

Finns abroad - the profile of emigrants and their thoughts about returning to Finland

Elli Heikkilä

Institute of Migration

**InsideOut Labour Migration In and Outside of National Borders, 18-20 April 2011,
Department of Social Research, University of Tampere (UTA), Finland**

Some historical perspective

- Finland has traditionally been a country of emigration, but nowadays the country has positive international migration balance. During the past one hundred years over 1 million people have moved to other countries. Depending on the time and country, 20-40 % of the emigrants returned to Finland. Without any emigration there would be 6-7 million inhabitants in Finland (now 5.3 million).

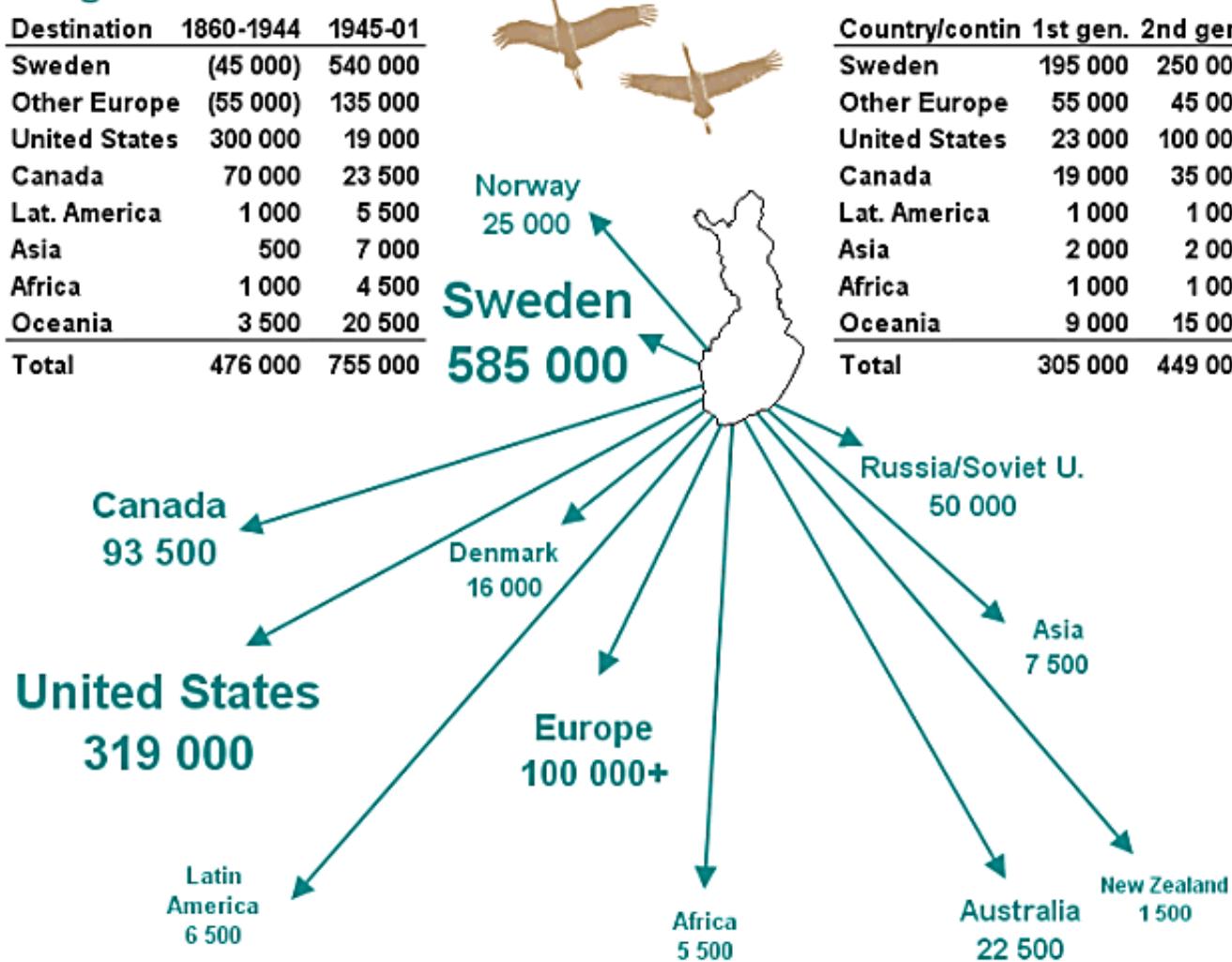
Emigration from Finland 1860-2001 and Finns abroad 2001

Emigration 1860-2001

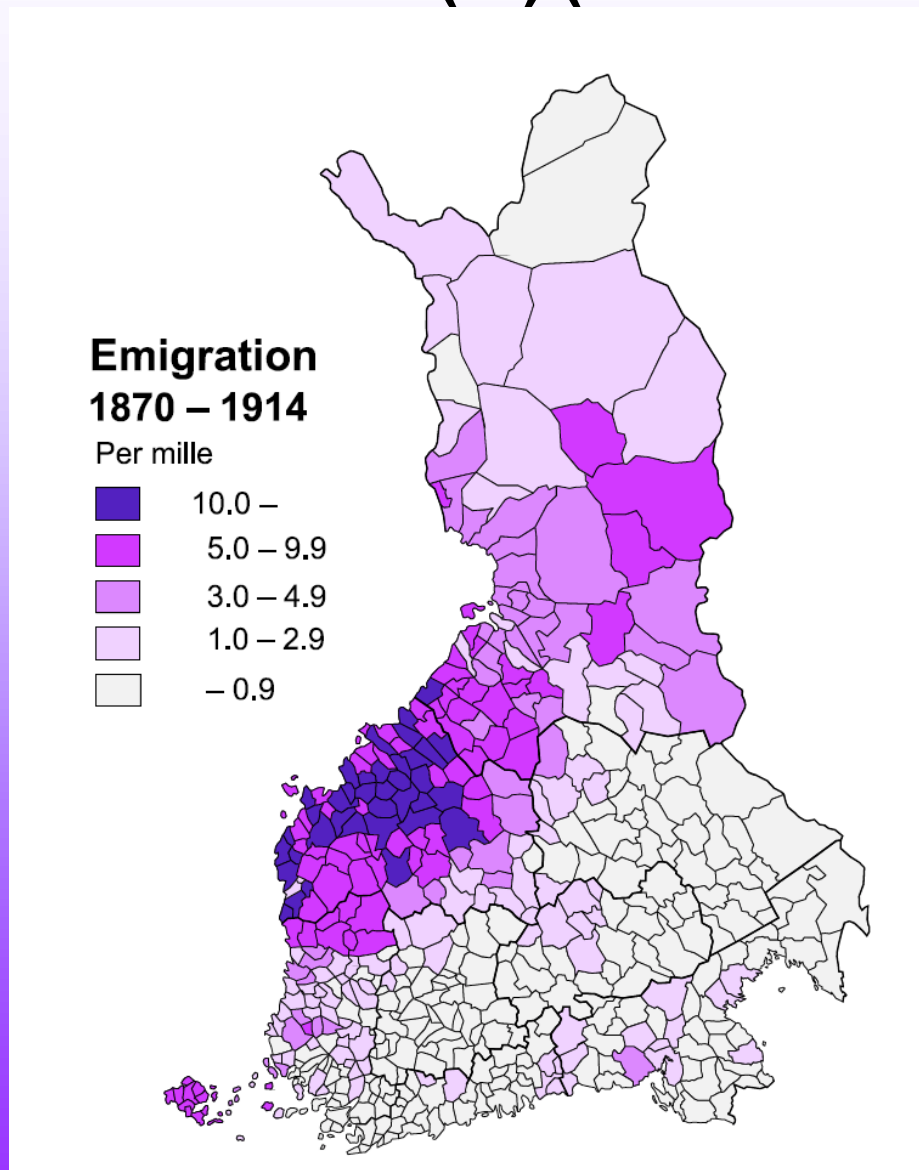
Destination	1860-1944	1945-01
Sweden	(45 000)	540 000
Other Europe	(55 000)	135 000
United States	300 000	19 000
Canada	70 000	23 500
Lat. America	1 000	5 500
Asia	500	7 000
Africa	1 000	4 500
Oceania	3 500	20 500
Total	476 000	755 000

Finns abroad 2001

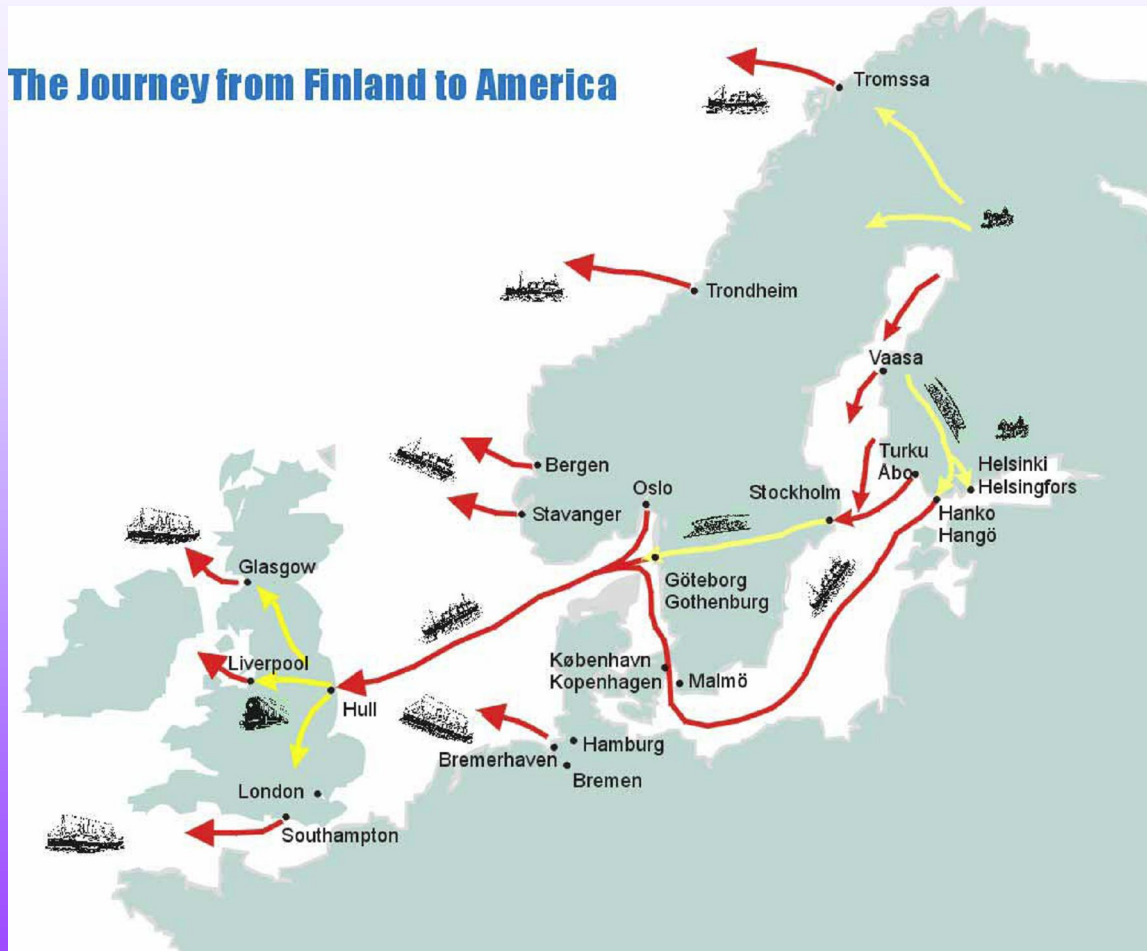
Country/contin	1st gen.	2nd gen.
Sweden	195 000	250 000
Other Europe	55 000	45 000
United States	23 000	100 000
Canada	19 000	35 000
Lat. America	1 000	1 000
Asia	2 000	2 000
Africa	1 000	1 000
Oceania	9 000	15 000
Total	305 000	449 000



The volume of emigration from Finland by municipality, 1870-1914 (‰) (Kero 1974:51)

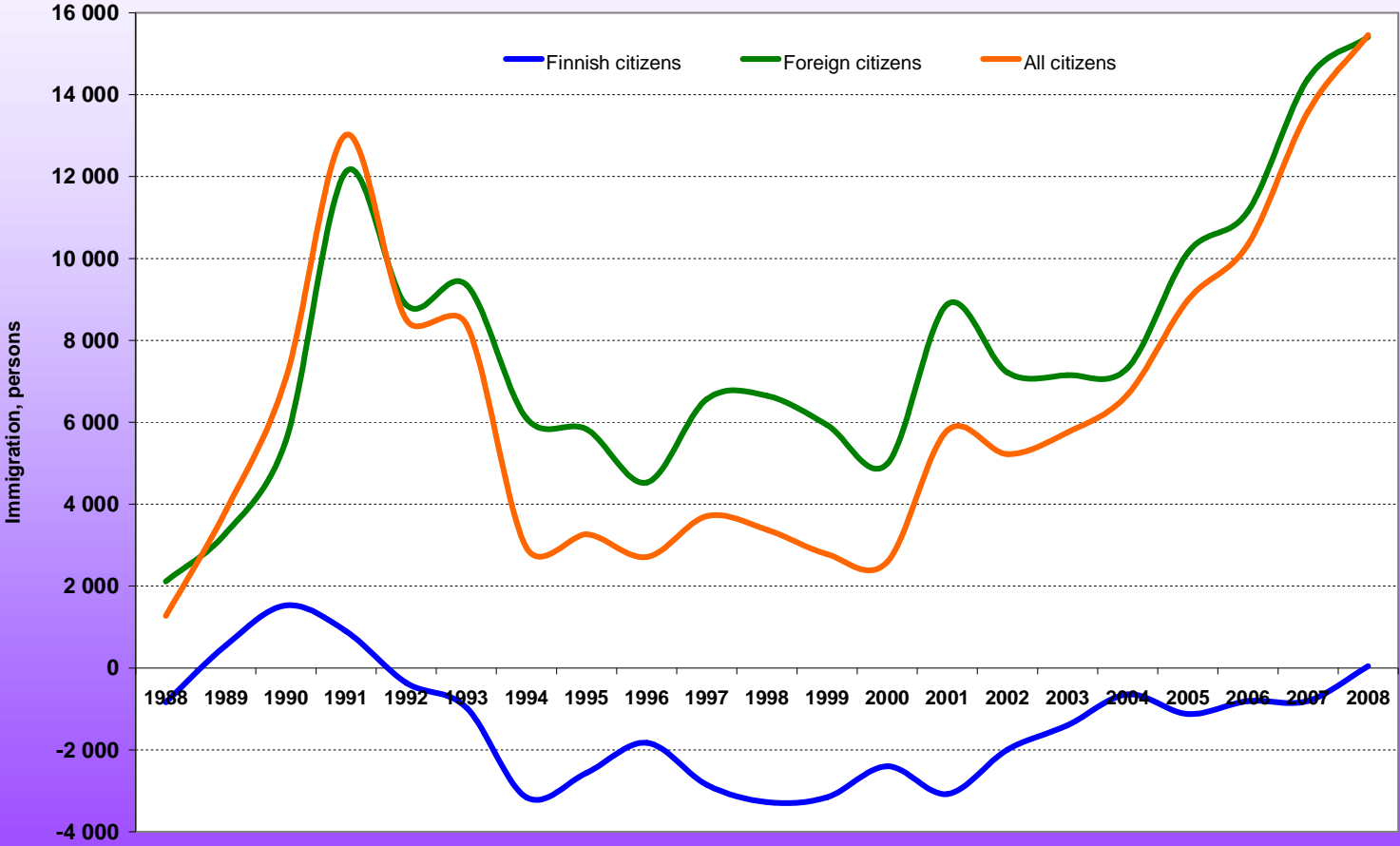


The Journey from Finland to America



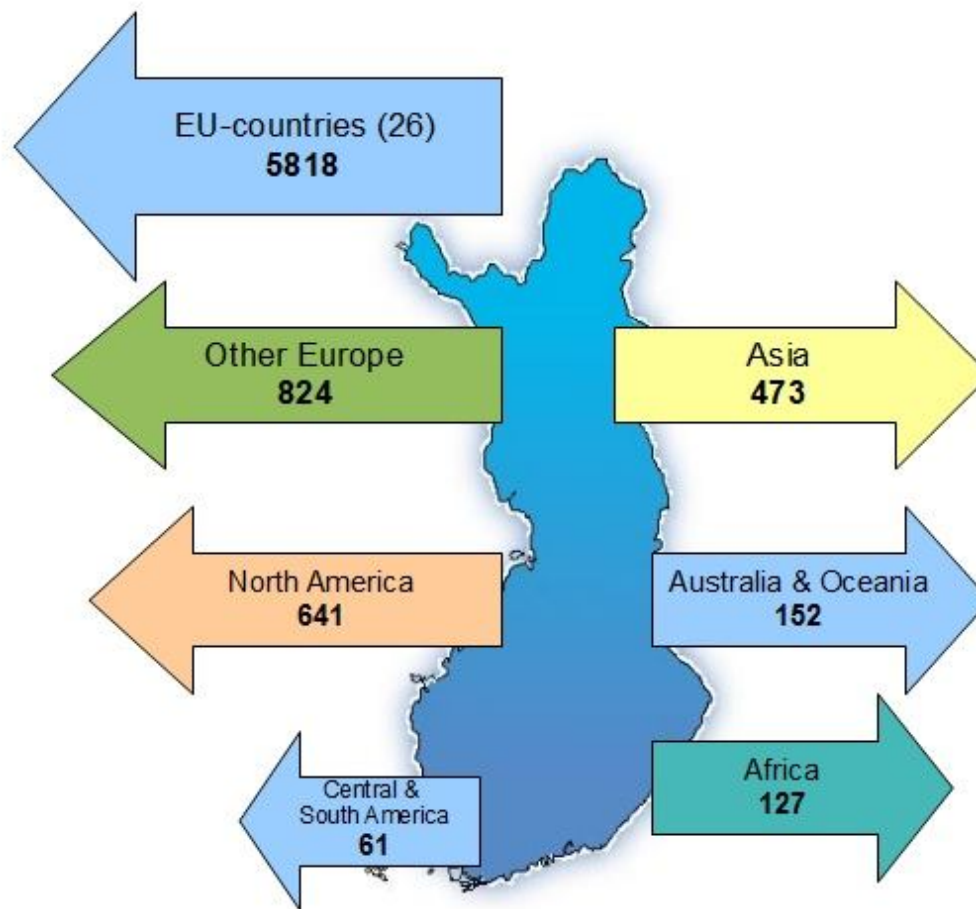
Contemporary emigration of the Finns

International migration balance of Finnish and foreign citizens in 1988–2008 in Finland.



- Emigration from Finland in 2009
 - 4 037 foreign citizens
 - 8 114 Finnish citizens
- Immigration to Finland in 2009
 - 18 087 foreign citizens
 - 8 612 Finnish citizens
- International migration balance
 - 14 050 foreign citizens
 - 498 Finnish citizens

Emigration of Finnish citizens from Finland by continent in 2009



Emigration from Finland to global regions by citizenship in 2009

Destination of emigration	Citizenship		Other European countries	North Africa	South America	Asia	Oceania	Unknown	Total	
	Finland	Other EU (27) countries								
Other EU (27) countries	5818	2282	49	55	20	19	94	9	14	8360
Other European countries	824	46	335	3	1	0	16	0	0	1225
Africa	127	7	1	70	0	0	0	0	1	206
North America	641	39	2	4	154	4	26	2	1	873
South America	61	13	1	0	1	44	0	0	0	120
Asia	473	26	5	0	10	1	578	7	0	1100
Oceania	152	7	1	0	0	0	1	30	0	191
Unknown	18	21	15	4	0	1	14	0	3	76
Total	8114	2441	409	136	186	69	729	48	19	12151

Emigrants from Finland to foreign countries in 2000, 2005 and 2009, by top ten countries, Finnish citizens (Statistics Finland 2010)

2000	%	2005	%	2009	%	
Sweden	32,9	3349	Sweden	2823	28,3	2295
Norway	12,1	1236	Britain	1133	10,7	866
USA	7,8	793	USA	844	6,7	547
Britain	7,6	770	Spain	584	6,2	505
Spain	7,2	734	Germany	577	6,2	503
Germany	6,8	695	Norway	506	5,3	426
Denmark	3,0	304	Denmark	303	3,9	319
Netherlands	2,3	234	Estonia	281	3,5	284
Switzerland	2,2	224	Switzerland	262	3,4	272
Belgium	2,1	211	France	218	2,8	230
Total	84,0	8550	Total	7531	77,0	6247
Emigration total	100	10183	Emigration total	9737	100	8114

International migration by type of municipality in Finland in 1996, 2000 and 2008

	Urban municipalities		Semi-urban municipalities		Rural municipalities		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
1996								
Immigration	10 538	79,3	1 194	9,0	1 562	11,7	13 294	100
Emigration	8 411	79,4	840	7,9	1 336	12,6	10 587	100
Net migration	2 127	78,6	354	13,1	226	8,3	2 707	100
2000								
Immigration	13 804	81,7	1 320	7,8	1 771	10,5	16 895	100
Emigration	11 710	81,8	1 205	8,4	1 396	9,8	14 311	100
Net migration	2 094	81,0	115	4,5	375	14,5	2 584	100
2008								
Immigration	24 032	82,5	2 401	8,2	2 681	9,2	29 114	100
Emigration	11 511	84,3	1005	7,4	1 141	8,4	13 657	100
Net migration	12 521	81,0	1 396	9,0	1 540	10,0	15 457	100

Emigration by counties in 2000, 2005 and 2009 (Data: Statistics Finland 2010)

Year 2000	Persons	%	Year 2005	Persons	%	Year 2009	Persons	%
Uusimaa	6446	45,0	Uusimaa	5402	43,7	Uusimaa	5910	48,6
Helsinki	3487	24,4	Helsinki	2919	23,6	Helsinki	3117	25,7
Varsinais-Suomi	1232	8,6	Varsinais-Suomi	1055	8,5	Pirkanmaa	1040	8,6
Turku	752	5,3	Turku	639	5,2	Tampere	691	5,7
Pirkanmaa	856	6,0	Pirkanmaa	993	8,0	Varsinais-Suomi	857	7,1
Tampere	537	3,8	Tampere	655	5,3	Turku	511	4,2
Northern Ostrobothnia	804	5,6	Northern Ostrobothnia	701	5,7	Northern Ostrobothnia	573	4,7
Oulu	428	3,0	Oulu	444	3,6	Oulu	301	2,5
Ostrobothnia	683	4,8	Ostrobothnia	549	4,4	Ostrobothnia	523	4,3
Lapland	656	4,6	Lapland	494	4,0	Åland Islands	453	3,7
Central Finland	425	3,0	Åland Islands	401	3,2	Lapland	428	3,5
Pohjois-Savo	413	2,9	Central Finland	391	3,2	Central Finland	380	3,1
Åland Islands	383	2,7	Päijät-Häme	340	2,7	Päijät-Häme	269	2,2
Päijät-Häme	368	2,6	Pohjois-Savo	302	2,4	Pohjois-Savo	252	2,1
Kymenlaakso	319	2,2	Satakunta	265	2,1	Kanta-Häme	223	1,8
Satakunta	282	2,0	Kymenlaakso	226	1,8	Satakunta	220	1,8
Kanta-Häme	222	1,6	Kanta-Häme	215	1,7	Itä-Uusimaa	199	1,6
Etelä-Savo	217	1,5	Southern Carelia	186	1,5	Kymenlaakso	169	1,4
Northern Carelia	208	1,5	Itä-Uusimaa	177	1,4	Southern Carelia	164	1,3
Southern Carelia	198	1,4	Etelä-Savo	170	1,4	Southern Ostrobothnia	130	1,1
Southern Ostrobothnia	190	1,3	Southern Ostrobothnia	169	1,4	Northern Carelia	127	1,0
Itä-Uusimaa	186	1,3	Northern Carelia	166	1,3	Etelä-Savo	118	1,0
Kainuu	112	0,8	Central Ostrobothnia	91	0,7	Kainuu	66	0,5
Kajaani	59	0,4	Kainuu	76	0,6	Kajaani	47	0,4
Central Ostrobothnia	111	0,8	Kajaani	38	0,3	Central Ostrobothnia	50	0,4
Counties total	14311	100,0	Counties total	12369	100,0	Counties total	12151	100,0

Emigrants' age by counties in 2009 (Data: Statistics Finland 2010)

County	-14	%	15 - 24	%	25 - 34	%	35 - 44	%	45 - 54	%	55 - 64	%	65+	%	Total	%
Uusimaa	961	16,3	943	16,0	1943	32,9	1154	19,5	523	8,8	267	4,5	119	2,0	5910	100
Itä-Uusimaa	31	15,6	36	18,1	49	24,6	35	17,6	23	11,6	21	10,6	4	2,0	199	100
Varsinais-Suomi	116	13,5	146	17,0	304	35,5	137	16,0	70	8,2	52	6,1	32	3,7	857	100
Satakunta	29	13,2	33	15,0	64	29,1	48	21,8	22	10,0	16	7,3	8	3,6	220	100
Kanta-Häme	23	10,3	44	19,7	69	30,9	37	16,6	30	13,5	11	4,9	9	4,0	223	100
Pirkanmaa	161	15,5	172	16,5	374	36,0	180	17,3	84	8,1	49	4,7	20	1,9	1040	100
Päijät-Häme	37	13,8	65	24,2	78	29,0	39	14,5	26	9,7	10	3,7	14	5,2	269	100
Kymenlaakso	13	7,7	31	18,3	43	25,4	37	21,9	25	14,8	15	8,9	5	3,0	169	100
South Karelia	16	9,8	24	14,6	49	29,9	31	18,9	24	14,6	12	7,3	8	4,9	164	100
Etelä-Savo	19	16,1	20	16,9	38	32,2	17	14,4	12	10,2	4	3,4	8	6,8	118	100
Pohjois-Savo	42	16,7	50	19,8	75	29,8	33	13,1	29	11,5	15	6,0	8	3,2	252	100
North Karelia	8	6,3	31	24,4	42	33,1	20	15,7	9	7,1	12	9,4	5	3,9	127	100
Central Finland	47	12,4	74	19,5	135	35,5	64	16,8	27	7,1	25	6,6	8	2,1	380	100
South Ostrobothnia	14	10,8	25	19,2	42	32,3	25	19,2	14	10,8	7	5,4	3	2,3	130	100
Ostrobothnia	53	10,1	200	38,2	159	30,4	67	12,8	16	3,1	20	3,8	8	1,5	523	100
Central Ostrobothnia	2	4,0	16	32,0	18	36,0	2	4,0	3	6,0	2	4,0	7	14,0	50	100
North Ostrobothnia	94	16,4	102	17,8	216	37,7	90	15,7	39	6,8	19	3,3	13	2,3	573	100
Kainuu	9	13,6	17	25,8	17	25,8	7	10,6	6	9,1	6	9,1	4	6,1	66	100
Lapland	76	17,8	73	17,1	94	22,0	64	15,0	72	16,8	35	8,2	14	3,3	428	100
Ahvenanmaa	31	6,8	234	51,7	118	26,0	29	6,4	16	3,5	16	3,5	9	2,0	453	100
Whole country	1782	14,7	2336	19,2	3927	32,3	2116	17,4	1070	8,8	614	5,1	306	2,5	12151	100

Emigration from Pirkanmaa county in 2009 by gender and age

Pirkanmaa	Men	- 14	%	15 - 24	%	25 - 34	%	35 - 44	%	45 - 54	%	55 - 64	%	65 - 74	%	75 -	%
Sweden	83	9	11,5	16	24,6	21	11,0	11	10,1	13	24,1	8	38,1	5	41,7	0	0,0
Britain	40	7	9,0	7	10,8	17	8,9	8	7,3	0	0,0	1	4,8	0	0,0	0	0,0
USA	40	11	14,1	5	7,7	13	6,8	7	6,4	3	5,6	1	4,8	0	0,0	0	0,0
Estonia	33	2	2,6	4	6,2	6	3,1	12	11,0	7	13,0	0	0,0	2	16,7	0	0,0
China	28	5	6,4	1	1,5	10	5,2	8	7,3	4	7,4	0	0,0	0	0,0	0	0,0
Total	530	78	100	65	100	191	100	109	100	54	100	21	100	12	100	0	0,0
	Women	- 14	%	15 - 24	%	25 - 34	%	35 - 44	%	45 - 54	%	55 - 64	%	65 - 74	%	75 -	%
Sweden	93	18	21,7	35	32,7	17	9,3	7	9,9	9	30,0	4	14,3	1	25,0	2	50,0
Britain	48	6	7,2	10	9,3	27	14,8	4	5,6	1	3,3	0	0,0	0	0,0	0	0,0
Germany	44	11	13,3	8	7,5	16	8,7	4	5,6	3	10,0	1	3,6	1	25,0	0	0,0
USA	38	7	8,4	2	1,9	15	8,2	9	12,7	1	3,3	3	10,7	1	25,0	0	0,0
Estonia	28	7	8,4	6	5,6	5	2,7	4	5,6	3	10,0	3	10,7	0	0,0	0	0,0
Total	510	83	100	107	100	183	100	71	100	30	100	28	100	4	100	4	100

15 years old and older Finnish citizens' emigration by destination region and education in 2008 (Data: Statistics Finland)

Destination region	Primary education/ unknown	%	Secondary	%	Lowest higher	%	Lower higher	%	Upper higher	%	Doctoral	%	Total	%
EU countries total	1 321	24,4	2 280	42,1	342	6,3	607	11,2	770	14,2	93	1,7	5 413	100
Nordic countries outside EU	116	21,0	248	44,9	56	10,1	75	13,6	49	8,9	8	1,4	552	100
Rest of Europe	56	16,0	98	28,1	30	8,6	57	16,3	99	28,4	9	2,6	349	100
Africa	8	13,1	27	44,3	6	9,8	6	9,8	13	21,3	1	1,6	61	100
North and South America	159	23,9	189	28,4	50	7,5	103	15,5	145	21,8	20	3,0	666	100
Asia	63	15,9	105	26,5	45	11,4	81	20,5	98	24,7	4	1,0	396	100
Oceania	42	27,8	36	23,8	15	9,9	17	11,3	39	25,8	2	1,3	151	100
Unknown	3	25,0	4	33,3	0	0,0	3	25,0	2	16,7	0	0,0	12	100
Total	1 768	23,3	2 987	39,3	544	7,1	949	12,5	1 215	16,0	137	1,8	7 600	100

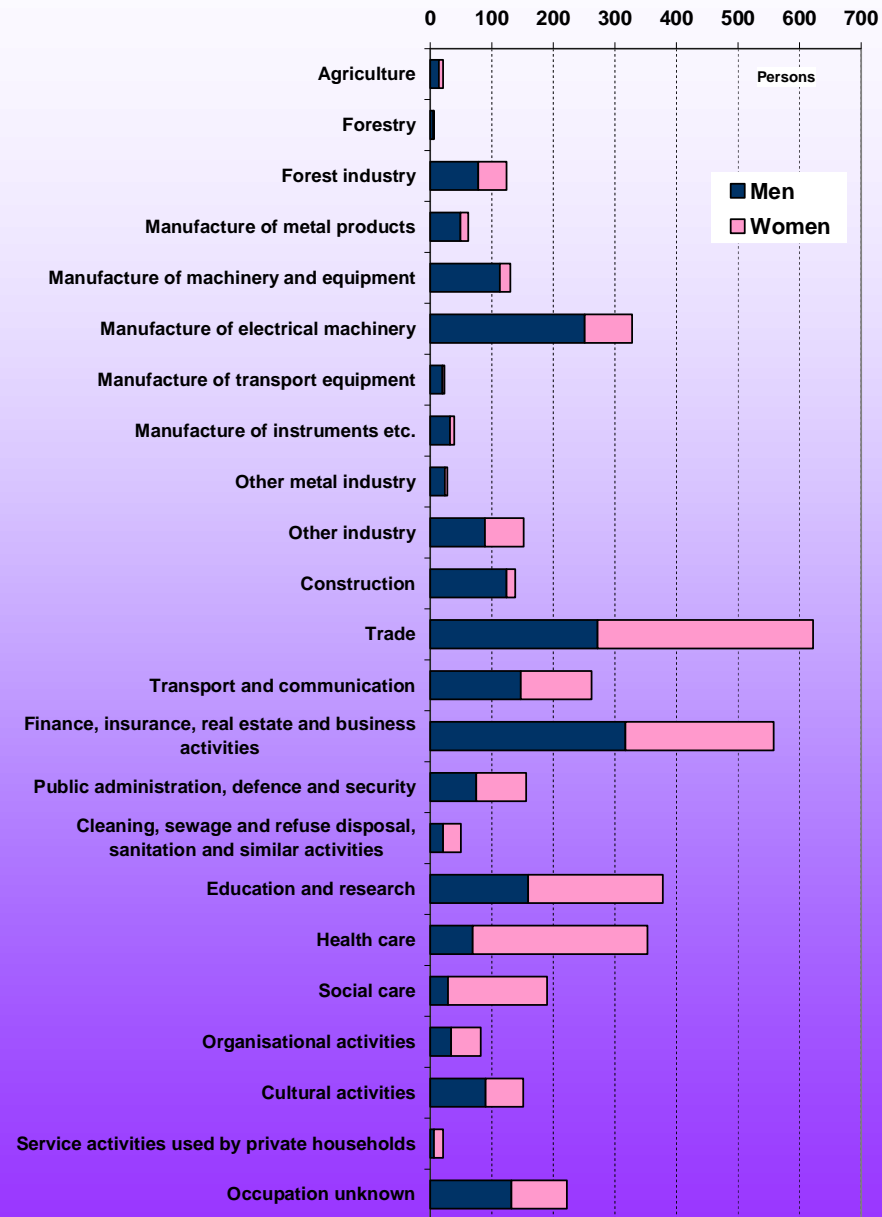
15-74-year old emigrants, country-internal migrants and population staying in place in 2002 in Finland (Data: Statistics Finland)

Year 2002	Emigrants		Country-internal migrants		Population staying in place	
	Persons	%	Persons	%	Persons	%
Primary education/education unknown	3306	34,5	16824	19,6	1348465	35,6
Secondary education	3204	33,5	44679	52,0	1477165	38,9
Lowest higher education	943	9,9	8098	9,4	494092	13,0
Lower higher education	812	8,5	8078	9,4	219453	5,8
Upper higher education	1141	11,9	7818	9,1	231381	6,1
Doctoral education	166	1,7	482	0,5	24050	0,6
Education total	9572	100,0	85979	100,0	3794606	100,0

Primary activity of Finns who emigrated from Finland in 2008 (Data: Statistics Finland)

Primary activity	0-14	15-64	65-	Total
Employed	0	2715	8	2723
Unemployed	0	210	1	211
Child (0-14 y.)	1076	25	0	1101
Student	0	776	0	776
Retired	0	162	154	316
Conscript	0	31	0	31
Unemployed retired	0	11	3	14
Other outside labour force	0	1530	16	1546
Unknown	320	1914	64	2298
Total	1396	7374	246	9016

Economic sectors of employed emigrants in Finland in 2002 (Data: Statistics Finland)



Economical sector of employed Finns who emigrated from Finland in 2008 (Data: Statistics Finland)

Employed in 2008	abs	%
Agriculture, forestry and fishing industry	18	1
Mining and quarrying	2	0
Manufacturing	443	16
Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	10	0
Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities	5	0
Construction	67	2
Wholesale and retail trade	369	14
Transportation and storage	160	6
Accommodation and food service activities	106	4
Information and communication	196	7
Financial and insurance activities	80	3
Real estate activities	14	1
Professional, scientific and technical activities	242	9
Administrative and support service activities	157	6
Public administration and defence	91	3
Education	233	9
Human health and social work activities	262	10
Arts, entertainment and recreation	110	4
Other service activities	85	3
Activities of households as employers	0	0
Activities of extraterritorial organisations and bodies	1	0
Industry unknown	72	3
Total	2723	100

Economical sector and education of employed Finns who emigrated from Finland in 2008 (Data: Statistics Finland)

Level of education	Primary		Secondary		Lowest higher		Lower higher		Upper higher		Doctoral		Total	
	abs	%	abs	%	abs	%	abs	%	abs	%	abs	%	abs	%
Employed in 2008														
Agriculture, forestry and fishing industry	5	2	8	1	0	0	0	0	5	1	0	0	18	1
Mining and quarrying	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
Manufacturing	29	10	104	11	33	16	115	23	157	23	5	6	443	16
Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	0	0	0	0	1	0	4	1	5	1	0	0	10	0
Water supply; sewerage, waste management and rem	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	5	0
Construction	22	7	34	4	2	1	4	1	5	1	0	0	67	2
Wholesale and retail trade	42	14	176	19	31	15	61	12	56	8	3	4	369	14
Transportation and storage	40	13	77	8	10	5	23	5	10	1	0	0	160	6
Accommodation and food service activities	13	4	69	7	5	2	15	3	4	1	0	0	106	4
Information and communication	16	5	53	6	16	8	40	8	70	10	1	1	196	7
Financial and insurance activities	5	2	19	2	3	1	17	3	36	5	0	0	80	3
Real estate activities	2	1	6	1	1	0	3	1	2	0	0	0	14	1
Professional, scientific and technical activities	8	3	59	6	9	4	52	10	101	15	13	16	242	9
Administrative and support service activities	28	9	84	9	3	1	28	6	14	2	0	0	157	6
Public administration and defence	8	3	23	2	7	3	11	2	37	5	5	6	91	3
Education	9	3	39	4	7	3	29	6	106	15	43	54	233	9
Human health and social work activities	23	8	79	8	56	27	68	14	29	4	7	9	262	10
Arts, entertainment and recreation	21	7	56	6	5	2	10	2	17	2	1	1	110	4
Other service activities	9	3	30	3	7	3	10	2	28	4	1	1	85	3
Activities of households as employers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Activities of extraterritorial organisations and bodies	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
Industry unknown	20	7	33	3	8	4	4	1	6	1	1	1	72	3
Total	301	100	951	100	204	100	496	100	691	100	80	100	2723	100

Finnish emigrants' thoughts about returning back to Finland



o This section is based on **International migration, need of labour and effects of immigration on education supply in Finland -anticipation project**

o Summary in English: Internationalization of Population and Labour Force from the Present to the Future.

http://www.migrationinstitute.fi/pdf/A30_summary.pdf

o Full report in Finnish:

http://www.migrationinstitute.fi/pdf/Siirtolaisuustutkimuksia_A30_ESR.pdf

Number of Finnish expatriates in various countries and continents in 2004
(Korkiasaari 2005)

Country / Continent	1. generation	2. generation
Sweden	190 000	280 000
Other Europe	55 000	80 000
United States	20 000	80 000
Canada	19 000	40 000
Latin America	1 000	1 000
Asia	2 000	2 000
Africa	1 000	1 000
Oseania	8 000	20 000
Total	296 000	504 000

Research data

- Web-based questionnaires addressed to expatriate Finns in the spring of 2006.
- Responses from 430 persons: women 78 %, men 22 %; age 19–84 years, average age 47 years; largest age groups 50–54-year-olds (68 respondents) and 55–59-year-olds (61 respondents).
- The respondents represent a total of 28 countries of residence, and the largest share (about 45 %, or 193 persons) live in Sweden. Other countries were Australia (73 persons, 17 %), the United Kingdom (31 persons, 7 %), Belgium (26 persons, 6 %), the United States (20 persons, 5 %), France (15 persons, 3 %).

Research data continues...

- The education level of the respondents varies, but most represented were the master's degree holders (27 %). The women respondents were, on average, more educated than the men.
- 69 % of the respondents were employed during the time of the questionnaire's publication.
- 92 % report that they had not planned in advance how long to live abroad.

Willingness to return to Finland

- About 40 % plan to move to Finland someday, 53 % do not, and 7 % are undecided.
- The women are more inclined to move to Finland: 44 % of the women as opposed to 29 % of the men.
- Students in particular are contemplating remigration.
- One-third of the respondents living in Sweden intend to move back to Finland someday, one-quarter of the 73 living in Australia, nearly 80 % of the 31 living in the United Kingdom, 65 % of the 26 living in Belgium, 70 % of the 20 living in the United States and two-thirds of the 15 living in France.

Respondents' intention to move to Finland someday, by main activity, in percentages

Main activity / Intention to return to Finland	Yes	No	I don't know	Total
Employed	43,4	50,5	6,1	100,0
Unemployed	46,7	40,0	13,3	100,0
Outside the labour force	24,7	68,2	7,1	100,0
Student	65,4	34,6	0,0	100,0
Unknown	11,1	55,6	33,3	100,0

- Plans to return are strongest among licentiates (63 %) and those with doctorates (50 %), whereas only about 15 % of the primary educated are thinking of moving.
- About 57 % of the respondents are interested in working abroad and in addition, plan to move back to Finland. Those who do not aspire to work outside the home country usually do not intend to return to Finland, either.

Willingness to return to Finland

"Finland is a cold, drab, clannish country, and Finnish expatriates as well as foreigners have a hard time adjusting to it. It's also hard to find work and make friends in Finland if you don't speak perfect Finnish (my husband's situation). I once returned to Finland a few years ago after my studies and noticed that my education was not at all valued there; I was just considered a misfit - as a job applicant, as an employee, and in the eyes of the bureaucracy." (27-year-old woman, Hungary)

"We've been immigrants in Australia for two three-year periods. It's time to return to our roots, where we have the advantage of being on home ground and don't need to prove that we belong." (38-year-old woman, Australia)

- *"Finland is the home country, close friends and relatives are there. Also for the sake of the children becoming Finnish, I would [move to Finland]; going to school only in foreign countries could alienate them from their own culture and take away their roots."* (**35-year-old woman, Singapore**)
- *"Finland is a good place to live, especially for families with children. This has already been the third multi-year period in which we've lived abroad. It has been good to return to Finland each time."* (**44-year-old woman, China**)

The time when respondents intending to move to Finland someday plan to do so (n=174)

Time of returning	Percentage
Within a year	13,8
Within 1-4 years	18,4
Within 5-10 years	7,5
Within 11-20 years	3,4
After 20 years	0,6
When the family and living situation would allow	21,3
Undecided/else	35,1
Total	100,0

"Actually, I don't even think about returning to Finland because currently it isn't an issue at all. But maybe someday, I don't know. The soonest would be in 5–10 years." **(27-year-old woman, Hungary)**

"If I got a job, I'd move right then! In any case, my plans are to move back to Finland within a few years..." **(47-year-old woman, Sweden)**

Interest in working abroad

- 58 % of the Finnish expatriates are interested in working somewhere other than in their home country.
- A greater percentage of the women than of the men are interested in working in a foreign country, but in both groups, the interest appears to increase as the education level improves.
- The students' group has the largest share aspiring to work abroad, while the smallest is of those outside the labour force.

"My spouse and I are living abroad for the second time now on a long, work-related "assignment" (on an ex pat -contract) and we're doing superbly. Returning and adapting to Finland after the first assignment abroad was very hard and not before long we found a way to move again, to yet a different country. We're drawn to moving/ staying abroad permanently. We value Finnish society and we'll keep the flag flying, but we enjoy the challenge of living abroad and the fairer weather." (38-year-old man, United States)

Back to Finland –study/Tarja Laine

-most important reasons for returning back to Finland in some moment of the life stage are (n=484):

- friends and relatives (around 250 respondents)
- Finnish life style (around 170)
- other reasons (around 160)
- retirement (around 150)
- home sick (110)
- work (100) etc.

Why Finnish people are not thinking moving back to Finland? (n=514)

-enjoying living in the recent home country (around 350 respondents)

-family (children and grand children) (around 245)

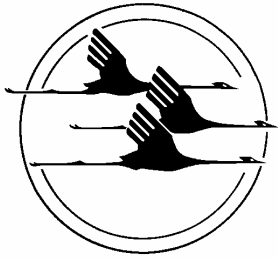
-work (240)

-economical security (around 220)

-alienation from the Finnish society (around 220)

-weak Finnish language skills of the spouse (around 160)

- As the Finnish population ages, some sectors already have a shortage of labour. When an expatriate returns to the country of birth, she or he often brings a foreign spouse. Therefore, benefits to the labour market include not only the returning Finn's own human capital acquired abroad, but also additional labour brought into the country. For return migration to be more appealing to expatriate–Finns, our country needs to consider the expatriate's entire family and their various necessities.



Thank you!

More information:

www.migrationinstitute.fi

Research Director Elli Heikkilä elli.heikkila@utu.fi