

Finns, Europeans, citizens of the world?

Identity construction of current-day expatriate Finns in the transnational world

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Abstract

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Abstract: This thesis investigates the transnational identities among current-day expatriate Finns around the world. It asks, what is the nature of transnational identity among these individuals who have emigrated from Finland? What is the level of their connectedness to their own Finnishness, on one hand, and to supranational identities such as Europeaness and internationality, on the other? The motivation to investigate the topic rises from the notion that the issues related to Finnish people in various expatriate communities, as well as their potential return migration, appears to have growing interest in Finland. The aim is also to contribute to the existing research literature by adding more contemporary theoretical approaches of migration studies to the investigations of expatriate Finns. The data (n=3195) was collected through a survey carried out in a research project titled "The Changing Nature of Being an Expatriate Finn: Survey on Emigration and Expatriate Finns" (The Migration Institute of Finland, 2020–2021). Cluster analysis as an example of the so-called person-centered analyses was chosen as a method. The benefits of cluster analysis go hand in hand with the awareness that the focus group, expatriate Finns, is not a homogenous group but that the motivations of these people to move abroad as well as their lifestyles and circumstances vary greatly.

Cluster analyses revealed three clearly different groups of people with respect to their Finnishness, Europeaness and internationality. In the first cluster, the three different identity markers were not seen as exclusionary, and a strong attachment to both the country of origin and the host country was not viewed to be incompatible. These individuals possessed the freedom to maintain and reject different sides of their identities depending on the context. The perspective of privilege was also considered, as their mobility was possible due to their relatively high quality of life and the social and human capital obtained over the years. Individuals in the second cluster gave high regard to Finnish identity which had often activated outside of Finland. Negative feelings, such as home sickness and disappointment in the life abroad, were also reported. These individuals also defined Finnishness in rather stereotypical ways and reduced the concept to a few well-known traits. This way, it was easy for them to emphasize their own belongingness to this homogenous category of Finns. Lastly, the individuals in the third cluster rejected the affiliation to the national identity of Finnishness altogether, their perceptions about Finland and other Finns varying from casual indifference to an apparent hostility. Instead, Europeaness and internationality were embraced as identities more inclusive and less particular.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Expatriate Finns are commonly understood as being Finnish citizens or people of Finnish origin who live permanently outside of Finland. It is estimated that the overall number of them is approximately 1,6 million, while around 300 000 of them hold a Finnish citizenship (Ministry of the Interior, 2021). Forming a clear quantitative analysis of the number of people who identify themselves as Finns is difficult, however. While most of these people live in the United States, Canada, and Australia, as a result of large historical migration flows from Finland to these areas particularly in the early 20th century, the people who hold a Finnish citizenship today mainly reside in other European Union countries. Of those, Sweden, Germany, Spain and the United Kingdom (as a former member of the EU) are the most popular countries of residence among expatriate Finns. In the case of Sweden, Finnish communities have existed for generations as the outcome of the so-called Forest Finns who moved to Sweden in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The labor-based emigration from Finland to Sweden in the 1960's and 70's has also resulted in over 700 000 people with Finnish origin in Sweden, making Sweden Finns the largest minority in the Nordic countries (Vilkman, 2019).

Finland-based scholarship has focused extensively on the phenomena related to these large emigration movements to North America, on one hand, and to Sweden, on the other. Much lesser research exists on the current-day movers: their motivations to leave Finland and their lives in their receiving countries. This diversifying expatriate Finnishness has also growing political and societal interest in Finland, as can be detected in the definition put forward by the Finnish government:

”Expatriate Finns share characteristics such as an awareness of their Finnish background and roots, the intention of preserving their Finnish identity and the need to maintain contacts with Finland.” (Ministry of the Interior, 2021)

While awareness and intention in relation to the Finnish roots and identity certainly exist among many expatriate Finns, the citation above seems to reflect more of the expectations of the sending country rather than the entire diverse group of Finnish people abroad whose motivations to leave, and potentially return, vary greatly. Concerns related to human capital flight, sometimes referred to as the “brain drain”, i.e., emigration of highly skilled and educated working-age Finns resulting in loss of human capital in Finland, have also raised awareness of the people choosing to live outside of their home country. The statistics show that the net immigration of Finnish citizens has been unprofitable in the 2010s even though the total net migration has been positive since the early 2000's (Official

Statistics Finland, 2021). In other words, persons with foreign background have kept Finland's net migration positive but at the same time more Finnish nationals have left than returned.¹

Another example of the awakening interests in expatriate Finns, and the desires to help them maintain strong connection to their old homeland, is the postal voting system made available for eligible voters living abroad since the parliamentary elections in spring 2019. As Peltoniemi (2018) has pointed out, the distance to the closest polling station can influence the decision to vote since lengthy distances to polling stations clearly decrease the likelihood to vote and is one of the main reasons why many expatriates choose not to vote. The postal vote opportunity was hence met with great excitement among many expatriates which, as mentioned before, include around 300 000 people and, as such, is no insignificant number of potential voters. To sum up my point about the growing attention to matters related to expatriate Finns, in February 2021 the Ministry of the Interior announced that they were in the process of updating Finland's strategy on expatriate Finns for 2022–2026. Together with several governmental bodies, non-governmental organizations and academia, their goal is to investigate new channels for expatriates to participate and exert influence in Finland as well as strengthen measures that enable Finns who are interested in returning with possible foreign spouses and children to settle in Finland “in an assisted and smooth manner” (Ministry of the Interior, 2021).

Finally, while it is obvious that there has been a growing societal interest towards the expatriate communities, it would be impossible to discount my personal experiences and motivations behind choosing this topic. On a more personal note, while the aforementioned developments have been occurring in the national context, my own status as an expatriate Finn has transformed into a returnee. My personal background, first as an expatriate Finn and then subsequently as a return migrant, has motivated me to scrutinize the topic of expatriate Finns and matters related to their identification.

As a result, the aim of this thesis is to investigate the transnational identities among the current-day expatriate Finns around the world. Using the data collected by The Migration Institute of Finland between September and December 2020 (see Appendix 1.), this thesis asks, what is the nature of transnational identity among current-day expatriate Finns? What is the level of their connectedness to their own ‘Finnishness’, on one hand, and to supranational identities such as ‘Europeanness’ and

¹ The total net migration loss of Finnish citizens has, however, clearly decreased since 2016 and has turned positive for the first time in 2020. It has been suggested that the reason for this change is the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic that has acted as a driver for some expatriates to return back to Finland due to uncertainties related to study, work and mobility. It is, however, difficult at this point in time to estimate the pandemic's long-term effects on return migration. (Statistics Finland, 2020; Jämsén, 2020).

‘internationality’, on the other? How do variables such as person’s age, education level or gender affect the formation and maintenance of their identity?

The data (n=3195) for this thesis was collected through a survey carried out in a research project titled “The Changing Nature of Being an Expatriate Finn: Survey on Emigration and Expatriate Finns” (The Migration Institute of Finland, 2020–2021).² The main goal of the survey was to gather up-to-date information about the diverse group of people who identify themselves as Finns and, as such, form a current overall picture of the Finnishness that is constructed, practiced, and maintained in different parts of the world. The relatively large survey, that covered various areas from expatriate networks to political activity, was openly accessible online between September and December 2020, and several hundreds of paper copies were also sent to potential participants around the world. Instead of looking at the survey results as a whole, I choose to focus on a section that deals with the identity of expatriate Finns. The nature of the survey and the methodological choices related to it will be discussed more thoroughly in chapter 3.

The structure of this thesis is as follow: First, I present the relevant recent research literature related to transnational identities. Next, I will introduce my data and discuss relevant methodological as well as theoretical background. After that, I will move on to the results which will be analyzed in depth. Discussion will conclude the thesis.

² The survey project was a collaboration between The Migration Institute of Finland, The Department for International Relations of the Church Council (Kirkkohallituksen ulkoasiain osasto), Finland Society (Suomi-Seura), Finnish Seamen’s Mission (Suomen Merimieskirkko) and The Finnish Lifelong Learning Foundation (Kansanvalistusseura). The final report was written by Tuomas Hovi, Miika Tervonen and the author of this thesis, and it was published in June 2021.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter discusses the relevant literature related to the main concepts of this thesis: mobility, transnationalism, expatriates, and social identity. I aim to show how these key concepts have been defined in the recent research literature that is relevant to my thesis. My goal is also to bring the review down to the Finnish level; while the pool of research in the Finnish context is much smaller and newer, it is necessary to investigate how transnationalism and expatriate Finnish communities have been researched in the past.

2.1 Contemporary mobilities and transnationalism

“Mobility is essentially a search for better economic, working, and living conditions; a search for food, love, and shelter; in other words, a search for happiness.” (La Barbera, 2015, p. 4)

Rapid changes in the world particularly in recent decades, such as increased and diversified mobility flows of people in the post-cold war world and new digital communication technologies, have transformed the nature of contemporary migration. It has become much more diverse, connected, and mobile. According to International Organization for Migration (2020), the number of international migrants, i.e., people living outside of their country of origin, has increased in all parts of the world but particularly in Europe and Asia, making the total number of migrants in the world 281 million people. This is around 3,6 per cent of the total population of the world. While the motivations to migrate and the circumstances before and after the individual migratory journeys vary greatly, the whole world seems to be on the move, as Mimi Sheller & John Urry (2006, p. 207) have put it.

As a result, scholarship on international migration has also developed from conventional migration theory to wider, more interdisciplinary interrogations. In social sciences, the empirical notion, that migration as a phenomenon is not only growing in quantity but is also becoming more diverse, has resulted in shift in thinking sometimes called the ‘new mobilities paradigm’ or ‘the mobility turn’ (Harvey, 2000; Kaplan, 1996; Urry, 2007). Studies related to migration have shifted from simply focusing on causes and consequences of migration, or the classic ‘push-pull’ factors, to a more diverse understanding of postmodern mobilities (Creswell, 2009; Sheller & Urry, 2006; Faist, 2013). Rather than “understanding the world as largely fixed with some movement between locations” (Rogers et

al., 2013), or merely “examining people, society, and economy as if rooted in places” (ibid.) postmodern migration research recognizes the fluid nature of people’s mobility and considers short-term movers and circulation of movements, as well. This holistic and relational understanding argues that

“(…) there is a need to recognize that life consists of mobile practices. In other words, people are mobile subjects who constantly move about to interact, work, consume, and so on, and need to be comprehended as such.” (ibid.)

In other words, movement of people is not a disconnected or separate phenomenon associated with particular activities, but instead, plays an integral role within the workings of most social practices and relationships (Sheller & Urry, 2016, p. 12). The broad understanding of mobility encompasses different forms, practices, scales, locations and technologies of mobilities, but also investigates the “embodied, material and politicized mobilities“ (Blunt, 2007, p. 685). Mobility can be understood as an entanglement of movement, representation, and practice, and it can take varied forms and spaces in terms of force, speed, rhythm, route, experience, and friction. (Creswell, 2009, p. 17) In addition to spatial mobility, the focus can be on vertical social mobility, such as from social class to another, or a horizontal mobility, such as from one occupation to another (Faist, 2013, p. 1637) – although these forms of vertical mobility are not the primary focus of my thesis. Furthermore, recent literature also challenges the assumption that migration is unidirectional movement from one place to another or a once-in-a-lifetime event (Leinonen, 2012).

Mobility is also granted to different groups of people unequally, as its antonym, immobility, suggests. Those who stay and those who do not, or cannot, move are also important aspects of the study of current day mobilities. It has also been suggested (Adey, 2006; Schewel, 2019) that immobility and both the structural and personal choices and circumstances behind it is an aspect that requires more attention in the field of migration studies. Raili Nugin (2014), for example, has studied young people’s mobility in rural societies where, according to her, geographical mobilities are often connected with social mobilities. Young people as well as educated middle class often leave rural areas in search for better education and employment opportunities, creating a situation where mobility becomes a resource while the lack of it can lead to marginalization of those who stay. The phenomenon is also somewhat gendered, as women tend to leave more often than men. (Nugin, 2014, p. 52) Nugin’s context is rural Estonia, but her research results also resonate within the larger European context where, in numerous areas, domestic migratory movements to urban areas and other growth poles are challenging the very vitality of the countryside.

Similarly to Nugin, Thomas Faist (2013) has also discussed the topic of immobility but represents one of the more critical voices in the field of migration studies. He analyzes how the ‘mobility turn’ has failed to study the mechanisms in the underlying production of social inequalities. Faist takes a critical position on the recent body of scholarship that suggests that successful cross-border interactions are important preconditions for successful social life. Moreover, Faist challenges the idea that immobility “connotes stasis, decline and disadvantage” of social life in the contemporary world (Faist, 2013, p. 1640). This is usually connected to the claims that globalization is the force that has changed the nature of mobility quite recently. Faist argues that the ‘mobility turn’ has failed to address one important aspect of modern-day spatial and social mobility; the social inequalities between two different categories of people moving across state borders: people who in public debates and policies are often labeled as labor migrants or immigrants, and the so-called highly skilled talents and international students who are seen as desirable, economically efficient, and agile transnationals. Faist asks that future research will not further strengthen the discursive divide between the two categories of mobile people and, in the process, enhance and normalize the semantics of social inequalities across borders (Faist, 2013, p. 1644). The intersection of class and mobility is not irrelevant in the context of this thesis, either, as my results aim to show further.

As a result, current-day migration studies is not an independent academic discipline but rather an interdisciplinary endeavor drawing methods and theories from a variety of academic traditions – although sociologists and anthropologists in particular have been in the forefront in researching current-day mobilities (Østergaard-Nielsen, 2012, p. 108). It has also been pointed out (Leinonen, 2019a, p. 13) that the interdisciplinary nature of the research field of migration studies results in certain limitations. Since migration is a phenomenon that touches almost every aspect of human life, research has been conducted in various academic disciplines from humanities to geography and from social sciences to economics. Researchers have, however, often been unaware of the vast research conducted in other fields since there has, at times, been little or no communication between disciplines that are seemingly far from each other in terms of methodology or the specific research interests.

In the realm of international migration studies, research on transnationalism emerged internationally in the late 1980’s and early 1990’s, while research in the Finnish context caught up in the late 2000’s (Leinonen, 2019a, p. 13). In the context of this thesis, transnationalism refers to the manifold economic, political, social, and cultural ties, activities, and processes – both formal and informal – of

people, networks and organizations that extend across the borders of multiple nation-states (Vertovec, 1999; Bevir, 2007; Faist, 2000). In other words, a diverse mixture of agents, both individual and collective, engage in current-day transnational practices having perhaps only one thing in common; these practices occur “notwithstanding the presence of international borders (and all the laws, regulations and national narratives they present)” (Vertovec, 2009, p. 3).

Critics have also warned not to view transnationalism as something that is uniquely exclusive to our time (Leinonen, 2019b, p. 12). Since the emergence of the concept, historians particularly have criticized social scientists for encouraging an ahistorical understanding of migration and mobilities as a phenomenon (Leinonen, 2019a, pp. 13-14). Historians have pointed out that migrants have always engaged in activities that would be described as ‘transnational’ today, such as sent remittances, looked for a spouse, remained involved in home-country politics and stayed in frequent contact with people back in the old home country (Foner, 2007, pp. 2484-2485; Leinonen, 2019a, pp. 13-14). Historians argue that, in fact, many of these practices could be described as “normal” activities of migrants both today and in the past – practically regardless of the location, too. Yet, researchers of transnationalism have also pointed out that while transnationalism as a phenomenon is not new, perhaps the analytic perspective to it is (Foner, 2007, p. 2484).³ Studying transnationalism, according to Alejandro Portes and colleagues (1999), is not simply investigating migrants’ ties to their old home country but rather exploring a very specific phenomenon with three existing, clearly defined prerequisites. First, the processes have to involve a significant amount of people, in other words, not exist merely between individuals. These people physically reside in two territorial locations: the old country of his or her nationality or usual residence and the new. Activities in case should also be solid and somewhat unchangeable, in other words, not passing or accidental. Lastly, the nature of these activities has to be such that they cannot be captured with the help of a concept or theory that already exists. From the point of view of Portes and colleagues, transnationalism is a very certain kind of phenomenon that has emerged in the contemporary world, since it involves significantly larger masses of people, is multidirectional more complex than any other phenomena linked to migration in the past (ibid.). From the perspective of policy, modern communication

³ It might, however, be necessary to critically re-read some of the scholarly works of the 1990’s and early 2000’s. For example, Foner’s (2007) thoughts on transnationalism as a set of practices and relations that are more effortlessly maintained today due to greater tolerance and ethnic diversity in the world as well as less strenuous demands for assimilation in today’s multicultural societies deserves a critical second look. Foner’s views on the effortlessness of being a transnational in the 21st century world seems to describe only a certain group of migrants, the elite-level mobile citizens of the global North, who are also defined as highly educated and professional.

technologies have also strengthened and augmented transnational practices, as the following quote suggests:

” Technology has strengthened migrant networks and transnational ties by making it easier to stay in touch with family and friends, to remit money, and to travel back and forth between destination and origin countries.” (European Political Strategy Centre, 2017, p. 10)

Attempting to analyze the different dimensions and avenues of investigation of transnationalism, Steven Vertovec (2009) has examined the concept through six conceptual premises: social morphology, type of consciousness, mode of cultural reproduction, avenue of capital, site of political engagement, and (re)construction of place or locality. Social morphology has to do with social formation and systems of relationships best described as networks that span across long distances. This is evident particularly in ethnic diasporas, where globally scattered yet collectively self-identified groups of people form and maintain a relationship with the homeland that they came from as well as with the state where they currently reside in.⁴ Type of consciousness refers to an attachment or identification to dual or multiple locations where transnational actors are in a way de-centered and aware of their multilocality, often describing being ‘here and there’ or having a ‘home away from home’. Mode of cultural production refers to the fluid and syncretized cultural products – in fashion, music or visual arts, for example – that are being produced and consumed between differing cultural fields and among transnational communities. Avenue of capital constitutes both institutional forms of transnational practices, such as transnational corporations, and private monetary transfers, most notably remittances between individuals and families across borders. Site of political engagement concerns new global public spaces and forums, largely actualized through new publishing and communication technologies, that allow public and political participation, mobilization of support and lobbying across long distances and in a short amount of time. Finally, (re)construction of place or locality, according to Vertovec, directs attention to the different ways transnationalism changes people’s relations to space and practices and meanings derived from specific geographical locations (Vertovec, 1999, pp. 4-12). These six different ‘takes’ on transnationalism are intertwined and evident in many ways among many migrants in the current-day mobile world.

⁴ Since current-day migrants are more likely to maintain contact with their country of origin while simultaneously creating meaningful ties to their new surroundings, it has been suggested that this creates a tension between alliances; the control of nation-states over its members (citizens) is weakening and individuals’ loyalty to the state might compete equally with other allegiances to another state, culture, or group memberships (Bevir, 2007, p. 984). Studying this notion of alliances is also interesting in the context of Finnish expatriates.

This is true also in the case of expatriate Finns. Hence, transnationality in the context of this thesis is understood as a process in which the social field and belongingness is built and maintained between the former and the present country of main residence. A mobile subject, or a “transmigrant” (Glick Schiller et al., 1995), is simultaneously at home and away from home. State borders are less restrictive in people’s daily lives; geographical boundaries are being crossed and social networks are formed and maintained across nation-states. These potentially complex and diverse ties (whether social, economic, political, religious, or family-related) exist in several countries at the same time, resulting in an interesting mix of unique transnational practices and identification strategies.

2.2 Transnational research in the Finnish context

As mentioned before, investigations of the Finnish context clearly shows that emigration from Finland has been studied quite extensively in the historical context. North American emigration particularly in the late 19th century-early 20th century dominated the field, as did emigration to Sweden in the 1960’s and 70’s. Earlier research focused on, for example, Finnish emigrants’ political and religious life, family relations and adaptation processes in the host society (Leinonen, 2019a, p. 15). Interestingly, emigrants’ ties to their old home country as well as emigrants’ political activism back home was examined as early as in the beginning of 1980’s (see Kostiainen, 1983). Similarly, in certain earlier studies that examined the acculturation and integration of Finnish emigrants to their new host countries, one key measure of the level of adaption was Finnish migrants’ contacts with their former homeland (see Tuomi-Nikula, 1989). Transnationalism as a concept was not yet used, however.

Instead, the first pieces of research on transnationalism occurred in the early 2000’s. Johanna Leinonen’s extensive bibliography on migration, ethnic relations and related subjects in Finland gives credit to Marja Tiilikainen’s doctoral dissertation (2003) on Somali women’s transnational life in the Somali diaspora as one of earliest and central contributions to the Finland-based research on transnationalism (Leinonen, 2019a, p. 23). Furthermore, Leinonen points out that the anthology *Ylirajainen kulttuuri*, edited by Tuomas Martikainen (2006), was the first piece of research where the Finnish translation for transnationalism, ‘ylirajaisuus’, was introduced (ibid.). In addition to these, transnational family life (Vuorela, 2002; Tiilikainen, 2007), transnational media use (Davydova, 2006; Nikunen, 2008) and issues related to citizenship in transnational context (Pitkänen & Kalekin-Fishman, 2007) were popular areas of interest all the way to the 2010’s (ibid.).

However, when compared to research on immigration, emigration has been investigated significantly less – particularly outside of the historical studies. A few notable examples are studies on Finnish migrants in the global economy (Ruckenstein, 2004), identity and language choices among second-generation Finns in Sweden (Weckström, 2003), emigrants’ voting practices and dual citizenship (Peltoniemi, 2018) as well as return migration from other European countries (Tuomi-Nikula, Haanpää & Laine, 2013). More recently, social science scholarship has investigated themes such as Finnish highly skilled labor migration and career building in the European Union (Koikkalainen & Suikkanen, 2012; Koikkalainen, 2019), Finnish university students studying abroad (Garam, 2018) and the service needs of young people with Finnish background abroad (Arvola, 2019). However, the historical perspective has continued to dominate (Leinonen, 2019a, p. 29), while the most recent emigration and the global Finnishness in today’s world has been in the focus much less. For these reasons, this thesis aims to contribute to the recent pool of research by interrogating the current-day Finnishness and the transnational nature of Finnish identities in the light of my data.

2.3 ‘Expatriates’ as objects of scholarly attention

As a result of the increasing numbers of people on the move in the world, there has been a growing empirical and theoretical interest on the so-called expatriates, too. The term ‘expatriate’ has usually been understood to mean people, usually highly skilled professionals, knowledge workers and various types of experts in their own fields, whose move abroad has been motivated and centered around work (Adams & van de Vijver, 2015; Mao & Shen, 2015; Kohonen, 2008). This rather narrow understanding has also included the built-in idea that the move to a certain location is temporary and often predetermined in length, and once the work assignment is over, the expatriate either returns to the country of his or her origin or relocates to another location in the form of another professional assignment. Consequently, research related to expatriates has mainly investigated the movers from the global North, i.e., from high-income countries, who belong to the upper-middle to upper class strata of the host society. (Adams & van de Vijver, 2015, pp. 323-324)

Alternatively, the term has also been adopted to include a more diverse group of people who have moved abroad by choice (Croucher, 2012; Walz, 2020). These choices could be related to work, studying abroad, forming romantic relationships, retirement but also leisure, such as simply desires to “see the world” or “go on an adventure”, to name a few. What connects these people is the

“comparative ease” (Walz 2020, p. 381) that they have executed and experienced their migration. The move of these “privileged migrants” has been motivated by opportunities and personal decisions rather than outcomes of hardship or conflict (ibid.). This understanding of expatriates also automatically excludes mobility flows falling under the broad terms of labor migration and forced migration. Scholarship has also investigated this phenomenon under the term ‘elite migration’ (Birtchnell & Caletrío, 2014; Savage et al., 2008; Leinonen, 2012).

As can be seen, the term ‘expatriate’ is sparingly granted to the mobile middle- or upper-class movers of the global North. Research related to ‘elite’ or ‘privileged’ migration has at times been very critical towards the phenomenon. Thomas Faist (2013, p. 1642) has pointed out that the discursive contrast between the different migrant categories upholds and reproduces social inequalities; labor migrants remain to be seen as immigrants who are “wanted but not welcome” while the highly skilled professionals are viewed as “wanted and welcome”. Consequently, the danger is that the spatial mobility of the so-called expatriates is exclusively seen as effortless, desirable, and free of all issues of integration.

The environmental impacts of the mobility of the privileged, related primarily to air-travel, have been discussed in recent research literature, too. For example, Andrew Glover and colleagues (2016) have critically discussed the impacts of internationalization of Western universities in attracting global students and staff, and the implications this has to international travel, despite the fact that universities increasingly advocate sustainability in their agendas. Shamus Rahman Khan (2014), on the other hand, has debated that today’s elite migrants in general are characterized by a meritocratic frame of the world that is filled with innumerable possibilities and where one is expected to navigate with ease. This type of “the world is yours” attitude includes an indifference to many exceptional opportunities that are granted to them and, as such, taken for granted. (Khan, 2014, pp. 145-146) Khan goes on to argue that this perception inevitably produces a world view where the difference between those belonging to the (mobile) elite and the (immobile) non-elites is simply a choice. Khan argues that, from this perspective, “what matters are individual attributes and capacities, not durable inequalities” (p. 147).

2.4 Identity in the lives of “transnationalists”

“If we ‘go away’, what do we go *from*, what do we leave? What does being a foreigner mean? Of what significance is the possession of a passport with its designations? (...) Why does it seem important to distinguish ourselves as a group from others and what is the significance to individuals of being identified as members of one group, rather than another?” (Billington et al., 1998, p. 167)

In order to investigate the transnational identities of expatriate Finns, it is necessary to conceptualize the term identity and its connection to the experiences of migration and transnational lifestyles. While identity as a concept can easily seem vague and too large of a construct, the citation above reveals the key elements of how identity is understood in this context. Here, it is first and foremost a social construct: feeling of *belonging* and *attachment* to a group outside the boundaries of a community that we come from and that is dissimilar to other groups and communities.

The understanding of the concept of identity in the context of this thesis is hence based on social identity theory put forward by Henri Tajfel and John C. Turner (1979). Social identity, according to Tajfel and Turner, refers to the ways people form their self-understanding through group memberships. Individuals prefer and maintain the identity that links them to certain desired social groups, such as nationalities, ethnic groups and religious affiliations while simultaneously accentuating distinctiveness from other groups. As such, social identity is not a fixed or monolithic entity but rather a process that comes into being through everyday social practices. These practices strengthen the individuals’ positive self-image and emotional ties to the in-group. Individuals differentiate themselves from others by selecting appropriate criteria that are shared by members of the same group. These social identities are maintained and performed both locally and in transnational spaces in the form of bodily practices as well as narrations. In the process, a sense of belonging to that group is created which, if recognized by the so-called outsiders, leads to the creation of collective identity (La Barbera, 2015, p. 2). In other words, identity is an outcome of others’ reaction to something that has more to do with “doing” (a process) rather than “having” (a property) (Jenkins, 2008).

The relationship between identity and migration has been investigated in recent research, as well (see for example Schwartz et al., 2008, Ramelli et al., 2013 and Verkuyten & Yildiz, 2007). It seems evident that in multi- and intercultural circumstances different identities, such as national or ethnic

identities, not only accommodate but also adjust and modify one another. The two-way relationship between identity and performance has also been illustrated. Group members may, for example, present themselves strategically by displaying specific elements, “markers”, of their identity (see for example Hopkins et al., 2007; Klein et al., 2007). These elements could be physical objects such as dress, language, behavior, or occupation of space (La Barbera, 2015, p. 6). The negotiation and construction of identity can also be seen as a practice where individuals can assert real agency and give meaning to their diverse and sometimes contradictory life experiences and trajectories, as La Barbera (2015, p. 7) has pointed out.

The nature of identity construction among individual subjects varies, and the current identity can also be only a short-term strategy that changes when the geographical location changes or time simply moves on. Identity, in fact, is always investigated in a fixed point in time, at a certain phase of development (Brady & Kaplan, 2000) which is also the challenge, and sometimes the point of criticism, of identity-focused research. Analyzing a moving target, as Johanna Peltoniemi (2018) has put it, has its methodological challenges. Nevertheless, linkages between identity and membership in a geographic and/or ethnic community, or citizenship, has been studied extensively in social science scholarship. The idea of national identity, although not a synonym with state citizenship, is understood to mean a singular membership in ethno-cultural political community, a “shared homeland” (Peltoniemi, 2018). The perception of shared similarity between members of other fellow nationals, who are often personally unknown, can include sharing a language or knowing about and giving credence to a common history and culture (ibid.). Nonterritorial identities, such as gender, race, and religion, are not mutually exclusive and coexist together with national identities, although these can be more or less important to individuals than national identity and can also conflict with it (Klandermans, 2014). This is evident for example in cases where ethnic or religious minorities have to fight for equal civil rights with the majority in a society. People can also define themselves in terms of attachment to larger geographical areas, such as a continent, which is relevant in the context of this thesis, as well. It has been argued that the existence of these supranational identities, such as that of a “Europeanness”, as well as increasing attachment to more localized geographic entities and substate regions “above, below, and including the scale of the nation-state” challenges the importance of national identity in the contemporary world (Warf, 2006).

As mentioned before, numerous people who have gone through the experience of migration maintain ties to their country of origin as well as build new ones in their host societies. Their identity, hence, is built and maintained in two separate geographical locations. As increasing migration flows and

human mobility has brought out questions related to national belonging and the terms of inclusion in a society, dual citizenship is one example of holding on to legal and political rights in two different countries simultaneously as well as reflecting multiple identities and transnational lifestyles. This “fluidity of national boundaries“ (Peltoniemi, 2018) or emergence of “de-territorialized nation-states” (Basch et al., 1994) also in turn challenges the traditional understanding of national identity and membership – producing de-territorialized citizens.

3. DATA AND METHODS

3.1 The survey

As mentioned before, in the fall of 2020 the Migration Institute of Finland carried out an extensive survey where the focus was on current-day emigration and expatriate Finnishness (see Appendix 1.). A survey has long been a popular data collection method in social research (Punch, 2003, p. 11). In general, most surveys are designed to produce quantitative data with the help of different types of variables, but many, such as the one used in this thesis, include open-ended questions resulting in qualitative data, the purpose of which is to offer a deeper insight into the phenomenon in focus. Surveys are conducted by researchers, public administrations, commercial enterprises, as well as mass media (Joye et al., 2017) for various purposes. Survey as a form of scientific inquiry, however, is always an organized, systematic, and logical process that starts from forming the relevant research questions, defining the data that is needed to answer those questions, designing the research to collect and analyze that data, and finally, utilizing the data that is collected to answer the questions (Punch, 2003, pp. 15-16). Ethical aspects should always be elementally present in the research process. At this point in time, internet surveys are by far the most popular way to execute survey research because internet has the potential to offer an easier access to target populations that might otherwise be difficult to reach (because of geographical distance, for example). Additionally, internet offers new possibilities to investigate and measure complex phenomena, such as preferences, attitudes, and expectations, more efficiently (Joye et al., 2017; Keusch, 2015).

The survey was open for participants from September to December 2020. Potential informants were found in two different ways: 1) by identifying the people who emigrated from Finland between 2017 and 2019 (in the case of Africa and South America, the time span was 2016–2019) from the Population Information System and contacting them by mail, and 2) through the so-called snowballing sampling technique, a commonly used practice where participants are recruited through the social networks of certain key contacts. In this case, organizations such as local seamen's churches, Finnish Saturday schools and various Finnish communities across the world provided invaluable help in gaining access to the Finnish individuals the survey wanted to reach. Often simultaneously both transnational and "grass-roots", these communities and organizations created a link between the survey and the potential informants by, for example, advertising the survey on their social media platforms as well as their events and get-togethers.

The original sample size was decided to be 6,000 individuals who were all Finnish citizens and belonged to separate households (only one person per household was invited to answer the questionnaire). Reflecting the principles of stratified sampling technique, both geographical and age-related definitions were added to the original sampling. This echoed one of the main goals of the survey project, which was to reach particularly the working-age expatriates as well as the more distant expatriate communities residing outside of the most popular areas of emigration, such as Europe and North America. As a result, the geographical distribution of the sample was as follows: Nordic countries 1,000, Western Europe 1,500, Eastern Europe 1,000, North America 1,000, Asia and Oceania 1,000, and Africa, the Middle East & South and Latin America 500. For the same reason, the age distribution of the sample was limited to 18–50 years old.

However, these requirements turned out to be too strict, as the Population Information System could only identify 5,137 people who met these requirements. Therefore, 863 people were randomly added to the data without the above-mentioned limitations related to age, time of living abroad or citizenship. Additionally, in October 2020, a reminder postcard with a QR code for the survey was sent to the same persons whose addresses were ordered from the Population Information System earlier in the fall.⁵ This resulted in a total of 1,145 responses which amounted to a response rate of 19 percent. Interestingly, the second recruitment method, the snowballing sampling technique with the help of the organizations working with and for the expatriate Finns around the world, proved to be much more effective, as a total of 2,050 responses were received through this route – making the total sample size 3,195. From statistical point of view, because of the multiple steps in the sampling process and the certain indefiniteness in specifying the population, it is difficult to estimate the total response rate as well as forming a comprehensive loss analysis. This point of view will be examined further in the discussion part.

The survey consisted of several thematic parts which covered areas such as wellbeing, expectations with regard to services provided to expatriates by Finland, expectations and support related to potential move back to Finland, current contacts in Finland, social networks, political participation, religious activity and identity. These topics of inquiry reflected the areas of interest and expertise of the background organizations who played a role in the developing of the survey either as funders or

⁵ Out of all the invitation letters sent based on the sample ordered from the Population Information System, 421 letters got returned to the Migration Institute due to incorrect address details. Most of these came from Sweden (150 letters), Germany (42 letters) and the United States (41 letters). In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic affected the postal services globally, and in some cases the letters did not get to their destination until after the survey had already closed.

as members of the steering group.⁶ Each background organization naturally had vested interests in creating a survey that would benefit the development of their own work in providing new and up-to-date information about this diverse group of people across the globe. From this point of view, it is understandable that the service needs, Finland-related social networks as well as the role of the Evangelical Lutheran church in the daily lives of expatriate Finns took up a relatively large role in the questionnaire. Implications of this are observed in the discussion.

Although the survey questionnaire contains numerous open-ended questions that allow for a more qualitative approach, it is primarily quantitative material with closed questions consisting of rating scales where participants indicate a response by circling or checking their answer. Most of the questions contained Likert scale type of response options with choices ranging from 1 to 5 (“strongly disagree” to “strongly agree” or “never” to “very often”). In addition to measuring statements of agreements, Likert scales were also used to measure other variations such as frequency (e.g. “How often do you attend a religious service?”), importance (“How important it is for you to be a part of different types of expatriate networks in your current home country?”), and likelihood (“Has the COVID-19 pandemic increased your willingness to return back to Finland?”). Open questions allowed the participants to elaborate more freely on the themes in question (“Has Brexit affected your future plans in the United Kingdom and if yes, how?” or “Describe shortly how you see Finland as a country at the moment and what does being Finnish mean to you.”). The survey also wished to pave the way for a more qualitative research by asking participants’ willingness to participate in thematic, in-depth interviews related to the topic in the future.

3.2 Conducting statistical analysis

The analysis of the data started with the process of cleaning the raw data by either removing or fixing any incorrect, missing, improperly formatted or otherwise “odd” data. This was done by identifying missing, out-of-range or otherwise problematic values and scales. Some unnecessary variables that were part of this relatively large survey but were insignificant to the topic of my research were also deleted. All data cleaning was done in such a way that the integrity of the data was not at any point

⁶ As mentioned earlier, the survey project was funded by The Department for International Relations of the Church Council (Kirkkohallituksen ulkoasiain osasto), the Finland Society (Suomi-Seura r.y.), the Finnish Seamen’s Mission (Suomen Merimieskirkko) and the Finnish Lifelong Learning Foundation (Kansanvalistusseura). In addition to these organizations, the members of the steering group represented The Church Research Institute (Kirkon tutkimuskeskus), Finnish National Agency for Education (Opetushallitus) and the University of Helsinki.

jeopardized. After data cleaning, certain statistical procedures were performed with the help of a statistics software program called IBM SPSS Statistics, a widely used tool for statistical analysis in social sciences.

Because the questionnaire also consisted of open-ended questions which were better suitable for providing in-depth understanding of certain issues, qualitative analysis was also required in order to make the most of the entire data set. Particularly fruitful was the very last question “Describe shortly how you see Finland as a country at the moment and what does being Finnish mean to you?”. Although participants were not specifically asked to discuss the nature of their identity, much of the answers touched on issues related to Finland and the current country of residence as well as emotional and other ties to both of them. Perhaps surprisingly, as many as 2 523 individuals (about 79 % of all the cases) chose to answer to this open, but not forced, meaning answering to it was not required, question at the end of a relatively large questionnaire, and the result was a rich set of data that can complement the statistical side in creating a better understanding of the nature of identities. This method-mixing is not uncommon in recent scholarship in social, behavioral, and human sciences where benefits of combining elements of both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies is an active discussion and of growing interest (Tashakkori & Creswell, 2007; Johnson et al., 2007; Almeida, 2018). Hence my analysis will be a mixture of both approaches and viewpoints which I believe complete each other in providing a more elaborate understanding of the topic of transnational identities.

Because I was interested in investigating what kind of identity types could potentially be found in the data, cluster analysis was selected as the most suitable statistical tool for this purpose. Cluster analysis as a statistical method is part of the so-called person-centered analyses which, unlike variable-centered analyses, focuses on how certain variables group within individuals and how individuals are different from each other. The dataset is divided into subgroups of individuals who are clustered together based on similar characteristics or similar scores on the independent variables (Kusurkar et al., 2021). In other words, while the so-called variable-centered analyses assume that the population is homogenous, person-centered analyses acknowledge the heterogeneity between populations “with respect to how variables influence each other”. As such, person-centered approach aims to find categories of individuals characterized by patterns of association among variables that are similar within groups and different between groups”. (Laursen & Hoff, 2006, pp. 379-380) Rejecting the assumption of homogeneity and the premise that the relationship between the variables is similar

throughout the data set, person-centered approaches have been increasing in popularity in social sciences within recent years (Bravo, Pearson & Stevens, 2016, p. 167).

Rui Xu and Donald C. Wunsch (2009, p. 2) have concluded that cluster analysis is particularly useful in cases where the researcher does not have set preconceptions about the number or nature of the groups in the data set. Clustering is an exploratory method for someone who has little or no prior information about the data, and it is the researcher's task to decide the basis of which the algorithm determines the groups closest to each other (Pauha, 2019, p. 14). Because of this, a hierarchical cluster analysis was run first to see which number of groups, or clusters, would become statistically visible in the form of a so-called dendrogram. After that, the K-means cluster analysis as another common clustering method was run with an a priori set of clusters, as in this case, three clusters appeared to be dissimilar and distinctive from each other.

3.3 Ethical considerations

There are certain ethical aspects that I have attempted to take into consideration every step of the way in my research, as ethics is an elemental part of the entire research process from formulating the problem to presenting the results (Preissle, 2008). Since I was not part of the provisional decisions regarding the planning of the research design, deciding sample selection or conducting the questionnaire construction, my responsibility as a researcher comes in when formulating the research questions and analyzing the survey data for this piece of research in question.

First, it is necessary to keep in mind that the language that is being used is always a conscious choice that carries implications for how the researcher views the people who are providing the data. To highlight the autonomy of the individuals who have willingly decided to aid in the survey, I have chosen to call them participants (instead of subjects or respondents, for example). Their contribution to the study is unique to each individual, even if they are technically mere samplings of the target population. While this understanding of the nature of the data and its providers is perhaps more prevalent in qualitative studies, I feel this decision is ethically correct to respect the contribution of the human subjects, even in a survey participation.

The anonymity and confidentiality of the participants has also been of utmost importance throughout the research process. In general, anonymity is central for the success of surveys particularly in cases

where participating in a survey can pose a risk for the participants, or they are asked to reveal sensitive information about themselves or others (Lavrakas, 2008, p. 28). Although participating in this survey was hardly risky for any of the individuals in case, questions related to the intimate spheres of our lives, such as those concerning identity, religious affiliation, and private relationships, meant that anonymity and confidentiality played an important role in this research, as well. Confidentiality, on the other hand, refers to the agreement on the methods to prevent others from accessing the data that might jeopardize their anonymity (Lavrakas, 2008, p. 131). In the cover letter attached to the survey, it was made clear that all the responses would be treated and kept confidential in accordance with the European Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). The material would also be used for research purposes only and, upon completion of the project, would be handed over in an anonymized form to The Finnish Social Science Data Archive (Yhteiskuntatieteellinen tietoaarkisto) and the archives of The Migration Institute of Finland. To protect the anonymity of the participants, I have also decided to reveal only the participants' gender and the current country of residence when using direct quotations from them.

4. RESULTS

Perhaps unsurprisingly, most survey responses came from the same countries where Finnish nationals have moved the most within recent years. Most number of responses came from the United States (466), followed by Germany (448), Sweden (391) and the United Kingdom (365). This group of top four countries constituted over half of all the responses.

Country	Frequency	Percent
United States	466	14,6
Germany	448	14,0
Sweden	391	12,2
United Kingdom	365	11,4
Spain	141	4,4
Switzerland	126	3,9
Canada	119	3,7
France	109	3,4
The Netherlands	90	2,8
Belgium	88	2,8
Italy	83	2,6
Australia	81	2,5
Norway	74	2,3
Estonia	65	2,0
Japan	57	1,8
Denmark	57	1,8
Austria	41	1,3
The Republic of Ireland	31	0,9
Greece	26	0,8
Others	337	10,7
Total	3 195	100,0

Table 1. The highest number of responses by country (top 20).

As can be seen, all the countries in the top 20 list are wealthy, industrialized nations, and 15 of them belong (or have until recently belonged, in the case of United Kingdom) to the European Economic

Area (EEA). It is widely acknowledged that the principles of free movement in the European Union, and in the entire EEA, have heavily affected the mobility of European citizens, including those with Finnish passport. The vast majority of the responses came from either Europe or North America, and despite efforts to reach members of the target population living outside of these areas, the response rate outside of the so-called First World was perhaps disappointingly low. A shade over 10 per cent of the responses came from Asia, Africa, South America, the Middle East and Australia and Oceania. This is somewhat understandable considering the sheer number of people with Finnish origin living in both Europe and North America. Greater numbers also produce more networks and connectedness among individuals, and it is likely that people living in those countries had heard about the survey through other Finns living in the same area – either personally or online.⁷ It is also possible that widely reported problems related to the speediness of postal services, i.e. delivering the paper copies of the surveys and the reminders related to them, due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic impacted the response rate in the more remote areas of the world.

Nevertheless, the complete data set consisted of responses from as many as 85 different countries from all over the world which, in part, tells a story of a truly global, yet Western world centered, expatriate Finnishness today. This diversity was also visible in the languages and nationalities that were reported, since as many as 17 percent of the participants reported that they considered themselves bi- or multilingual or that their first language was something other than Finnish. Almost every fourth, 24,4 percent, were persons with dual citizenship most often of Finland and United States, Sweden, Germany, or Canada. A vast majority, 77,4 percent, of the participants were women, while men consisted of 22,2 percent and other genders 0,4 percent of the data set. This imbalance is somewhat unsurprising for two reasons. Women have been overrepresented in similar studies before (see for example Tuomi-Nikula et al., 2013), but females also comprise slightly more than half of all the people who emigrate from Finland (see Appendix 2.). In general, female migrants comprise slightly more than half of all international migrant stock in Europe and Northern America (Migration Data Portal, 2021). Large part of the participants were also working-age adults (63,4 %), while young adults between the ages of 18 and 30 were the second largest age group (20,7 %).

⁷ The survey was also promoted online on different platforms, such as on various social media sites and online forums among Finnish people living abroad (Hovi, Tervonen & Latvala-White, 2021, p. 24).

Age group	Frequency	Percent
Under 18	6	0,2
Young adults (18-30)	658	20,7
Working age (31-60)	2014	63,4
61 and older	498	15,7
Missing	19	0,6
Total	3195	100,0

Table 2. Age groups of the participants.

Noticeably, individuals who responded to the questionnaire were highly educated. As many as 68,4 percent of them had a university degree ⁸, and 7,4 percent had completed a postgraduate degree. These numbers are significantly higher than that of the total population of Finland; by the end of 2019, around 32 percent of the total population had completed a tertiary level qualification (either a Bachelor's or Master's degree) (Statistics Finland, 2021). Previous research (Favell, 2011; Recchi, 2015) has also shown that highly qualified individuals are among the most mobile populations in Europe, so this skewness toward the highly educated makes sense.

65 percent of the participants were employed, and the rest consisted of a diverse group of retirees, students, freelancers, and stay-at-home spouses, to name a few. The biggest employment sectors among the participants of the survey were information technology (8 %), academia (5 %), education (3 %) and healthcare (3 %). The high education level combined with the fact that participants' countries of residence were among the wealthy, industrialized nations, and are aligned with the most popular countries of expatriate Finns in general, implicates that the majority of the participants belong to a relatively high socio-economic class. From this perspective, societal and policy level concerns related to the human capital flight, or the "brain drain", in Finland as the sending country are somewhat justified. Furthermore, it appears that many participants could be labelled as so-called elite migrants, i.e., highly skilled people whose decisions to migrate are heavily influenced by education or work. As discussed before, elite migrants in this context include a diverse mix of people belonging to "ambitious and adventurous mobile middle classes" (Leinonen, 2012, p. 246), in other words, both students ⁹ aiming to get a higher degree outside of their own home country as well as professionals

⁸ This number includes Bachelor's and Master's degrees from both research universities (*yliopisto*) and universities of applied sciences (*ammattikorkeakoulu*).

⁹ According to the statistics by Social Insurance Institution of Finland (KELA), 8 380 Finnish students received support for studies carried out entirely abroad during the academic year 2015–2016. The number had doubled in the previous ten years. (KELA, 2021)

working in various fields. Additionally, mobility seems to play a role in their lifestyles, since 39 per cent of women and 43 per cent of men reported to have visited Finland two to four times in recent years. Twelve per cent of women and nine per cent of men disclosed visiting home country more than five times a year. (Hovi, Tervonen & Latvala-White, 2021, p. 38) ¹⁰.

In fact, by these measures, most migrants from the Nordic region belong to the migrant elite, and this is magnified by their presupposed invisible ethnicity (i.e. their whiteness), as Leinonen (2012, p. 247) has argued. As discussed earlier in the literature review, this implied “elite-ness” is visible even in the naming of the population in question; Finnish – or any other Western – people dwelling and working outside of their own country of origin are hardly ever called ‘migrants’ but rather expatriates or ‘expats’, as is visible in the title of the survey, as well. The terminological divide between migrants and expatriates also relates to Faist’s criticism (2013) about the social mechanisms that hierarchize cross-border populations into two different categories (labor migrants and the highly skilled). Unlike the highly skilled, labor migrants are also considered as immigrants which comes with expectations of integration, and fears of their non-integration is a commonplace topic in public debate. Furthermore, maintenance of transnational ties is considered a hindrance to the successful integration of the first category populations, whereas for the highly skilled, there seems to be no problem with respect to their transnationality (Faist, 2013, p. 1642). This discursive divide and the connotations related to it is an area that scholarship should be more careful not to replicate.

4.1 Cluster analysis of different identity types

In the questionnaire part dealing with identity, different types of values such as Finnishness, Europeanness and internationality were investigated as markers of identity. Other markers were native language, the language of the country of residence, won cultural background, the culture of the country of residence, religion and patriotism. The goal was to measure how strongly the participants would anchor themselves to these values. Although used in a variety of ways, values are often defined as fairly stable yet quite abstract constructs and integral parts of everyday life that define our preferences and guide our motivations. Their stable and rather timeless nature is what distinguishes them from other closely related concepts such as beliefs and attitudes that are more

¹⁰ The coronavirus pandemic will have likely put a temporary stop on the traveling between countries, but it will be interesting to see how quickly and in what capacity this type of transnational movement of Finnish expatriates (and others) will return to the pre-pandemic levels.

prone to change (Bednarek-Gilland, 2015, p. 12). Emotions and affections are interchangeably connected to values, since people tend to value and invest in things that they care about and are worried about losing. Values also motivate action and guide our evaluation of things but are still applicable in various different types of situations. (Schwartz, 2012, pp. 3-4).

It is worth noting that it was up to the participants to define how they understood these three identity markers, meaning that the survey did not offer any preexistent explanation or clarification how they should be determined. Europeanness, for example, could be understood as economic, socio-cultural, or political construct that manifests itself both at institutional level and in the everyday lives of its citizens (McEntee-Atalianis & Zappettini, 2014). The focus could also be on the shared sense of belonging or self-understanding as Europeans (Logemann, 2013). But what does identification to this supranational union mean to the individuals? It is difficult to know what interpretations the participants attached to these concepts which remain both contested and loaded with connotations. Nevertheless, the results show that as many as 65 percent of all the participants considered Finnishness to be a very important value in their lives, 27 percent reporting it to be quite important. Europeanness was very important to 44 percent and quite important to 40 percent of the participants. Internationality had a very important role in the lives of 61 percent of the participants and quite important for 31 percent.

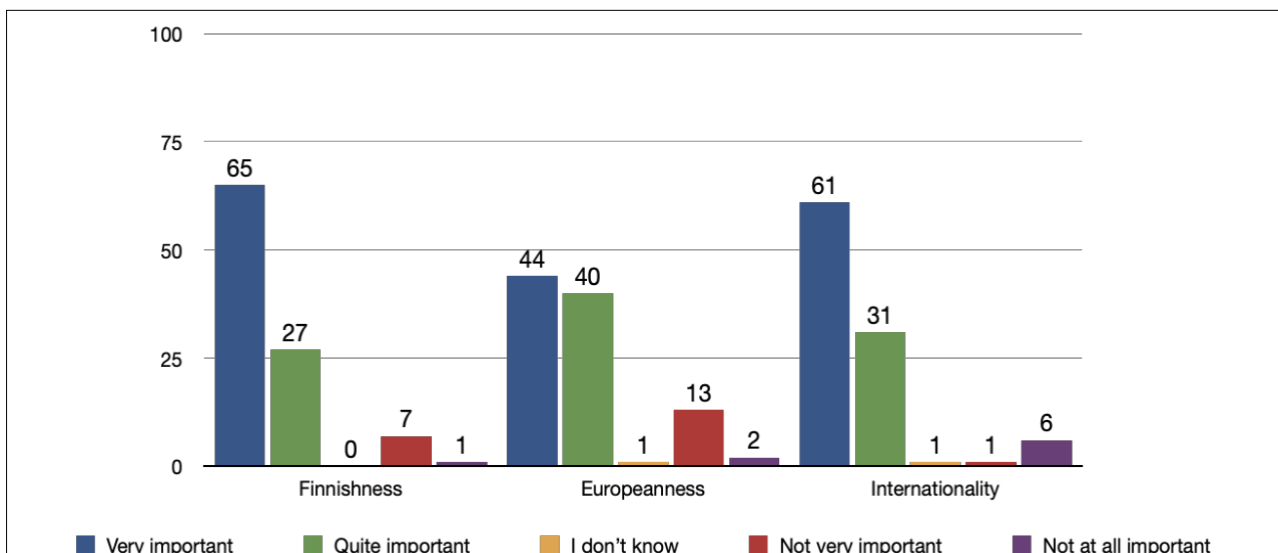


Figure 1. Three key identity markers and their importance among participants (%).

After pulling out some of the relevant descriptive statistics from the data set, hierarchical and K-means cluster analyses were tested to reveal three clearly different groups of people with respect to their Finnishness, Europeanness and internationality, as can be seen from the figure below. K-means

cluster analysis is one the more common clustering methods and is based on the algorithm defining a center point for each group so that each statistical unit is as close as possible to the center point of its own group (Pauha, 2019, p. 7).

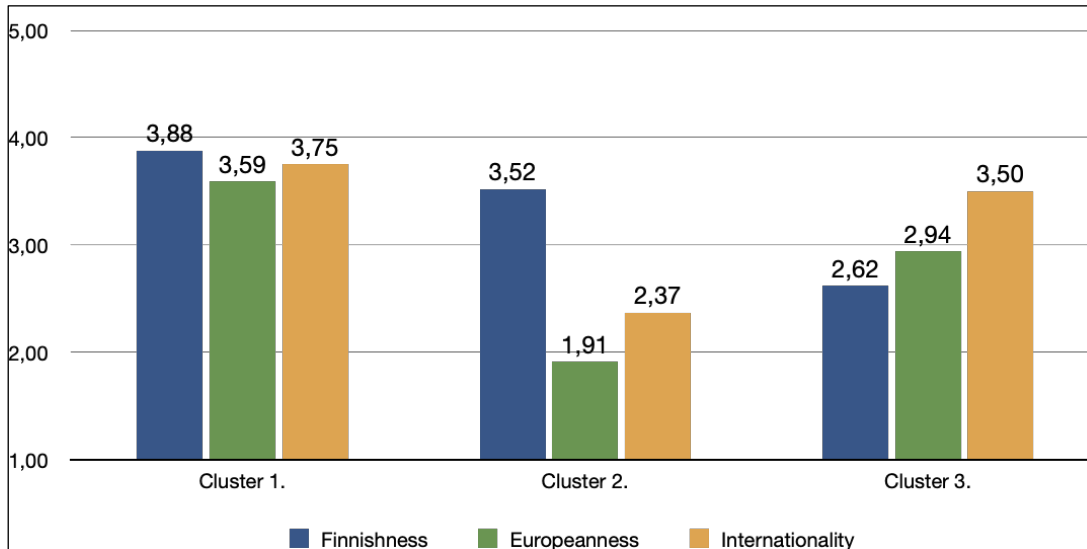


Figure 2. The means of the identity markers in each three cluster.

After investigating the statistical properties of these three different groups and coming to decision about the significance of the number of clusters ¹¹, I named the first cluster “the transnational citizens” (borrowed from Faist, Fauser & Reisenauer, 2013), the second one “the Finnish-oriented” (cluster 2.) and the third “the worldly internationalists” (cluster 3.). According to Pauha (2019, p. 12), one sign of a functional clustering is often that it is easy to intuitively come up with descriptive names for them. I believe these chosen names communicate the essence of each group and the distinctive ways they differ from each other. The first cluster is by far the largest and included 2 054 cases. The second cluster is the smallest with 419 cases. The third cluster consists of 675 cases. A total of 47 cases were excluded from the cluster analysis due to missing variables. The relevant variables in each group are presented here:

¹¹ ANOVA test was run together with post hoc test to see whether the clusters have a statistically significant difference. The Sig. value for all was .000 which indicates that the differences between the clusters are significant and not arbitrary.

		Cluster 1.	Cluster 2.	Cluster 3.
Gender	Male	369 (18,0%)	124 (29,6%)	189 (28,0%)
	Female	1664 (81,0%)	294 (70,2%)	473 (70,1%)
	Other or unknown	21 (1,0%)	1 (0,2%)	13 (1,9%)
Age groups	Under 18	5 (0,2%)	0 (0,0%)	1 (0,1%)
	18–30	404 (19,7%)	94 (22,4%)	157 (23,3%)
	31–60	1338 (65,1%)	248 (59,2%)	409 (60,6%)
	61 and older	294 (14,4%)	73 (17,4%)	108 (0,16%)
	Not known	13 (0,6%)	4 (1,0%)	0 (0,0%)
Education	Primary school	21 (1,0%)	10 (2,4%)	9 (1,3%)
	Vocational school	253 (12,4%)	75 (17,9%)	93 (13,8%)
	High school	152 (7,4%)	52 (12,4%)	55 (8,1%)
	University of applied sciences/ polytechnic	365 (17,8%)	72 (17,2%)	119 (17,6%)
	University	1105 (53,8%)	181 (43,2%)	321 (47,6%)
	Postgraduate degree	140 (6,8%)	23 (5,5%)	73 (10,9%)
	Not known	18 (0,9%)	6 (1,4%)	5 (0,7%)
Annual income	Prefer not to say	220 (10,7%)	46 (11,0%)	74 (11,0%)
	20 000 € or less	168 (8,2%)	48 (11,5%)	89 (13,2%)
	20 001–40 000	361 (17,6%)	98 (23,3%)	121 (17,9%)
	40 001–60 000	359 (17,5%)	59 (14,0%)	125 (18,5%)
	60 001-80 000	285 (13,9%)	57 (13,6%)	87 (12,9%)
	80 001 or more	647 (31,5%)	108 (25,9%)	177 (26,2%)
	Not known	14 (0,6%)	3 (0,7%)	2 (0,3%)

Table 3. Some relevant variables in each cluster by frequency (share in percentages).

Next, I aim to present the characteristics of each cluster in more detail and link my findings to the relevant research literature.

4.2 The transnational citizens: Mobility as a privilege

When considering the importance of Finnishness, Europeanness and internationality, the individuals in the first cluster, which I have named the transnational citizens, gave high regard to all three of these identity markers. In a scale of 1 to 5, the means of each three identity markers (3.88, 3.59, 3.75, respectively) were higher than any of the three in the other two clusters. Such high regard for all three identity markers points to the direction of transnational identity where one is not confined by neither the current country of residence nor the country of one's origin. Interestingly, many participants in this cluster recognized belongingness and attachment to the national communities of both Finland and their country of residence. These different aspects of their identity were not viewed as exclusionary, as is evident in the quotations ¹² below:

“I feel 100% Finnish and 100% international and 100% European. It is a little scary that some define Finnishness in such a way that these things are mutually exclusive. In other words, a self-closing Finland is scary.” -*Woman, Belgium*

“Finland's importance to myself has changed significantly. I don't feel that I belong completely to the USA, but I also don't feel that I belong to Finland anymore. The importance of Europeanness has been emphasized when I live abroad. I still feel that I am Finnish, although being abroad has changed my personality a bit.” -*Man, USA*

Interestingly, this cluster also had the highest share of high earners, i.e., individuals reporting annual income of 80 000 euros or more. The number of dual citizens in the first cluster was also notably high. Dual citizenship and high income seem to be interrelated, which has also been noted by Bloemraad (2004); individuals with higher human capital and mobility, rather than those with low socio-economic status, are more likely to attain dual citizenship. Dual citizenship is therefore a manifestation of transnationally located dual identity and a reflection of attachment to both Finland as the sending country and their current home country as the receiving one (Bloemraad, 2004, p. 394). In fact, the attitudes of nation states towards dual citizenship – a form of political transnationalism – have become much more tolerant within recent decades. Finland has recognized dual (or multiple, to be exact) citizenship since 2003, and roughly half of all the countries in the world tolerate dual citizenship for both their emigrants and immigrants (Migration Data Portal, 2021). The number of

¹² Direct quotes written in Finnish have been translated into English by the author of this thesis.

countries accepting dual citizenship as an unavoidable consequence of transnational migration has increased rapidly, even though it can be argued that it challenges the very foundation of the concept of nation state (Peltoniemi, 2018, p. 10). Nevertheless, the institutional and societal advantages of attaining a dual citizenship – such as voting rights, ability to buy property and access to health and welfare benefits – are appealing enough for many, including many expatriate Finns, to acquire a second citizenship.

Peggy Levitt (2003), among others, has noted that belongingness and the desire to anchor oneself to different identity markers can also vary over time. Therefore, it is important to note that the survey results only represent a moment in time, and longitudinal changes are impossible to predict. This is the case with all the participants, but discussions around the temporalities of identity were explicitly present particularly in the first cluster. The participants themselves examined different timeframes in their answers and reflected how their own Finnishness has changed over time.

”I was born in Finland and lived there for the first 28 years of my life. I am first and foremost a Finn. But in recent years, after leaving Finland, I have thought to be more of a European: this has connected me to other Europeans even when living abroad.”
-*Woman, Austria*

Finnishness as such is a membership one cannot choose, meaning it is a frame of reference that the participants in the survey were born into, but the meanings individuals attach to it is a matter of choice, as Liebkind (2009, p. 15) has pointed out. Changes in self-identification can happen over time but also when moving from one geographical location to another, as can be detected from the following excerpts:

“I consider myself to be especially Finnish when I am abroad. But when I am in Finland I feel very international. I have a very international background and enjoy that. But I am very proud of my Finnish heritage.” -*Woman, Sweden*

”Although I have lived abroad for over 25 years, Finland is my home country and I feel I am more Finnish than a citizen of any other country. The UK is my 'home' but Finland is my 'home home'. I follow Finnish news regularly and I'm quite well aware of what's going on there. You can take the girl out of Finland, but you can't take Finland out of the girl!” -*Woman, United Kingdom*

Interestingly, this type of belongingness and membership was not a question of either-or but rather something transient and flexible and characterized by movement on a scale. In a way, identities seemed to be on a journey just as much as physical bodies. Different aspects of the participants' identity seemed to activate in different environments, as many pointed out that they felt "more Finnish" when they were outside of Finland but "more international" when visiting or holidaying in Finland. Steve Fenton (2007) has called this phenomenon the "rising" and "falling" identities; nationality identity, in this case Finnishness, could also be considered a disposition that should not be expected to have permanent significance to individuals but rather something that "rises and falls in accordance with external events or prompts" (Fenton, 2007, p. 326). These could include holidays, nationally significant events but also personal experiences, such as a move to another country.

Overall, Finnishness was viewed to be a resource that was worth holding onto and something that, according to the participants in the first cluster, other outsiders considered a value, as well. According to the social identity theory, this kind of social comparison is a process in which individuals determine the relative value of belonging to a particular group (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). At the same time, while Finnishness was mostly constructed in positive terms, a strong attachment to both the country of origin and the host country was not viewed to be incompatible. The transnational citizens in the first cluster felt that they possessed the freedom to "maintain, explore, rediscover or reject" (Liebkind, 2009, p. 84) different sides of their identity depending on the context. It is perhaps precisely this type of flexibility towards the three different identity markers that warrants the transnational citizens in the first cluster to have such high regard to Finnishness, Europeanness and internationality all at once.

Interestingly, this cluster also had the largest share of both women (95% CI: 79,2%-82,6%) and people belonging to the age group 31–60 (95% CI: 63,0%-67,2%). The individuals in this group were also highly educated, as 71,6 percent (95% CI: 69,5%-73,5%) had completed a tertiary education and as many as 6,8 percent (95% CI: 5,7%-7,9%) held a doctorate degree. On the other end of the education spectrum, one percent (95% CI: 0,6%-1,5%) of the individuals had completed only comprehensive school (or the preceding *kansakoulu*) and 12,4 percent (95% CI: 10,9%-13,8%) had graduated from a vocational school (*toisen asteen ammatillinen koulutus*) – these being the lowest shares among all the three clusters. As a result, an image of rather privileged transnationals is beginning to form. To these individuals, mobility is an experience that is a means of developing social and human capital in another country, often in several other countries. Crossing the borders of nation-states, having access to contacts, information, and resources in multiple locations, and

“simultaneously investing their social engagement in different territorial spaces” (Rye, 2019) is made possible by these transnationals’ relatively high quality of life and social capital obtained from the experiences of mobility.

When asked about their intentions to live in the current host country in the future, many individuals in this cluster also indicated desires to move elsewhere in the future. While 6,1 percent (95% CI: 5,0%-7,2%) predicted that they would be living in their current country of residence for no more than one year or less, 41,6 percent (95% CI: 39,4%-43,7%) predicted this timeframe to be several years. These were the highest shares in all three clusters, meaning that the individuals in the other two clusters seemed to think that they would be living in their current host country much longer, if not permanently. Considering this from the perspective of the mobility-immobility scale, the transnationals in the first cluster seemed to view themselves more mobile in the future, as well. Multiple migrations are, of course, not unique to the highly skilled or well-to-do migrants, but previous research (Zufferey, 2019; Nekby, 2006) has shown that, at least in Western societies, the most mobile people are also highly skilled. These highly skilled individuals benefit from having experiences in multiple countries that improve their social capital, such as professional skills and languages competences, which are beneficial in building and maintaining social and professional networks in and between several countries (Zufferey, 2019, p. 97).

While it is safe to say that a large majority of the transnational citizens in the first cluster were highly educated, working-aged women, it would be a shame to dismiss the obvious diversity and apparent minority identities among many individuals in this cluster. Describing his complexities in identifying in and between the three identity markers, the following participant explained his position:

“I am not Lutheran, I do not have a family, and I do not appear ethnically Finnish. Those factors have made it difficult to feel comfortable and find a place in my local Finnish expatriate community. I study Swedish and have become more involved in the local Swedish community, which feels more accustomed to ethnic and religious diversity among its citizens.” -*Man, USA*

As mentioned before, one of the pitfalls of research related to Finnish emigrants has been that it has generally treated Finnish emigrants as more or less a homogenous group of people and disregarded the relatively high number of religious, linguistic, and other minorities among the movers (Tervonen & Leinonen, 2021). Many in this cluster also identified themselves as members of a religious,

linguistic, ethnic or sexual minority. In addition, some pointed out that being a migrant living in a foreign country automatically means a certain minority status. In other words, living outside of your home country makes you an outsider in the host society. This notion was not automatically considered to be a negative thing, however.

4.3 The Finnish-oriented: Juxtaposing the old home with the new

The second and the smallest cluster differed from the first and the third cluster in many ways. The individuals belonging to this cluster seemed to give high regard to Finnishness (mean 3.52) as an identity marker but valued Europeanness (mean 1.91) and internationality (mean 2.37) notably less. This notion seemed to point toward a particularly salient Finnish identity, which led me to name the second cluster the Finnish-oriented. The share of men was much higher in this cluster, 29,6 percent (95% CI: 25,6%-34,2%), compared to the 18 percent (95% CI: 16,3%-19,7%) in the first cluster. Fewer people were of working age, and the age groups 18–30 and particularly the 61-year-olds and older were represented more strongly. The relatively smaller number of people in the active working age made the average income level notably lower, as 35,1 percent (95% CI: 30,5%-39,8%) reported annual earnings of 40 000 euros or less.

Why did the individuals in this cluster seem to value Finnishness at the expense of the other two identity markers? When asked to describe their position on Finland – and their own Finnishness in consequence – many expressed feelings of home sickness, nostalgia and disillusionment of life outside of Finland.

“At the moment I think that Finland is the best country in the world and I would do anything to get my spouse to move there with me. The Finnishness in me has become so much stronger since I moved because I have been very disappointed in life in other countries.” -*Woman, Australia*

”My Finnish identity has become stronger after I moved abroad. I have always been proud of the Finnish welfare society, but Finnishness wasn’t an active part of me when I lived in Finland. Swedish people often define me instantly through my Finnishness, so I have also started to see myself as a Finn first and foremost. Nowadays I’m proud of my homeland, my roots and my culture in a way I never have before. All the Sweden

Finns I meet instantly feel like allies, and I feel a sense of togetherness with all the Finns I meet.” -*Woman, Sweden*

In the first quote above, the Australian woman describes a form of “protracted transnationalism” where the return to Finland is regularly imagined and, as a result, is shaping the individual’s identity and affecting her integration to the host society (Tedeschi et al. 2020). The rather telling depictions above also reveal how the Finnish identity has activated outside of Finland, and outside of the safety net of one’s own reference group, which was a prevalent conception among participants in other clusters, too. This is not uncommon, as personal experience of migration almost inevitably results in a redefinition of one’s cultural identity. When individuals end up leaving the country of origin and embarking on a migration journey, whatever the circumstances, they must “continuously reorganize the delicate structure of their various social identities” (Horenczyk, 2009, p. 67). Those negotiations include attachments to the former home society as well as the new host culture. Living in and between these different social worlds and being faced with various cultural and social expectations coming from their surroundings often result in situation where a person can juggle between multiple reference groups (Horenczyk, 2009, p. 68).

Research literature related to social and cultural identity change (e.g., Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Kohonen, 2008; Mao & Shen, 2015) also suggests that while the identity of some individuals, at the outset, seems to have changed relatively little as a result of living abroad, this does not mean that they have experienced no change in relation to their membership of the home-culture group. Eeva Kohonen (2008) describes these individuals as ‘identity non-shifters’. These non-shifters differ from the two other groups theorized by Kohonen, ‘the identity-shifters’, who easily adjust to new contexts, and ‘the identity-balancers’, who create and maintain bi-cultural identities with relative ease. On the outside, these non-shifters, may strongly affirm their home-culture identity. Yet, at the same time, the content of their identity may have changed significantly, resulting in an identity where certain home-culture values have become more salient and visible. (Mao & Shen, 2015, p. 1542) The attestations of the Finnish-oriented individuals in the second cluster seems to clearly point towards the strategy of affirmation.

As a result, personal life trajectories but also the attitudes of the receiving society, seemed to play a part in the individuals’ attitudes towards Finland, as the participants above explained. For some, being labeled as “a Finn” by outsiders also had the ability to strengthen their own identification to the national and ethnic category of Finnish people. As such, the participants treated Finnishness as a

fairly homogenous category with uniform attributes and a couple of key traits. Many in the second cluster juxtaposed Finland with their current home country, depicting the ways Finland, or the features and qualities of its people, were more familiar and implicitly better than those of their current country of residence.

Finnishness was often defined in rather stereotypical ways, consisting of characteristics such as authenticity, honesty, peacefulness, purity, and connectedness with nature. These widely shared stereotypes about Finns as honest and simple people are always constructions “rooted in the socially and culturally shared discourses” (Varjonen et al., 2009, 63). Linking this notion to the social identity theory, Tajfel & Turner (1986) themselves have also argued that stereotypes form because people have a need to associate negative traits with out-group members and positive traits with in-group members. These stereotypes help people maintain a positive self-image. In other words, individuals differentiate themselves from others by selecting appropriate criteria that are shared by members of the same group. To emphasize their own belongingness to the seemingly homogenous category of Finns, these participants in the second cluster reduced the concept of Finnishness to a few overly positive yet well-known traits. This way it was easier to construct themselves as part of that group on the basis of those key features (Varjonen et al., 2009).

In other words, the individuals’ identities in the second cluster seemed to have clear physical anchorage, Finland, as their Finnish identity seemed to be more tenacious and persistent than their attachment to Europeaness or internationality. Europeaness particularly was not viewed as an important identity marker (mean 1.91), which is interesting considering the fact that this cluster had the largest share of people residing in other European countries. While 71,9 percent (95% CI: 69,9%-73,8%) of the people in this cluster currently lived in Europe, this share in the first cluster was only 61,7 percent (95% CI: 56,9%-66,4%) and in the third cluster 64,0 percent (95% CI: 60,2%-67,6%). This curious detail seems to indicate that Europeaness as a value and as a membership affiliation is a something that “activates” when one leaves the physical boundaries of Europe. It is possible, yet difficult to know for certain without further investigation, that Europeaness is simply something taken for granted and requires active (re)construction and reflexive negotiation only when being European becomes a minority identity in other parts of the world.

In fact, this phenomenon of positive distinctiveness is also described in detail by social identity theory. According to Tajfel & Turner (1979; 1986), individuals are motivated to positively distinguish their own group from others in the interest of constructing a positive social identity. Since individuals

may be defined by their social identities, a strive for the individual positive social identity leads to ingroup favoritism and outgroup discrimination (ibid.). It is perhaps safe to say that Europeanness is generally viewed as a positive quality in many parts of the world, but European identification is meaningless if most people around you are part of that same group. In the light of social identity theory, highlighting the ingroup membership, which is viewed as desirable and positively distinctive, becomes relevant only when one is in everyday contact with outgroup members.

4.4 The worldly internationalists: Rejecting the national identity in place of supranational ones

The third cluster (n=675), which I named the worldly internationalists, differed from the first and second cluster in that the individuals in this group seemed to bypass or reject the affiliation to the national identity of Finnishness (mean 2.62). Europeanness and internationality, however, were given quite high regard. The participants in this group were also young, as almost every fourth were between the ages 18 and 30. This could be one potential explanation for the curiously low regard for Finnishness, slightly higher regard for Europeanness (mean 2.94) but significantly higher appreciation for internationality (mean 3.50). Many of the answers seemed to point toward a certain casual indifference or disregard toward national identity, such as in the following quotations:

“Finland is my old home country, and it’s good to travel around the world with a Finnish passport. However, I don’t feel myself particularly Finnish. Finnishness itself doesn’t mean that much to me.” -*Woman, Spain*

“Finland is a good country. Probably better than average. National identities don’t mean that much to me.” -*Man, Belgium*

“Finland is my home, one of them, the first one. A land of many people who look and sound just like me, but where I’ve always felt very different compared to others. It’s nice to go there and even nicer to leave and go home to the country where home at that moment happens to be.” -*Woman, United Kingdom*

As can be seen, the attitudes of these participants towards Finnishness were somewhat apathetic and indifferent. There were, however, clear variations among all the answers provided by the individuals in this cluster. While there was a notable absence of any strongly expressed positions towards

Finnishness in the answers provided by the previous individuals, others asserted clear negativity, even hostility, toward Finnishness as an identity marker. While some of them explicitly denied being Finnish, others viewed it as quality or precondition that they had automatically inherited but did not appreciate or feel attached to:

“Doesn’t mean anything to me. I am European, not Finnish.” -*Woman, The Netherlands*

“Because of my background, I don't really see myself as belonging 100% to any nationality/culture, and being Finnish is therefore a part of me, but it is not something I wholly identify with and it is further complicated by being a Swedish-speaking Finn and not speaking Finnish. There are aspects of Finnish culture I am proud of and enjoy, but there are also aspects I don't like and many I simply do not know or understand.” -
Woman, Sweden

“ I see Finland as a racist, introvert country. The way Finns believe in their own excellency and putting down other cultures and ways of acting feels weird. (...) Finnishness means that I was born in Finland and that I speak Finnish. I do not feel connectedness to Finnishness or Finnish people.” -*Woman, Spain*

The motivations behind distancing themselves from Finnishness, or blatant denial of it, varied from feelings of not fitting in to the mold of a “typical” Finn, on one hand, or being embarrassed or displeased by the attitudes and behavior of other Finnish people, on the other. Social mobility strategy, a part of social identity theory, suggests that individuals who consider themselves belonging to a low status group (with undesirable or displeasing characteristics) sometimes choose to leave the group and join a higher regarded one (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). According to the theory, the more permeable the boundaries are, the easier it is to leave one group and join another one (ibid.). This seems to be the case among some individuals in the third cluster, as many reported difficulties in being able to associate themselves with other Finns due to perceived differences in attitudes, values, or ways of life. Pointing these differences out were also not neutral matter-of-fact statements but rather charged with an air of superiority, seeing that a former in-group had transformed into an out-group. At the same time, most of these individuals can be assumed to be Finnish citizens. Denis Sindic (2011) has called this phenomenon the lack of “psychological citizenship”, i.e., the absence of subjective sense of being a citizen of a certain political community.

Moreover, some individuals in the third cluster simply stated that they did not know what ‘Finnishness’ was exactly anymore. Sometimes this disassociation had to do with geographical distance, sometimes with passing of time. After living outside of Finland for extended period of time, Finnishness was simply something that was lost over time, as is noticeable in the reflections of these individuals:

”Finnishness is more like the identity of my youth, but now as a person living abroad I feel myself more European/international.” -*Woman, South Korea*

”Childhood and youth in Finland, working age in Sweden, old age in Spain. The meaning of Finnishness has diminished slowly over time, although not totally disappeared. (...) The last time I visited was six years ago, I miss going to Stockholm more (our kids are there).” -*Man, Spain*

Similarly to Fenton’s (2007, pp. 333–334) findings related to young British adults’ attitudes towards national identity, Europeanness and internationality were embraced as supranational identities more inclusive and less particular and narrow. In their case, supranational experience is “embraced”, and the global elements of their life trajectories “provide the logic for demoting” their Finnishness (ibid.). Sindic (2011, pp. 208–209), too, has pointed out that “for the proponents of global citizenship, the main merit of such form of identification resides in the fact that it would overcome the inherent exclusiveness of national identity”.

Furthermore, the motivation for these identity markers that bypassed the national affiliation was also often the individual or family migration story, as the elderly man living in Spain explained above. Identifying oneself as “European” or “international” allowed the recognition of links and belongingness to multiple national and transnational frames of reference and, as such, gave way to the recognition of the individual life trajectories and migration journeys of these participants. Many individuals in this cluster, particularly the older ones, had left Finland a long time ago and moved multiple times. For them, migration had not been a unique event that had led to a definite settlement in one given country, but rather a series of multiple migrations where multiple borders had been crossed along the way. From this perspective, it is somewhat understandable that, for some of them, national borders represented “artificial obstacles to cosmopolitan flows of connections”, as McEntee-Atalianis & Zappettini (2014, p. 409) have put it. Keeping in mind the fact that this cluster also had the largest share of young people, disregarding Finnishness could have also had to do with being in

the beginning of one's migration journey, leaving Finland behind, embarking on an adventure and wanting to experience the world.

5. DISCUSSION

The motivation to investigate the identities of current-day expatriate Finns arose from the notion that the issues related to Finnish people in various expatriate communities as well as their potential return migration had growing interest in Finland. The Ministry of the Interior's new Strategy on expatriate Finns (2022–2026) and the development of the postal voting system abroad were perhaps the largest-scale examples of how Finland was interested in enhancing the position of expatriate communities “in constant state of change” (Ministry of the Interior, 2021). While in the past, both research and public discourse had generally treated Finnish emigrants as a relatively homogenous group, room for a more diversified understanding of expatriates seemed to have opened. In academia, newer migration studies had also shifted the focus from the understanding migration as a unidirectional, once-in-a-lifetime event and researching traditional push and pull factors to a more contemporary understanding of mobilities that can be transnational, repeated, circular, and result in lifestyles and identities that are manifold and simultaneously located in several geographical locations.

As a result, research literature related transnationalism and social identity theory provided a suitable theoretical background for this endeavor. The brand-new survey data collected by the Migration Institute of Finland offered an interesting opportunity to investigate the identities of expatriate Finns, and cluster analysis as an example of the so-called person-centered analyses was chosen as a method. Unlike many variable-centered statistical analyses, cluster analysis allowed for an important recognition that the relationship between variables is not similar throughout the data set. In other words, the benefits of the cluster analysis were in investigating how the cases, i.e., individual participants, were different from each other in terms of identifying to Finnishness, on one hand, and to supranational identity markers, such as Europeanness and internationality, on the other. The benefits of cluster analysis seemed to go hand in hand with the awareness that the focus group, expatriate Finns, is not a homogenous group but that their motivations to move abroad as well as their lifestyles and circumstances vary. Hence, their connectedness and belonging to different frames of reference also deviate. And while survey as a form of inquiry is a demanding yet popular method in investigating people's opinions, attitudes, and values, there are numerous aspects to consider in every step of the research process when evaluating the success of the survey. These include planning of the research design, deciding sample selection, constructing the questionnaire, the data analysis, and ethical considerations related to anonymity and confidentiality of the participants, to name a few.

Hierarchical and K-means cluster analyses revealed three clearly different groups of people with respect to their Finnishness, Europeanness and internationality: the transnational citizens (cluster 1.), the Finnish-oriented (cluster 2.), and the worldly internationalists (cluster 3.). In the first cluster, these three different identity markers were not seen as exclusionary, and a strong attachment to both the country of origin and the current host country was not viewed to be incompatible. It seemed that the individuals in this cluster, most often working aged and highly educated women, possessed the freedom to maintain and reject different sides of their identities depending on the context. Their mobility could also be looked at from the perspective of privilege, as crossing the borders of nation-states was made possible by their relatively high quality of life and the social and human capital that they had obtained from the experiences of mobility. For the individuals in the second cluster, their highly regarded Finnish identity had often activated outside of Finland and outside of the safety net of one's own reference group. The share of men was much higher, and fewer people were of working age, and particularly the 61-year-olds and older were represented well. Some of them expressed negative feelings, such as home sickness and disappointment in the life abroad. Interestingly, they also defined Finnishness in rather stereotypical ways, and reduced the concept to a few yet well-known traits. This way, it was easy for them to emphasize their own belongingness to this homogenous category of Finns. Lastly, the individuals in the third cluster rejected the affiliation to the national identity of Finnishness, their perceptions about Finland and other Finns varying from casual indifference to an apparent hostility. Instead, Europeanness and internationality were embraced as identities more inclusive and less particular. The participants in this group were also notably younger, as almost every fourth were between the ages 18 and 30.

It is important to note that the definition of an expatriate Finn in the context of my thesis is understood as someone who has a Finnish citizenship, who was born in Finland *or* has at least one parent who holds a Finnish citizenship. The other important factor was the relative permanence of the person's expatriation; one must have made a notification of the move abroad to the Population Information System, i.e., left Finland more or less permanently, in order to be qualified as an expatriate. Consequently, the focus was on settled expatriates who are residents "within territorial boundaries of a particular nation state" (Horvath, 2012, p. 1745). According to Horvath, this has both conceptual and practical consequences when developing the research design: how to define the target group as the unit of the analysis in the study and how to avoid sampling-related difficulties when it comes to those populations who fall outside of the state-defined and state-centered categories (i.e., undocumented and 'untypical' migrant populations with irregular residencies working in, for example, tourism, construction or agriculture). Multi-place living is also not a phenomenon that is

associated solely with migrant populations working in low-wage industries. It is estimated, although not much research exists about the topic at this stage, that one of the effects of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic is the increase in location-independent work resulting in people dwelling in different locations over periods of time. As a result, a more transnational approach should consider these types of short-term, seasonal, and circulatory movement as well as cross-border mobilities more broadly in the attempts to understand this specific target population better. But since the target population was defined in the research project prior to my involvement, I had to settle for this rather strict definition of who is an expatriate Finn. It is, however, important to keep in mind that people's own opinion of their membership in the national and ethnic category of "Finnish" as well as their connectedness to their current country of residence can also vary greatly from that of the authorities and state-administered registers.

These aforementioned notions have links to the pitfalls of the so-called methodological nationalism, a concept developed in social science scholarship, that warns not to overaccentuate the role of nation and its borders as a unit of analysis (Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002; Amelina et al., 2012). Investigating expatriate communities through a nation-centered lens can lead to "overlooking social formations that extend beyond national arrangements" when instead, research should make visible the "hybridity and mixity in a world of constant motion" (Amelina et al., 2012, pp. 3–6). Particularly prevalent in phenomena related to globalization and transnationalization, possible units of analysis could instead be identities, social networks, institutions as well as postcolonial hierarchies of power, to name a few (ibid.). In addition to problematizing the artificial boundaries of who is Finnish and who is not, I am also aware that the terminology regarding expatriates used in this context is not free of connotations and preconceptions about race, privilege, and education. While I was aware of these predicaments – clearly pointed out and problematized also in the research literature that I used – the majority of the people who responded to the survey seemed to, nonetheless, fit the description of a stereotypical, in many ways privileged 'expat'. Most were highly educated, mobile citizens of the global North whose motivations to move and dwell outside of his or her own country of origin were based on personal aspirations rather than outcomes of hardship or lack of choice.

Nevertheless, the aim of this thesis was to contribute to the existing research literature by adding more contemporary theoretical approaches of migration studies to the investigations of expatriate Finnish communities. A scholarly understanding of the diverse nature of current day mobilities and transnationalism was an orientation unexamined in the context of Finnish expatriates. My wish was also that the thesis would offer new insights utilizable in the public discourse related to expatriate

Finns, at this moment in time when there seems to be a growing interest in the Finnish society towards this topic. However, since identity is always dynamic and continually negotiated, the survey used as data measured only a moment in time. There are other needs for future research topics and methodologies, as well. It is, perhaps, also relevant to ask whether quantitative methods, that many utilizers of social identity theory have also heavily relied on, have the full potential in understanding the more implicit dimensions of identification. Can the true nature and the strength of one's identity always be expressed, or measured, with the help of scales? For example, Sindic (2011, pp. 211–212), drawing attention to the identifications that are much more implicit, has argued that “identity and self-conceptions can sometimes operate in ways that are not always explicitly acknowledged by social actors” and therefore research should consider more suitable methodologies in revealing situations where “identity is denied, contested or threatened”. On the other hand, there are also scholars using qualitative methods who argue that the importance of identity “cannot be easily estimated in percentage terms from qualitative interviews” (Fenton 2007, p. 328). To sum up, combining quantitative and qualitative methods in the future has perhaps the greatest potential in delving into such complex concepts like identity.

Furthermore, not much research exists on younger, more recently emigrated Finns, and same goes for example for migration flows from Finland to Asia and Latin America. In the future, more research is also needed on the mobility flows in the European landscape post-Brexit as well as in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic. The long-term effects of the pandemic to transnational identities and lifestyles of expatriate communities and return migration remain to be seen, although there are early signs that the pandemic has caused more people with Finnish origin to move back to Finland than in previous years. Future research in the Finnish context could further focus on the diversity of expatriate Finnishness, the expatriates' cross-border ties, as well as aspirations related to the return migration. Whatever the specific research topics, the transnational perspective remains to be perhaps more crucial than ever.

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APPENDIX 1. The “Changing nature of being an expatriate Finn” survey

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Gender

Male/ Female/ Prefer not to say

In which year you were born?

In which country you were born?

What is/are your citizenship(s)?

Native language

Finnish

Swedish

Others, which?

I am bilingual/ multilingual

In addition, I use the following languages fluently in everyday life:

What is your education?

Still in comprehensive school

Primary school or senior primary school

Comprehensive school

Vocational school or course

Upper secondary school or upper secondary school graduate

College-level vocational education and training

University of applied sciences

University, Bachelor’s degree

University of applied sciences, Master’s degree

University, Master’s degree

Doctorate

Do you have a spouse or a permanent partner and do you live together?

Yes I do, we live together

Yes I do, we do not live together

I do not have a spouse or a permanent partner

In which country was your spouse or permanent partner born?

Yourself included, how many people normally live in your household?

In total __ people

What are the ages of the people normally living in your household?

Aged 18 or older

7–17-year-olds

Aged 6 or younger

What age is the youngest child living in your household?

Are you currently in paid employment?

Permanent employment

Fixed-term employment

I am not in paid employment

Job/industry:

Are you

Employee

Entrepreneur, no employees

Entrepreneur with 1–9 employees

Entrepreneur with 10 or more employees

Employed in a family-owned company

Employed in the public sector

Employed in the private sector

Pensioner

Student

Other, what?

What is the income category of your family when all the salaries, pensions and other income of all family members are added together? Tick the option matching the annual income (€) of your household after taxes and other deductions.

20 000 or less/ 20 001–40 000/ 40 001–60 000/

60 001–80 000/ 80 001 or more/ Prefer not to say

A. RESPONDENT’S SITUATION IN LIFE AND REASONS FOR MOVING ABROAD

In which country do you currently live?

How long have you lived in your current home country (in years)?

What were the reasons for you to move to the country you’re currently living in? (You can select several options, also indicate their importance)

Very important/ fairly important/ somewhat important/ not important/ I cannot say

Work

Studies

Work of your spouse

Studies of your spouse

Desire to learn the language/improve language skills

Desire to live abroad

Desire for adventure

Remote relationship

Family/roots of the spouse

Parents’ background in the target country

Return to another home country

Other, what?

Are you currently living (you can specify in the last point if you wish)...

In the centre of a big city/ In a residential area or suburb of a big city/ In some other city/ In a village or population centre in the countryside/ In a sparsely populated area in the countryside/ Other, where?

Do you intend to live in your current country of residence?

Permanently/ For several years/ A year/ Less than a year/ I cannot say

If you answered other than “Permanently” in the previous item, which of the following reasons affect the temporary nature of your stay (you can select more than one option)?

Your own work
Your own studies
Career insecurity
Work or studies of your spouse
Children’s schooling or studies
Desire to return to Finland
Uncertainty due to the Coronavirus
Other, what?

Are you currently studying abroad full-time?

Yes/ No

What is the field of your studies?

Veterinary medicine/ Pharmacy/ Dentistry/
Humanities/ Pedagogy/ Economic sciences/ Visual arts/ Physical education/ Natural sciences/ Medicine/ Agriculture and forestry/ Music/ Law/ Psychology/ Industrial design/ Dance/ Theatre/ Engineering science/ Theology/ Health science/ Social sciences/ Other, what?

Have you ever lived abroad before and for how long?

Country/ In what year did you move abroad?/ For how long did you live in that country in total?

B. WELL-BEING

How much do you enjoy living in your current country of residence?

Very much/ Fairly much/ Somewhere in the middle/ Not very much/ Not at all

Do you think you have good social networks (e.g. family, friends, colleagues, acquaintances) in your country of residence?

Very good social networks/ Fairly good social networks/ Neither good nor poor social networks/ Fairly poor social networks/ Very poor social networks

How would you describe your health at the moment?

Very good/ Fairly good/ Neither good nor poor/ Fairly poor/ Very poor

What kind of welfare-related services (e.g. health, social relationships, quality of life, income) would you like to receive from Finnish providers?

Health care/medical counselling/ Social relationships/ Quality of life/ Livelihood/ Employment and working

conditions/ Housing and environment/ Support for problems in relationships/ Your own well-being or that of your loved ones/ Information about the coronavirus/ Other, where?

C. SERVICE REQUESTS, EXPECTATIONS WITH REGARD TO FINLAND

Do you think that there are enough services and counselling available to expatriate Finns from Finland?

Very much/ Fairly much/ Neither well nor poorly/ Fairly poorly/ Poorly/ I cannot say

The Ministry to Finns abroad, the Finnish Seamen’s Mission, the Finnish Lifelong Learning Foundation and the Finland Society offer different services to expatriate Finns in terms of moving abroad, moving back and living abroad. How well do you know the following organisations?

Very well/ Fairly well/ Not particularly well/ Not at all
Embassy/consulate of your country of residence
Finnish Seamen’s Mission
Finland Society
Finnish Expatriate Parliament
Parish of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland in your country of residence
Kulkuri School of Distance Education
Nomadskolan

If you are not familiar with these organisations, how would you like to learn more about them?

Twitter/ Facebook/ Electronic letter/ Printed info sheet/ Digital info sheet/ I do not need any more information

On what issues or topics do you need or would have needed counselling or services? You can select more than one option.

Information about your country of destination
Taxation
Social security
Returning to the home country
My school attendance
Children’s school attendance
Own studies
Children’s studies/day care
Distance learning
Support for problems in relationships
Information about other expatriate Finn communities and their activities
Falling ill
Death and funeral arrangements
Doing military service
Religious activities
Recreational activities
Registration as a resident abroad
Voting in the Finnish elections
Coronavirus
Other, what?

Distance learning. Do you need different kinds of distance learning possibilities from Finland for school-age children and/or adults?

Yes/ No

What kind of distance learning possibilities from Finland would you like to have for school-age children and/or adults and what kind of contents would you like to have for distance learning?

What kind of support do you need to maintain your child's native language?

Educational materials and videos on the Internet

Contact teaching

Educational materials in writing (books, notebooks, handouts)

Virtual meetings or webinars

Other, what?

D. CORONAVIRUS EPIDEMIC

Has the coronavirus epidemic increased your willingness to return to Finland?

Very much/ Fairly much/ Not very much/ Not at all/ I cannot say

If you answered "Very much" or "Fairly much" to the previous question, what reasons in your current country of residence increase your willingness to return to Finland?

High amount of coronavirus infections

Lack of trust in the healthcare system

Loss of livelihood because of the epidemic

The diminution of study opportunities

Travel restrictions

Problems with child's school or kindergarten attendance

Other, what?

How has the coronavirus situation affected your daily life in your country of residence?

Did you need or have you received sufficient information and support from the Finnish State because of the coronavirus situation? And if not, what kind of information or support would you have needed?

Yes/ No/ What kind of additional support or information I would need

Did you need or have you received support from expatriate Finnish organisations due to the coronavirus situation?

Yes, what and from what organization?/ No

E. BREXIT

Has the upcoming withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union affected

Your work

Your studies

Communications to Finland

Children's school attendance

The relationship with your partner

Your relationship with the relatives of your partner

Your experience of belonging to your country of residence

Your relationship with neighbours or colleagues

Your plans for the future

Something else, what?

Has the upcoming Brexit increased your willingness to return to Finland?

Very much/ Fairly much/ Not very much/ Not at all/ I cannot say

Does Brexit affect your plans for the future in the United Kingdom and if so, how?

F. EXPECTATIONS AND SUPPORT RELATED TO MOVING BACK

Have you considered moving back to Finland?

Yes/ No/ I cannot say

Why have you considered moving back to Finland?

You can select more than one option. In addition, select the three options that are the most important to you and give them a number in order of priority.

Work situation in your country of residence

Family reasons

Relatives in Finland

Reasons related to studies

Political situation in your country of residence

I miss Finland

The corona epidemic

Other reason, what?

If you are planning/dreaming of moving back to Finland, on which matters you would like to receive guidance/counselling? (You can select more than one option. Note! Moving means a stay of more than three months in Finland.)

Looking for a study place

Looking for a job

Practical issues related to moving (notifications of change of address, social security, taxation, etc.)

Looking for a dwelling

Completion of military service

Benefits and services (e.g. KELA, tax office, etc.)

Learning the Finnish language and culture (language courses, etc.)

Support for problems in relationships

Children's day care and school attendance

Looking for work or a study place for your spouse

Quarantine and travel restrictions

Something else, what?

I have no plans to move to Finland

G. CONTACTS, FAMILY AND VISITS TO FINLAND

How often do you follow affairs relating to Finland?

Daily/ Weekly/ Monthly/ Less often/ I do not follow affairs relating to Finland

How often have you visited Finland since moving abroad?

More than 5 times a year/ 2-4 times a year/ Once a year/ Less than once a year/ Not at all

For what reasons have you visited Finland?

Work/ Holiday/ Partner living in Finland/ Other family living in Finland/ Studies/ Other, what?

Do your family members currently live in Finland, in your current country of residence or in another country?

In Finland/ In your current country of residence/ In another country
Spouse/ Children/ Parents/ Grandparents/
Grandchildren/ Siblings

How do you keep in touch with your family members living in different countries? You can select more than one option. Phone/ Email/ Letters, postcards/ Messaging apps (WhatsApp, Messenger etc.)/ Video calls (Skype, Teams, Zoom, etc.)
Spouse/ Children/ Parents/ Grandparents/
Grandchildren/ Siblings/ Friends

H. SOCIAL NETWORKS, FORMS OF PARTICIPATION

How often do you spend your leisure time in your current country of residence with friends who...

- A. Are Finns living in your country of residence?
- B. Come from your current country of residence?
- C. Come from other countries?

Daily/ Weekly/ Monthly/ Less often/ Not at all

Has the coronavirus epidemic decreased your social interaction with others in your country of residence?

Very much/ Fairly much/ Not very much/ Not at all/ I cannot say

Have you participated in the activities of any of the following? Yes/ No

Finland Society and/or Finnish Expatriate Parliament
Finnish Seamen's Mission
Kulkuri School of Distance Education
Nomadskolan
Ministry to Finns abroad
Parish of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland in your country of residence
Church, a local Finnish parish
Church, local parish
Finnish School
Events organised by other Finns living in the country

Expatriate Finn discussion groups on Facebook
Local Finland Societies

Activities of some other Finnish organisation, which:
Some other Finnish activities, what?

How important it is to you?

Very important/ Fairly important/ Not particularly important/ Not at all important/ I cannot say
To participate in the activities of expatriate Finnish communities
To have Finnish contacts in your country of residence
To have the possibility to use the Finnish language
For your children to go to school in Finnish
To follow Finnish-language media and to watch Finnish-language TV shows

How could the affairs of expatriate Finns be approved in your opinion?

I. POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

1. How interested are you in politics?

Very interested/ Fairly interested/ Not very interested/
Not at all interested/ I cannot say
a. In Finland
b. In your country of residence

In which Finnish elections have you voted?

Presidential elections 2018
Parliamentary elections 2019
Municipal elections 2017
European Parliament election 2019

Have you voted in the elections of your current country of residence?

Yes/ No
If you have voted in Finnish elections while living abroad, how have you voted (you can choose more than one option)?
At a Finnish diplomatic mission/ Postal voting/
Otherwise, how?

People sometimes do not vote in elections. If you did not vote, why was that?

Voting is difficult, the voting place is far away
I did not know how to vote
I am not of age
I am not interested in Finnish politics
I do not think my vote makes a difference
I could not vote because of an illness
I was unable to vote in time
I did not know when the elections took place
I forgot

Have you voted for candidates of the following parties (you can choose more than one option)?

The Finnish Social Democratic Party (SDP)
Finns Party (PS)
The National Coalition Party (Kok)
The Centre Party (Kesk)

The Green League (Vihr)
The Left Alliance (Vas)
Swedish People's Party of Finland (RKP)
The Christian Democrats
Movement Now
Other, what?

Do you take part in the activities of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament?

Yes/ No/ I am not familiar with the Finnish Expatriate Parliament

J. RELIGION

Do you belong to a church or religious community?

Evangelical Lutheran Church/ Eastern Orthodox Church/ Roman Catholic Church/ Other Christian church or community/ I am a Jew/ I am a Muslim/ I am a Buddhist/ I am a Hindu/ I do not belong to a church or religious community/ I belong to some other religious community, which?

Do you consider yourself...

a religious person/ a non-religious person/ a firm atheist/ I cannot say

How often do you...

At least once a week/ At least once a month/ A few times a year/ At least once a year/ Not at all in recent years

Attend a worship service at a church

Attend a life event (baptism, wedding, funeral) at a church

Attend a church concert or some other event of spiritual music

Do voluntary work for a parish or religious community

Attend other activities organised by a parish or religious community

Attend non-religious events of religious communities (bake sale, club activities, leisure activities, meetings, etc.), what?

Other religious activities, what?

How often do you...

Daily/ At least once a week/ A few times a month/ Less than once a year/ Never

Pray

Read the Bible or other scriptures
Watch/listen to spiritual or religious shows on radio or television

K. IDENTITY

How important are the following to you?

Very important/ Fairly important/ Not particularly important/ Not at all important/ I cannot say

Being Finnish

Being European

Internationality

Native language

The language of your country of residence

Religion

Patriotism

Finnish language

Swedish language

Finnish food

Finnish celebrations

Finnish music

Finnish literature

Finnish films

Finnish television series

A religious service in Finnish

A religious service in Swedish

Do you eat Finnish dishes or delicacies at home? If yes, what?

Do you consider yourself as belonging to a minority group on the basis of your language, ethnic background, religious beliefs, gender identity or some other reason? If so, which one(s)? (NB: We will treat all the information about you in anonymous form and with strict confidentiality)

Describe shortly how you see Finland as a country at the moment and what does being Finnish mean to you?

INTEREST IN AN ADDITIONAL INTERVIEW

Would you be interested in participating in an additional interview? If you are, please enter your email address and contact details below (your contact details will not be associated with the survey answers you provided above).

APPENDIX 2. Emigration from Finland (by sex) 1990 –2020

Year	Males	Females	Total
1990	3,225	3,252	6,477
1991	2,949	3,035	5,984
1992	2,994	3,061	6,055
1993	3,149	3,256	6,405
1994	4,221	4,451	8,672
1995	4,447	4,510	8,957
1996	5,181	5,406	10,587
1997	4,838	5,016	9,854
1998	5,145	5,672	10,817
1999	5,683	6,283	11,966
2000	7,052	7,259	14,311
2001	6,252	6,901	13,153
2002	6,335	6,556	12,891
2003	5,827	6,256	12,083
2004	6,841	6,815	13,656
2005	6,038	6,331	12,369
2006	6,036	6,071	12,107
2007	6,215	6,228	12,443
2008	6,994	6,663	13,657
2009	6,260	5,891	12,151
2010	5,853	6,052	11,905
2011	6,291	6,369	12,660
2012	6,842	7,003	13,845
2013	6,856	7,037	13,893
2014	7,764	7,722	15,486
2015	8,093	8,212	16,305
2016	8,906	9,176	18,082
2017	8,159	8,814	16,973
2018	9,702	9,439	19,141
2019	8,644	8,619	17,263
2020	7,652	7,432	15,084

Source: Statistics Finland (2021).