

# **Finnish North Americans today**

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Ethnic groups in North-America have generally received much historical emphasis and much is known about the Finns in this regard as well. However, very little is known about the present conditions, their present status in North American society, their ethnic identity and attitudes towards their country of origin, and their successes within the assimilated immigrant population of the country. The aim of the project “Finnish North Americans today” is to answer these and many other interesting questions dealing with the present situation of the Finnish ethnic minority in the United States and Canada. Empirical findings presented in this paper are based on a large survey of over 2,600 Finnish Americans and Finnish Canadians.

### **Some historical outlines of the Finnish migration**

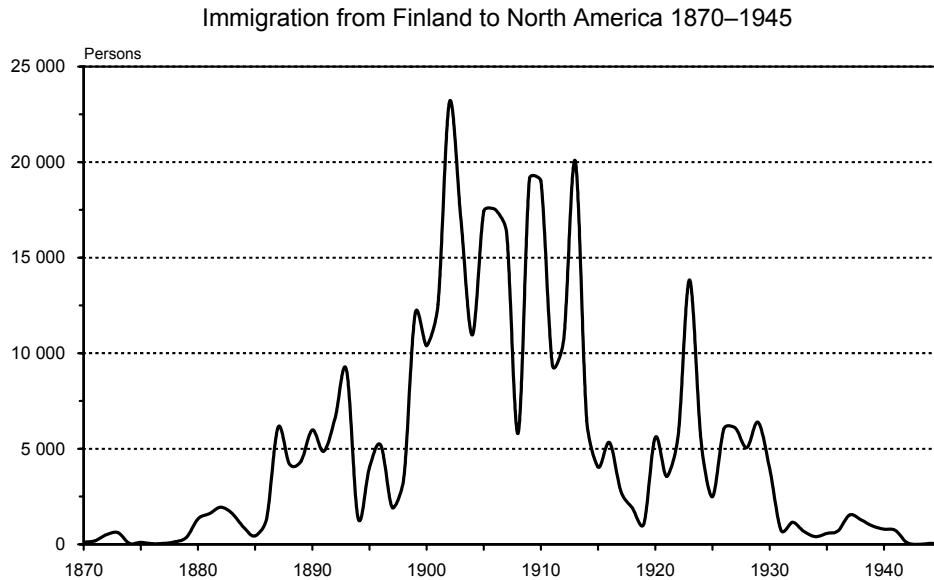
The first Finns, some 500 to 600, arrived in America as settlers of the New Sweden colony in Delaware as early as the 17<sup>th</sup> century. A couple hundred years later there were also a few hundred Finns in Russian Alaska some of them being in very prominent positions. Larger numbers of Finns, however, did not start arriving in North America until the 1880’s. The peak of Finnish immigration to the U.S. occurred between 1899–1913. Another, smaller wave headed for Canada in the 1920’s. It is estimated that between 1860 and 1930 over 350,000 travelled to North America, and that of these about 220,000 settled permanently in the USA and 50,000 in Canada. During the same period over two million immigrants from the other Scandinavian countries had settled in the United States. (Kero 1974; 1996; 1997)

In 1921 and 1924 the US congress passed restrictive immigration laws establishing a quota for European immigrants. This cut down the immigration from Europe from 800,000 to 164,000 a year. The quota for Finns was as low as 3,921 in 1921 and 471 in 1924. After this Finns headed for Canada but the start of the Great Depression in 1929 was the final blow to Finnish immigration to North America.

The Finns are considered latecomers among the immigrants to North America. They arrived on the average over a generation later than the other Scandinavians, for example. There was no longer free land handed out, and many Finns had to take on the toughest jobs in the forests and the mines. Many died young. Nearly 65% of emigrants leaving Finland during 1869-1914 were men. This was one of the factors resulting in fewer American born generations of Finns. (Kero 1974; Westerberg 2004)

In the US the Finnish settlements concentrated in Massachusetts, Michigan and Minnesota. The wish of many Finns to own a farm created the Finnish farming communities, especially in the Midwest. In Canada, about 60 per cent of the Finnish population lived in Ontario, es-

pecially in Toronto, Sudbury and present-day Thunder Bay. Many Finns settled also on the West Coast, but relatively few in Prairie Provinces or the French-speaking areas.



The US Census counts and characterizes the population once every ten years. In 1920 it counted 150,000 persons born in Finland and the same number of US born persons with at least one parent born in Finland. These two generations totalling 300,000 persons were called "Finnish Stock". People of Scandinavian Stock counted three million at that time. In 1930 the Finnish stock was even higher, 320,000, of which 142,000 were born in Finland. After this it started steadily to decline being about 203,000 in 1970.

In Canada the Finnish stock increased quite slowly from 2,500 in 1901 to 21,000 in 1921. In the next ten years it more than doubled being nearly 44,000 in 1931. Thousands of newcomers in the 1960s increased the stock again to over 59,000 in 1961. The decline started in the 1970s.

Since the Second World War Finnish immigration to North America has been quite insignificant, some 20,000 to the United States and 27,000 to Canada. Post-war emigration has primarily occurred to Sweden, especially between 1950's and the 1970's, totalling nearly 550,000 persons to Sweden and approx. 250,000 to other countries. The majority of them have returned, however. As always in voluntary mass migration, the main reasons for this lively movement have been economic. (Korkiasaari 1989; 2000; 2004)

Historically, Finland has mainly been a country of net emigration. During the past 100 years 1.2 million persons have emigrated from Finland to foreign countries. Estimating that every third has later returned, a loss of 800,000 souls has been a heavy loss for such a small country of five million inhabitants today.

The turning point came in the 1980s when emigration reached its lowest post-war level and turned to a flow of returnees. In the 1990s, however, most of the immigrants have been persons of foreign origin. Consequently, the number of foreign citizens living in Finland today

is higher than ever being about 107,000 or 2.0% of the population (Statistics Finland 2003). This is still, of course, a small number compared with the US, Canada and most of the European countries. However, this is new phenomenon in Finland, and the immigration of foreigners has already caused many far reaching changes in the society on its way to a multicultural country on a par with other Western World countries.

In 2004 the “Finnish stock”, i.e. persons born in Finland and their children, living in other countries was approx. 600,000–700,000. Added with the later generations especially in the US and Canada, the total number of people of Finnish descent living abroad is roughly 1.5 million today.

### **Ethnicity, ancestry and statistics**

Statistics on the population of foreign origin living in North America are based on the Censuses of the US and Canada. Before the 1980s, the Censuses of both countries distinguished the population of foreign origin by their own or their parent’s place of birth. This made it possible to track ethnic groups for two generations. The question on parental birthplace provided data only for people with one or both parents born outside the United States. The rest of the population was classed as natives of native parentage, not further distinguishable on the basis of their ethnicity. In the US Census 1980, the question on birthplace was dropped and replaced with a new question on “ancestry” making it possible to connect people to ethnic groups in the third generation and beyond. In Canada a similar change was made in 1986 Census. In the latest Censuses only one or two attributes of ancestry or ethnic origin is taken into account even if the person may have claimed more than two ancestries in the Census survey (the Canadian Census form gives space to list four ancestries). (Glazer 2001; Brittingham & de la Cruz 2004)

Ethnicity generally refers to a person’s affiliation with a particular ethnic group, or to their sharing qualities, characteristics or customs of that ethnic group. Ethnic identity is quite personal and individual, and it has many facets. It can be based on geography, nationality, ancestry, family, culture and sub-culture, religion, language, race – or any combination of these.

While lacking precise definition, the term “ethnicity” commonly refers to collectivities that share a myth of origin. Most who apply the term emphasize the importance of ancestry; others, the importance of history, most often migration and settlement. Common to many definitions is the sharing of a “culture,” the most notable aspect of which is language. Indeed, many ethnic groups are known by the same name as the language they speak. (Bates 2004)

Ancestry as well is a broad concept that can mean different things to different people; it can be described alternately as where their ancestors are from, where they or their parents originated, or simply how they see themselves ethnically. Some people may have one distinct ancestry, while others are descendants of several ancestry groups, and still others may know only that their ancestors were from a particular region of the world or may not know their ethnic origins at all. The US Census Bureau defines ancestry as a person’s ethnic origin, heritage, descent, or “roots,” which may reflect their place of birth, place of birth of parents or ancestors, and ethnic identities that have evolved within the United States. (Brittingham & de la Cruz 2004)

Ethnic identity or the “choice” of ancestry is dependent on the situation. This idea of “situational selection” suggests that people organize their perceptions and choices depending on how an issue is framed. Viewed from this perspective, ethnicity can be seen as a choice or a strategy, the value of which varies with the situation. The value of a strategy depends on the expected response of others. (Bates 2004)

One of the respondents (#2622) in a survey presented in this paper summarized the question of identity very well: “*The issue of identity is an open question and constantly moving and shifting and questioned. It depends on the very situation.*” This can be said about the ancestry as well.

Integration and assimilation reduce over time the differences that distinguish one group from another, or from the original settler group. Immigrants merge in two or three generations into a common American people and ethnic distinctions become less and less meaningful. Ethnicity becomes symbolic, a matter of choice, to be noted on the basis of name or some other signifier on occasion, of little matter for most of one's life. (Glazer 2001)

The amount of mixture among groups, through marriage, is today such that the answers to the ancestry question, if one is not an immigrant or the child of an immigrant with a clear sense of ancestry, are not helpful in distinguishing an ethnic group much beyond the second generation. The answers then become so dependent on cues from the census itself – such as the examples the census form gives to the respondent regarding what is intended by the term “ancestry,” which is by no means clear to many people. (Glazer 2001)

\* \* \*

In 2000, 58 percent of the US population specified only one ancestry, 22 percent provided two ancestries, and one percent reported an unclassifiable ancestry such as “mixture” or “adopted.” Another 19 percent did not report any ancestry at all, a substantial increase from 1990, when 10 percent of the population left the ancestry question blank. (Brittingham & de la Cruz 2004)

The highest growth rates between 1990 and 2000 occurred in groups identified by a general heritage rather than a particular country of ancestry. For example, the number of people who reported Latin American, African, or European all more than quadrupled. The number who reported American and no other ancestry increased from 12.4 million in 1990 to 20.2 million in 2000, an increase of 63 percent. (Brittingham & de la Cruz 2004)

These figures must, of course, be interpreted with caution because of the difficulty of answering a question on ancestry, and because of the methodology used to gather the data. There's no guarantee that a person who chooses “American” as an answer to a question on ethnicity won't make an entirely different choice on another survey. Ancestry is variable, it changes. People have multiple identities, and therefore it becomes difficult to pin down a person's origins. A person can say he's an American, but when he visits his Finnish American grandparents, he'll say he's Finnish. And what's true for young adults may change as they get older and want to share their family heritage with their children. (Yin 2001)

Because of intermarriage and distance from their immigrant roots, people increasingly have multiple ethnic identities to choose from in defining their ancestry. How they choose to characterize themselves may depend on variables such as time and place, or even the power of suggestion. (Yin 2001)

The question “*What is your ancestry*” on the census form traditionally lists more than a dozen examples. It is a well known fact that these examples skew the response. In 2000, American or United States was not an example, but the category may have benefited from the omission of older European ancestry groups, such as German and English, from the list of examples provided that year. (Yin 2001)

Groups listed in the example in a given year often experience an increase in numbers claiming that ancestry. In 1990, for instance, the number of Germans appeared to leap from 49 million in 1980 to 58 million, when it was included in the example, only to fall again in 2000 to 46 million, when it was left out. Similarly, in 1980, the first year ancestry data was collected, English was included in the sample. Since then it's been omitted and the number claiming any English ancestry has dropped from 50 million in 1980 to 24,5 million in 2000. It's likely that many either migrated into the American category or simply didn't answer the question. (Yin 2001)

A few more examples. For the first time, in the 2000 Census, a Scandinavian ancestry, Norwegian, was listed. As a result the number of Norwegian Americans increased from 3,869,395 in 1990 to 4,477,725 in 2000 (+15.7%) while in other “Nordic” groups it decreased (see the table below). Noteworthy is also that in the supplementary censuses 2000 and 2001 the estimate of the people claiming Finnish ancestry was significantly higher than in the main census of 2000 (624,000 vs. 803,000/822,000)

The evidence suggests that there is no simple solution to the issue of self-identification. Part of the problem is that individuals aren't consistent in how they identify their ethnicity. Most of this inconsistency arises from people who identify with more than one ethnic group in some way.

**Selected ancestries in the US Census 1990 and 2000**

Ancestry	1990		2000		Change, 1990 to 2000	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Total population	248,709,873	100.0	281,421,906	100.0	32,712,033	13.2
American	12,395,999	5.0	20,188,305	7.2	7,792,306	62.9
British	1,119,140	0.4	1,085,718	0.4	-33,422	-3.0
Danish	1,634,648	0.7	1,430,897	0.5	-203,751	-12.5
English	32,651,788	13.1	24,509,692	8.7	-8,142,096	-24.9
European	466,718	0.2	1,968,696	0.7	1,501,978	321.8
<u>Finnish</u>	<u>658,854</u>	<u>0.3</u>	<u>623,559</u>	<u>0.2</u>	<u>-35,295</u>	<u>-5.4</u>
German	57,947,171	23.3	42,841,569	15.2	-15,105,602	-26.1
Irish	38,735,539	15.6	30,524,799	10.8	-8,210,740	-21.2
Northern European	65,993	-	163,657	0.1	97,664	148.0
Norwegian	3,869,395	1.6	4,477,725	1.6	608,330	15.7
Scandinavian	678,880	0.3	425,099	0.2	-253,781	-37.4
Swedish	4,680,863	1.9	3,998,310	1.4	-682,553	-14.6
United States*	643,561	0.3	404,328	0.1	-239,233	-37.2

Source: <http://www.census.gov> ; see: Brittingham & de la Cruz 2004.

## **The number of Finnish North Americans**

In the US Census 2000 the number of people claiming Finnish ancestry was 624,000. Of those 20,000 were born in Finland (including about 8,000 that had arrived since 1990, many staying in the US on a temporary basis). It is estimated that about 80,000 are second generation immigrants (first born in America). This means that over half a million third, fourth, fifth and even sixth generation Finnish-Americans recognize their Finnish roots at the census polls (as either the first or second ethnicity). In comparison, about ten million claimed Scandinavian ancestry, of which about 800,000 are still first and second generation. (Westerberg 2004)

Forty percent of the respondents claimed a single ancestry (Finnish only). Of those claiming multiple (or dual) ancestry, half claimed Finnish first, and as many put it on the second place. For 100,000 the other ethnicity was Scandinavian.

The Census also asks "What language other than English is spoken at home?". In the year 2000 "Finnish" was the language given by 40,000 (over 6 percent of those claiming Finnish ancestry). 150,000 claimed Danish, Swedish or Norwegian language (only 1.5 percent of those claiming Scandinavian ancestry). (Westerberg 2004)

The ranking of the US states with most Finns in 2000 was as follows: Michigan 101,400, Minnesota 99,400, California 56,000, Washington 40,300, Wisconsin 36,000, Massachusetts 27,000, Florida 25,700, Oregon 21,400, Illinois 19,100, Ohio 18,000, and New York 16,800 (see Appendix 2 for more details).

Currently about 500 persons a year from Finland are given permanent residence status (Green Card), mostly by being married to a US citizen. At the same time, there are close to 10,000 non-immigrant visitors from Finland admitted each year. As an example, in year 1994, there were 3,500 admitted on employment visas, 4,000 for studies, and 1,500 for government related purposes. (Westerberg 2004)

In the Census of Canada the question dealing with ethnic ancestry is practically similar to that used in the US Census. According to Canadian Census 2001 about 115,000 claimed Finnish ancestry; of those 32,000 reported single ancestry and 83,000 multiple ancestries. Provinces with the highest number of "Finns" were Ontario 44,000, British Columbia 20,000, Alberta 10,500, Saskatchewan 3,000, Manitoba 2,600 and Quebec 1,500 (see Appendix 2 for more details).

## **The research project: Finnish North Americans today**

The author of this paper got the idea of the project in 1997. The initial incentive for it was the form used in a survey of Norwegian Americans by Odd Lovoll (results of his study were published in 1998). It was rather short but many of the questions in it were used to build a test form for the survey of Finnish Americans. It was tested at FinnFests of 1997 and 1998 with a couple hundred hardcopies. The feedback received was then used to construct a new form which included a lot new questions most of them being of “open” type. The form was made available on the internet at the website of the Institute of Migration. In addition, it was distributed as a hardcopy at FinnFest 1999 and as requested also by email. The responses of the web form were transmitted automatically by email when respondents submitted the form information. By this form over 600 usable responses were received in 1999–2000.

The information gathered was mainly qualitative. To get also data for quantitative analysis a new form was constructed in 2001. Most of questions in it were of “fixed choice” type based on the responses of the previous form. About 3,000 responses were gathered with this form (a few hundred of them are still missing in the computer data used in the analysis presented in this paper). Handling of this data was a lot easier because the responses were saved directly into a database instead of separate emails saved in unformatted text form. The survey form can be found at: <http://www.migrationinstitute.fi/survey.htm>

### *Goals of the survey*

The main questions of the survey were as follows:

1. What are the main characteristics of the Finnish North American population today (by generation)?
2. How do they identify themselves?
3. What do they think about their Finnish heritage?
4. What kind of a role does their Finnish heritage play in their life?
5. What kind of contacts they have with their relatives in Finland and with Finland in general?
6. How do they perceive the future of "Finnishness" in North America?

The survey is just a part of a wider project. The ultimate goal of the project is the production of a book that will deal with

- the results of the survey data,
- narratives of Finnish North Americans and their life stories,
- short articles on locations, structures, memorials, landmarks etc. which have a Finnish origin or connection and left behind by this ethnic group, and
- a short genealogical guide for readers on how to trace family roots in Finland as well as in Canada and the USA.
- A short statistical overview and a summary of the history of Finnish migration to North America will also be included in the book.

In addition to the author of this paper there are two other researchers connected to the project: assistant professor of geography Dr. Mika Roinila of the State University of New York at New Paltz and genealogy expert Timothy Laitila Vincent of Salt Lake City.



In 2004–2005, the researchers will travel across the United States and Canada to collect material from numerous individuals, chosen from lists of possible interested individuals obtained through former contacts with the investigators, as well as additional contacts obtained by soliciting for participants through the ethnic media. As a result of these contacts, the research team will visit many locations, and possibly provide some public information sessions as well.

The project has received financial support from the following funds: Finlandia Foundation Trust, Canadian Suomi Foundation, Kaarle Hjalmar Lehtinen Fund (Institute of Migration) and SUNY New Paltz.

### *Subjects and sample*

Referring to the difficulties of defining the terms “ethnic identity” and “ancestry” discussed above it is evident that it is not possible to give an exact definition to the terms “Finnish North American”, “Finnish American” or Finnish Canadian either. Theoretical definitions, on the other hand, would be practically useless when picking up a sample of the target population for an empirical study. Because of the voluntary nature of the participation in surveys it is obvious that the samples are always more or less skewed. In a survey based on ancestral identification the participants must be aware of and at least somewhat interested in their ancestry.

It is well known that the well-healed middle class people with stable living conditions are usually overrepresented in surveys. Small, socially, economically or otherwise deviant marginal groups are, correspondingly, underrepresented. In a study dealing with ancestral interest it is also obvious that the average age of the sample is higher than that of the base population because the interest in one’s heritage usually increases by age. How large this skewness is in this study is quite impossible to estimate because there is no information available on the base population which to compare to. We don’t even know its exact boundaries.

Comparing the geographic distribution of respondents with the data derived from the Censuses shows that the deviations are in practice nonexistent (see Appendix 2). The average age of the sample is about 48 years. The gender ratio, 54,6% females/45,4% males, is quite normal taking into account the age structure (females live longer). The different generations were also represented quite well in the sample. It was, of course, expected that respondents belonging to the later generations would be few (5%).

<u>Generation</u>	<u>Persons</u>	<u>%</u>
Immigrant generation	245	9.3
1st (first born in North America)	496	18.8
2nd	1,184	44.8
3rd	584	22.1
4th	103	3.9
5th+	29	1.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,642</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Note: The 1st generation in this study refers to the first generation born in North America. In other studies it is quite often used for the immigrant generation.

Compared with other surveys the representativeness of this study seems to be clearly better. In Odd Lovoll's survey of Norwegian Americans (1998) the respondents were significantly older: 79% of the 6,406 respondents were over 50 years old and 58.7% were females. Generational distribution, however, was quite similar than in this study. In another survey of Nordic Americans including Finnish Americans (Susag 2000), the average age varied by group between 64–70. The number of respondents was small (156), however.

The differences between this and other studies mentioned above are probably due to different methods of gathering the data. Lovoll and Susag used traditional methods for distributing the forms, mainly through ethnic organizations, while in this study the primary method was internet which probably tempted also younger people and those with more distant relations to their Finnish heritage.

### **Preliminary results of the survey**

As a starting point for the analysis two variables were used to group the respondents by their affiliation to "Finnishness". The other one was the "genetic distance" measured with the question "What percentage of your ethnic background is Finnish (roughly)?" including five choices: 100%, 75%, 50%, 25% and 12,5%. (question #4). The other variable was the "emotional distance" which was measured by calculating summary points of several variables. These were:

- "How important is/was being Finnish to your parent(s)?" (#10)
- "Did your parents or grandparents tell you about your Finnish ancestors?" (#11)
- "What contact do you have with your relatives in Finland?" (#14)
- "Do you observe Finnish customs?" (#15, including 13 sub variables)
- "How important of a role does your Finnish heritage play in your daily life? (#16)
- "Do you subscribe to or read any Finnish-American newspapers or magazines? (#17, including 12 sub variables)
- "Do you subscribe to or read any newspapers or magazines published in Finland?" (#18, including 8 sub variables)
- "Do you participate in any Finnish-American organizations and/or social events?" (#19, including 13 sub variables)
- "Do you have any of the following items or objects concerning Finland or Finnish?" (#20, including 9 sub variables)
- "To what extent do you follow current events in Finland?" (#23)
- "How important is being Finnish to you?" (#27)
- "Do you think that being Finnish-American is an important reflection of who you are?" (#28)
- "How important is it that Finnish-Americans preserve their Finnish-American identity and awareness of their Finnish origin?" (#29)
- "How important is it that Finnish-American parents teach Finnish traditions to their children?" (#30)

By using this new summary variable the respondents were classified to four groups – from “weak” to “strong” – to measure their emotional affiliation to Finnishness. The variables of genetic and emotional distance to Finnishness were then crosstabulated as follows:

Emotional closeness to Finnishness	Genetic percent of Finnishness			Total
	100	50-75	25 or less	
Weak	4.3	25.3	49.5	21.8
Quite weak	18.4	37.3	31.6	29.2
Quite strong	41.1	26.5	14.5	29.8
Strong	36.3	10.9	4.5	19.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	984	1,189	469	2,642

This crosstabulation was used to make the final classification of respondents into five groups. The group membership was defined by combining the “cell memberships” as follows:

Emotional closeness to Finnishness	Genetic percent of Finnishness		
	100	50-75	-25
Weak	1	1	4
Quite weak	1	3	4
Quite strong	2	3	5
Strong	2	5	5

As a result the following five groups (a new variable) were formed:

- Group 1:** Close genetic but distant emotional affiliation to Finnishness (**G+E-**), respondents 542.
- Group 2:** Close genetic and strong emotional affiliation to Finnishness (**G+E+**), respondents 761.
- Group 3:** Average genetic and moderate emotional affiliation to Finnishness (**G0E0**), respondents 758,
- Group 4:** Distant genetic and distant emotional affiliation to Finnishness (**G-E-**), respondents 380,
- Group 5:** Distant genetic but close emotional affiliation to Finnishness (**G-E+**), respondents 219.

(The “symbolic” shortcuts G+E-, G+E+, G0E0, G-E- and G-E+ are used to save space and to make it easier to read tables and figures.)

In the further analysis it became obvious that these groups really were very distinct in many of their characteristics. A summary of these differences is presented in figure 1 (page 14). A more detailed examination can be found in Appendix 3.

### *Group characteristics*

By examining how the different “background” variables were connected to this grouping it was noted that the generation of the respondents was one of the strongest factors distinguishing the groups. The connection to Finnishness fades generation by generation which, of course, is expected. There are, however many factors which can significantly slow down this process. Childhood experiences and living environment have an important role in learning and maintaining of it. The interest and willingness of parents and grandparents to tell children about their roots and teach them Finnish traditions seem to be very decisive, too. Language is also of primary importance in getting deeper insight into the Finnish culture and building live contacts with relatives in Finland. Many respondents regretted that their parents and grandparents never talked about their Finnish background. In some cases it was even something to be ashamed of or a kind of secret which was not to be talked about. It was also quite common that parents didn’t want to talk Finnish with children or stopped it when children reached school age. The reasoning behind this was that they wanted their children to be Americans/Canadians first and foremost, and to learn English as soon and as effectively as possible.

- *“My parents did not talk about their families in Finland. It was a big secret. They always claimed to be Swedish but both of them were born in Finland.” – (Group: **G+E-**, #1332, Female, 1910, North Carolina, 100%, immigrant 1911, High school)*
- *“The values and ethics learned as a child growing up in a finnish-am neighbourhood have stayed with me playing an important part in my life. I have fond memories of hearing the Finnish language by elders around me including the church. Also heard the music which has sustained me and inspired me to carry on traditions in dance and music. My 'Finnishness' is a source of pride in my life . Being finnish-am I am connected with a larger community that provides a basis for identity and integrity.” – (Group **G+E+**, #385, Male, 1939, Minnesota, 100%, 2<sup>nd</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup>, master)*
- *“I can not explain my strong connexion to my heritage. I can not place where it came from, no one person or event. I have just always felt finnish. As a young child I took great pride in the Finnish repaying the war dept. I am living a life of sisu.” – (Group **G0E0**, #2125, Male, 1964, Maine, 50%, 3<sup>rd</sup>, some college)*

Often the connection to Finnishness is lost because of the early death of parents or grandparents. The Finnish connection is also usually quite weak if the person is of mixed ancestry, especially if the Finnish part is minor and less “dominating”. On the other hand, growing up in a Finnish American neighbourhood where Finnishness is an essential part of daily life creates usually a very warm and keen relationship to one’s heritage. Moving to and living in a non-Finnish community has an opposite effect. For many, a Finnish first name and/or surname are very important determinants of identification. For some their Finnishness is a mystery, something that they can’t explicitly explain, something that just comes up in certain situations as an odd feeling of being “Finnish” and very unique.

- *“I'm sorry that my grandmother thought that being from the "Old Country" was something to be ashamed of. She was born here but her sister was born in Finland. She looked down on my Swede-Finn grandfather who was born in Finland.” – (Group **G-E-**, #1064, Female, 1941, California, 25%, 3<sup>rd</sup>, bachelor)*

- *“My education of my Finnish background has been neglected, badly. One half of the family was Hispanic and one Finnish. I know about the Hispanic and English sides. I'm trying to learn about the Finnish side and also get my daughter interested; it's her heritage, too. Being in the US we tend to take the past for granted. That's what prompted me to do some research on my family in Finland.” – (Group G–E–, #2025, Male, 1964, Florida, 25%, 3<sup>rd</sup>, some college)*
- *“Despite the fact that I am only a little more than one-fourth Finnish, I was raised to think of myself as being Finnish in a community with many Finns and Finnish Americans. Because my name is Finnish everyone thought of me as being Finnish. I also grew up with traditions and Finnish music and my father would read to us from Kalevala. I think of myself as an American Finn. I like to visit Suomi as often as I can and have many friends there. Suomi feels to me like my second home and I feel a bit of sadness everytime I have to leave the country. I feel great love and pride for Suomi and the character and talents of the Finnish people.” – (Group G–E+, #337, Male, 1949, Minnesota, 25%, 3<sup>rd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup>, some college)*

The groups differ quite clearly by age. This is obviously connected to the generational difference: Later generations are, on the average, younger. The age, quite obviously, “explains” quite a lot of the educational and occupational differences between the groups. In groups with higher average age the educational level is lower and the proportion of blue collar occupations higher, and vice versa. This is also reflected in political views: Older people are more conservative. These dependencies are not very strong, however. It is interesting that females clearly “dominate” (60–61%) in groups with distant genetic affiliation to Finnishness. The group with close genetic but distant emotional relationship to Finnishness, on the other hand, is the only one with males making the majority (53,4%). These gender differences may “explain” part of the dependencies dealing with the education, occupation and political point of view. The spouse being also of Finnish ancestry seems to be clearly more usual in groups with close emotional affiliation to Finnishness. (See tables xx)

### **Concluding remarks**

The results of the analysis show that among the Finnish North Americans there are several clearly distinct groups with very different affiliations to Finnishness. Every human being has a unique life history and a very individual view of his/her ethnic identity and ancestry. By compacting all this diversity to just five groups in a study such as this is, of course, quite rough. Limiting the number of groups makes it, however, possible to see the whole and to understand better the major factors behind the identification of ethnic ancestry. This gives us the “skeleton”. To get “flesh and blood” over it calls for additional examination through qualitative “data”. By reading a few free form answers picked up from the survey (like those cited above) we get some feeling of the all the diversity connected to this interesting topic. For more thoughts on identity see Appendix 4.

Figure 1. The major characteristics of respondents by affiliation to Finnishness.

		<u>Emotional</u> affiliation to Finnishness	
		<b>STRONG</b>	<b>WEAK</b>
<u>Genetic</u> affiliation to Finnishness	<b>CLOSE</b>	<b>G+E+</b>	<b>G-E+</b>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Genetic Finnishness: 100%</li> <li>- Generations: Immigrant 27%, 1<sup>st</sup> 35% and 2<sup>nd</sup> 30%</li> <li>- Average age: 53 (1950)</li> <li>- Marital status: Married 70%</li> <li>- Spouse FA/FC: Yes: 26%</li> <li>- Gender ratio F/M: 54,4/45,6</li> <li>- Speaks Finnish: well/fluently 39%, some/moder. 51%</li> <li>- Participation in FA/FC organizations: <u>Yes</u> 62%</li> <li>- Personal contacts to Finland: Yes 73%</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Genetic Finnishness: 50% or less</li> <li>- Generations: 2<sup>nd</sup> or later (40% 2<sup>nd</sup>, 31% 3<sup>rd</sup>)</li> <li>- Average age: 43 (1960)</li> <li>- Marital status: Married 52%, single/cohabiting 36%</li> <li>- Spouse FA/FC: Yes 17%</li> <li>- Gender ratio F/M: <u>61,2/38,8</u></li> <li>- Speaks Finnish: well/fluently 12%, some/moder. 64%</li> <li>- Participation in FA/FC organizations: <u>Yes</u> 67%</li> <li>- Personal contacts to Finland: Yes 64%</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Genetic Finnishness: 75-100%</li> <li>- Generations: 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> (59% 2<sup>nd</sup>)</li> <li>- Average age: 51 (1952)</li> <li>- Marital status: Married 65%</li> <li>- Spouse FA/FC: Yes 6%</li> <li>- Gender ratio F/M: 46,6/<u>53,4</u></li> <li>- Speaks Finnish: none 67%, some 26%</li> <li>- Participation in FA/FC organizations: <u>No</u> 92%</li> <li>- Personal contacts to Finland: Yes 12%</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Genetic Finnishness: 25% or less</li> <li>- Generations: 2<sup>nd</sup> or later (30% 2<sup>nd</sup>, 55% 3<sup>rd</sup>)</li> <li>- Average age: 40 (1963)</li> <li>- Marital status: Married 56%, single/cohabiting 36%</li> <li>- Spouse FA/FC: Yes 2%</li> <li>- Gender ratio F/M: <u>60,0/40,0</u></li> <li>- Speaks Finnish: none 88%, some 12%</li> <li>- Participation in FA/FC organizations: <u>No</u> 92%</li> <li>- Personal contacts to Finland: Yes 7%</li> </ul>
	<b>DISTANT</b>	<b>G+E-</b>	<b>G-E-</b>

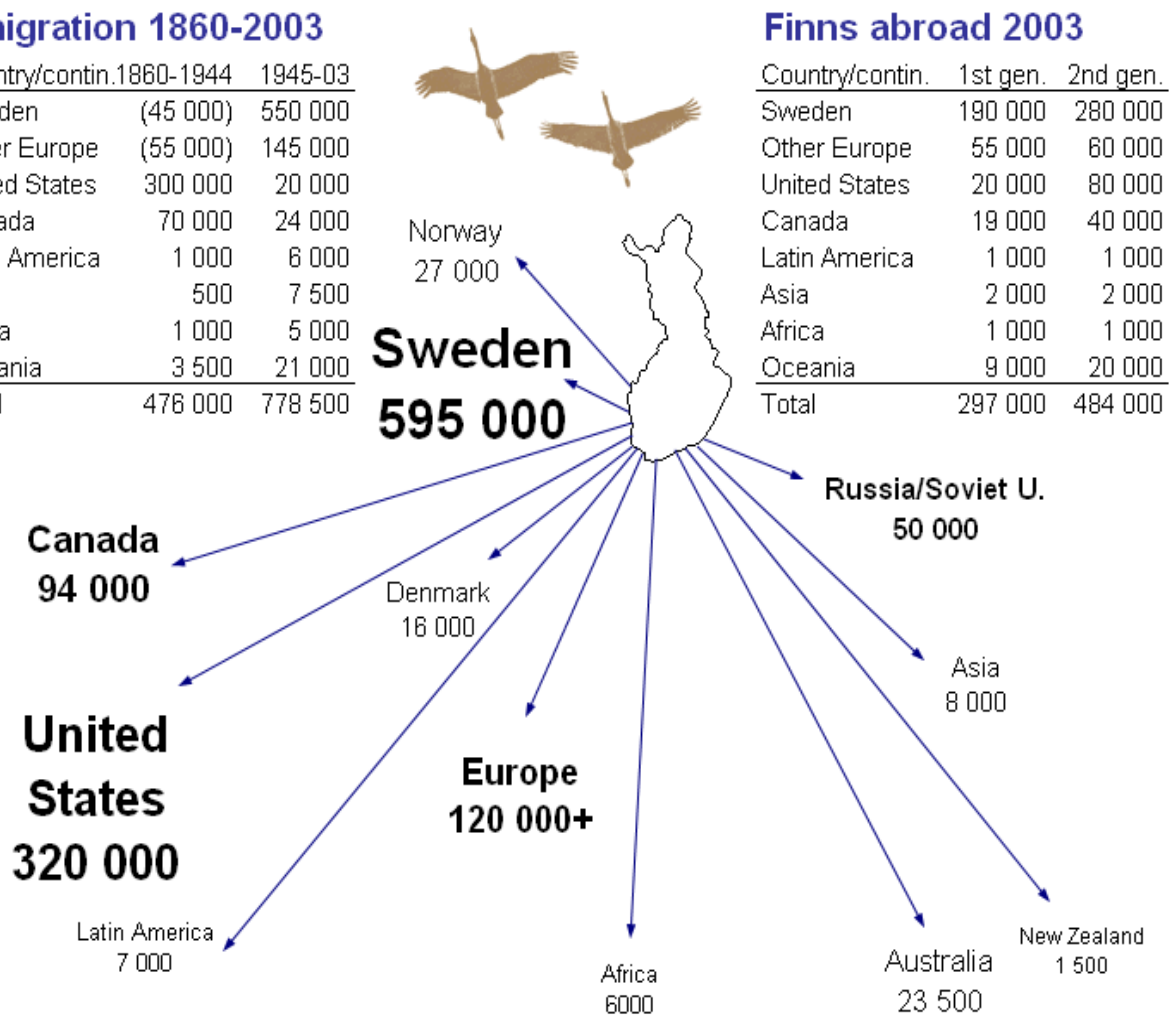
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## Appendix 1.

### Emigration 1860-2003

Country/contin.	1860-1944	1945-03
Sweden	(45 000)	550 000
Other Europe	(55 000)	145 000
United States	300 000	20 000
Canada	70 000	24 000
Latin America	1 000	6 000
Asia	500	7 500
Africa	1 000	5 000
Oceania	3 500	21 000
<b>Total</b>	<b>476 000</b>	<b>778 500</b>



### Finns abroad 2003

Country/contin.	1st gen.	2nd gen.
Sweden	190 000	280 000
Other Europe	55 000	60 000
United States	20 000	80 000
Canada	19 000	40 000
Latin America	1 000	1 000
Asia	2 000	2 000
Africa	1 000	1 000
Oceania	9 000	20 000
<b>Total</b>	<b>297 000</b>	<b>484 000</b>

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## Appendix 2.

Distribution of Finnish North Americans by state/province in the survey and in the Censuses 2000/2001 (%).

### The United States

State	Survey	Census 2000
Alabama	.2	.3
Alaska	.9	.6
Arizona	2.2	1.9
Arkansas	.5	.2
California	12.0	9.1
Colorado	1.5	1.6
Connecticut	1.5	1.1
Delaware	.1	.1
Florida	4.0	4.1
Georgia	.7	.8
Hawaii	.1	.2
Idaho	.3	.7
Illinois	2.7	3.1
Indiana	.6	.8
Iowa	.4	.4
Kansas	.3	.3
Kentucky	.3	.2
Louisiana	.3	.2
Maine	1.6	1.0
Maryland	1.8	.8
Massachusetts	3.9	4.4
Michigan	14.9	16.3
Minnesota	10.4	15.9
Mississippi	.1	.1
Missouri	.6	.5
Montana	.9	1.2
Nebraska	.2	.2
New Hampshire	1.2	1.3
New Jersey	1.3	1.1
New Mexico	.4	.4
New York	3.1	2.7
Nevada	.8	.7
North Carolina	1.2	.8
North Dakota	.2	.6
Ohio	2.4	3.0
Oklahoma	.5	.3
Oregon	4.1	3.4
Pennsylvania	1.6	1.2
Rhode Island	.4	.2
South Carolina	.4	.4
South Dakota	.1	.6
Tennessee	.6	.5

Texas	2.2	2.0
Utah	.7	.6
Washington	7.0	6.5
Washington DC	.1	
Vermont	.4	.3
West Virginia	.1	.1
Virginia	1.5	1.0
Wisconsin	5.6	5.8
Wyoming	.3	.4
<i>Lives in other country</i>	.5	-
Total %	100.0	100.0
Respondents (N)	2,166	623,596

Source (Census): <http://www.census.gov>

### Canada

Province	Survey	Census 2001
Alberta	11.7	11.1
British Columbia	21.3	23.8
Manitoba	3.7	2.7
Newfoundland	.2	.1
Nova Scotia	.8	.5
Ontario	55.5	55.9
Quebec	1.6	1.9
Saskatchewan	1.8	3.2
Yukon	.2	.2
Other province	-	.7
<i>Lives in other country</i>	3.0	-
Total %	100.0	100.0
Respondents (N)	488	114,690

Source (Census):

<http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census01/home/index.cfm>

## Appendix 3.

### Some of the variables used for grouping the respondents by their genetic and emotional affiliation to Finnishness

#### Did your parents or grandparents tell you about your Finnish ancestors?

	G+E-	G+E+	G0E0	G-E-	G-E+	Total
Practically none	<u>39.5</u>	7.8	15.4	<u>33.9</u>	6.0	20.0
Little	<u>46.8</u>	32.0	<u>39.2</u>	<u>42.4</u>	19.4	37.5
Pretty much	11.7	<u>30.0</u>	<u>31.3</u>	18.7	<u>31.8</u>	25.3
A lot	2.0	<u>30.2</u>	14.1	5.1	<u>42.9</u>	17.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of respondents	542	761	758	380	219	2,642

#### What contact do you have with your relatives in Finland?

Don't know any	<u>66.9</u>	8.7	39.8	<u>74.9</u>	16.5	39.3
None. but I know some ...	8.3	4.3	10.3	6.6	5.5	7.3
Not me personally. but ...	13.0	13.7	22.5	11.4	14.2	15.8
I have been in contact with them	11.8	<u>73.4</u>	27.3	7.1	<u>63.8</u>	37.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

#### Do you observe Finnish customs?

No. don't know of any ...	<u>58.0</u>	1.7	27.1	<u>73.3</u>	3.8	30.7
As a child but not anymore	18.9	9.7	17.9	5.4	3.3	12.7
Yes	23.1	<u>88.7</u>	54.9	21.3	<u>92.8</u>	56.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

#### How important of a role does your Finnish heritage play in your daily life?

None	<u>25.7</u>	.9	3.2	<u>26.1</u>	.5	10.1
Very little	<u>44.1</u>	10.7	32.4	<u>43.8</u>	6.9	28.0
Some	28.0	<u>52.1</u>	51.3	27.2	<u>48.8</u>	43.3
Great	2.1	<u>36.3</u>	13.0	2.9	<u>43.8</u>	18.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

#### Do you subscribe to or read any Finnish-American newspapers or magazines?

No	<u>96.0</u>	53.7	<u>86.9</u>	<u>96.1</u>	52.1	77.6
Yes	4.0	<u>46.3</u>	13.1	3.9	<u>47.9</u>	22.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

#### Do you participate in any Finnish-American organizations and/or social events?

No	<u>91.6</u>	37.8	<u>76.5</u>	<u>92.4</u>	32.9	67.0
Yes	8.4	<u>62.2</u>	23.5	7.6	<u>67.1</u>	33.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

#### How important is being Finnish to you?

None	4.5	.4	.1	3.2		1.5
Little	<u>39.7</u>	4.1	9.5	<u>33.7</u>	2.7	16.8
Quite important	45.3	36.4	<u>56.1</u>	46.8	27.4	44.6
Very important	10.5	<u>59.2</u>	34.3	16.3	<u>69.9</u>	37.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

#### How important is it that Finnish-Americans preserve their Finnish-American identity and awareness of their Finnish origin?

Not important	3.1	.1	.1	3.7		1.2
Little	28.0	3.6	6.0	13.3	.9	10.2
Quite important	52.5	33.5	46.4	53.5	22.6	42.9
Very important	16.3	<u>62.8</u>	47.5	29.5	<u>76.5</u>	45.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

## Some background variables

Generation	G+E-	G+E+	G0E0	G-E-	G-E+	Total
Immigrant	3.2	<u>26.8</u>	1.6	.5	4.6	9.3
1st born in North America	19.3	<u>34.8</u>	11.7	1.6	16.0	18.8
2nd	<u>58.6</u>	<u>30.1</u>	<u>58.6</u>	30.3	<u>40.6</u>	44.8
3rd	15.6	7.8	22.3	<u>54.6</u>	<u>30.6</u>	22.1
4th	2.3	.3	4.7	10.0	6.8	3.9
5th+	1.0	.3	1.1	2.9	1.4	1.1
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of respondents	542	761	758	380	219	2,642

### Gender

Female	46.6	54.4	55.7	<u>60.0</u>	<u>61.2</u>	54.6
Male	<u>53.4</u>	45.6	44.3	40.0	38.8	45.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

### What is your educational background?

Less than 9th grade	.4	1.3	.1	-	-	.5
9 to 12th grade. no diploma	4.1	3.0	2.0	4.3	5.2	3.3
High school graduate	12.6	10.6	10.4	7.0	2.4	9.7
Some college. no degree	23.2	21.3	26.0	28.2	23.3	24.2
Associate degree (AA. AS ...)	12.6	8.9	11.4	9.1	13.8	10.8
Bachelor's degree (BA. AB ...)	29.0	28.3	29.2	32.4	28.1	29.3
Master's degree (MA. MBA ...)	11.6	18.0	13.5	12.3	18.6	14.7
Professional (MD. DDS ...)	3.1	3.2	3.9	3.8	3.8	3.5
Doctorate (PhD. EdD ...)	3.5	5.4	3.5	2.9	4.8	4.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

### Marital status

Single	16.2	13.8	18.2	<u>29.1</u>	<u>28.9</u>	19.0
Cohabiting	6.0	5.0	5.8	6.6	7.3	5.9
Married	<u>65.1</u>	<u>69.5</u>	<u>63.0</u>	55.8	51.8	63.3
Divorced	<u>9.4</u>	6.8	<u>10.9</u>	7.7	9.6	8.8
Widowed	<u>3.3</u>	<u>4.9</u>	2.1	.8	2.3	3.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

### What is your current activity?

Employed	50.1	44.2	<u>59.1</u>	<u>58.1</u>	54.6	52.5
Self-employed	10.4	9.8	9.8	5.6	9.7	9.3
Student	7.0	5.6	7.1	<u>14.6</u>	<u>15.3</u>	8.4
Homemaker	6.0	6.5	7.5	9.8	6.5	7.2
Retired	<u>25.3</u>	<u>29.4</u>	14.0	9.0	9.7	19.6
Otherwise occupied	1.2	4.5	2.5	2.9	4.2	3.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

### Political viewpoint

Conservative	<u>30.8</u>	26.7	30.4	28.0	21.9	28.3
Moderate	<u>42.5</u>	38.7	35.4	38.0	33.5	38.0
Liberal	24.2	31.1	31.5	30.7	<u>38.6</u>	30.4
Radical left	2.6	3.5	2.6	3.3	<u>6.0</u>	3.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	504	734	726	368	215	2,547

### If married. is your spouse Finnish American/Canadian?

Yes	5.6	<u>26.3</u>	6.4	2.1	<u>17.1</u>	12.5
No	94.4	<u>73.7</u>	93.6	97.9	<u>82.9</u>	87.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	391	574	533	241	129	1,868

## Other variables characterizing the groups

### Do you have family reunions?

	<u>G+E-</u>	<u>G+E+</u>	<u>G0E0</u>	<u>G-E-</u>	<u>G-E+</u>	Total
No	<u>43.9</u>	22.9	27.6	<u>46.9</u>	14.2	31.1
Not really	31.5	32.5	34.0	29.7	31.1	32.2
Yes at special life events	15.6	<u>29.0</u>	25.9	16.3	<u>36.1</u>	24.2
Yes genealogical reunions	9.0	<u>15.6</u>	12.5	7.1	<u>18.7</u>	12.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of respondents	542	761	758	380	219	2,642

### Does your family have a written family history?

No	<u>42.9</u>	27.6	31.9	29.7	13.2	31.0
No. but it's under work	18.3	14.1	18.2	28.4	20.1	18.7
Simple family tree	26.4	34.8	34.2	32.9	35.1	32.7
Yes a photocopy	9.5	<u>16.4</u>	11.5	6.8	<u>21.0</u>	12.6
Yes a printed book	2.9	<u>7.1</u>	4.2	2.1	<u>10.5</u>	5.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

### What is your ability to speak Finnish?

None	<u>66.5</u>	9.7	60.1	<u>87.6</u>	23.9	47.6
Some	26.1	32.1	36.4	12.1	50.9	30.9
Moderate	5.0	<u>19.2</u>	2.3	.3	<u>13.8</u>	8.4
Well	1.4	<u>14.6</u>	.7	-	<u>6.9</u>	5.3
Fluent	1.0	<u>24.2</u>	.7	-	<u>4.6</u>	7.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

### To what extent do you follow current events in Finland?

Hardly at all	<u>76.4</u>	23.5	51.8	<u>76.2</u>	16.4	49.0
Some	22.7	51.9	43.2	22.5	54.8	39.7
Pretty much	1.0	<u>17.1</u>	4.6	1.3	<u>21.0</u>	8.4
Very much	-	<u>7.4</u>	.4	-	<u>7.8</u>	2.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

### Have you ever thought or planned to visit Finland in the future?

	.6	2.6	.8	1.1	2.3	1.4
1 No. not seriously	13.5	4.3	4.9	8.2	.5	6.5
2 Not really. but I would like to if ...	33.8	11.4	25.7	33.4	7.8	22.8
3 No plans yet. but it's likely	35.7	27.9	37.9	35.3	25.6	33.2
4 Yes. I will	16.4	<u>53.7</u>	30.7	22.1	<u>63.9</u>	36.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

### Have you ever considered moving to Finland?

Never	<u>89.4</u>	56.4	<u>74.8</u>	<u>82.4</u>	42.5	70.9
Yes. in the past	8.1	<u>26.9</u>	15.3	10.1	<u>32.2</u>	17.8
Yes. currently	2.5	<u>16.7</u>	9.9	7.4	<u>25.2</u>	11.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

### In what kind of area did you live in your childhood?

Rural	<u>47.7</u>	<u>51.3</u>	41.0	31.0	42.7	44.0
Suburban	29.2	21.8	40.3	<u>44.3</u>	30.3	32.5
Urban	23.2	26.9	18.6	24.7	<u>27.1</u>	23.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

## Appendix 4.

A sample of answers to the survey question: *Please give your general thoughts and feelings about being of Finnish heritage and a Finnish-American*” (#31).

**Background variables** (in parenthesis): Group name (shortcut), case number, gender, date of birth, state of residence, percent of Finnish ancestry, Finnish-American/Canadian generation from father's/mother's side, educational degree

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Sometimes I think people need to take it easy with their heritage when coming to America. They are living in a new country with a separate identity. Knowing your origin is great. Having records, documents of customs, etc is great. Banning together with other Finns at a Finnfest is too clanish. A "Cultural Expo" that includes many nationalities would be better. – (G+E-, #4, **Male**, 1978, California, **50%**, **2<sup>nd</sup>**, bachelor)

My family is a very proud family. I am sort of a "black sheep" of our family - I have moved away from where I grew up in Minnesota. In Charlotte, North Carolina, there are very few Finnish people, so I am never exposed to the Finnish culture. I love the "Finnish Cook" – my mother was an awesome cook! Loved (and miss) her cardomon biscuit!". – (G+E-, #68, **Female**, 1956, North Carolina, **100%**, **2<sup>nd</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup>**, some college)

Many people emigrated from Finland in this area, a lot of them follow traditions of the "old country", having grown up away from other Finnish Americans, it's not an issue with me. I'm a bad choice for your questions, I didn't even know that I had Finnish heritage until I was 17 years old. – (G+E-, #274, **Male**, 1959, Michigan, **50%**, **2<sup>nd</sup>**, associate)

Being Finnish has had no significance in my life. My father never talked about it, I never knew my grandfather, and rarely saw my grandmother. – (G+E-, #432, **Male**, 1950, Illinois, **50%**, **2<sup>nd</sup>**, master)

There are some positive points about being Finnish which I try to exercise accordingly and of course plenty of bad ones which I try to avoid. Being Finnish and the Finnish language and culture is quite insignificant in relation to the rest of the world.". – (G+E-, #624, **Male**, 1959, British Columbia, **100%**, **immigrant 1971**, some college)

I enjoy learning about it, though I don't really know much about being Finnish. I'd like to know more. My parents divorced when I was young, and my father did not communicate much with us after that. He has done so a bit more recently, and I just found out that I have an extended "Finnish clan" in the past year. – (G+E-, #689, **Female**, 1955, Kentucky, **50%**, **3<sup>rd</sup>**, bachelor)

I never knew my grandparents (the immigrants)...they died before I was born. My father said he purposely forgot how to speak Finn because when he went to school in the 20's and 30's, foreigners were looked down upon and ridiculed in the USA. His mother wanted him to blend in and be AMERICAN. How sad for me. My father died when I was 29 years old and, at that age, I was not interested enough to learn about Finland. He was the youngest and last of his siblings to die and I have no way to research my ancestry. – (G+E-, #826, **Female**, 1946, Delaware, **50%**, **2<sup>nd</sup>**, associate)

Once my parents left Finland they did not look back. Their belief was that they were in Canada now, and must raise their children to be Canadians. Although they did socialize with other Finns in Canada, they did not say anything about the families they left in Finland. . – (G+E-, #1093, **Male**, 1942, Ontario, **100%**, **1<sup>st</sup>/1<sup>st</sup>**, Doctorate)

I love being Finnish, but don't think it's a good idea to talk about it to non-Finns. . – (G+E–, #1198, **Female**, 1954, Maryland, **100%**, **2<sup>nd</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup>**, High school)

Being second generation, first generation didn't bring the culture into the family. We were not taught the language. Major disappointment. As I've grown older my Finnish heritage is becoming more and more important to me. The internet has opened the door. . – (G+E–, #1290, **Female**, 1952, Michigan, **100%**, **2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup>**, Associate)

To me being Finnish is exactly what I am, I can't remove it anymore than I could cut off my hands. I hold my politics and my heritage very deeply in my soul, and also on my face, everyone who comes into contact with me, will know these things about me in very short order. I am very pleased that I was born a Finn, of course we can not be proud of something we have no control over, but I feel this sense of pride none the less. – (G+E+, #24, **Male**, 1961, California, **100%**, **2<sup>nd</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup>**, some college)

I was taught to be very proud of being a Finn and to learn as much as I could about the Finnish culture (as well as other cultures). I never realized how very Finnish I was until I traveled to Finland and felt completely at home. .... Although I understand very little of the Finnish language I always recognize it when I hear it and get excited to share my ethnicity with fellow Finns. I remember fondly Finnish Festivals which included Bingo games held at various Finnish Halls in the area, when I was a child. Several of my Grandparents lived with us when I was young and therefore the Finnish language was prevalent. My sister and I would occasionally hear our names and know that they were talking about us but had no idea what was being said. I have many many memories of being a second generation Finn and growing up amid the Finnish community. – (G+E+, #50, **Female**, 1943, Washington, **100%**, **2<sup>nd</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup>**, some college)

We, the first generation Finns, often think that all the cultural offerings coming directly from Finland are the only right ones. The immigrants, new-comers in most cases, don't appreciate the Finnish-American culture, which really differs from the modern Finnish culture. I have heard the FinAm culture referred as a "stone age culture" by some immigrants. They don't know any better - yet. It takes many years for an average immigrant to understand the difference of these two cultures and only after that one is able to appreciate the richness and the variety of the FinAm culture. We need here the impact of the modern Finnish culture directly from Finland. Finnish language schools, Suomi-Koulus, FinnFests, Salolampi, folk music groups, etc. represent Finnish-American culture. It takes time for us to realize that we actually are not talking about the same concept. Only after understanding the difference one can start appreciating the richness of this local Finnish-American culture. I feel that both of those cultures are very important. We should support and maintain our Finnish-American culture, but also show what today's Finland has to offer and that way renew and enrich the tradition here. . – (G+E+, #502, **Female**, 1941, Washington, **100%**, **immigrant 1978**, bachelor)

I feel more Finnish than Finnish-American after living here for ten years. Then again, the identity is kind of split, because professionally I feel completely American or Minnesotan, and my nationality is rarely ever a topic of discussion - except with my co-workers. I feel completely Finnish when I'm with Finnish people and speaking Finnish. There is this dual identity going on. I was never patriotic when living in Finland but here I see everything about Finland through rose-colored glasses. Finland has become this glorified place that is somehow superior to everything else. This happens even though I'm aware of being biased. My most cherished Finnish "things" are rye bread, sauna, salmiakki, and Muumimukit, possibly even in that order. . – (G+E+, #548, **Female**, 1959, Minnesota, **100%**, **immigrant 1991**, master)

I feel myself strongly as a Finnish-American. But having lived in New York City for over 30 years and being exposed to so many different cultures and ethnic groups I identify myself

more and more as a citizen of the world. – (G+E+, #1073, **Female**, 1945, New York, **100%**, **immigrant 1967, master**)

As a Finnish Canadian child born to a Finn family I was always aware of the difference it made in my life. "We" were "different" and that was important. We had a strong cultural influence in our household. Food, Language, sauna, furnishings and books all played a role in signifying my identity. Neighbours of different origins knew we were Finn and for the most part respected that. "Sisu" was a trait that was prized in my family. I like the idea that I belong to a population that is special. I hope to convey that specialness to my son and to, someday, visit Finland. My roots and my heritage are very important to me. The story of the immigrant Finns is very powerful and I am proud to have such strong and brave ancestors. – (G+E+, #1971, **Male**, 1957, Ontario, **100%**, **2<sup>nd</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup>**, bachelor)

I consider myself an American, but the history of my family is important to me. My Finnish ancestry is mysterious because my great-grandfather, a Finnish immigrant, disappeared from his children's lives and from the family history after the death of his wife. He was the one I never knew about and his history, my Finnish ancestry, is hidden from me. My grandfather never spoke about him and he refused to speak Finnish to his children or grandchildren, even though he himself spoke nothing but Finnish until he was six. – (G-E-, #753, **Female**, 1971, North Dakota, **25%**, **4<sup>th</sup>**, bachelor)

Up until 1996, I thought my Grandfather had come from Sweden! When I began my research I discovered the place he had described so lovingly was in Finland! I visited Finland to see the sights he saw and walk the streets he walked and eat the foods he so enjoyed. It was a wonderful experience and I was very proud to have roots in this beautiful country. I am very unsure how to answer some questions, because I think of myself as a hyphenated Swede-Finn. However, my best girlfriend is "pure" Finn and assures me that we can both claim Finland. – (G-E-, #1151, **Female**, 1957, Maryland, **25%**, **2<sup>nd</sup>**, bachelor)

I feel robbed of my heritage as so does my husband, also Finnish American. It seems as if all of our roots have been destroyed. All that has been said of our family tree is 'there are no criminals in our family and the rest is none of your business' We ca. – (G-E-, #1661, **Female**, 1965, Arkansas, **25%**, **3<sup>rd</sup>**, some college)

My grandmother married a black man in the 1920's her family disowned her. We never knew any of our Finnish relatives ... my grandmother was wounded all her life because of the decision she made. I know she had many happy times but she missed her family ... she had 3 children and was a great mother. I was raised by her also and I thank God for her. I miss her dearly ... I am proud of being black and Finn. – (G-E-, #1837, **Female**, 1947, Ohio, **25%**, **3<sup>rd</sup>**, some college)

It is the most interesting part of my heritage, and, sadly, the one I have the least connection to. My mother's side is completely Irish, and my dad's father was Italian, so my Grandmother is the only connection I have to any Finnish heritage. I have studied some of the history (WWII, specifically), and like to identify myself as having some of the characteristically Finnish traits, although that is probably more desire than truth. I'm pretty sick of just being white American, and the Finnish culture is the one I would most like to connect myself with, although, as a white American, there seems to be no authentic way to do that. – (G-E-, #1950, **Male**, 1975, North Carolina, **25%**, **3<sup>rd</sup>**, some college)

I have no info as my grandfather (first generation, parents were immigrants) hated being the child of immigrants and tried to get rid of all signs of his past. He really worked hard at it and I know very little about his parents and their Finnish traditions. – (G-E-, #1953, **Female**, 1971, Illinois, **25%**, **3<sup>rd</sup>**, bachelor)

My father always stressed the importance of being a proud Finn, but since my mother is of German descent, she empathized that part of my heritage. I don't think too much about whether I am of Finnish heritage or any other heritage, just that I am proud to be an American. As I get older (I am now 29) and have children, I may feel it important to pass on my Finnish heritage. – (G–E–, #2138, **Male**, 1974, Ohio, **25%**, **3<sup>rd</sup>**, high school)

First of all, I am an American, which do not take lightly! Next, I have a Finnish Heritage which is very important to me. I believe that this heritage has had a significant impact on my character. I do not, however, like the term of Finnish-American as it is too devicive to the character of the country of which I am a citizen. America has been a melting pot for many years and the 'hyphenization' of the various heritages has only segregated the peoples of this and other countries. A person is a CITIZEN of a country with HERITAGE of either that or another country. I hope your report can bring people together without segregating them from the rest of their society!. – (G–E+, #592, **Male**, 1943, Montana, **12,5%**, **2<sup>nd</sup>**, associate)

I am very proud of my Finnish heritage. Although it only makes up 25% of my total pedigree, it has been very important to me, giving me a sense of identity. It developed as my father would tell me stories about his grandparents coming to America and speak. – (G–E+, #1669, **Female**, 1970, Michigan, 25%, 3rd, master)

I have always been proud of being part Finnish; I don't know many people who are of Finnish descent, so it's a bit of a novelty in my area. I kept my Finnish maiden name when I married, partially because the name is so rare. I have always felt more Finnish-American than Irish-American although more of my ancestors came from Ireland. When I was growing up, my household didn't seem to follow any Finnish customs at all, however I recently gave my husband an article describing the temperament, customs, etc. of Finns, and he laughed and said that the article described me perfectly. So I guess the traditions are passed down whether a family intends to or not! – (G–E+, #1959, **Female**, 1975, New Hampshire, **25%**, **3<sup>rd</sup>**, some college)

I am very proud to be Finnish. I'm more Austrian Hungarian than Finnish, but for some reason, the pride of being Finnish is always there the most. My mother instilled it in all three of her girls. I would like to get more involved with the Finnish Cultural Center. Although my children will only be 1/8 Finnish, I will still instill in them the pride, history and culture of the great people they came from. – (G–E+, #2085, **Female**, 1969, Michigan, **25%**, **3<sup>rd</sup>**, associate)

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