be meeting and interacting with ethnic Russians from Russia while in Finland. There is even some evidence (based on qualitative information provided by our respondents) of family reunification, as family members who previously lived separately in Estonia and in Russia have moved to Finland so they can live together again. Ethnic Estonians and ethnic Russians do not, however, appear to be integrated into Finnish society to the same extent (Sarvimäki 2011). For example, according to Mannila and Reuter (2009), the risk of social exclusion is three times higher among Russians than it is among Estonians. The differences between the experiences of ethnic Estonian and ethnic Russian migrants in Finland are also partly related to the willingness of native Finns to accept the members of these two ethnic groups. For example, Mannila and Reuter (2009) found that Finns tend to have strong positive attitudes towards Estonians, while their attitudes towards Russians tend to be more neutral. Thus, previous studies suggest that the degree of integration in Finland of ethnic Estonians is higher than that of ethnic Russians. Studying the intentions of Estonian origin immigrants in Finland regarding return migration to Estonia can therefore make an important contribution to the emerging debate, initiated by de Haas and Fokkema (2011), about whether there is a positive or a negative relationship between integration and return migration.

4. Data and methods

The data used in this study are drawn from a survey conducted in 2009. A random sample of 1,000 adult (aged 18+) Estonian origin immigrants was extracted from the Finnish Population Register. It is a representative sample of the immigrants who have officially registered as permanent residents in Finland. It should be noted that the many temporary, seasonal, and illegal workers are not included in the survey (cf. Ahas 2012). Currently no representative data on these itinerant migrants are available, and a different type of study design would be necessary to conduct

research on this group. In our analysis, we have chosen to focus on the two largest ethnic groups of migrants living in Finland: ethnic Estonians (n=769) and ethnic Russians (n=111). The ethnicity of the migrants is based on self-definition. The ethnic Russians in the survey were all born in Estonia. The socio-demographic characteristics of these two groups differ somewhat. For example, compared to the ethnic Estonians, the ethnic Russians were more likely to report that they had arrived as children, had lived in Finland for at least 10 years, and had no more than a primary education (Table 2). In the questionnaire, data were also collected on the respondents' circumstances prior to migration in Estonia, as well as on their circumstances shortly after arrival and at the time of the survey. These data allow us to cover issues related to structural integration. The respondents were also asked about their level of sociocultural integration and whether they intend to return to Estonia. Thus, our data enable us to analyse several indicators of structural integration (employment, housing, education, citizenship) and sociocultural integration (social intercourse, friendship, marriage) which may be expected to affect return migration intentions.

In the following, we provide a descriptive analysis of the differences in the levels of integration of the ethnic Estonian and the ethnic Russian migrants in Finland. We then apply a binary logistic regression to our data in order to study the return migration intentions of Estonian migrants in Finland. In line with research conducted by de Haas and Fokkema, (2011) the respondents were asked: "Do you intend to stay in Finland, to return to Estonia, or do you not know?" In our analysis, we compare the respondents who indicated they intend to return (coded 1) with all of the other respondents (coded 0). This is because our primary focus is on return migrants, and the three groups in our sample are too small for multinomial regression. Our main variable of interest is ethnicity (Russian=0, Estonian=1), and we are interested in how the ethnic differences in return migration change after we control for integration (and other relevant background) variables. We therefore begin by establishing the relative risks of return migration in a baseline model that includes no other variables (Model 1).

Table 2: Main characteristics of the research population (%)

	Total	Estonians	Russians
Ethnicity			
Estonian	87		
Russian	13		
Gender			
Male	45	45	45
Female	55	55	55
Age at migration			
<18	16	14	25
18-29	41	41	43
30-39	22	22	22
40-49	16	17	7
50+	7	7	4
Educational attainment			
Primary	20	19	24
Secondary	29	28	30
Vocational	39	40	36
Tertiary	12	13	10
Years since migration			
0-4	29	30	19
5-9	29	29	27
10+	42	41	54
N	880	769	111

Source: Sample Survey.

De Haas and Fokkema (2011) studied the dimensions of structural integration separately, and constructed a single index for sociocultural integration. Their finding that the level of sociocultural integration is negatively related to the intention of return migration is in line with neoclassical economic theory. They studied North African immigrant groups in Spain and Italy. Although the geographic distance between North Africa and Spain or Italy is not much greater than the distance between Estonia and Finland, it is certainly easier to establish transnational family arrangements between Estonia and Finland than it is between North Africa and Italy or Spain. Because both Finland and Estonia are EU member states, their citizens can move freely between the countries. Moreover, commuting between the countries is

very easy and cheap by means of ferries which travel between Estonia and Finland numerous times a day. It would be interesting to learn whether the negative relationship between integration and return migration also applies to neighbouring countries, and which dimensions of sociocultural integration are affected. Understanding these sociocultural factors would be especially helpful when designing integration and migration policies in both the origin and the destination countries.

We have chosen to use separate indicators of sociocultural integration in our study in order to shed light on how they relate to the intention to return. Model 2 includes both ethnicity and all of the background variables, such as gender, age at migration, years lived in Finland, and education. The final Model 3 adds integration variables. As a robustness check (see Mood 2010), we applied a linear probability regression⁵ on our binary dependent variable in Model 3, and performed a variance inflation factor (VIF) test for multicollinearity. We then removed from our models all of the variables outside of the conservative VIF value range of 0.20 to five, as this exercise revealed that there were some problems with multicollinearity in our data, such as between proficiency in the Finnish language and the home language. Sociocultural integration in our final model (Model 3) is measured through family relationships (has Finnish partner=1, otherwise=0) and everyday contacts with Finns (has daily contacts with Finns=1, otherwise=0). Attachment to the home country is measured by the frequency of visits to Estonia (visits weekly=1). A recent study by Engbersen et al. (2013) showed that there is no strong relationship between integration in the host country and maintaining contact with the country of origin. The dimensions of structural integration include employment, homeownership, and citizenship (the variables can be found in Table 3 in the descriptive results section). We were also able to construct variables that reflect changes in the structural integration variables, such as occupational mobility in Finland and changes in housing tenure; but since none of these variables were found to be an important predictor of return migration, they were not included in our final model. In addition, we were unable to detect a significant association between satisfaction variables (work life, housing) and the respondents' intentions regarding return migration.

Immigrants generally decide whether to stay or to return based on the balance between their degree of integration in the host country, and the strength of their attachment and ties to the country of origin (de Haas and Fokkema 2011). We measured ties to the country of origin through the frequency of visits to Estonia. We did not ask specific questions about integration in the country of origin, as our focus was on the differences between the two ethnic groups in terms of their return migration intentions, and because ethnicity itself captures the migrants' level of

⁵ The results are not shown, but are available upon request.

integration into Estonian society to a large degree. The question of what effect the degree of integration in the origin country has on the return migration intentions of members of an ethnic minority group is interesting in itself. However, this question should be addressed in future studies which draw upon a larger sample or an over-sample of the minority population, or which explicitly focus on the minority group.

5. Results

5.1 Sociocultural integration

Table 3 presents indicators of sociocultural integration for both the ethnic Estonians and the ethnic Russians who migrated from Estonia to Finland. As expected, we found that ethnic Estonians are, from a sociocultural perspective, better integrated into Finnish society than the ethnic Russians (all of the differences were statistically significant). This was found to be the case for all of the dimensions of sociocultural integration we measured in this study. More specifically, the results showed that, compared to the ethnic Russians, the ethnic Estonians have more personal contacts with native Finns outside of home and work, are more proficient in the Finnish language, are more likely to marry a Finn, and are more likely to speak Finnish at home (i.e., Finnish is one of the languages spoken at home between family members). The findings further revealed that 23% of Estonians are either married to a Finn or have a Finnish partner, and speak Finnish at home. This suggests that a high percentage of Estonians are not just integrated, but are also assimilating into Finnish society. Given these differences in their degrees of sociocultural integration, we might also assume that there are differences between Estonians and Russians living in Finland in their degrees of structural integration.

Table 3: Sociocultural integration of Estonians and Russians living in Finland (share of “yes” responses out of all responses, %)¹

	Total	Estonians	Russians
Has everyday non-work contacts with Finns	57	59	40
Fluent in Finnish language	69	72	45
Spouse/partner is Finnish	20	23	5
Speaks Finnish at home	21	23	7

¹The percentages in bold indicate statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) difference between the two ethnic groups.

Source: Sample Survey.

5.2 Structural integration

Table 4 presents the descriptive information on the indicators of structural integration for both the ethnic Estonians and the ethnic Russians who migrated from Estonia to Finland, starting with their levels of *economic integration*. Among ethnic Estonians, 83% started working immediately after arrival, while the respective figure for Russians was 65%. Around one-third of the migrants from Estonia stated that upon arrival in Finland they had to accept a job that was beneath their qualifications, with no differences found between the Estonians and the Russians (Table 4).

Table 4: Structural integration of Estonians and Russians living in Finland (share of “yes” responses out of all responses, %)¹

	Total	Estonians	Russians
Employment			
Job at arrival			
Found a job within the first 3 months	81	83	65
Job correspondence to qualification			
First job required lower qualification	31	31	33
Current job requires lower qualification	17	17	18
Current employment status			
Employed	79	80	71
Unemployed	3	3	6
Inactive	18	17	23
Citizenship			
Has acquired Finnish citizenship	12	9	31
Housing			
1st type of residence in Finland			
Flat	59	57	71
Shared flat	12	13	9
Dormitory	8	8	6
House	14	15	8
Shared house	4	5	1
Trailer	1	1	1
Other	2	1	4

Table 4: (Continued)

	Total	Estonians	Russians
Housing			
Current type of residence in Finland			
Apartment	68	67	79
Shared apartment	2	2	0
Dormitory	1	1	1
House	27	28	20
Shared house	2	2	0
Trailer	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0
Homeownership			
Family owns the current place of residence	37	37	36

¹The percentages in bold indicate a statistically significant difference ($p < 0.05$) between the two ethnic groups.

Source: Sample Survey.

Our data also allowed us to observe longitudinally the migrants' recent work histories, including the last job they had in Estonia, the first job they had in Finland, and the job they had in the survey year. The results showed that among the Estonian migrants in Finland, the shares of skilled workers and service workers were larger than they were in the total workforce in Estonia in 2009, while the shares of managers and senior specialists were smaller (Table 5). Upon arrival in Finland, the migrants often took several steps down on the occupational ladder: i.e., 9% of the Estonian migrants took positions as managers and senior specialists, while 63% took jobs as skilled and unskilled workers. The share of skilled workers—e.g., machine operators and craftsmen in sectors such as industry and construction—was higher among the migrants in Finland than among the Estonian workforce. These findings regarding occupational composition are in line with those of other studies on east-west migration in Europe (Friberg 2010; McDowell 2009). Again, no differences were found between ethnic Estonians and ethnic Russians in terms of the initial occupational downgrading.

Table 5: Comparison of the occupational structures for migrants from Estonia to Finland, and for the total workforce of Estonia and Finland

	Estonia, total Workforce	Migrants:			Finland, total workforce
		last in Estonia	first in Finland	current in Finland	
Manager	12	9	2	11	10
Senior specialist	17	13	7	9	21
Specialist	15	11	9	12	18
Clerk/Service worker	19	23	19	22	26
Skilled worker	28	35	35	37	15
Unskilled worker	9	9	28	9	9

Sources: Sample Survey, Statistics Estonia, Statistics Finland.

It is, however, interesting to note what happened to the migrants after they had been in Finland for a longer period (Table 5). First, we observed an interesting U-shaped change in the occupational composition. In the survey year, the share of managers and senior specialists was 20%, and the share of skilled and unskilled workers was 46%. These figures are comparable to those for the last job in Estonia. Compared to the breakdown for the total Finnish workforce in 2009, the shares of both managers and unskilled workers were similar, while the shares of skilled workers were significantly higher, and the shares of all of the other occupations were smaller. Second, we found some differences by migrant ethnicity in terms of the ability to climb the occupational ladder in Finland: ethnic Estonians were more successful than ethnic Russians in moving out of unskilled occupations and into managerial positions.

While Estonians were shown to be better integrated in the Finnish labour market, their level of *political integration*, as measured by citizenship attainment, was found to be lower: 31% of the Russians, but only 9% of the Estonians, had acquired Finnish citizenship (Table 4). At this point it should be noted that a number of Ingrian Finns, who speak Russian as their mother tongue, moved from Estonia to Finland in response to an invitation by the Finnish government for people with Finnish ancestry to return to their homeland after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Many Ingrian Finns living in Estonia used this opportunity to acquire Finnish citizenship. However, our research population includes only ethnic Estonians and ethnic Russians, not Ingrian Finns. The high share of ethnic Russians with Finnish citizenship is a strong signal that they intend to stay in Finland. Gundel

and Peters (2008) found that immigrants who have overcome the bureaucratic hurdles involved in acquiring citizenship are less likely to return.

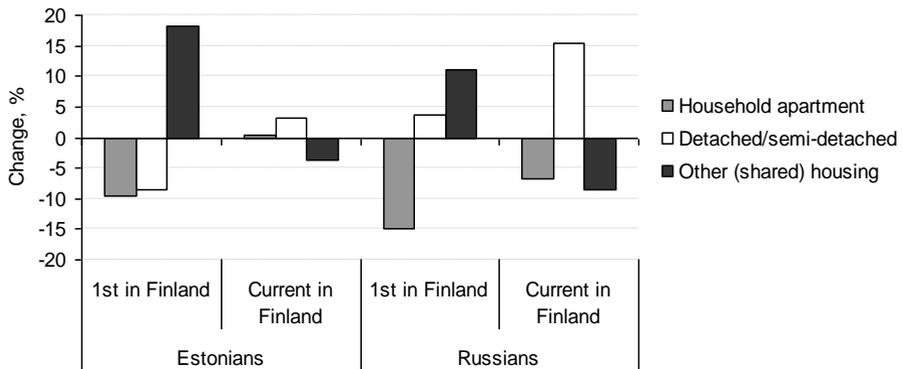
The third dimension of structural integration examined in our analysis was *housing integration*. Again, our data allowed us to trace longitudinally the changes in respondents' housing conditions. The results showed that the respondents' pre-migration housing conditions in Estonia were somewhat worse than those of the total population: compared to the population as a whole, the share of the migrants who were living in apartments occupied by members of their own household or in detached or semi-detached houses was smaller, while the share who were living in shared apartments or dormitories was larger (Table 6). The housing conditions in Estonia varied by ethnicity: 66% of the Estonians and 86% of the Russians had lived in apartments before moving to Finland, while 24% of the Estonians and just 5% of the Russians had lived in detached or semi-detached houses. In line with their occupational mobility pattern, the migrants moved several steps down on the housing ladder upon arrival in Finland. This type of downgrading often occurs among immigrants who lack both resources and information about the host country's housing market (Clark 1991; Myers and Liu 2005). The results showed that 28% of migrants from Estonia moved into shared apartments or dormitories, and that some even settled in campers or house trailers. There were substantial differences by ethnicity in the migrants' housing conditions upon arrival. Interestingly, the Estonians were found to have moved farther down the housing ladder than the Russians. This was probably because their housing conditions had been relatively good in Estonia, and they found it more difficult to find a housing situation similar to the one they had at home (Figure 2). It is also interesting to note that the Russian migrants not only downgraded to a lesser extent than the Estonians; the share of Russians living in a detached or a semi-detached house even increased following migration.

Table 6: Comparison of the housing conditions of migrants from Estonia to Finland, and for the total populations of Estonia and Finland

	Estonia, total population	Migrants: last in Estonia	first in Finland	current in Finland	Finland, total population
Detached/semi-detached	26	22	16	25	55
Household apartment	71	69	56	68	44
Other (shared) housing	3	9	28	7	1

Sources: Sample Survey, Statistics Estonia, Statistics Finland.

Figure 2: Changes in the distribution of the types of residence by ethnicity (the last residence in Estonia vs. the first in Finland; the last residence in Estonia vs. the current residence in Finland)



Source: Sample Survey

The migrants' housing trajectories were similar to their occupational trajectories: the migrants' housing conditions underwent a U-shaped change and improved considerably with the length of time spent in Finland. This pattern is often observed among immigrants, as their resources and information about the housing market in their new homeland tend to be poor upon arrival, but improve thereafter (Clark 1991; Myers and Liu 2005). Our findings indicated that the share of migrants living in shared housing decreased from 28% to 7%, and that the shares of people living in their own apartments and in detached and semi-detached houses became comparable to the pre-migration distributions. The improvement in housing conditions was especially pronounced among the Russians: about 20% of them lived in a detached house in the survey year, up from 5% prior to emigration. However, this share was still smaller than the share for the ethnic Estonians (27%).

5.3 Regression analysis on intentions regarding return migration

Nearly one-quarter (24%) of the Estonian migrants surveyed said they intend to return to Estonia. This figure is slightly higher than the share of actual return migrants between 1991 and 2011 (19% have moved back to Estonia). Sharp

differences by ethnicity were revealed in the intention to return: just 7% of the Russians expressed a desire to return, compared to 28% of the Estonians. Our baseline regression model, in which only ethnicity was included, showed that ethnic Russians had about five times ($1/0.22$) smaller odds to want to return to Estonia than ethnic Estonians (Model 1, Table 7). In Model 2, we controlled for important background characteristics, including education. Interestingly, the results for ethnicity did not change relative to those of Model 1: again, ethnicity appeared to play an important role in the desire to return to Estonia. The results for the background variables were as follows. The respondents who arrived in Finland as children were the least likely to indicate they wanted to return. Interestingly, the level of education and the number years since migration were not found to be significantly related to the intention to return. When we compared our results with those of de Haas and Fokkema (2011), the most important difference was in education, as they found that members of the most educated migrant group were the most likely to want to return. It seems that, among the third country nationals included in their study, having a higher level of education was associated with having a higher level of mobility. However, our findings suggest that within the EU's common labour market, educational differences are not important. In other respects, the findings were qualitatively very similar, with no differences in the willingness to return identified by gender or years since migration.

In Model 3, all of the variables related to the level of attachment to country of origin and the level of integration in the host country were included as well. While the ethnic differences in the intention to return were somewhat lower relative to those of Model 2, they remained statistically highly significant, as minorities were still found to have five times smaller odds to want to return. The results for background variables remained largely the same as well. We found a positive association between the frequency of visits to Estonia and the intention to return. For example, the Estonian migrants living in Finland who visited Estonia less often than once a month had 10 times smaller odds to say they want to return than the migrants who travelled home on a weekly basis. Such frequent commutes are, obviously, only possible between neighbouring countries with convenient travelling options, as in the case of Estonia and Finland. Estonian migrants living with a Finnish partner were the least likely to want to return: i.e., there was a negative association with the intention to return. Negative relationships were also found for a number of other sociocultural integration variables, including being proficient in Finnish and meeting Finnish friends on a daily basis.

Table 7: Intention to return (odds ratios). N=880

			Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
	Ethnicity	Estonian	1	1	1
		Russian	0.22 ***	0.26 ***	0.21 ***
Background characteristics	Gender	Female		1	1
		Male		1.18	1.06
	Age at migration	<18		1	1
		18-29		1.90 **	1.66
		30-39		1.73 *	1.09
		40-49		3.33 ***	2.19 **
		50+		3.82 ***	2.79 **
	Educational attainment	Primary		1	1
		Secondary		1.17	0.97
		Vocational		1.33	1.05
Tertiary			1.04	0.97	
Years since migration	0-4		1	1	
	5-9		1.03	1.36	
	10+		0.72	1.17	
Attachment to origin country	Visiting Estonia	Weekly			1
		Monthly			0.41 ***
		Less often			0.10 ***
Sociocultural integration in the host country	Partner ethnicity	Co-ethnic			1
		Finnish			0.55 *
		No partner			1.21
	Finnish proficiency	Not proficient			1
		Proficient			0.71 *
	Meeting Finnish friends	Daily			1
Weekly				1.73 ***	
Less often				1.30	

Table 7: (Continued)

			Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	
Structural integration in the destination country	Finnish citizenship	No			1	
		Yes			0.67	
	Homeownership	No			1	
		Yes			0.67 *	
	Labour market status	Not working			1	
		Manager			2.81 **	
		Senior specialist			2.04 **	
		Specialist			1.72	
		Clerk/Service worker			2.50 ***	
		Skilled worker			1.95 **	
		Unskilled worker			2.15 *	
	-2 Log likelihood			977.59	934.27	846.43

* Significant at 10% level; ** Significant at 5% level; *** Significant at 1% level.

Source: Sample Survey

For two of the structural integration variables, Finnish citizenship and homeownership, a negative relationship with the intention to return was found. Acquiring the citizenship of the host country and purchasing real estate are both part of the process of rooting oneself in the new homeland. The only variable that was found to have a positive relationship with the intention to return was that of labour market status. The respondents who were not working (inactive, unemployed) were much more likely to indicate a willingness to stay in Finland, while those who were working were more likely to say they want to return to Estonia (the only exception was the group of specialists, among whom the desire to return was not significantly different statistically from that of the respondents who were not working; but in our sample, the unemployed were still more likely to express a desire to return). As a next step, we changed the reference group (results not shown) to examine whether the willingness to return to Estonia still differed between the occupational groups, but we did not find statistically significant differences. However, in our sample, managers were the most likely to express a desire to return, which appears to confirm previous findings that the most skilled migrants are also the most mobile and the least attached to their current host country. In an effort to learn more about

the role of ethnic differences in integration on return migration, we tried interaction effects between ethnicity and all of the integration variables, but none of them turned out to be statistically significant. However, this might have been due to the small sample size.

6. Summary and discussion

In the current study, we have widened the on-going discussion of east-west migration in Europe, which has mainly been focused on socioeconomic dimension (brain drain, brain gain, and brain waste) with ethnic dimension (ethnicity, integration). There are several reasons why it is important to consider the ethnicity component—i.e., whether the migrant is a member of the minority or the majority population of the sending country—when studying migration. First, in countries with large ethnic minority groups, such as the Baltic states, ethnic minorities make up a substantial share of the population. Thus, for these groups emigration is onward migration. Members of ethnic minority groups tend to be more footloose than the ethnic majority population (Ivlevs 2013). After they emigrate, the choice of whether to stay in the new host country or return to the country of origin is rooted in a complex context of migration and integration. Second, as the shares of immigrant and ethnic minority groups are gradually increasing in countries around the world, it is increasingly important that we take these groups into account in migration research. Because they are more mobile than the ethnic majority population, they could start to trickle up into the more prosperous countries of the EU, which is now possible under the conditions of the common labour market. While there are studies on the onward migration of immigrants and minorities (e.g., Aptekar 2009; Nekby 2006), differences in return migration patterns need to be studied more closely in ethnically diverse sending countries. Third, the degree of integration of the various ethnic groups in the destination countries may differ, for example, by the distance between the language of the host country and the language of the respective ethnic group. The primary language spoken by the members of the majority population of the sending country is often more similar to the primary language of the neighbouring country than the languages spoken by the members of minority populations of the sending country. The ability of immigrants to communicate with the local people is often considered the most important single factor that leads to social and economic integration (Dustmann and van Soest 2002).

As our analysis was based on a representative sample of migrants from Estonia to Finland, we focused on the context of free labour mobility in the EU, and on differences in the desire to return to Estonia between ethnic Estonians and ethnic

Russians who were living in Finland, controlling for integration in Finland. For ethnic Estonians who leave Estonia, Finland is the main destination of emigration. For ethnic Russians who leave Estonia, the main migration destination since the dissolution of the Soviet Union has been Russia; they are, however, increasingly moving to European countries, including Finland. Our descriptive results uncovered important differences between ethnic Estonians and ethnic Russians living in Finland in terms of their levels of integration and their intention to return to Estonia. Compared to ethnic Russians, ethnic Estonians are more likely to be proficient in Finnish, to have personal relationships with Finns, and to live with a Finnish partner (to be intermarried). They are also more likely to be well integrated in the labour and housing markets.

Both the Estonians and the Russians took several steps down on the occupational ladder upon arrival in Finland, but the Estonians then climbed the ladder faster. However, the Russians have been more active than the Estonians in acquiring Finnish citizenship. Overall, our analysis found that the ethnic Estonians surveyed were much better integrated into Finnish society than the ethnic Russians. However, our results also showed that the Estonians were significantly more likely than the Russians to say they want to return Estonia. In fact, ethnicity was found to be one of the most important personal characteristics predicting return migration from Finland to Estonia. These results are in line with the observation made by de Haas and Fokkema (2011) that being better integrated does not necessarily translate into a greater willingness to stay in the host country. Rather, being well integrated in the host country and having the opportunity to work hard while there serve to shorten the stay in the country; i.e., integration could facilitate short-term labour mobility within Europe. Differences in the intention to return migration between the ethnic Estonians and the ethnic Russians decreased little after we controlled for relevant background characteristics; and, interestingly, even after we controlled for the integration variables in Finland. This means that neither attachment to Estonia, as measured by frequency of visits home; nor the degree of integration into Finnish society are responsible for the ethnic differences in the willingness to return. Thus, the level of attachment to the country of origin, the degree of integration in the host country, and ethnicity appear to be related in a more complex way, and more focused studies on the mobility of minority ethnic groups are needed. Our sample was too small to allow us to conduct such a study, but some important issues can be highlighted. First, differences between the integration contexts in Finland and Estonia might be one reason why members of minority groups want to stay in Finland. For example, the overall Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX) score is 69 for Finland and 46 for Estonia, with Estonia lagging significantly behind in areas such as anti-discrimination, political participation, and citizenship acquisition

(British Council 2013). Thus, the ethnic Russians from Estonia may be less integrated in Finland than the Estonians, but they face even bigger integration obstacles in Estonia. Second, the ethnic Russians may feel some bitterness towards Estonia, as their status in Estonia changed considerably after the break-up of the Soviet Union. Ladõnskaja (2013) compared the situation of Russians in Estonia after the break-up of the Soviet Union in 1991 to that of “children of a split family.” These factors may have intensified the willingness of the ethnic Russians to build a new life in a new country, especially in a country like Finland, which has a stronger welfare system than Estonia.

Most of the integration factors—especially the sociocultural variables—were found to be negatively related to the intention to return. These findings are similar to those of de Haas and Fokkema (2011). Migrants who can communicate fluently in Finnish, who meet Finnish friends on a daily basis, or who live with a Finnish partner tend to prefer staying in Finland to returning to Estonia. Two structural integration dimensions were also found to be negatively related to the willingness to return to Estonia: i.e., having invested time (acquiring Finnish citizenship) or money (buying a home) in the integration process. However, integration in the labour market and return migration were found to be positively related: i.e., migrants who were working were more likely to want to return. Thus, the respondents who expressed a desire to return were more likely to be active and mobile members of society looking to take advantage of the EU common labour market. These results diverge from those of de Haas and Fokkema (2011), who found no differences between working and non-working migrants in their study of third-country nationals from Africa who were living in the EU. This seems to indicate that within the EU and its common labour market, worker mobility has become a norm irrespective of the particular occupation, and that the main demarcation line is between those who do and do not work. Within a common labour market, the migrants who work are more likely than those who do not work to view their stay in a foreign country as a temporary sojourn.

This brings us to the important debate regarding the turning point in migration studies; namely, the mobility turn (Sheller and Urry 2006; King 2012). Faist (2013, p. 1637–1638) argued that “In connection with social mobility, spatial mobility — not only but also across borders — has been seen as a way to achieve upward mobility, or at least to deal with social risks, as in the livelihood approach or the new economics of labour migration.” Emigration from Estonia is strongly related to the fact that, compared to many older EU member states, especially the neighbouring country of Finland, Estonia offers less attractive economic opportunities, and the risk of unemployment is higher (Anniste et al. 2012). In addition, the barriers to mobility are lower for EU residents than they are for third-

country nationals entering the EU (Castles and Miller 2009). Thus, circular migration in Europe appears to be accelerating (Skeldon 2012). This study adds an additional ethnic layer to these circular forms of migration: i.e., relative to members of the minority population of a European country, who are more likely to leave the country for good; members of the majority population of a European sending country are more likely to join the intra-European migration flows by taking temporary advantage of the labour market opportunities of the wealthier EU countries.

In conclusion, our results show that along with the increase in the onward migration of ethnic minorities and immigrants from less attractive immigration destination countries like the Baltic states, to more attractive immigration destination countries of Europe like the Nordic countries; the number of permanent settlers in the latter group of countries could increase as well. This suggests that a process is emerging in which ethnic minority groups who live in economically disadvantaged destination countries in Europe are trickling up to more prosperous destination countries in Europe, and that members of the majority population in these less attractive countries are temporarily taking advantage of better economic opportunities in the more attractive destination countries. To help us to better understand these trends, future studies should further explore the integration contexts of sending and receiving countries, and the motivation structures of minority migrants.

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