

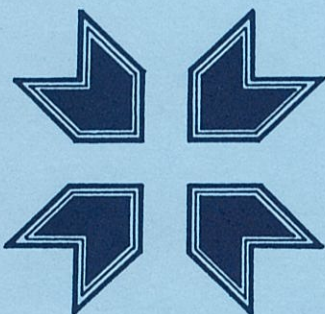
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POPULATION STUDIES

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CONTINUITY OF ESTONIA AND ITS POPULATION
FROM DEMOGRAPHIC VIEWPOINT

Kalev Katus

RU Series B No 29



EESTI KÕRGKOOULIDEVAHELINE
DEMOURINGUTE KESKUS

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EESTI KÕRGKOOIIDEVAHELINE DEMOUURINGUTE KESKUS
ESTONIAN INTERUNIVERSITY POPULATION RESEARCH CENTRE

Postkast 3012, Tallinn EE0090, Eesti

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The paper *Continuity of Estonia from the Viewpoint of Population Development* reflects the report at the International Conference in the framework of ESTO festival, Tallinn, August 1997. Two main issues are discussed in the paper. The first concerns perspectives of long-term population development in Estonia in the context of new geopolitical situation of the 1990s. Particularly the process of re-establishing the historical Baltoscandia as a specific European region, intermediate for Estonia from the viewpoint of the European integration, and its effects to the Estonian population development are discussed. The second issue concerns those features of the Estonian population development deviating from the corresponding trends among demographically comparable European nations.

1. Specificity of Demographic Viewpoint

The specificity of a demographic viewpoint could be explained on the basis of two principal phenomena. Firstly, a demographer deals with social processes in a much longer timeframe than it is typical in many other social sciences. The population development runs, metaphorically speaking, in a timeframe dissimilar to the rhythms of daily routines. In the course of a day, month or even a year the changes in population development are so remote that compared with the dynamic changes in the realm of different other societal processes, the demographic situation may be perceived as constant. Correspondingly, calendar year is not suitable for a basic time-unit for a demographer but it is a generation, i.e 25-30 years, which serves this purpose. Only in the generational timeframe it is possible to understand the regularities and major trends of the population development. The various shifts and fluctuations (conjunctural processes) occurring in shorter periods are rather consequences of previous processes than real trends.

Secondly, a demographic viewpoint presents itself in the population-centred or human-centred perception of the societal development. At a first glance this might seem something close to nonsense, because of the self-evidence of the statement or tautology presented in it. However, summarising various societal analyses, one finds among numerous policy-, state-, economy-, culture- and individual-centres perspectives surprisingly few population-centred approaches. Detecting some approaches of the kind, however, one is confronted with a further surprise, namely, population-centred standpoint to societal development often results in deviation to a remarkable extent from those brought forward in the above-mentioned perspectives. The difference becomes most evident when analysing long-term developments. The demographic analysis can sometimes reveal the capabilities and developmental potentials of a society even in a contrary perspective than interpretation of the short-term trends might have put forward. Additionally, surprisingly enough, the outcomes of this adverse population-centred analysis have the tendency to realise with a higher probability, unlike other societal analyses, in a long run. Certainly, all aspects of the society deserve adequate attention. There can be little doubt that economic processes, for example, demand independent economy-related analysis, especially during periods of substantial transformations. Still, from the standpoint of population development the economic activities are purely means, not a goal of the society. In case the population or its ideals change, new means will be naturally implemented instead of the old ones. The same idea has also been expressed in a different way: a flourishing country and wealth have no significance without the nation itself. Namely demographic viewpoint is rather closely related to the goals of the societal development, and not to the heterogeneous attributive instrumental environment.

Both specificities of the demographic viewpoint, the long-term outlook and the population-centred approach, are considerably less attractive in Estonian "high places" as well as among middle-rank administrators than common in developed countries. Also, importance of those principles are much more underestimated than it could be afforded in the Estonian geopolitical environment. In present circumstances the decision-making procedures resulting from the current needs rather than long-term

planning are favoured. The governmental circles have even adopted the corresponding term, gaps-filling decision. Nobody exactly considers such course of administration style proper, but still almost inevitable in the present situation. In better cases, decision-making outlook is covering the period in power, considerations extending over longer time intervals are extremely rare.

Implementation of a population-centred approach seems to be typically replaced by the profit-criterion of an economic background. Applying an approach to various branches of public domain, at best, attempts are made to seek those purely economically profitable solutions for a whole nation, however, sometimes decisions and corresponding activities are driven by a party/group or even individual interests. In all cases, even Marx and ideologists of his kind could be impressed by completely materialistical principles underlying in public sector, one can hardly find at the end of the 20th century in Europe. In these circumstances such categories as PEOPLE and NATION and the future of the country do not enjoy popularity in current Estonia. Losers have always grumbled and idlers jeered at those notions, but now similar attitude has been taken over by the men in the corridors of power. The Pragmatics with their two feet on the ground or the Realpolitiker (as they call themselves) ridicule at stressing the need to look a bit more distant future.

In short, regretfully, the demographic viewpoint emphasise those principles which are not generally accepted in Estonia today and the essence of which are even questioned. Accordingly, the same attitude has also befallen on the relevant branch of science. Estonia is practically the only country in Europe which possesses no national population programme/policy, finances no basic population research, has not calculated any official population projections, and in fact has even no reliable population data. Comparison with historically close Northern Europe is not appropriate any more, Estonia is obviously lagging behind even if compared with Latvia, Lithuania or Russia [Katus, Puur, Sakkeus 1995]. Despite the understanding of the demographic principles in the eyes of authorities, the long-term and population-centred approach, nevertheless, permits to present two groups of problems in future development of Estonia and the nation followingly discussed.

2. Continuity of Estonia

The first group of problems of the long-term development is related to securing the continuity of Estonia, the country and the population, within the new geopolitical environment of the XXI century. Without doubt, the continuity of Estonia should be regarded as an integral process, however, it seems appropriate to distinguish between these two closely connected components. First of all such a distinction is essential due to different combination of developmental stages of those components. One of them, population development, has been decisive throughout the history in securing the continuity, but during rapid transition periods the geopolitical integrity of the country and regionally homogenous pace of development might have a decisive impact for the overall continuity outcome. Estonia is going to experience such a period for a century at least.

2.1 National Independence as a Prerequisite of Continuity

The modern world has become overwhelmingly interdependent and several societal processes have acquired global character. From the future of Estonia, still the neighbouring region seems to hold a great importance. Nowadays the Estonian geopolitical environment is not anymore Edgar Kant's Baltoscandia, in which boundaries social identification, cultural, economical and ethical patterns of the Estonians have been historically closely intermingled [Kant 1934]. The limited Baltoscandia environment would be extremely suitable for the Estonian society, particularly to overcome the transitional difficulties. The local nations and states in this region do not represent any kind of existential threats for Estonia, vice versa, do offer a beneficial environment for long-term basis. However, the current Estonian geopolitical environment has been enlarged far in the direction of West and Southwest as well as East and Southeast. The integration processes in Europe during the XX century have doubtlessly facilitated the linkage of distant countries and nations into this geopolitical region. The European Union has been formed and experienced quite a steady development in Western Europe, comprising today also part of the historical Baltoscandia. Through the neighbouring European Union, geopolitical environment of Estonia today has entangled Mediterranean countries which, considered separately, would not possess such an immediate influence. Another neighbour, Russia, named also as Soviet Union or the CIS, has introduced several Asian countries into the geopolitical environment of Estonia with whom there has been even less historical and socio-cultural contacts compared with the Mediterranean region. In addition to the enlargement of the Estonian geopolitical neighbourhood, the forced incorporation of Estonia into the Soviet Union for a half of century has shaped the conception of closer Estonia's liaison with Russia among politicians than never observed before, including the period of Peter the First or WW II. Currently the equilibrium between East and West is biased from the Estonian viewpoint.

National independence or, at least, certain autonomy has always been beneficial for the continuity of Estonia and its population. The existence of the two mentioned unions in modern Europe has practically moulded the option into the prerequisite of the long-term continuity in future. With the restoration of the Republic of Estonia in 1991, the prerequisite seems to have been accomplished. From strictly political viewpoint the goal might be considered to have been really accomplished, however, social structures of the country as common to an independent state as well as economic potential of the country are still to be restored. Until now the activities aimed at those goals have been rather insufficient, if viewed from the long-term perspective. Particularly, the President of Estonia has considered it necessary to underline the lacking statesmanship of politicians and administrators in growingly dark tones, last time rather harshly in his speech at the ceremony of the LXXIX anniversary of the Republic of Estonia [Meri 1997]. Making emphasise on economic policy oriented to immediate financial growth has undermined the integrity of Estonia in social and regional aspects. On one hand inequality between social groups has expanded extremely rapidly, which, as far as the most wealthy are concerned, in its prevalence does not proceed from differences in skill and talent. On the other hand regional differences in developmental processes have increased almost explosively. The latter has been reinforced by a budgetary

policy. In addition, in the framework of economic globalisation every small nation should seriously consider dependence on international capital. In this respect it seems that Estonia has taken to the path of *laissez faire*, without determining any national priorities, and consequently, relatively weak international competitiveness even in the economic sectors of traditional advantages is not surprising.

Nevertheless, restoration of political independence and obvious progress in departing from the Soviet-type economic and administrative patterns counterweight splitting trends in regional development, prevailing narrow-mindedness in decision-making process and weakness of the economic potential. In other words, the situation in respect of this component of securing the long-term continuity of Estonia could be regarded as the most favourable during the last fifty years.

2.2. Nativity of Population as a Prerequisite of Continuity

In securing the Estonian continuity population development certainly plays the decisive role. The Estonian population as such has undergone substantial change during this century, the most important part of which is doubtlessly the explosive growth in the number of immigrants. By today the immigrant population, foreign-borns and their second-generation, constitute approximately 35 percent of the total population in the country. The integral characteristics of this sub-population is its foreign origin, i.e. non-nativity from the Estonian point of view. In the following the attempt has been made to explain the term *nativity* and the meaning of this demographic characteristic for the continuity processes, particularly bearing in mind the deficiency in relevant information and almost non-existent data differentiating the native- and foreign-born population groups.

It would be reasonable to start with a recall that demographic characteristics are usually differentiated among various social ones by the nature of being inborn and do not experience changes during a personal lifetime (or the change is linked to a very complicated procedure). According to the criterion the main demographic characteristics are gender, date of birth/age and country(place) of birth/nativity. From the viewpoint of continuity processes naturally the importance attached to demographic characteristics is inevitably much more substantial in comparison with other social features. In other words, the distribution of the population by demographic characteristics is more fundamental and persistent in comparison with most other social distributions and therefore possesses more substantial meaning for the long-term development of a society.

The nativity of population comprises the relationship between the country of origin and country of residence. Country of origin cannot be chosen or changed during lifetime, metaphorically speaking the nativity of a person is determined by his/her father and mother. At the same time the place of birth not from the formal point of view but the nature of its social and physical environment is of principal importance. Primary adaptation processes governing the early weeks and months of the infant life are not still fully understood, although research results have gradually adding proof to the understanding according to which adaptation to human society or socialisation is quite

rapid during the infancy. Correspondingly, social and also physical environment specific to the country of birth shapes the majority of principal social characteristics of a child, through which he or she is determined to belong to a certain nation or, according to demographical terminology, to the determined geodemographic system [Pavlik, Hampl 1976]. In addition the social homogeneity of the parental home and the country's environment is important for the unambiguous identification of the new-born with the given geodemographic system. Usually such homogeneity is secured by parental and grandparental descent from one and the same geodemographical environment, or in other words, settlement in the country of birth in the course of three successive generations.

It becomes obvious that a person could belong to the native-born population in one country exclusively and even that is true only in case his grandparents already have lived in the given social environment. Definitely, a person can change his place of residence during his lifetime. If the resettlement is combined with a change of the geodemographic system the person has to undergo another adaptation process or the secondary socialisation into the new environment. Due to the strength of generational ties between people this kind of new socialisation into the social environment of the country of residence is hindered and aggravated. Whatever the result, during this secondary adaptation a person belongs to the immigrant population, and naturally that sub-population without exception differs from the native-born population to a smaller or larger extent.

Considering an individual level and only limited aspects some persons can go through secondary adaptation quite smoothly. This is not a possibility on a population level for the numerous immigrant group within one generation as demographic characteristics cannot be changed intentionally. Foreign-borns or first-generation immigrants inevitably retain close ties with their homeland and common social environment. Also, second-generation immigrants usually cannot complete secondary socialisation in their new homeland. On one hand the primary socialisation, as a rule, does not proceed in conditions of homogeneity between home and surrounding social environment and a child always retains some links with the country of his parents. On the other hand the double identification can be facilitated by communication with the kin in the former homeland, like with grandparents as an example. So, namely demographic continuity of population determines the prolonged character of nativisation process into the social structures of the new country of residence. This process usually demands three generations for completion. In case the social environments in country of origin and residence differ significantly from each other or social communication of immigrants are directed inside of their own group the nativisation of immigrants can be even more prolonged.

The demographic nature of nativisation explains the rather different status of native and migrant population groups from the viewpoint of population continuity. The foreign-born population is a marginal group in the country of residence, in the longer perspective it will either become native or leave. During this long period of time, however, the social background imported together with the immigrants, remains marginal as well. Due to the cumulative effect of several circumstances the marginality of immigrants in Estonia is especially deep and heterogeneity of the Estonian total population very high, near to polarisation. In other words, the problems relating to the

continuity processes are divergent for the native- and foreign-born population groups and possible solutions tend to be different as well, if not opposite in nature. Understandably, the higher the heterogeneity of the population, the weaker the overall potential of population continuity. As a conclusion we have to admit that the Estonian continuity from the population perspective is the worst at present during the whole XX century. In the following a brief overview of the processes which have caused the situation is given.

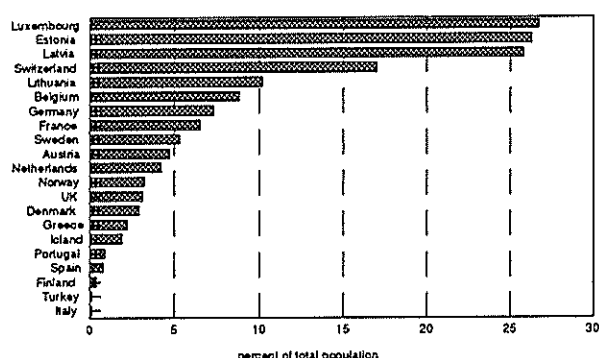
3. Formation of Foreign-born Population in Estonia

Formation of foreign-born population and its rapid growth into a numerous sub-population in Estonia has been caused by the immigration processes originating from the whole territory of the Soviet Union but primarily from the European regions of Russia during the post-war period. In order to understand Estonian-Russian migration exchange, we have to return to an earlier period. Namely, migration flows between those two countries have developed quite in accordance with the classical scheme which has been formulated by Wilbur Zelinski in his mobility transition theory [Zelinski 1971]. Later his theoretical scheme has been successfully tested on the basis of data from several European countries within the framework of IIASA research project, thus Estonia seems to be quite an ordinary country among the countries with a regular migration development [Rogers, Willekens 1986].

Emigration of Estonian population from its ethnic boundaries began in the second half of the last century, approximately a couple of decades after the beginning of the demographic transition. Combination of several factors directed out-migration mainly eastwards, i.e. towards the Russian Empire. This out-migration from Estonia to Russia should be characterised as outstandingly intensive, resulting in approximately 15-20 percent of the Estonian population settling outside the borders of their historic homeland before WW I. However, by the middle of the XX century, the course of demographic development had reversed the Estonian-Russian demographic balance. The migration processes corresponding to new situation had a new direction in comparison with the migration flows characteristic to the beginning of this century. Estonia had undergone demographic transition approximately 50 years before Russia and had exhausted its migration potential by mid-twenties already, while Russia reached the peak of this potential in post-war decades [Katus 1990; Vishnevski, Volkov 1983]. New geopolitical situation on the Southern shore of the Baltic Sea had created quite favourable conditions for realisation of Russian out-migration potential into its new Western colonies. Thus, the large time-lag in demographic development created in Estonia fruitful soil for intensive immigration from Russia and other regions of the USSR. The depopulation of Estonia due to the war casualties and victims of the forceful societal transition together with russification and sovietisation policies intensified this although objective migration process.

Population in- and outflows between Estonia and regions of the Soviet Union were characterised by an extensive migration turnover and constant positive net migration throughout the whole Soviet era [Sakkeus 1991]. This has resulted in formation of a numerous foreign-born population which comprised 26.3 percent of total population in

Figure 1. FOREIGN-BORN POPULATION
European countries, first half of 1990s



Estonia according to the last census. Such a high proportion of foreign-borns is record-breaking in Europe (Figure 1), and simultaneously the highest among the countries of the former Soviet Union [Council of Europe 1996; Katus, Sakkeus 1993].

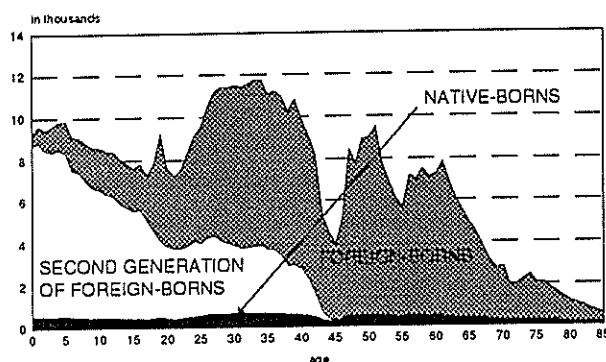
Foreign-born population is formed by the first-generation immigrants. While estimating the population of foreign origin, particularly by nativity characteristic, the second and

the third generation of migrants should be taken into account as well. In case of Estonia accounting for the second generation of immigrants is already sufficient. All these population groups should be handled separately from the historical ethnic minority populations. In Figure 2 the total number of non-Estonians are distributed into three groups: native ethnic minority population, second generation migrants and foreign-borns. According to the last census (1989) the corresponding number for the native ethnic minority population is 38.2 thousand, and for the population group of migrant origin 564.2 thousand people, making the total of 602.4 thousand non-Estonians in the country. A small portion of second-generation immigrants, however, has been quite integrated into Estonia through mixed marriages and socio-cultural and language adaptation. This gives a ground to include their third generation conditionally among the native born population already. In total the current proportion of foreigners is 36.0 percent while the native-born population, regardless the ethnicity, is smaller in numbers ca 10 percent compared with the pre-war period, comprising 1001.5 thousand people.

Besides the explosive growth of foreign-born population in Estonia and their awesome proportion today, the differences in social behaviour and value system of this sub-population in comparison with native-borns constitute a major concern from the viewpoint of continuity processes. In other words, society has undergone abrupt differentiation, while depending on the demographic background, this heterogeneity will be retained for a long period in future. The foreign-born population in Estonia has, like any other similar sub-population in Europe, brought in with themselves the habits, values, attitudes and norms of their home country. In addition, the majority of immigrants in Estonia have inherited from the Soviet educational establishment and ideology unified chauvinistic ideas about principles of societal build-up. Unlike the situation prevalent in Europe, foreign-born population in Estonia has immigrated from a huge migration hinterland with rather varied sociocultural environment, in other words, contemporary Estonia incorporates a long list of various geodemographic systems. By no means nor in any context, decision-making on the national level included, is it appropriate to consider the population of Estonia as a homogenous socium. In order to better understand the problems relating to heterogeneity of the foreign-born population, Estonia may learn from the results of relevant international projects initiated by UN, EC and several national institutions [Oschlies 1989; Chesnais 1991; van de Kaa 1991; etc].

As indicated earlier, the timing of demographic development in Estonia and Russia has proceeded dissynchronously. It is not just a time-lag, the dissynchrony started already in the XVIII century when the Hajnal line divided Europe into two halves, leaving

Figure 2. NON-ESTONIANS IN ESTONIA
Census 1989



Estonia and Russia on the opposite sides of the border [Hajnal 1965]. This historical border-line turned into an important watershed in shaping the timing of the demographic transition and is likely to differentiate European nations even today. In the conference 'Where does Europe end?' some years ago the Hajnal line was attributed a meaning of a defining criterion among of all other analysed possibilities [File of...

1994]. Thus, a number of social indicators distinguishing the immigrants in Estonia from native-born population, is in fact the result of both sub-populations having historical-demographic roots in different poles of Europe. For centuries the two groups have lived in separate territories as well. Now the same Hajnal line divides the population inside one and the same country, which in addition is very small in territory. The data from the first two nation-wide representative surveys - the Estonian Family and Fertility Survey and the Estonian Labour Force Survey - prove the importance of the nativity as a principal characteristic explaining the population differentiation in all spheres of societal processes in modern Estonia [EKDK 1995].

In conclusion, as far as population is concerned, the current situation in Estonia does not allow to regard the continuity as a homogenous process any more. On the contrary, two sub-populations of comparable size, which in some cases show opposing developmental trends, have to be taken into a consideration. In such a quality the circumstances in this field could be assessed as more complicated than in any other period before in Estonian history. Only long-term (i.e. free of political struggles) programmes and appropriate goal-oriented national policy (i.e. free from narrow-minded bureaucracy) may restore the integrity of the population and secure the continuity of Estonia.

4. Deviations of Estonian Population Development

Besides the issue of securing continuity processes of Estonian population, the demographic viewpoint is also making emphasise to another significant set of contemporary problems: those developmental trends which by no means facilitate integration with Europe, but just the other way round, despite expressed aspirations and appropriate activities, push us farer away from European standards. These problems should concern the political leaders already today, and in order to avoid rueful results in the future relevant policy measures should be implemented today at the latest. Definitely, demographic development can be analysed and its positive and negative

trends could be presented upon various reference systems. In the following overview the stage of demographic development in Estonia serves as a principle for selection such a reference system. Demographic development in Estonia have been analysed in the context of those nations and countries comparable from the named viewpoint. In this context as an undesirable could be estimated such a situation which satisfies at least one but preferably both criteria. First, when a certain demographic levels or statuses in Estonia are undeniably worse than in other countries experiencing the same stage of demographic development. Second, when a certain population trend shows deviation from the common to the same reference system and is developing into negative direction. In such a case, there is no point to discuss whether a situation better than the present one would be realistic or not as it exists in the same reference system. Implementation of both criteria permits to present four aspects relating to the population development in Estonia.

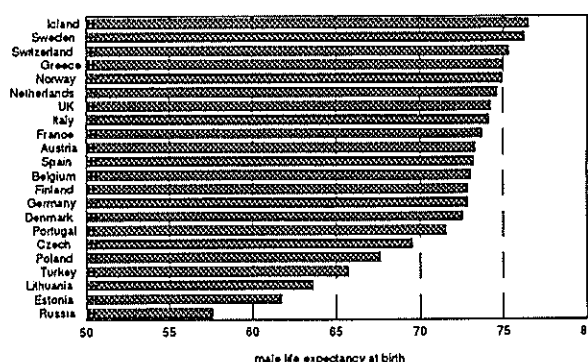
4.1. Public health and mortality

The existence of health or the lack of it can be measured in various ways. Some of these methods offer assessments which might be of partly a subjective nature. A reliable means of measurement in presenting a general assessment of the public health is mortality levels and trend. Death of a person is one of the rare absolutes in our relative world and this event represents an indisputable final disappearance of health.

Since the second half of the XIX century Estonian life expectancy at birth increased permanently for nearly a century. At the same time the upward trend was relatively smooth and characterised the Estonian population till the end of the 1950s. The life table constructed on the data of the first post-war census (1959) fixes the life expectancy for males and females at 64.3 and 71.6 years respectively [Katus, Puur 1992]. Up to that date, mortality decline and increase in life expectancy was substantially comparable to the corresponding trend in Northern and Western Europe, Estonia being a leading country in mortality transition among the East European countries and the Soviet Union [Krumins 1993]. However, during the following 35 years up to recent period, mortality in Estonia has practically not decreased. Infant mortality, influencing life expectancy to a great extent, still decreased in the 1960s but at the same time mortality of adult male has increased.

Because of stagnation in public health, one country after another has surpassed Estonia and consequently, international comparison of the Estonian mortality situation yields a growingly miserable picture. For example, as to the male mortality, at the time of regaining independence, only Turkey in Europe faced a still worse situation in mortality besides some parts of the former Soviet Union. Today even that country has

Figure 3. MALE LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH
European countries, mid of 1990s



passed Estonia (Figure 3). Several developing countries in Latin America and Southeast Asia are displaying longer life expectancy as compared to the Estonian population. Of course, as a consolation, one can find countries in Africa and Asia with yet shorter life expectancy, however, no other country with stagnation for 35 years in public health characterising Estonia can be found elsewhere. Hence, high mortality levels and short life-expectancy present serious concerns but still more worrisome is the lack of any progress in the field of public health for a record-breaking long period. During the last five-six years mortality has even presented a trend of growth. Life tables calculated by the Estonian Statistical Office are obviously incorrect but the downward trend in life expectancy is ruefully accurate. The society as a whole and the health establishments within it has been, if we are looking from this angle, just working in vain.

The aim of this article is not to seek causes why an Estonian burns himself out ten years earlier than an average European, and the men even more quickly. Still, it is reasonable to point at the fact that these are not just strictly health or medical issues. Such vast differences are deemed to effect several societal structures to form patterns uncommon in Europe. For example, the problems of the so-called Third Age phase, which according to Laslett are central in European countries when updating investment policies, consumption patterns of the populations, educational institutions but also public administration and political structures [Laslett 1993], are not appropriate in Estonia. In short, due to discrepancies between the state of mortality and public health in Estonia and the so-called Eurostandards, Estonia cannot be engaged in all corresponding problems which are seriously considered in Europe.

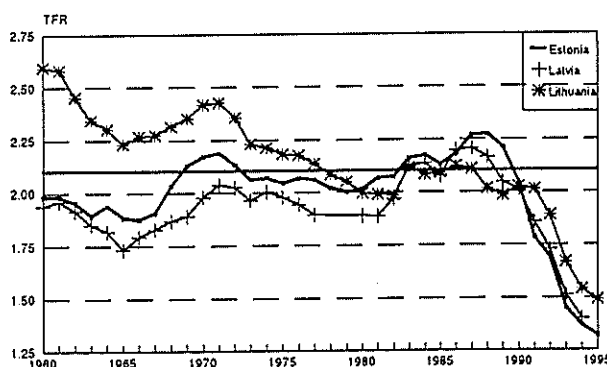
4.2. Rapid Fertility Decrease

Demographic transition started relatively early in Estonia and family planning was prevailing already in the first half of this century. To put it shortly, each family (and each woman) have elaborated their own preferences concerning the number of children and their timing, and behaved in accordance with their personal priorities rather than with prevailing habits or norms. Such a shift in a society means disappearance of large families with many children as the major determinant of fertility pattern. From the viewpoint of population reproduction present and future fertility trends will be mainly

determined by the proportion of females wishing to have three children in the family to those who limit themselves to one child or remain childless [Coale, Watkins 1986].

For seventy years Estonia has already been experiencing low fertility characteristic to post-transitional nations. In this framework, during 1970s and 1980s, even as lately as seven years

Figure 4. TOTAL FERTILITY RATE
Baltic countries, 1960-1995



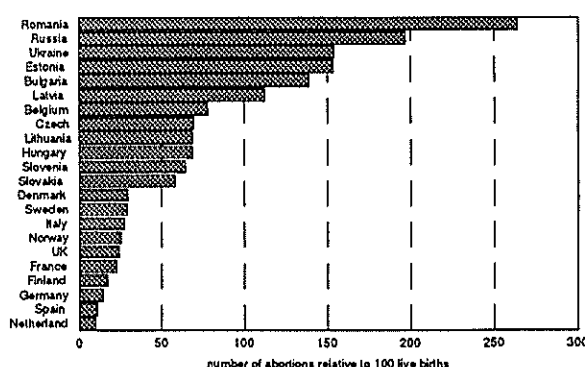
ago, the proportion of Estonian women desiring the third child into their family was barely, but still sufficient for keeping replacement fertility. That situation was not quite characteristic in the European context but it has been rather important for a small nation without postwar baby-boom [Katus 1994]. During the following 6-7 years, Estonia has witnessed a rapid decline in fertility, at present the fertility level is approximately twice lower than in pre-decline period and, on average, one child less is born into a family. Declining trend in fertility is rather typical for Eastern Europe but in Estonia the decrease has been record-breakingly intensive. Figure 4 shows the comparison with other Baltic states, also known by their decreasing fertility; fertility in Estonia prior to the onset of downward trend exceeded corresponding level in neighbouring countries, by now Latvia and Lithuania have passed us.

The first consequence of fertility decline has been the replacement of population growth with population decline. The depopulation started immediately after the fertility decrease to below-replacement level in summer 1991 and the trend has gathered its speed during the following years. Much more important is the impact of the fertility decline on creating the demographic wave by extremely small numbers of the recent birth cohorts. This demographic wave will influence population reproduction in Estonia during the following 70-80 years, causing the first substantial set of problems in the beginning of the second decade of the XXI century. The wave as such is already determined inevitability, independent of future fertility trends. The latter is a separate issue: the future trend of the process shall be mainly determined by the behaviour of younger families having one child today. They definitely have given up the second (and naturally the third) child in their twenties but could make up for it in their thirties. The birth cohorts of the 1970s (and the 1980s to follow) shall have a decisive role in determining whether the relatively stable cohort fertility in Estonia will be maintained or a crucial shift to lower levels takes place. To a certain extent, their choices will depend on their ability to appreciate and differentiate between cumulative values of longer perspectives and values of the current moment.

In prevailing patterns the analysis of fertility from the viewpoint of overall pregnancy process is quite important since a live birth is just one possible outcome of pregnancy among three additional possibilities: stillbirth, spontaneous abortion and induced abortion. In simplified terms, the problem Estonia faces is that in certain population groups live birth is ranking second as a pregnancy outcome succeeding abortions [EKDK 1995]. High

abortion and pregnancy rates were developed in Estonia only in the post-war period. Using the language of market economy, abortion was initially an imported item, brought to Estonia by the immigrants from the East. Nevertheless, the native-born population adopted new habits gradually, remarkably since the 1960s. Not only unusually high abortion rates of the Estonian population compared against the European background but the proportion of first pregnancies ending in abortion could

Figure 5. ABORTION RATIO
European countries, first half of 1990s



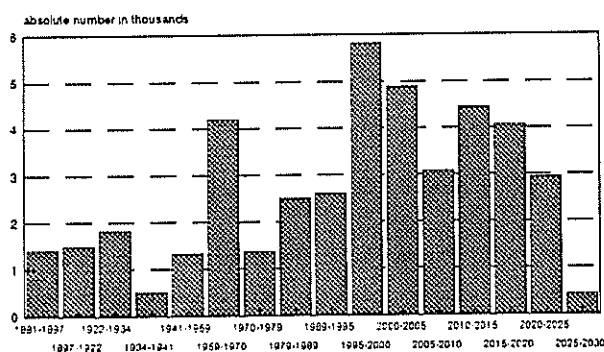
be regarded as the biggest concern from the viewpoint of reproductive health. In Estonia such abortions constitute 20 percent of the total amount which in relative terms is not too high. However, from the other perspective, taking into account the 8-10 times higher intensity of abortions in Estonia (Figure 5) this 20 percent is quite a large number in absolute figures. The principal cause behind high abortion rates tends to be illiteracy in the field of family-planning methods and availability of modern means but indirectly the situation refers to strong emphasis by young generation on current moment only- here and now - as it is common to say.

4.3. Population Ageing

In the background of turbulent times the population ageing proceeds unnoticed, but having reached a certain stage, this phenomenon has demanded everywhere and will demand in Estonia significant reforms in the societal build-up. If such reforms are not conducted or not implemented to a sufficient extent for some reason or another, for example for the scarcity of resources in the country, population ageing can pose the society with an unexpectedly grave set of problems. Among this set the issue of human rights can be definitely distinguished, as dignified old age is one of the major rights which the person having worked for 40-50 years is entitled to receive from the generations of his children and grandchildren.

Population ageing is the result of demographic transition, during which prevailing slow replacement of generations shapes the appropriate age distribution of the population. Correspondingly the proportion of the elderly in total population increases from ca 5 percent to 25-35 percent. When the most numerous cohort of the Estonians born at the end of last century reached their old age in the 1960s, Estonia had entered among the countries with the aged population wherefrom there is no return. Still, throughout the post-war period population ageing in Estonia has been restrained. Stagnation of life expectancy at a low level has played its part in this process as well as above-replacement fertility in the 1970-1980s and rejuvenation of population during that period but the most important component has been the intensive immigration into Estonia [Katus 1996].

Figure 6. AVERAGE ANNUAL GROWTH OF ELDERLY
Estonia, 1881-2030



During the last decade the previous counterprocesses to population ageing have lost their importance one after another: fertility has declined fast, immigration has decreased and rejuvenation of native-born population has come to an end. By this date, decline in life expectancy has remained the sole component countering population ageing but hardly the persistence of this trend is wished to continue.

Acceleration of the ageing is naturally unavoidable in Estonia, however, the process is remarkably stimulated by the

numerous immigrant population cohorts reaching old age just in coming years. Certainly the decade of 1995-2004 will be distinguished by the most accelerated population ageing in Estonian history (Figure 6), it tends to be also record-breaking in the European context due to coincidence of several timing patterns of population development.

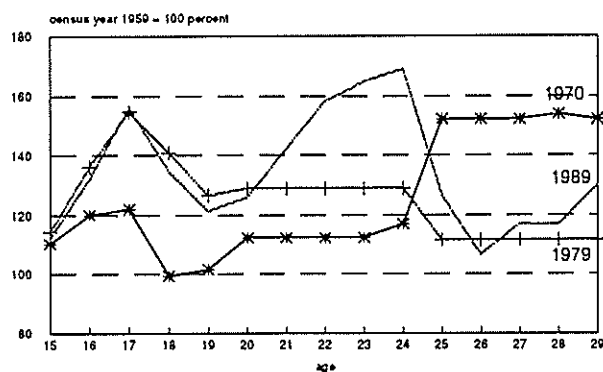
The organisation of the society with high proportion of elderly tends to differ to a great extent from the society with young population. Even in the wealthy Western European countries social and economic adaptation to the new population age distribution has caused quite extensive tensions. In order to arrange for smoother reforms specific population-responsive policy adapting society to population development has been proposed in contrast with traditional policies influencing population development itself [Myers 1994]. As regards the adaptation with ageing society Estonia is lagging far behind European nations primarily due to the impact of the Soviet era. In addition, the country is facing an ageing period much more intensive than average. Furthermore, the resulting tasks are aggravated by the prevailing transition in economy: from one side this means that Estonian economic level is only somewhere between the developed and developing countries but possibly even more important is the extensive need for investments in order to secure the transitional tasks. Strong competition for limited resources intensifies the problems emerging from rapid population ageing.

4.4. Population Education

As a forerunner in demographic transition, Estonia experienced increase in the average length of educational attainment already in the end of the last century. Education was traditionally held in high esteem among all the population groups allowing to utilise the emerging demographic-economic possibilities and for the beginning of this century Estonia was among the most advanced countries by the participation rates and level of educational attainment in Europe. Presumably the high educational level and the resulting general cultural environment, comprising also the older birth cohorts, is one of the major advantages of the Estonian population in the economic competition between the transition countries today. The relative population homogeneity by the educational levels gives advantages to Estonia also in comparison with the so-called Asian tigers. In the very last years, the traditional approach to education as a measure

of social success, which had been dwarfed a bit during some previous years, seems to experience survival.

Figure 7. RELATIVE CHANGE IN EDUCATIONAL PARTICIPATION
Estonia, census years 1959-1989



However, the Soviet period has brought about a principal change in the educational attainment pattern of the population which shows a definite worsening trend in the current transition period. This change seems to be originating from the late 1960s and developed further in the following decade.

5. Instead of Conclusion

The article presents two groups of problems crucial for the future development of Estonia from the demographic viewpoint. First of them is linked to securing the continuity capacity of Estonia, both the country and the nation, and the second with those population processes and trends exceptionally dissimilar in European context. The efficient solution of these problems depend primarily on prevalence of statesmanship in decision-making structures of society.

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