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AN ETHNOGRAPHY OF NOSTALGIA: NORDIC MUSEUM CURATORS INTERVIEWING FINNISH IMMIGRANTS IN SWEDEN

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ABSTRACT

In using the concept of nostalgia as defined by anthropologist David Berliner, this article aims to analyze both the exo-nostalgia of the curators of the Nordic Museum in Stockholm, who researched the everyday life of immigrants from Finland in Sweden during the 1970s, and the endo-nostalgia of the immigrants themselves. The research is based on fourteen interviews conducted in 1974 in Upplands Väsby, Sweden, with migrants from Finland, who arrived from the late 1950s to the early 1970s. Because of the important role of food in daily culture, especially the importance of heritage food for immigrants, the article focuses on food-related nostalgia. After an introduction to the ideas of the museum project and about the conditions of the fieldwork, the text contains the description of how the interviewees followed their own nostalgia and how they found the expected nostalgia of their interviewees by asking questions about the émigrés' daily food consumption. Most of the Finns interviewed came from relatively urban backgrounds. However, they were still portrayed as rustic.

HERITAGE FOOD AND NOSTALGIA

The Nordic Museum (Nordiska museet) in Stockholm, Sweden, provides an immigrant perspective on the question of nostalgia and heritage food raised recently by several scholars. It is assumed that for immigrants, the consumption of heritage foods is a way of remembering the land of their birth and their homeland. Food is associated with family and traditions, and it is a direct link to a person's cultural identity (Holak 2014, 188). A widely used metaphor is that an immigrant packs her

luggage and brings a piece of her homeland to the new country, including culinary practices. The Swedish folklorist, Barbro Klein, writes:

Traditional songs, celebrations, and holiday foods are so flexible and adjustable that they can play a particularly important role in situations of migration and resettlement. These forms are embodied and sensory: they live in gestures and color combinations, when people move together to the sound of familiar music, or when the aroma of selected foods wafts through the air. (Klein 2006, 10)

Food scholars have also stressed that everyday cooking is as meaningful as festive foods. Finnish ethnologist Maarit Knuutila sees cooking, on the one hand, as an everyday skill and, on the other hand, as an act that communicates cultural meanings (Knuutila 2006, 29).

Daniel L. Weller and David Turkon (2015, 61) argue that most first-generation immigrants, including those who have no memories of their heritage country, have deep emotions toward food. For them, consumption of heritage foods is not only an act of nostalgia but also one of resistance that expresses their identity in a physical, tangible way and confronts the cultural homogenization of their new homeland. Earlier research has shown that this is exactly what happened with Finnish immigrants after they had lived several decades in Sweden. The Christmas foods most appreciated by Finnish immigrants were different kinds of casseroles not traditional in Swedish families (Snellman 2003, 235). There are still special shops that sell Finnish heritage foods in Sweden: a March 2015 headline of a lead article in the newspaper *Helsingin Sanomat* read, "Finns long for liver casserole in Sweden" (*Helsingin Sanomat*, March 31, 2015).

In her study of Jewish heritage food in postwar Montreal, Andrea Eidinger stresses that nostalgia is the key ingredient in ethnic food, when prepared by someone who has family history in mind while cooking. Cooks strive to get their family recipe "just right" (Eidinger 2012, 189). Scholars tend to think that heritage food and foodways are a physical means through which immigrants maintain ties to and remember the world they emigrated from (e.g., Holak 2014; Mapril 2012; Holtzman 2006; Wilk 1999). However, scholars also assume that new food patterns arise as immigrants live in a new environment. That was exactly the hypothesis the curators of the Nordic Museum in Stockholm had when they launched a massive research project, "Migration Finland–Sweden" in the beginning of the 1970s. The curators of the museum were interested in their informants' Finnish identity in

everyday life: the researchers expected to witness Finnishness, and the informants were expected to perform “Finnishness.” A touch of Swedish influence was also anticipated as a result of immigrant experience (Snellman 2010).

This essay describes the Nordic Museum’s first project dealing with immigrants to Sweden and discusses how Finnish immigrants relate to their heritage food in a new cultural environment. Even though nostalgia has been discussed in several studies lately, ethnographies of nostalgia are still scarce. Nostalgia nonetheless constitutes a fascinating site for studying issues of identity, politics, and history (Angé and Berliner 2015, 1). Anthropologist David Berliner distinguishes between two fundamental postures: nostalgia for the past one has lived personally (endo-nostalgia) and nostalgia for a past not experienced personally (exo-nostalgia). David Berliner argues that when anthropologists in the West were building a science on nostalgia for disappearing distant Others, ethnographic interest in the popular and rural led to the institutionalization of European ethnology and folklore studies in the second half of the nineteenth century in Western Europe. At the time of the interviews carried out by the Nordic Museum, ethnology still rested on combined ideas about the fragility of traditional societies and the impact of modern times, often expressed in a pre-apocalyptic tone. That idea is so deeply rooted in ethnologists’ disciplinary exo-nostalgia that even the curators of the Nordic museum were writing “cultural obituaries,” though not perhaps consciously (Berliner 2015, 19–22).

The data I am using in the following enable me to analyze both endo-nostalgia of Finnish immigrants in Sweden and exo-nostalgia of curators of the Nordic Museum doing the interviews: I have analyzed fourteen interviews conducted in Upplands Väsby with Finnish-speaking families in 1974.¹ The interviews deal with a variety of topics, but in the following I analyze only the parts of the interviews that address culinary practices.

1 The interviews were conducted in Finnish by Lea Joskitt from the University of Jyväskylä, and Birger Grape, a curator from the Nordic Museum. The interviews were not taped, and the transcriptions were based on handwritten notes. After the interview Lea Joskitt wrote a fieldwork report and a transcription of her interview in Finnish. The Finnish transcriptions were translated into Swedish, but the name of the translator is not known. Birger Grape was a speaker of Meänkieli, a dialect of Finnish spoken at Sweden’s northern border with Finland. He conducted his interviews in Finnish and made transcriptions and fieldwork reports in Swedish himself. The interviews were transcribed as if they were first-hand accounts. The interview citations in the text have been translated into English by Hanna Snellman.

THE “MIGRATION FINLAND–SWEDEN” PROJECT IN UPPLANDS VÄSBY

The project “Migration Finland–Sweden” (1972–1990) was carried out in collaboration with the Department of Geography from the University of Umeå, Sweden, and the Department of Ethnology, University of Jyväskylä, thus continuing the strong ties of European ethnology with practicing museums (cf. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2012, 199). Its primary objective was “to examine the assimilation and ethnic identity of Finnish immigrants, in other words the extent to which the Finns had adapted to Swedish society” (Snellman 2010, 48). Upplands Väsby, near Stockholm, was chosen as one of the sites to conduct the research. In 1990, eighteen years after the funding application had been submitted, the final report, *När finländarna kom* (When the Finns came), was published (Häggström, Borgegård, and Rosengren 1990).

Until the 1950s, Upplands Väsby was just a small farming community situated along the Uppsala–Stockholm railway line. From the 1950s onward, it grew rapidly because of the industrial boom. For example, the Marabou chocolate factory moved there in the 1970s. At Marabou, about half of the workforce of 750 had been born in Finland and two-thirds of the workforce was women. Men also had an abundance of jobs to choose from in the metal industry. In many ways, Upplands Väsby provides a good example of the Swedish immigrant community of post-war Sweden, which was also the reason why the Nordic Museum chose the community to be part of the project: In the 1950s, the majority of Finnish immigrants came from the Swedish-speaking communities of Ostrobothnia. Finnish immigration reached its peak at the end of 1960s when the majority of immigrants were coming from Finnish-speaking communities in northern and eastern Finland and big cities (by Finnish standards). In the 1960s, the majority of the Finnish immigrants lived in apartments in one of eight baby-blue seven-floor apartment buildings in the center of Upplands Väsby. In 1990, fifteen years after the documentation, there were 30,000 inhabitants in Upplands Väsby, of whom one-fifth had been born outside Sweden and every one-tenth in Finland (Snellman 2008, 4).

The ethnological project of the Nordic Museum in Upplands Väsby consisted mainly of interviews and photographic documentation conducted in people’s homes and of participant observation (Rosengren 2006, 105). Interviews were made in collaboration with the geographers who were involved in the project. People were selected from the geographers’ material to give ethnological interviews according to certain criteria, the time of immigration being the most important criterion. Some of the interviewees were found using the snowball method. The Nordic Museum’s archives contain sixty folders of written-up interviews, photographs, ground and

layout plans of homes, school essays, and other material. There are six folders containing material solely from Upplands Väsby. The interviewees had either immigrated to Sweden between 1958 and 1963 or 1970 and 1972, and they were born between the 1890s and 1960s. About half of the interviewees spoke Swedish as their mother tongue. Usually the whole family or at least both parents were present at the interview. The interviewers were either curators of the Nordic Museum or graduate students from the University of Jyväskylä. In my analysis, the names of the interviewees are pseudonyms. The interviews have no code numbers.

I have not found any evidence of a research plan or an interview form, but having studied the interviews carefully, it is obvious that the interviewers followed a strict interview questionnaire. The interviewers considered the interviewees as “informants,” who were expected to provide them with information in large quantities to be analyzed later in a positivistic tone by the researchers. Everything was supposed to be comparable, and therefore a large number of interviews were necessary. The interview transcripts, in accordance with practices of the 1970s, rely mostly on handwritten notes and were not taped. After the interview, the interviewer wrote a report and submitted a transcription of his or her notes (Tyrfelt 1977, 2). The interviews were generally conducted in the interviewee’s mother tongue, i.e., either Finnish or Swedish. The Finnish transcriptions have been translated into Swedish. The interviews lasted for hours and always followed the same pattern. The same keywords can be found in the margins of the transcribed interviews: people, language, milieu, celebrations, ceremonies, holidays, food, contacts with the fatherland, free time, studying and culture, folklore, contrasts, views and values, and the future. In the following, the citations from the interviews have been translated into English by me.

The fieldwork diaries describe in detail how the interview was arranged and the circumstances under which it was conducted. Reading these diaries enables us to catch a glimpse of the everyday lives of Finnish immigrants in Sweden at the beginning of the 1970s. We can read, for example, how Lea Joskitt from the University of Jyväskylä rang the doorbell at one of the baby-blue seventh-floor apartment houses of Upplands Väsby on October 14, 1974, at 6 p.m., and a girl, aged seven years, opened the door and, according to the fieldwork report, “looked astonished” at the interviewer. Her father, aged 35, peeked from the bathroom door with his face covered with shaving foam, and asked the interviewer to come in. He complained that their color TV—apparently a very expensive purchase—had broken. After a while he came to the living room and started drinking beer; after ten minutes, the

mother also joined them, curlers in her hair. The interviewer introduced herself, and they started the interview. According to the fieldwork report, the father usually answered the question first and after that the mother gave her opinion, usually different from the husband’s, or she just added something new to the answer. To questions about cooking, the mother, a factory worker around thirty years of age with three children, usually answered alone. In what follows, this family and their neighbors will become familiar to the reader. The transcriptions of the interviews enable us to peek into the kitchens and living rooms of Finnish immigrants in Upplands Väsby and to discuss the role of nostalgia in their food practices.²

THE SEARCH FOR VANISHING SOCIETIES

One of the interviewees, 33-year-old Anneli, who worked as a metal worker at the Optimus mill, described her family’s everyday culinary practices as follows: “We both come from poor families. We are not used to any fancy food. Especially not vegetables, other than potatoes that we ate at home. We have not learned to cook any special foods, because we have not gone to school. Gravy and potatoes, potatoes and gravy, that’s what we have always eaten at home.” It appears in the interview transcription that the interviewers did not accept such a plain culinary practice, and they almost forced the interviewees to describe a more nuanced culinary diet. The interviewers simply did not accept answers such as those above, but followed the script described below.

The questions had a strong “before and now” initial setting, the “before” being the life and traditions in Finland, and the “after the new life” in Sweden. At first, the curators tried to discover information about heritage food they assumed was typically Finnish, almost primeval Finnish, and after that they proceeded to questions dealing with what they thought constituted a Swedish influence on the immigrants’ culinary choices. The same keywords appear in the margins of each interview: bread (Swed. *bröd*), “*memma*” (Swed.), pastries (Swed. *pajer*), casseroles (Swed. *lådor*), stews (Swed. *grytor*), sausages (Swed. *korv*), soups (Swed. *soppor*), “*talkkuna*” (Finn.), porridge (Swed. *gröt*), thin porridge (Swed. *välling*), meat (Swed. *kött*), blood foods (Swed. *blodmat*), milk (Swed. *mjök*), cheese (Swed. *ost*), vegetables (Swed. *grönsaker*), marmalade (Swed. *marmelad*), beer (Swed. *öl*), tobacco (Swed. *tobak*), sweets (Swed. *sötsaker*). The first questions concerned the baking of bread, then questions about other dishes prepared in the oven: “*mämmi*” (Swed. *memma*, a traditional Easter

² From here on, the material referred to is Migrationen Finland-Sverige, sign. KU 10583, Folders Migrationen Finland-Sverige. Upplands Väsby. Intervjuer och foton (fi spr). Archives of the Nordic Museum, Stockholm.

dessert made of malted rye); barley pastries (also known as Karelian pastries), and other pastries; casseroles, hot pots, and sausages. After the oven-made foods, the interviews continued with questions about different soups and then went on to food made of grain: porridge, thin porridge (Finn. *velli*), and "talkkuna." The latter is a finely milled flour mixture prepared differently in different parts of Finland. In northern Finland, it is cooked and in the south it is eaten with thick or thin sour milk (Finn. *viili* and *piimä*). Next on the menu were questions about meat dishes and blood. After meat and blood, milk products, vegetables, and roots were pursued. Next beer was discussed, then sweets such as marmalade and candies. Most likely the curators assumed that marmalade, beer, tobacco, and sweets were consumer goods one often purchased on the ferry between Sweden and Finland.



Figure 1. Herring rolls served in 1953. Photo Atte Hyvärinen. Courtesy of the Finnish Labour Museum Werstas.

The curators of the Nordic Museum had apparently read the Finnish ethnological research literature of the time carefully and were aware of the fact that, traditionally, Finland was basically divided into two areas. In eastern Finland, typically, fresh bread in the agrarian household of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was baked every week. In western Finland, however, bread was baked only a couple of times per year. Even the shape of the bread was different; in the

east, bread was shaped into loaves, and in the west, bread was flat and round with a hole in the middle. The hole was necessary, because the bread was dried on thin horizontal poles close to the ceiling of the living room of the dwelling. Both were made of rye flour (Talve 1977). This ethnological literature described life in log buildings in the Finnish countryside sometime before the twentieth century, and did not represent the urbanized Finland of the twentieth century. Thus, the curators asked anachronistic questions about everyday practices dealing with bread. They did not get descriptions of baking either the eastern or western way, but rather they were told how their informants did not like Swedish bread, mostly because it was too sweet. The mother of the girl who opened the door for the interviewer in one of the baby-blue houses, 29-year-old Liisa, who was born in Helsinki, responded to the question about bread in the following way: "My family does not eat a lot of Swedish bread, at least not bread with sugar. There is too much sugar in the Swedish bread. Bread made of wheat can be eaten occasionally, and also Swedish crisp bread, there is nothing wrong with the latter. Usually the family eats Finnish bread which usually is bought from the shops in Upplands Väsby, mostly from Domus." The curator did not give up easily but asked whether Liisa bakes Finnish bread at home. From her reply, one can sense the sarcasm: "Yes, sometimes . . . but there is not a big difference in the Finnish and Swedish bread I bake . . . one cannot always tell whether it is Finnish bread or Swedish bread, it can be a little of both [said with a smile]." The same miscommunication continues as the interview goes on: for example, Liisa said that she did not fry funnel cake (Finn. *tippaleipä*) for the First of May, her family did not eat "talkkuna," nor use sour milk in their diet. Both funnel cake and "talkkuna" were considered to be typical Finnish heritage foods by the interviewer.

Sarcasm is not always as obvious as in the example above, but in the majority of the interviews the interests of the curators and the informants did not meet. In the fieldwork report, the curator described how difficult it had been to interview another couple living in Upplands Väsby: "It was somewhat painful to interview about holidays and food even though the informants were not against these topics. It was very difficult to get information about special Finnish traditions." The answer to the majority of the food questions was accordingly negative: "No, we don't bake savory pies at home." "No, we are not in the habit of making 'mämmi' at home, but we have bought it and eaten at home," replied the informants to the questions of the curator. Another interview had the same outcome. The curator reported in his fieldwork diary that the couple he had interviewed had been very friendly, but it was very difficult to get information about Finnish traditions. The word "no" is a

typical way of starting a sentence. For example, “No, we do not drink beer at all, we get homemade beer (kvass) from Finland instead.” In Finnish, the word “beer” can mean both homemade beer and beer made at the brewery.

Many scholars have pointed out that nostalgia is an emotion that can be positive or bittersweet (e.g., Holak 2014, 185). The informant’s sarcasm can be seen as an emotional reaction toward the museum curators’ nostalgia. The latter were eager to revitalize their interviewees’ pasts, even to patronize and museumify them (see Gustavsson 2014). Disciplinary melancholia and exo-nostalgia (Berliner 2015, 19) exhibited by the curators of the Nordic Museum was thus the reason why the informants often found it very hard to understand what the questions were about. The presumption that a Finnish immigrant would most likely bake bread at home and in a different way according to her place of birth, eastern or western Finland, has already been mentioned. Reflections of the ethnological research literature in the curators’ questions can be found elsewhere, too. When the curator asked about practices dealing with milk products, what he had in mind was most likely the ethnological map of Finland with different kinds of methods for conserving milk in different cultural areas. What he got were answers such as the following: “Milk for meals. She eats sour milk (Finn. *piimä*) and another type of Nordic sour milk (Finn. *viili*) in a bowl with *talkkuna*. Edam, *Koskenlaskija* butter cheese or *Regent port salut* cheese. She fetched the latter from the refrigerator, because she did not remember the name.” A modern apartment, of course, had a refrigerator, so conserving milk the traditional way as cheese or sour milk was not necessary. Again, the interviewers were looking for reflections of cultural areas of Finland, where the eastern and western parts of the country had different traditions for conserving milk (cf. Ränk 1966).

Nostalgia is also often used when describing how something is lacking in a changed present—a “yearning for what is now unattainable simply because of the irreversibility of time,” as Pickering and Keightley (2006, 920) put it. In addition to examples from bread and milk products, the interview data are rich with other examples of the museum curators’ nostalgic attitude toward Finnish heritage food, not the Finnish immigrants’ nostalgic attitudes about it. Conserving meat and other animal products was equally as important in rural Finland as conserving milk. Questions about meat, blood, and sausages thus had again roots in the ethnological research literature (see Talve 1979: 113–14). The interviewees did not elaborate on slaughter practices, or on smoking the meat and using the entrails and blood for sausage-making, as expected, but on modern ways of preserving meat products.

One interviewee told the curator that they bought a whole pig from the countryside every fall and preserved the meat in a freezer. The mother of the family, however, told the curator that she would actually prefer canned beef.

When the curators were searching for vanishing societies (Angé and Berliner 2015, 4), most of the time the interviewees did not have a clue to what the interview questions were about. Different kinds of bread baked in eastern and western Finland were a consequence of a different type of vernacular architecture, namely fireplaces. In the east, the fireplaces had an oven, and therefore bread was baked on a weekly basis. In the west, however, a fireplace in the living room (Finn. *pirtti*) was not used for baking; bread was baked in a different building (see Valonen 1963). In the wintertime, it would have been a waste of firewood to bake every week in a building not used for any other purpose. In addition to baking bread, people living in eastern Finland made other kinds of food in the oven. The curators of the Nordic Museum knew that very well and had a set of questions about casseroles and savory pies, typical of the rural culinary practices of eastern Finland. But again, curators’ nostalgia constitutes an idealized self-image of Finland from earlier centuries, not of the 1970s (Bryant 2015). When the curators had so-called Karelian pastries (Finn. *karjalanpiirakka*) and other savory pies in mind, the informant, born in the industrial town of Nokia in southern Finland, where such baked goods were not traditional, did not understand the question, and thought the curator was asking about pizzas. I have concluded that from the transcribed interview of Sirkka, a woman in her forties working at the nearby hospital: “Savory pies: Sirkka did not really know what I meant. She mixed up pies and pizza. She said that she had once bought a pizza, but did not like it, because it was too spicy. Sirkka then assumed that Swedish pie and Finnish berry or fruit pie are the same. That, she had baked.”

LONGING FOR CLEARLY DEFINED BOUNDARIES

Cultural anthropologist Rebecca Bryant has argued that one of nostalgia’s basic functions is to portray ourselves in ways that we would like to see ourselves. This is why nostalgia is often present at times of liminality and identity confusion: “because nostalgia represents not a longing for a forgotten past, but rather a *longing for essentialism*, a longing for a simplified representation of ourselves that is no longer available to us” (Bryant 2015, 156). Nostalgia’s propensity to sustain social identities in the context of rapid change has been discussed in the same vein (Angé 2015, 179). The migrant setting is a textbook example of such nostalgia: Finnish migrants in Upplands Väsby did cook the way they were used to—if possible—but

they also wanted to emphasize foodstuffs that both they and the interviewer knew were Finnish. Mutual understanding between the curators and informants was even stronger in cases where the food stuffs discussed were typical for Finland but not for Sweden. An interviewee's nostalgia was a longing for a clearly defined identity with its clearly defined boundaries (Bryant 2015, 171).

That endo-nostalgia also fulfilled the expectations of the curators in reconstructing Finnish immigrant culinary practices. The same Liisa, who had ironically pointed out that whether she bakes the Finnish way or the Swedish way described above is irrelevant, told the interviewer that she used to bake pies at home during her early years in Sweden. She no longer did that, but rather bought blueberry pies from the crockery store in Upplands Väsby when they were available, thus proving the hypothesis of the study as being appropriate: Finnish immigrants followed their Finnish traits and adopted new culinary practices as well.

Oven-made foods, casseroles, and stews were an easy topic for both the curator and the informant, because they were, by definition, "Finnish" for both. From the answers, one can read between the lines that the informant could please the curator with her answer and there was no lack of understanding: "She often makes different kinds of casseroles, for example, Baltic herring casserole, sausage casserole, meatloaf casserole, carrot casserole, and rutabaga casserole. Of stews she makes Karelian stew quite often," summarized the curator of Liisa's interview. Anni, born in 1929 in northeastern Finland, had answered similarly: "M [the husband] and A [the wife] eat casseroles often. A makes different kinds of casseroles, for example, Baltic herring casserole, meat casserole, fish casserole, liver casserole, potato casserole, macaroni casserole, and some others too, carrot casserole and rutabaga casserole during Christmas." Another informant came close: "They do not make casseroles at home very often. But it happens that they buy food that is similar, but not very often. Stews they make sometimes, for example, 'palapihvi' (verbatim, piece beef) and roast." Also cultural knowledge about soups, porridge, and the more liquid version of it, thin porridge, was shared by both the curators and the informants: "The family eats soups often, for example, meat soup, fish soup, and pea soup. Porridge every once in a while. Everyone in the family likes porridge made from whipped semolina and lingonberries, and that porridge [Finn. *vispipuuro*] is eaten regularly. The family does not eat thin porridge that often," as Liisa's interview transcript has it. "I buy pea soup in a tin can quite often, and I always have a can of pea soup in reserve in case I don't have time to go to the grocery store. Those occasions I always eat pea soup. I also cook meat soup quite often, always more than

I need in one meal, for two or three meals. Thin porridge I don't make that often for the same reason; I don't make porridge that often. It does not keep hunger away," said Heta, a woman who earlier had worked as a cleaner and now was working as a metal worker. A reference to the need for energy and, therefore, to manual labor can also be interpreted as a reference to class.

There were also several informants who did bake at home, eat or even make *mämmi* at home, and who brought *talkkuna* ingredients from Finland. Their culinary practices were described with delight—though only read between lines. Anni's interview must have been quite easy to conduct for the curator, who was looking for foodways she thought were Finnish, because the only item in the menu she answered with a "no" was a question about whether they drink Finnish or Swedish beer; her answer was neither, because they did not drink beer at all. However, she made kvass (Finn. *kalja*) and mead (Finn. *sima*) at home, among several other Finnish heritage foods:

M and A eat both Finnish and Swedish bread, but they do not eat Swedish bread with sugar. They buy rye bread from Upplands Väsby.

Question: "Do you bake Finnish bread at home?" Answer, A: "Yes . . . and often when we lived in Kiruna . . . not so often nowadays . . . our oven is not as good here so I bake Finnish bread approximately once a month."

A has the habit of baking other goods with a Finnish background where bread has an important role, for example, fish baked inside a loaf of bread (Finn. *kalakukko*) or potatoes baked inside a loaf of bread (Finn. *perunakukko*).

A usually bakes goods for the coffee table and bread made with wheat flour (Finn. *pulla*). Mostly she bakes these and does not buy. Funnel cakes she makes seldom. A: "There's a lot of fat." Doughnuts she makes often.

Question: "Do you bake savory pastries at home?" Answer, A: "Yes! . . . and always a lot at one time. I put them in the freezer, those that we do not eat immediately."

Question: "Do you make *mämmi* at home?" Answer, A: "Yes, I made *mämmi*, often when we lived in Kiruna . . . I made *mämmi* for our friends, too

. . . yes, I make *mämmi*, here in Visby, too, during Easter, it is a typical Easter food . . . I have also taught Swedes to eat it." A also makes pies, for example blueberry pies.

A makes first and foremost a lot of homemade food. It would be too expensive to buy all these foods, because they could not afford it. It takes time, but is worth it. In Finland M and A were used to going out in nature and getting ingredients from there.

Food made in the oven A and M eat often. A: "In fact, every day." Meat is the most important ingredient in such foods. M and A eat Finnish sausages every once in a while. They usually buy sausages from Finland when they are visiting. Sometimes they eat Swedish breakfast sausages. They eat soups regularly, for example, meat soup and pea soup and others. They eat porridge every once in a while. A makes porridge made from whipped semolina and lingonberries in the fall, when they can find lingonberries. They eat meat as a main course about three times a week. All kinds of food made from blood are common, for example, blood pancakes, blood sausage, and black pudding. Blood sausages A both makes herself and buys.

They both prize *talkkuna*. They eat *talkkuna* regularly. A usually buys the ingredients from Finland and then makes it herself at home.

Anni was a dream interviewee in the project because she represented "the kind of Finn" the curators had expected to meet.

Andreea Deciu Ritivoi sees nostalgia as a defense mechanism designed to maintain a stable identity by providing continuity among various stages in a person's life. For her, the concept of nostalgia mandates a constant search for the self, an effort to define and redefine identity by pondering its prior stages of manifestation, and by finding connections between the past and the present, as well as anticipating the future (Ritivoi 2002, 10). One of the obstacles in carrying out daily tasks in an immigrant setting very often relates to difficulties in accessing the ingredients or tools required to make heritage food (see Snellman 2015). The data collected by the Nordic Museum give plenty of examples of this: Heta, a metal worker in her late forties, already mentioned above, talked about language problems:

In the grocery shop I only buy things that I don't have to say anything about. I buy cheese in a package, and also meat. I have seen Finnish sausages at the counter, but I don't want to go there and buy them, because I would need to speak Swedish, and they think that there comes a good-for-nothing Finn again and slows things down. I rather do without and eat more when I travel to Finland. It will taste better there. Once I did buy cheese at the counter. My daughter was ill and could not eat anything, and I thought that now I am asking for cheese, no matter what; she perhaps could eat it because it is Finnish, but it did not help either.

She also gave an example of how difficult it was to cook the flagship meals of Finnish origin, oven foods, because the right kitchen equipment was lacking. Continuity was thus conserved when she found the right type of Finnish-made iron pot from the shop:

I did not even have a pot [for making casseroles and other food in the oven] for quite some time. I had tried and tried to find a proper pot made of iron, but there aren't any at the stores. Finally I did find an Arabia³ pot from Konsum in the center, and even on sale. I bought it immediately, because I wanted to make doughnuts, and I also use it in making Karelian stews and genuine casseroles.

CONTRASTING THE FINNISH AND THE SWEDISH

Drawing contrasts is a crucial strategy in nostalgia; many times one looks back in time, as mentioned above, but one can draw contrasts in other ways, too. The data collected by the Nordic Museum are filled with contrasts between Finland and Sweden, and also between Finnish foodways and Swedish foodways. There is only one example when Swedish food is described as being better than the Finnish. One of the interviewees reported that the Swedish sour milk (Finn. *viili*) was excellent. All other answers reported the contrary.

As mentioned above, Swedish bread is described as being too sweet. Crisp bread is a little better, "there's nothing wrong with it," but "the best bread is Finnish bread," says Pekka, a man in his thirties. "The family buys both Finnish and Swedish bread, but they prefer Finnish bread. It is the best and healthiest [or 'useful']; the Swedish word *nyttig* has several meanings, so it is difficult to know what the

³ Arabia is the flagship of the Finnish porcelain industry. The mill was established in 1873 in Helsinki and is still functioning today.

interviewee meant] and the bread we were used to earlier,” report Henrik and Anna, who had migrated to Sweden in 1964.

The competition between Finnish and Swedish sausages provoked strong emotions as well: “We eat a lot of sausages. Swedish *falusausages* and *frankfurters* we eat often. But the Swedish sausages are not as good as the Finnish,” answers Pekka, while his wife Liisa continues: “Finnish sausages are better and we mostly buy them. When there are Finnish weeks in Upplands Väsby’s shops, it is possible to buy Finnish sausages. But usually they are often sold out already on the opening day.” Another interviewee plays with words and says that the only alternative is to eat good sausages in Finland and to suffer in Sweden (in Swedish: “*äter då man är där och lider här*”). She had not bought sausages very often because the other Finns had complained so much about Swedish sausages that she had not dared to. When I was doing fieldwork in Gothenburg, Sweden, in 2000, I learned that there had been several Finnish grocery stores in Gothenburg with a Finnish name, “*Makkarakauppa*,” which translates to *Sausage shop* in English. To evaluate Finnish sausages as being so much better than Swedish sausages was an identity project. Holiday traditions were also battlefields for resistance: “These Swedes are so peculiar, because they celebrate Midsummer when it is the First of May. In the beginning it was peculiar,” reported a man named Leo. Other interviewees also pointed out that in Sweden they celebrated the First of May with bonfires, which is a typical way of celebrating Midsummer in Finland. From my own fieldwork in Gothenburg between 2000 and 2003, my informants made fun of Swedish Midsummer traditions, because the Swedes were singing Christmas carols at Midsummer. Celebrating holidays in the Finnish way and especially eating Finnish heritage food during Christmas was extremely important, even after forty years in Sweden.

As mentioned above, the interviews proceeded from presumably Finnish foods to foods with Swedish influence. Brown beans are an example of the latter. The habit of eating them was addressed together with questions about vegetables and roots. The curator summarized Heta’s answer as follows: “Brown beans she had not tasted or bought. I don’t eat anything if I don’t know what it is.” Children of families with a Finnish background were, of course, familiar with Swedish food, because they had it at school. Anita, a thirteen-year-old interviewee, liked both brown and white beans and also *pölsa*, a Swedish hash-type heritage food resembling the Scottish *haggis* and often including liver, heart, ground beef or minced pork, onion, and pot barley. Her mother said she would not dare to taste it. The Swedish foods divided opinions in other families, too. For example, the interview of Kari and Saija, both in

their thirties, after having lived in Sweden for more than a decade, illustrates it well: “Saija likes brown beans a lot with pork prepared in the authentic Swedish way. Kari [the husband]: ‘It is that kind of food a proper housewife [*husmor* in Swedish] does not give even to pigs.’ When Saija eats beans she cooks something else for Kari.” For the record, one can mention that Kari had prejudices toward Finnish heritage foods, too, or at least *talkkuna*: “We in eastern Finland are so civilized that we cook the food before we eat it.” His comment could be an outcome of questions concerning the differences between the east and the west by the curator, too, and showing resentment towards the interview. With their ethnological mindset, the curators must have had many questions regarding how traditions differed in various parts of Finland, especially if the husband and wife came from different cultural areas (Gustavsson 2014).

Nonetheless, it was not only the informants that provided contrast; the curators also did. In addition to looking for different kinds of cultural area pasts, the curators were constantly looking for signs of agrarian traditions from the interviewees’ answers in general. When the interviewee described her or his practice, which could be interpreted as a sign of rusticity, it was documented in the transcription with great delight. The same applied to home interiors. Spinning wheels, horse collars, churns, flails, and also souvenir kitsch brought from Finland and used to decorate the home were carefully photographed. For some reason, the researchers were always eager to report on whether the interviewee had a copper coffee pot as an ornament; these seemed to be common. Everyone was asked how she prepared her coffee. The answer was always the same: interviewees drank coffee often, and all of them cooked their coffee in a coffee pot, not in a coffee maker. The agrarian default also dictated that a Finnish woman would bake, the family would have a plot for potatoes, and if that was not possible, there would be root vegetables stored on the balcony, and they would have smoked meat whenever possible. However, as Svetlana Boym has also pointed out, homes are personal memory museums, but the stories the owners of immigrant homes tell about their objects reveal more about making a home abroad than about reconstructing the original loss (Boym 2001, 328).

CONCLUSION

The German ethnologists Regina Bendix and Michaela Fenske indicate that everything can be read politically, including eating. State banquets are understandably political, but intimate family meals are too. For ethnologists, eating is a form of

political action on a smaller stage such as within the family or in a larger setting where public acts play out (Bendix and Fenske 2014, 17–18). The politics discussed in this essay touch upon several topics, including how Finnish immigrants in Sweden came to be of interest to the Nordic Museum as the curators realized that immigrants' lives should also be documented. Finnish immigrants were an example of the post-Second World War population exodus from eastern and southern rural areas of Europe to industrial and wealthier Sweden. Nostalgia understood in a broad sense formed the basis for documentation: curators of the museum were looking for the rustic past that they assumed the newcomers would also put into practice in the new cultural environment of suburban Sweden, including a dash of Swedish influence to season the outcome, becoming new people of Sweden. Partly, the informants were confused by the questions they were asked because they could not meet the expectations of the curators of the museum. Even so, the interviewers did not change the stock of questions, and the very same questions were asked over and over again of the next interviewees. From this short history of how ethnological knowledge was produced, we can surmise how little interaction there was between the interviewer and the interviewee.

Many of the interviewees had indeed migrated to Sweden from rural areas of Finland. For them, living in apartments with refrigerators and freezers was an improvement in the quality of life, and, in that sense they were not nostalgic about the old ways in Finland. Finnish immigrants in the suburbs did not necessarily have a potato plot, but they nevertheless were mostly able to eat the same everyday simple food they were used to in Finland. However, they did have difficulties in obtaining the necessary ingredients from grocery shops, because they were hesitant or unable to speak in Swedish, which was often necessary in shops in the 1970s. The informants were almost unanimous about one thing: Swedish food was not as good as Finnish food. Bread and sausages especially were crucial for the identity project of Finnish immigrants in Sweden. In making this statement, they were also nostalgic, but from different premises than those of the curators.

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