

Reino Kero, *Migration from Finland to North America in the Years between the United States Civil War and the First World War*. Migration Studies Cl. Institute for Migration. Turku. 1974. 260 pages.

Reino Kero's study is an instance of the reawakened interest among historians and others in all the Nordic countries in the last few years for emigration to the US. There have been several studies of emigration in all these countries, and there is also a cooperative inter-Nordic research project in progress. Reino Kero has been one of Finland's leading participants in this project, and he has in his studies given a major contribution to the history of Finnish emigration to the US.

The aim of Kero's book is a rather ambitious one. He wants to "center on those problems in Finnish emigration that either have been dealt with very sparingly in research to the present or about which untenable conclusions have been made." The specific problems he selects for discussion are the starting process of emigration, the determining of the number of emigrants, the fluctuations in emigration and the composition of emigration. He also looks into how factors outside Finland influenced Finnish emigration. The time limits of the study are the American Civil War and the beginning of World War I. I will here point out some of the most important conclusions Kero comes to, and add a few critical remarks without being competent to discuss Finnish emigration.

The first problem Kero looks into is the beginnings of Finnish migration overseas: where did it start and how did it spread? He finds that the emigration spread from the north southwards and from the coast to the interior. The last pattern is similar to what we find in Norway, but here the emigration started in the south and spread northwards. Otherwise the influence from Norway and Sweden upon the Finns seems to have played a central role in the beginning of emigration from Finland.

Kero discusses very broadly the extent of the Finnish emigration: how many Finns left for the US? And he comes to the conclusion that more Finns emigrated during the period 1865—1914 than earlier writers have been willing to accept. The number of emigrants that Kero ends up with puts the Finnish emigration on the same level as the Danish in absolute numbers. But in the period of the heaviest Finnish emigration, the two decades before World War I, the percentage of Finland's population that emigrated was very large compared to that of other European countries.

One problem frequently discussed in emigration research is the problem of causes behind cyclical phases in emigration. Kero also looks into this problem. He puts the cycles into three different categories: seasonal cycles, cycles connected with short-term economic trends, and cycles influenced by long-term trends. This is an illuminating way in which to study fluctuations in emigration, but I can not see that Kero has found anything principally new concerning cycles in emigration in his study.

The two largest chapters in this book concern the composition of Finnish emigration and the different aspects of the competition between shipping lines with Finnish emigrants as customers. The first of these is a broad analysis of what kind of people emigrated from Finland: What social groups did they belong to? What was the ratio between the sexes? What age groups left? How many left in family groups?

Concerning social groups I want to make one remark. Kero uses five years as sample years when computing the social composition of the emigrants, namely

the five peak years of emigration. But how can we know that these years are representative? Could it not be that during the peak years, when emigration was strongest, emigrants came from a wider social specter than usual? There is also another factor making errors possible. The figures from 1873 and 1882 (2 of the 5 peak years) are taken from official emigration statistics. But Kero has himself shown that these figures probably are too low. And we do not know what groups are left out.

The women among the Finnish emigrants were in the minority in almost every year, but the number of female emigrants did not fluctuate as sharply as the number of male emigrants. That means that the difference in numbers was largest in peak years and smallest in trough years. This is explained by arguing that "changes in economic trends affected much more forcibly those fields of work where men were employed than those employing women." But I would like to mention one other line of explanation that seems to hold true for Norwegian emigration: In a family group the men left first for the US, especially during the peak years of a cycle. After a couple of years, when they had got a job or bought a farm, they sent money or tickets to their wives, mothers or sisters, and the female emigration became relatively stronger during trough years following peak years. That these women also brought children with them may explain the fact that the number of boys less than 16 years old was at its greatest during trough years (p. 114).

Like many other writers on emigration Kero divides rather sharply between emigrants leaving in family groups — family emigrants — and individual emigrants. But I do not think it is right to keep these two categories so sharply apart. In a microstudy on emigration from a parish in Norway I found that a large and growing percentage of the emigrants had close relatives — parents, children, sisters, brothers — among earlier emigrants. So even if they left as individual emigrants, they joined with a family in the US. Individual emigrants at one point of time might be part of a family emigration over time.

Kero has gathered a lot of data on the Finnish emigrants, and the only realistic way fully to use those data is to apply Automatic Data Processing techniques. This Kero has done in a very inventive way. But I sometimes wonder if these ADP techniques can lead the researcher to overuse them, to show too many figures, too many percentages. I miss a more distinctive direction on what the researcher is interested in finding out. We must not let the techniques decide this direction. I find a tendency in Kero's work to do this.

Kero's study is on the whole a very thorough and critical work on Finnish emigration which establishes new grounds for further research on this topic in Finland.

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