

Return Migration in Kainuu, Finland

Relatively little attention has been paid to return migration in research into migration patterns in general, in spite of the fact that place of birth is still an important factor governing the location of population. It is significant, for example, that nowadays only 33.6 % of the population of Uusimaa in the south of Finland were born in that province, whereas 57.8 % of the population of the province of Oulu, of which the Kainuu region forms a part, are native-born. Consistent with this trend, the proportion becomes larger towards the periphery of the latter province, with as many as 81.8 % of the inhabitants of the rural commune of Kuhmo in Kainuu having been born there. These spatial differences are largely a product of migration, the proportion of native inhabitants in Uusimaa having been reduced markedly as a result of pronounced in-migration (see Kultalahti 1986: 281-297).

This paper will consider the nature of return migration in the rural communes of Kainuu over the period 1980-85 and compare it with native out-migration, where return migration and native out-migration are regarded as diametrically opposed permanent moves in which people born in a given commune either move away from it or return to it. The migration data were gathered from population registers and notices of changes of abode for the period in question and located geographically at the land register village level. The results are also examined in the



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light of the division into built-up areas and rural areas. The location of Kainuu and the areal division employed here may be seen in Fig. 1.



Fig. 1
 Division of the land register villages and the built-up areas in the rural municipalities of Kainuu and the location of Kainuu in Finland.

Trends in Return Migration and Native Out-Migration

Return migration accounted for 24.3 % of total immigration into the rural communes of Kainuu over the period 1980-85 (cf. Sofranko & Williams 1980: 20; Lewis 1982: 66-67), while native-born people made up as much as 56.4 % of the out-migrants. Thus even in the early 1980's

these communes were losing specifically native population to other areas. In fact, return migration showed a marked decline over the period in question, from 29.4 % in 1980 to 13.2 % in 1985, the most substantial drop of all occurring between 1984 and 1985, since the figure in the former year was still 23.9 %. No corresponding fluctuations occurred in native out-migration.

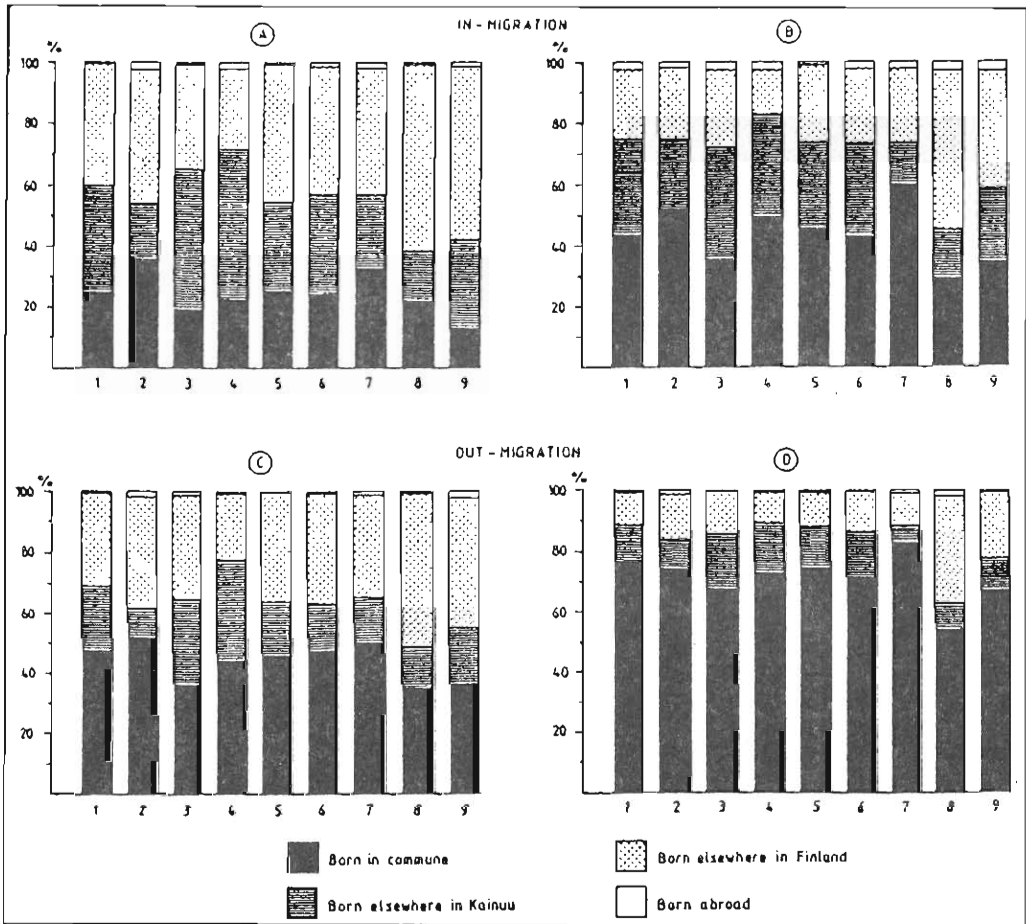


Fig. 2.

In-migration and out-migration according to birthplace in the rural communes of Kainuu in 1980-85. 1=Hyrynsalmi, 2=Kuhmo, 3=Paltamo, 4=Puolanka, 5=Ristijärvi, 6=Soikamo, 7=Suomussalmi, 8=Vaala, 9=Vuolijoki, A and C=built-up areas, B and D=rural areas.

The rural areas seem to have been affected worst by this trend, as native-born people accounted for 70 % of all out-migration from these communes compared with only 45.7 % from the built-up areas. Correspondingly, return migration was directed chiefly at the rural areas, where 31.1 % of inmigration concerned persons who had been born there, compared with less than 20 % in the built-up areas (Fig. 2). The focus for both native out-migration and return migration in Kainuu would appear to have been upon the villages in the eastern and central parts of the region,

whereas a highly negative native migration balance was characteristic of the western and central areas (Fig. 3).

The native migration balance for the whole region was a negative one over the period 1980-85, to an extent of 4780 persons, implying an annual loss of native inhabitants equivalent to: 1.2 % of the population of the rural communes. The highest proportions of the losses were to Southern Finland (30.2 %), the town of Kajaani (24.2 %) and other parts of Northern Finland (19.0 %). The proportion of the losses accounted for by migration be-

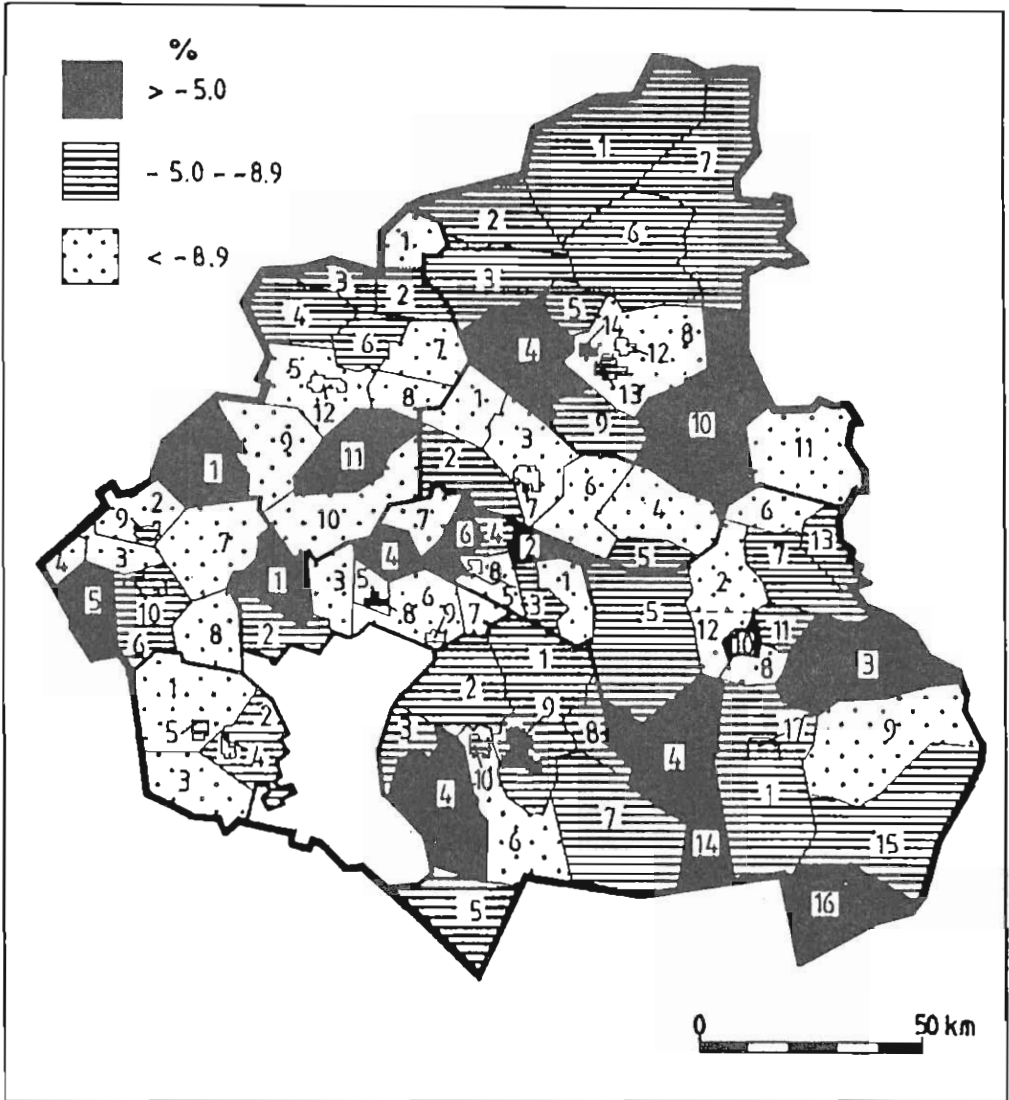


Fig. 3. Migration balance according to return migration and native out-migration in the rural communes of Kainuu in 1980-85.

tween the rural communes of Kainuu was 13.8 %. The total loss of native population from the rural communes of Kainuu to areas outside the region in 1980-85 was 2961 persons, equivalent to 0.8 % of the total population of these rural communes per year. On the other hand, a positive balance of native migration was recorded between these rural communes and for-

eign countries, principally Sweden (Fig. 4).

Characteristics of the Migrants

The migrants returning to the rural communes of Kainuu were typically single people, largely unmarried men with oc-

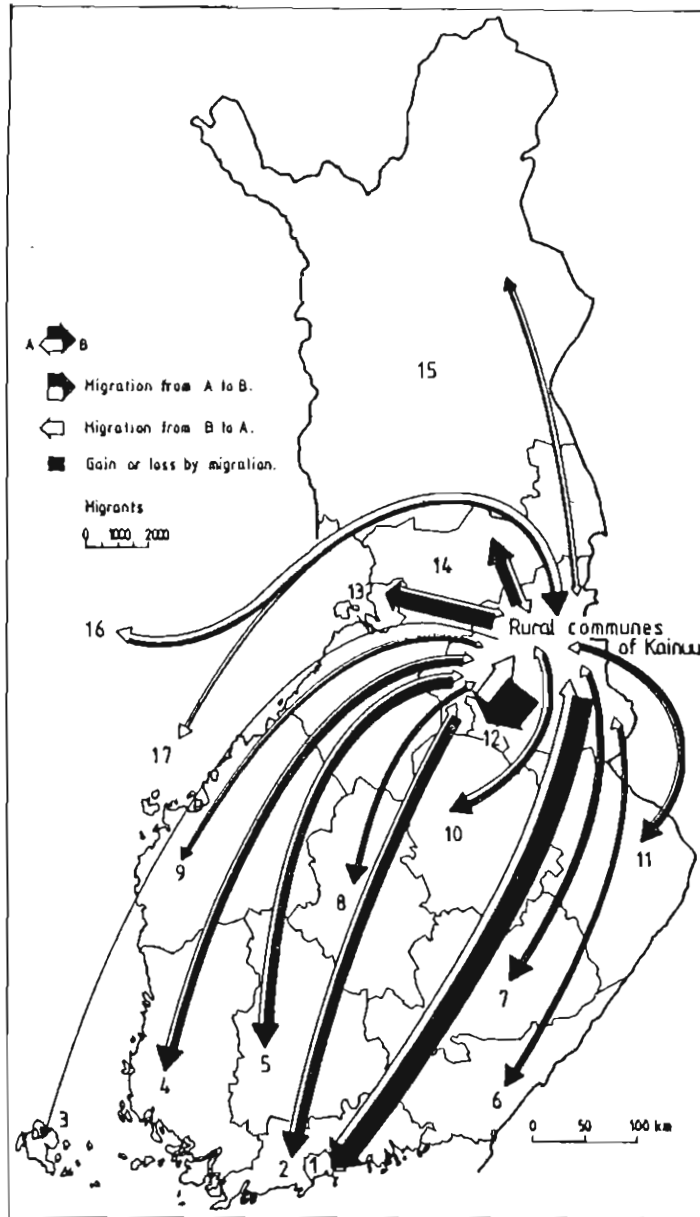


Fig. 4.

Return migration and native out-migration of the rural communes of Kainuu in 1980-85. 1=Helsinki and the communes surrounding it, 2=rest of Uusimaa province, 3=Åland province, 4=Turku and Pori province, 5=Häme province, 6=Kymi province, 7=Mikkeli province, 8=Central Finland province, 9=Vaasa province, 10=Kuopio province, 11=North Karelia province, 12=Kajaani, 13=Oulu and the communes surrounding it, 14=rest of North Ostrobothnia, 15=Lapland province, 16=Sweden, 17=other foreign countries.

occupations in the service sector. This predominance of men was typical of the actual rural areas, whereas no sex-related differences were observable in the built-

up areas (Table 1; Fig. 5). A similar predominance of men in return migration statistics has been noted earlier (see Aho et al. 1987: 110-111). Return migrants and

Table 1. Characteristics of return migrants to and native out-migrants from the rural communes of Kainuu in 1980-1985.

Characteristics	RETURN MIGRANTS				NATIVE OUT-MIGRANTS			
	built-up areas		rural areas		built-up areas		rural areas	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
Size of family								
1 pers.	674	70.9	856	75.8	1 800	84.3	3 436	93.6
2 pers.	107	11.3	98	8.7	162	7.6	142	3.9
> 2 pers.	169	17.8	175	15.5	172	8.1	92	2.5
Total	950	100.0	1 129	100.0	2 134	100.0	3 670	100.0
Sex								
Male	591	50.1	751	56.7	1 421	45.8	2 093	50.6
Female	588	49.9	573	43.3	1 682	54.2	2 043	49.4
Total	1 179	100.0	1 324	100.0	3 103	100.0	4 136	100.0
Age								
0-14	31	2.6	28	2.1	753	24.3	328	7.9
15-24	399	33.8	471	35.6	1 324	42.7	2 284	55.2
25-34	460	39.0	493	37.2	820	26.4	1 143	27.7
35-44	112	9.5	168	12.7	104	3.3	136	3.3
45-64	114	9.7	131	9.9	77	2.5	174	4.2
65 +	63	5.4	33	2.5	25	0.8	71	1.7
Total	1 179	100.0	1 324	100.0	3 103	100.0	4 136	100.0
Marital status								
Single	604	51.3	755	57.0	2 255	72.7	3 219	77.8
Married	474	40.2	457	34.5	759	24.4	788	19.1
Widowed/divorced	100	8.5	112	8.5	89	2.9	129	3.1
Total	1 178	100.0	1 324	100.0	3 103	100.0	4 136	100.0
Occupation								
Agriculture & forestry	38	4.9	121	13.7	59	5.7	148	13.9
Constructional	65	8.4	101	11.4	110	10.7	113	10.6
Industrial	158	20.5	174	19.7	147	14.3	211	19.8
Transport & communications	58	7.5	81	9.1	73	7.1	72	6.7
Commerce and service sector	453	58.7	408	46.1	640	62.2	522	49.0
Total	772	100.0	885	100.0	1 029	100.0	1 066	100.0

those interested in returning have also been observed to include many with a high standard of education, who are actively engaged in a career and who have a relatively long experience of full-time work (Ryökäs 1988: 55).

The average age of the return migrants in 1980-85 was 30 years, with no differ-

ence observable on the dimension countryside — built-up area. Also, the proportion of total return migration accounted for by the most migration-prone age group, 15-24 years, was slightly higher than in immigration in general. Taken all in all, return migration during the present decade has involved more young people than

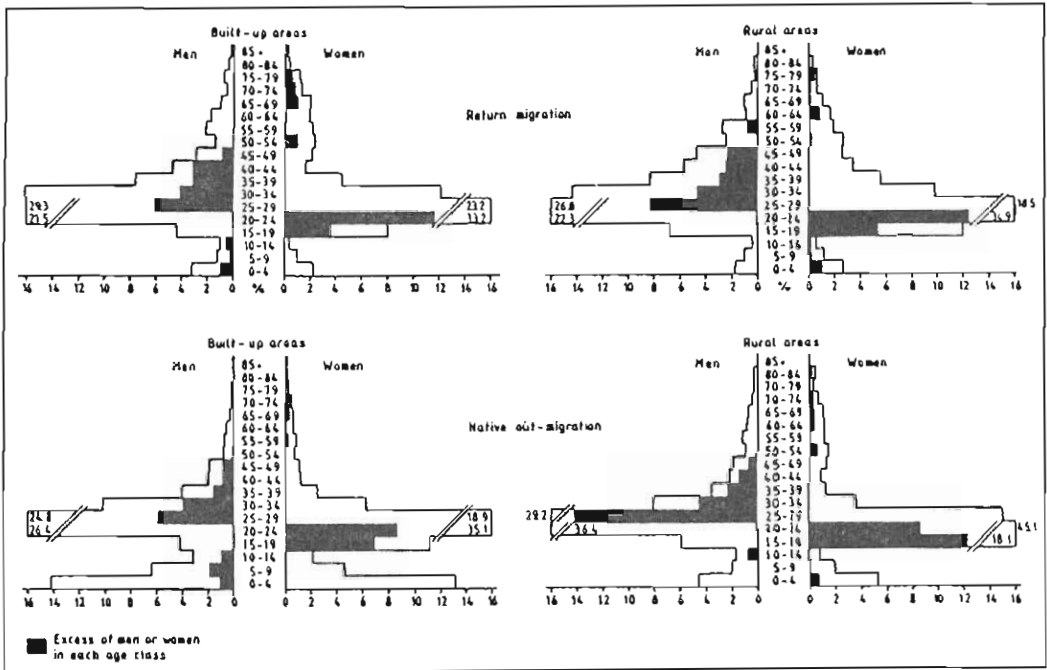


Fig. 5. Age and sex structures of the return migrants and native out-migrants in the rural communes of Kainuu in 1980-85.

older ones (cf. Williams 1980: 173, 182), although it is interesting to note that old people (over 64 years) account for almost twice the proportion of return migrants as they do of in-migrants as a whole, moving chiefly into the built-up areas.

The typical native out-migrant is also a single person, a young unmarried woman with a service-sector occupation. This predominance of females is most evident in the built-up areas, whereas no differences between the sexes are seen in native out-migration from the rural areas. Native out-migration is concentrated among single people to a still greater extent than any other form of migratory flow, for these account for 90.2 % of all migrants as compared with 81.1 % of out-migrants from the communes as a whole. Similarly 49.8 % of the native out-migrants were young people, aged 15-24 years, compared with 37.8 % of all out-migrants. The proportion of native out-migrants aged over 64 years did not differ appreciably

from the proportion of out-migrants in general of this age.

Significance of Return Migration for Regional Development

Kainuu has characteristically been on the losing end as far as long-term migration trends are concerned, with only the central place of the region, Kajaani, showing a regular net in-migration. Internally, the region's migration pattern has featured a pronounced concentration of population in the built-up areas and consequent abandonment of the countryside. Were over 67 % of the region's population still lived in the countryside in 1960, the proportion in 1985 was no more than 36 %. This concentration has continued into the present decade and shows every sign of doing so for some time to come.

The trend in migration as far as the return flow is concerned has been a declin-

ing one in recent years, return migration falling by almost a half both in absolute terms and as a percentage of total in-migration. Meanwhile out-migration has meant that the communes have lost above all large numbers of their native inhabitants to other areas. Only with respect to actual immigration and emigration, especially to and from Sweden, has the balance continued to be a positive one.

In spite of the decline in migration in general and return migration in particular in the rural communes of Kainuu, return migration remains a phenomenon of some significance, especially in areas of net out-migration (cf. Goldscheider 1983:51; Aho et al. 1987:9; Borgegård 1987: 11). Apart from the drift of population back from Sweden, another significant trend is thought to be return migration within Finland itself, which is expected to increase in volume in the 1990's (Ryökäs 1988: 1; cf. Aalto & Koironen 1986: 196). It should be noted, of course, that the probability of return migration in an individual case has been observed to decrease with increasing length of residence elsewhere (Clark 1982: 24-25), while Williams (1980: 172) likewise observed that over a half of the return migrants that he studied were coming back after an absence of 10 years or less.

Return migrants can be divided into three categories: those coming home because they were unable to settle in their new surroundings, those coming home on reaching retirement age, and most significantly, those who met with success in their new life and are now enthusiastic to come home in order to contribute something 'new' to the area of their birth (cf. Lewis 1982: 29). Thus return migrants have been shown to be predominantly

relatively well educated people with specific professional skills to offer. Their advantages when setting up in business upon returning often lie in the fact that they have already built up a network of professional contacts, so that distance no longer becomes a limiting factor (see Sundin & Wiberg 1988: 13).

One crucial idea as far as trends in migration are concerned is that the structural and economic compulsions built into our society are gradually declining in importance as determinants of human activity and are being replaced by people's own goals and values. Improved standards of education in particular are regarded as leading to a situation in which increasing weight will be placed upon non-economic factors related to the quality of life within migration decisions (Asp 1982: 319; Rannikko 1986: 119). Hautamäki (1984: 86-89) similarly justifies his view of a 'rural revival' in terms of alterations in people's attitudes.

The reasons for people returning from Sweden have already been traced back to predominantly non-economic considerations, e.g. adaptational and linguistic difficulties, children's education, or retirement (see Lindgren & Ritamies 1981: 24; Korkiasaari 1983: 12-14), and it is frequently the case that such people have retained many of their home ties and preserved, or even increased, their respect for the rural way of life while living elsewhere (Aho et al. 1987: 112). A very recent survey of return migration to Mikkeli has shown that the most significant motives for returning are connected with housing and environmental factors, the second most common reason being employment, with considerable emphasis also on a desire to return to the area of one's birth (Ryökäs 1988: 55).

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