Elite Migration, Transnational Families, and the Nation State: International Marriages between Finns and Americans across the Atlantic in the Twentieth Century

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Johanna Katariina Leinonen

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Dedication

To the Memory of Dad, Kari Leinonen (1934-2008)
Abstract

My dissertation explores transatlantic migration in the context of international marriages in the twentieth century, using marriages between Finns and Americans in Finland and the U.S. as a case study. The first part of my dissertation documents and explains changes in migration and marriage patterns between Finland and the U.S. over the course of the 20th century. My research shows that among Finns in the U.S. and Americans in Finland, international marriages have become extremely common. In fact, in both migrant populations marriage and migration are often inextricably intertwined: the main explanation for the high number of international marriages can be found in the mobile lifestyles of students, professionals, and young people traveling. The occurrence of these marriages is thus related to the elite position of Finnish and American migrants today: with their EU and U.S. passports, and relatively privileged socioeconomic and racial status, they can move around the world with relative ease. At the same time, the impact of law cannot be dismissed even in the case of these elite migrants: it provides the framework in which these marriages are contracted.

In the second part of my dissertation, I challenge “methodological individualism” (the idea that elite migrants are male professionals who are not bound by familial relationships) by revealing the very important roles that marriage and family play in the migration decisions of elite migrants. I also examine how Finnish migrants in the U.S. and American migrants in Finland negotiate their identities and transnational family life in international marriages. My research shows that during important life-changes, such as when a migrant has a child, transnational engagements often intensify. At the same time, these significant events may also make the migrant feel more attached to the host country. Thus, I found that a migrant’s simultaneous engagement in the country of origin and the country of residence highlights the weakness of treating integration and transnationalism as if they were dichotomous categories. My study also contributes to literature that challenges the traditional idea of migration as a unidirectional movement from one place to another initiated by a single motive – work or family. I show that in reality, multiple motives and multidirectional movements are often involved.

Finally, I explore how these elite migrants have been incorporated into immigration discourses in Finland and the U.S. Both countries imagine themselves as exceptional but in very different ways. Finland, it is often argued, is an exceptionally homogeneous nation with no experience in dealing with immigration. Meanwhile, the U.S. portrays itself as a “nation of immigrants.” I found that the differing discourses surrounding immigration and the distinctive meanings attached to the term “immigrant” in Finland and the U.S. were crucial determinants of the way Finns and Americans understood their place in the receiving nation. My research also challenges the common assumption that elite migrants automatically enjoy an “elite status” and can choose the extent to which they integrate in the receiving society. In fact, my research highlights that many migrants experienced a loss of occupational status when moving to the new country, especially in the case of Americans who moved to Finland.
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Introduction

“The usual story. A young Finnish woman leaves to study in America, falls in love with an American friend from college, marries him, and stays in America for good. Just like the story of Petra Mengelt, except that this story ends in Helsinki, on the couch of a homey living room. (...) Both American Mike Mengelt, 30, and Finnish Petra Mengelt, 31, know how it is to be a stranger in the homeland of their partner. This couple, who has lived both in America and in Finland, knows that these two countries have a lot of differences – that are not worth comparing too much.”

This excerpt is from an article that was published in a magazine called Move On! in Finland in 2006. The couple interviewed in the article, Petra and Mike, met in Madison, Wisconsin, where they both were pursuing their B.A. degrees in the 1990s. After graduation, in 1999, Petra and Mike moved together to Seattle, Washington, because Mike found employment there as a geotechnical planner. It took a little bit longer for Petra to find work in Seattle; she reminisced in the article that it was “very difficult to live in a foreign country and look for a job.” Then one day the Honorary Consul of Finland in Seattle sat down with her to look at her resume and to make it more

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marketable in the U.S. labor market: “All of a sudden I, a quiet and modest Finn, was transformed into an American version,” Petra noted. Sure enough, soon she found a job as a project coordinator in an aerospace company. Four years later, the couple decided to move to Finland so that “Mike would learn more about Finnishness than by visiting the country in the summer.” They both found employment in Finland within a year. The biggest difference between Finland and the U.S., in their view, was how few foreigners there were in Finland, as compared to the U.S. In Seattle, when Mike attended meetings of his office, “there was always at least one man of Japanese origin, one Mexican, and a few dark-skinned and a couple of fair-haired persons. In Finland, there are only Finns in the meetings of my workplace.”

Coincidentally, Petra was one of the Finnish women who participated in my dissertation research. I happened upon this article by accident; when she participated in my research in 2001-2002, she was still living in Seattle. I was at first surprised to read in the article that the couple had moved to Finland, but as I continued my research, it turned out that their choice was not rare at all: many of the intermarried Finns and Americans who participated in my research had lived in both countries.

The reason I chose to start my dissertation with this magazine article is not only because it is about one of the participants of this study, but also because it highlights many of the themes that I discuss in this dissertation. The marriage and migration patterns of people like Petra and Mike do not figure centrally in current migration research. For example, migration scholars have failed to examine how increasing international mobility of students and professionals often leads to intimate relationships
that cross national boundaries. Petra and Mike’s marriage is one example of such relationships: Petra wrote in her questionnaire that she moved to the U.S. only to pursue her B.A. degree, and did not intend to stay in the U.S. permanently. However, after meeting Mike, her plans changed, as the article shows.

Petra and Mike’s story also illustrates how elite migrants – traditionally defined as highly educated and/or professional migrants – are often able to move from one country to another without any great difficulties.\(^2\) Migration research that typically focuses on “desperate, poverty-stricken labor migrants and asylum seekers” has ignored life-stories of migrants like Petra and Mike.\(^3\) In addition, professional men like Mike are usually seen as individualistic migrants who shuttle from one work place or country to another, unbound by family ties or concerns. Mike, however, did not move to Finland because of his career but because the couple wanted to try out living in Petra’s home country too. By doing that, he took a risk: “I had a steady job in Seattle, and I didn’t know if I would find a job in Finland, or even learn the language. The only things I knew how to say in Finnish were swearwords and names of fruits.” In my interviews with American men in Finland I found that for many “elite” men, family was the main reason for migrating to Finland, and many had made career concessions when moving to the country. Mike was successful, however: he found employment within a year.


\(^3\) Adrian Favell, Miriam Feldblum, and Michael Peter Smith, “The Human Face of Global Mobility: A Research Agenda,” in Human Face of Global Mobility, 3.
The magazine article also touches on another understudied theme – how elite migrants like Petra and Mike negotiate their belongings in host societies. As Eleonore Kofman points out, migration scholars have rarely employed biographic approaches or applied gendered analysis to the lives of elite migrants. Elite migrants, with their high human capital, are assumed to be able to “blend in” without any problems. However, Petra and Mike, like many of the participants in my research project, reflected on their feelings of being a “stranger” in the new country. Petra felt that she had to “become more American” to find employment in Seattle; Mike sometimes felt like an outsider in his workplace where he was the only foreigner. These examples highlight how two nation states – Finland and the U.S. – with distinctive histories of migration provide rather different contexts in which migrants negotiate their belongings and identities.

Overview of the Dissertation

At the broadest level, my dissertation explores transatlantic migration in the context of international marriages between Europe and the U.S., using marriages between Finns and Americans in Finland and the U.S. as a case study. While my main focus is on the 1960s to the present, I start my dissertation by outlining the changes that have taken place in migration and marriage patterns between these two countries from the early twentieth century to the present.

The twentieth century witnessed considerable changes in the relationship between Europe and the U.S. as World War I, immigration restrictions of the 1920s, and the Great

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Depression ended the European mass migrations and as new structures, such as the European Union (EU), transformed relations and networks between the two continents. In my study, I treat transatlantic migration between Finland and the U.S. as a reflection of this changing relationship: as the political and economic relationship between the two continents has changed, migration patterns and policies have changed as well. For instance, both Europe and the U.S. have implemented immigration legislation that restricts labor migration while providing better opportunities for family migrants and highly skilled migrants. Simultaneously, there has been a rise in the number of international marriages, the product of ever-increasing numbers of people who move because of work, study, or travel and of the accelerating speed of communication across borders.

Despite the fact that marriage has recently become one of the most important reasons why people migrate to and from the U.S., and the fact that it has been the main reason for migration to Finland for most of the twentieth century, we know very little about the processes of international marriage migration.\(^5\) Scholars of international migration pay little attention to family-related migration because it has been considered secondary to labor migration and because it has been associated with females who are the dependents of male labor migrants.\(^6\) On the other hand, scholars who study marriages that cross ethnic, racial, or national boundaries often view such marriages as a measure of


\(^{6}\) Eleonore Kofman, “Foreword,” in *Wife or Worker?*, ix.
assimilation among those who are permanently settled in one nation, thus ignoring historical, transnational, and legal perspectives.

My dissertation brings these two fields of inquiry into conversation with each other. The first part of my dissertation documents and explains changes in transatlantic migration and marriage patterns between Finland and the U.S. over the course of the twentieth century. My first main question is, how have marriage and migration patterns of Finns in the U.S. and Americans in Finland changed during this time period (Chapter 1)? My research reveals that there have been three important changes. First, migration between these two countries has become more balanced: while migration from Finland to the U.S. was far more numerous than migration from the U.S. to Finland for most of the twentieth century, in the recent years there has been a shift toward a balanced exchange of population. This reflects the increasing numbers of Americans emigrating from their home country. Second, in both migrant populations, international marriages have become extremely common, even the majority experience. Third, these migration and marriage patterns are gender-specific: in both countries, marriages between Finnish women and American men are much more common than unions between Finnish men and American women. The fact that I found similar patterns among other Western migrant groups in Finland and the U.S. suggests that these migration and marriage patterns reflect broader changes in transatlantic mobility. Overall, my research in Chapter 1 reveals that we are not really looking at two isolated migration streams: in both cases migration is dominated by Finnish women and American men who more often than not are married to each other.
My second major research question inquires into reasons behind these changes (Chapter 2). Have international marriages become more widespread in response to changes in immigration laws? Or are there other factors behind the growing numbers of international marriages? My research shows that in the case of marriages between Finns and Americans, marriage and migration are often inextricably intertwined. While the demographic factors of these two migrant populations – for example, the small group size and imbalanced gender ratios – partly explain the high number of international marriages, the main explanation can be found in the mobile lifestyles of students, professionals, and young people looking for life experiences through travel. The occurrence of these marriages is thus related to the privileged position of Finnish and American migrants today: with their European Union and U.S. passports, and relatively high socioeconomic status, they can move around the world with relative ease. At the same time, the impact of law cannot be dismissed even in the case of these elite migrants: it provides the framework in which these marriages are contracted, facilitating or restricting them.

Both the racial and socioeconomic status of Finnish migrants in the U.S. has transformed significantly over the course of the twentieth century (as I will outline in Chapter 3). It can be argued that today, Finnish migrants in the U.S. and American migrants in Finland are comparable “elite” migrant populations: they are typically white migrants with a relative high socioeconomic status.\(^7\) When scholars have examined elite

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\(^7\) Statistics Finland does not collect data on ethnicity of foreign citizens in Finland, and therefore I do not have data on the ethnic and racial composition of American citizens in Finland. However, the great majority of Americans who participated in this study were white Americans of European descent, as I will detail later in the introduction.
migrants, the research has often suffered from “methodological individualism:”\textsuperscript{8} elite migrants are depicted as male professionals who shuttle from one work assignment or country to another, part of an international upper class that is not bound by familial relationships or national borders. My dissertation is the first study of marriage and family life among intermarried, predominantly white, professional migrants. It challenges methodological individualism by revealing the very important roles that marriage and family relationships play in the migration decisions of elite migrants, who in migration statistics and scholarly discussions typically appear merely as students, professionals, or highly educated persons.

At the same time, my research also challenges the common assumption that elite migrants automatically enjoy an “elite status” in the receiving society and that they are always able to choose the extent to which they integrate in their host destination.\textsuperscript{9} In fact, my research highlights how many migrants, especially Americans who have moved to Finland, have experienced a loss of occupational status when moving to the new country. Moreover, my research shows how elite migrants’ high social status does not necessarily guarantee that they will feel part of the society in which they live. Especially in my research with American migrants in Finland, feelings of being an outsider were not uncommon.

In Chapter 4, I look more closely into how Finnish migrants in the U.S. and American migrants in Finland negotiate their identities and transnational family life in international marriages. The traditional model of migrant incorporation assumes that

\textsuperscript{8} Kofman, “Invisibility of Skilled Female Migrants,” 53.
\textsuperscript{9} Favell, Feldblum, and Smith, “Human Face of Global Mobility,” 17.
over time, migrants become more integrated and transnational engagements wither away. My research shows that this is not always the case: during important life-changes, such as when a migrant has a child, or when her or his parents in the home country fall ill, transnational engagements often intensify. At the same time, significant events in a migrant’s life-course may also make the migrant feel more attached to the country of residence. I will discuss at length how having children made the migrants determined to maintain connections to family in the homeland, especially through teaching the native language, and feel more integrated into the host society. Overall, my research shows how during a migrant’s “transnational life-cycle,” there are times when she or he seems more transnational and others when she or he seems more incorporated.10 This transnational life-cycle also gives insights into the ways in which transnationalism and incorporation are gendered processes.

My study also contributes to literature that challenges the traditional idea of migration as a unidirectional movement from one place to another initiated by a single motive – work or family.11 For example, Michelle Lee and Nicola Piper argue that a migrant’s “transnational life-cycle” often involves multiple migrations for different reasons. As Petra and Mike’s example suggests, many couples migrated multiple times either within the country (in this case, from the Midwest to the West Coast) or internationally. Additionally, the migrant’s entry status as a labor or family migrant often determines the perspective from which she or he will be studied: as a skilled or unskilled

10 Michelle Lee and Nicola Piper, “Reflections on Transnational Life-Course and Migratory Patterns of Middle-Class Women – Preliminary Observations from Malaysia,” in Wife or Worker?, 127.
worker or a wife (or more rarely, a husband) of a citizen or resident alien. However, many who first migrate because of marriage move on to become a worker or a student, and those who migrate for work-related reasons, or for studies, may meet their future spouse during that stay and end up getting married and settling permanently in the host country. In other words, my research shows how the legal and scholarly distinctions between different categories of migrants often fit poorly with migrants’ lived realities.

Furthermore, I expand on Lee and Piper’s transnational life-cycle approach to explain not only multiple migrations in different roles but also multiple, simultaneous identifications in transnational and national spaces. My research contributes to the scholarly work done on migrant identity formation by highlighting the impossibility of examining migrant identities only in the context of the country of settlement. The migrants in this study articulated simultaneous, sometimes even contradictory feelings of belonging to the home country and to the country of residence. Moreover, my research shows that for privileged migrants like the ones I study, the extent to which they want to highlight their national or transnational loyalties may be also, to a certain extent, a matter of choice.

Even though I highlight the mobile life-styles of elite migrants, most families did decide to settle down (at least for an extended period of time) at some point of their lives. In Chapter 5, I analyze the experiences of Finnish migrants in the U.S. and American migrants in Finland in the context of nation-state building processes of the two nations. Both countries imagine themselves as exceptional but in very different ways: while Finland, it is often argued, is an exceptionally homogeneous nation, the U.S. portrays

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itself as “a nation of immigrants.” My goal is to examine, then, how these differing national understandings influence the way these two groups of intermarried Finns and Americans understand their place in the receiving nation. The specific lenses through which I tackle these topics are immigrant visibility and the different ways the term “immigrant” is understood in Finland and the U.S. These lenses focus attention on who can be considered part of the Finnish or American nation, and for what reasons. My contention is that it is through the politics of visibility – by which I mean not only visual, physical visibility of migrant bodies but also audible visibility through language use, as well as “non-sensorial” visibility at the level of public discourses – that foreigners are identified as immigrants and positioned differently “in the hierarchy of desirability” in their host societies.13 I argue that immigrant visibility is contingent on specific national and temporal contexts, in which hierarchies based on race, ethnicity, class, gender, and nationality intersect to produce different kinds of visibility for different groups of foreigners.

Moreover, my research demonstrates how the national identities that migrants carry with them to the new country play an important role in the way migrants approach their integration process. Whereas Finns are accustomed to being emigrants, due to the long history of Finnish emigration, Americans often had difficulty seeing themselves as immigrants in Finland. This difficulty is likely related to the impossibility of seeing the U.S. as a country of emigration, and Americans as emigrants or immigrants departing

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their home country. For example, I met Americans who had lived in Finland for almost 20 years and still did not speak Finnish. This reveals not only Americans’ reluctance to see themselves as immigrants in Finland, but also the fact that Finnish society does not perceive Americans as immigrants: unlike migrants with lower social status, Americans are not expected to assimilate into the host society. Overall, my research shows that public discourse on migration in general and on international marriages more specifically deeply impact the integration process of my interviewees.

**Methodology and Sources**

My research employs a transnational and comparative approach, which is strongly inspired by Kevin Kenny’s 2003 article “Diaspora and Comparison: The Global Irish as a Case Study.” In the article, Kenny persuasively argues for the benefits of combining these two approaches in migration research:

“Nation-based comparisons cannot capture the fluid and interactive processes at the heart of migration history: mass movement of people across oceans and continents, participation by migrants or their descendants in the nationalist affairs of the homeland, and articulation of literary, cultural, or political sensibilities that connect widely dispersed migrant groups with one another and with the homeland. But a strictly transnational approach can underestimate the enduring power of nation-states and the emergence within them of nationally specific ethnicities that sharply differentiate an ostensibly unitary “people” (…) across
time and space. What is needed is a migration history that combines the diasporic or transnational with the comparative or cross-national.”

Most historical research is inherently comparative, as historians usually strive to identify historical changes that take place over time. My study too utilizes this “then to now” approach (as described by Nancy Foner), by examining changes in marriage and migration patterns across the Atlantic throughout the twentieth century. I also compare Finland and the U.S. to see how the migrants that I study incorporate into these two different countries of migration. Comparisons across space can also reveal whether theories and concepts developed in one society can be applied to others.

For the type of migration that I study, the comparative approach alone would be insufficient: the migrants’ multiple migrations, intense contacts across the Atlantic (thanks to their high socioeconomic status), and identifications in transnational and national spaces, underscore the impossibility of restricting my research to the boundaries of nation states, and thus necessitate a study that employs a transnational perspective.

Migration scholars have been criticized for using the term “transnationalism” too vaguely and indistinctly,” as a “catch-all” phrase. In its broadest meaning, transnationalism refers to social contexts that are concurrently situated in at least two nation-state frames. The unit of analysis in my research is family, more specifically the

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16 Ludger Pries, “Transnationalism: Trendy Catch-all or Specific Research Programme? A Proposal for Transnational Organisation Studies as a Micro-macro-link” (paper presented at the Transnationalisation and Development(s): Towards a North-South Perspective Conference, Center for Interdisciplinary Research,
international marriages that the participants of this study have formed. In my research, transnationalism refers to the concrete practices that my interviewees employ to maintain transnational family life (such as teaching the migrant’s native language to children) and to the way migrants construct their identities and navigate their belongings in the context of both the receiving society and their homeland.

My transnational and comparative approach is complemented by an intersectional framework. Scholars have shown how people’s lived realities are marked simultaneously by race, gender, class, and sexuality. Lynn Weber explains that scholarship using the intersectional approach began in the 1970s and 1980s with women of color’s critiques of theories and perspectives that focused exclusively on a single dimension – race or gender, class or sexuality, etc. Out of this critique, contemporary intersectional scholarship was born. As Weber points out, the hierarchies based on race, gender, class, and sexuality are not fixed or static but highly contextual. As constructed categories, they undergo changes as new social contexts (economic, political, ideological, etc.) emerge. Moreover, these categories are tied to systems of power relationships in society. Race, class, gender, and sexuality are hierarchies of domination that allow some groups to exert power and control over other groups.\(^\text{17}\) Because this dissertation examines the transatlantic migration and marriage patterns of white, middle-class, and mostly professional immigrants, the categories of gender, race, and class will be at the center of my analysis.


I am a historian with a strong interest in interdisciplinary research. In this dissertation, I employ mixed methods from social history, sociology, and demography. The term “interdisciplinarity” has been in use by U.S.-trained historians at least since the 1950s. Most often interdisciplinary approaches have been used by economic historians who employ quantitative methods in their research. More recently, historians have also adopted approaches and methods from humanities and language studies. Overall, however, only a minority of historians have seriously employed mixed methods in their scholarly work. Some historians are preoccupied with historians’ “professional identity” and defend “the autonomy of historiography against intercourse with other branches of science and scholarship, especially in the form of quantitative research.”

In migration studies, there has been a great increase in interdisciplinary cooperation in recent years (especially in the U.S., to a lesser degree in Europe). In 1997, Jan and Leo Lucassen pointed out that the “deepest disciplinary canyon” in migration studies can be found between historians and social scientists. Since then, however, there have been many publications that specifically focus on bringing interdisciplinary discussions to the forefront. Migration scholars who conduct gender analysis have been especially active in creating interdisciplinary dialogues.

For me, the interdisciplinary approach was a choice dictated both by my own interests and by necessity. The contemporary nature of my topic made it difficult to find enough archival sources that would have answered the questions that I posed. As a result, I chose to employ mixed methods in my dissertation research. Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, and Turner define mixed methods research as “the type of research in which a researcher (...) combines elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches (e.g., use of qualitative and quantitative viewpoints, data collection, analysis, inference techniques) for the broad purposes of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration.”22 In my research, too, I have combined quantitative and qualitative methods.

When I started my research by conducting oral history interviews in Minnesota, I kept hearing stories like Petra and Mike’s – international couples whose marriages seemed to be a result of the increasing global mobility of students and professionals, and whose lives often involved multiple migrations. In order to find out how common these kinds of international relationships are, quantitative methods proved to be indispensable. More specifically, I utilized descriptive statistics that I created using Finnish and U.S. stock and flow data. Stock data (usually census data) offers a “population snapshot” in a specific point in time. An advantage of stock data for this study is that such data are available for a longer period of time. However, stock data also shows far less variation than flow data, which reveals the number of people arriving to a country as migrants and

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is collected continuously by governmental administrative agencies.\textsuperscript{23} Additionally, I also used other quantitative sources, such as statistics on international student mobility provided by the Institute of International Education in their annual \textit{Open Doors} reports (1948-2009).\textsuperscript{24}

For stock data, my main sources were population data provided by Statistics Finland and the Minnesota Population Center (MPC). The MPC houses the largest population database in the world. In my research, I used U.S. census data from 1900 to 2000 and data from the annual American Community Survey between 2000 and 2008. The MPC data are publicly available microdata, which allowed me to create my own datasets and conduct microlevel data analysis. Statistics Finland provides both demographic and migration data, but unfortunately the data available without cost are very limited. My financial resources did not permit the purchase of microlevel data from Statistics Finland so I had to confine myself to using their online database, which does not allow individual level analysis.\textsuperscript{25} In addition, many statistics that were of interest to me (for example migration statistics) were available only from 1987 or 1990. Furthermore, detailed cross-tabulations were not possible. To give one example, migration statistics are available only by nationality or birthplace, gender, and age, but not by occupation or educational level. To complement the data available through the online database, I combed through the Statistical Yearbooks of Finland, published by


Statistics Finland since 1879. The number of foreign citizens in Finland by nationality was published for the first time in 1928. For most of the twentieth century, no other information on foreign citizens was available, except occasional statistics on occupational and sex distribution. To complement the flow data available in the Statistics Finland database, I utilized residence permit and naturalization statistics from the Finnish Immigration Service (FIS). These data are, however, even more recent: usually only the past four or five years are covered by these published statistics. This absence of statistical data on migration to Finland in the past renders the historical presence of migrants in the country invisible and reinforces the Finnish myth of national homogeneity.

As befits a self-conscious “nation of immigrants,” the U.S. put richer statistics at my disposal. The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS, which was renamed in 2003 as the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services) publishes detailed statistics of the U.S. immigrant population. I compiled data from the Annual Reports and Statistical Yearbooks whenever there were data on Finnish migrants available. The drawback of studying a small migrant population like Finns in the U.S. is that for many years, these small groups were left out from the published tables (this was the case especially in many years during the 1970s and 1980s).

According to Elizabeth Grieco, the way countries count their migration populations “reflects how a country views ‘membership’ and who does, and does not, belong” to the nation.26 Countries are usually divided into those that emphasize the *jus solis* (citizenship by birth) and *jus sanguinis* (citizenship through descent and heritage) principle in their naturalization measures. While both countries combine elements from

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26 Grieco, “Defining 'Foreign Born' and 'Foreigner'.”
both systems, in the U.S. the emphasis is on *jus solis* and in Finland on *jus sanguinis*. As Grieco points out, the system used influences how countries count their migrant populations in official statistics. Finnish statistics divide the population into Finnish and foreign *citizens*, and for most of the twentieth century, this is the only data available on the number of foreigners in Finland. Migrants with foreign *birthplace* are assumed to include many Finnish citizens or descendants of Finnish citizens born abroad. In other words, not all foreign-born are considered migrants: if a person can document Finnish ancestry, naturalization is easier and these foreign-born persons are not counted as migrants. However, as migrants are naturalizing at an increasing rate, citizenship as a criterion for determining the size of a migrant population becomes more unreliable. In the U.S., by contrast, only foreign-born persons appear as migrants in official statistics. These differences in the way migrant populations are counted are important to keep in mind in my analysis.

Because the questions that I am interested in – transnational family patterns and migrant identities and belongings – seemed to necessitate a deeper understanding of how migrants experienced the migration process, incorporation, and connections to the homeland, I also employed qualitative methods, in the form of oral history interviews that were conducted in both Finland and the U.S., questionnaires that I sent to Finnish-born women living in the U.S., and an online survey of American-born men and women living

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in Finland. Because the 74 oral history interviews that I conducted in Finland and the U.S. form the foundation of my study, I will discuss them at length in a separate section below, after introducing my other qualitative sources.

In order to gather more information about Americans in Finland, I launched an online survey of American-born people who were living in Finland in 2008. I received 106 responses to the survey. The survey questions, which mostly dealt with Americans’ connections to the homeland and social networks in Finland (in addition to basic variables such as occupation, age, year of immigration, etc.), can be found in Appendix 1. Out of 106 survey respondents almost all were Americans of European descent. The exceptions were three Asian Americans, two African Americans, and another two Hispanic Americans. Of those who reported sex, 57 percent were women. Almost all (82 percent) of the online survey respondents were college-educated. A majority (64 percent) was married, and mostly to Finns: 84 percent of the spouses were born in Finland. Almost a half (48 percent) had lived in Finland for more than 10 years when the survey was conducted; 26 percent had lived in the country for 1-5 years and an additional 26 percent for 6-10 years. The richest source of information turned out to be generated by my last, very open-ended question, “please write freely about your experiences of coming to and living in Finland.” Almost all the respondents (95 persons, 90 percent) answered this question, many extensively. It is through this open-ended question that I found out

28 The online survey was built and maintained by the Survey Service of the Office of Information Technology, College of Liberal Arts, University of Minnesota. An unfortunate mistake was made when my survey was posted online: the information technologist accidentally omitted the question regarding respondents’ gender from the survey. In 58 cases (out of the total of 106, i.e. 55%), I was able to impute the gender of the participants based on other responses (e.g. if the respondent wrote about “her husband,” I assumed that the respondent was a woman). The percent of female mentioned above (57%) thus represents the percent of female out of those whose gender I was able to detect. Nevertheless, this mishap significantly impeded the gendered analysis of my survey responses.
about Americans’ problems with the Finnish language and difficulties of finding employment that fits their educational qualifications.

In addition, I utilized questionnaires that I collected for my Master’s Thesis which was completed in 2002 at the University of Turku, Finland. In 2001-2002, I sent questionnaires to Finnish-born women living in the U.S. and Canada, and received 181 responses. In this research, I used only the questionnaires (N=135) that were filled out by Finnish women living in the U.S. A great majority (96 percent) of the women who filled out the survey were married, and mostly to a non-Finn (72 percent). In the questionnaires, according to my interests of the time, I mainly inquired about the ways the women maintained their Finnish heritage in North America, but I also included questions about migration motives that were helpful for my analysis. The Master’s Thesis questionnaire can be found in Appendix 2.

Finally, I also conducted archival research in Helsinki and in Minnesota to complement my quantitative and ethnographic sources. The main sources for historical materials on Finnish migrants in the U.S. are located at the Immigration History Research Center (IHRC) of the University of Minnesota. For example, during the 1980s, the IHRC conducted a research project called the Minnesota Finnish American Family History Project, which yielded a large amount of material about Finnish American families. The collection includes photographs, documents, and taped oral histories pertaining to all dimensions of Finnish immigrant life, especially to family, political activities, social events, and relations between ethnic groups in Minnesota. The time period of the collection spans from the late nineteenth century to the 1980s. This collection helped me
put marriages and family life of Finnish migrants in the U.S. into historical perspective. In Finland, I conducted archival research in order to find more historical data about Americans and other migrants in Finland before the time when there are more statistical data available (from the late 1980s). More specifically, I consulted the National Archives of Finland and the archives of the FIS, the Parliament of Finland, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in Finland, and the Evangelic Lutheran Church of Finland. All these archives are located in Helsinki.

I also examined immigration laws of both countries, paying special attention to the changes in provisions regarding family reunification. The aforementioned yearbooks and reports of the INS were helpful in this regard, as well as other legal sources that I examined in the Government Publications of the Wilson Library at the University of Minnesota. In Finland, I found most of these legal sources in the Library of the Parliament of Finland. In addition, most materials are available online since the early 1990s. Finally, I conducted a survey of Finnish and American newspaper articles pertaining to international marriages. More specifically, I utilized online databases of the New York Times, Star Tribune, and Pioneer Press in the U.S. and Helsingin Sanomat in Finland (the largest Finnish newspaper by circulation) to gain insights into public discussions surrounding international marriages in these two countries.

**Oral History Interviews**

In order to capture intermarried couples’ experiences of crossing national and cultural borders and living in an international marriage, I conducted in-depth oral history
interviews with intermarried Finns and Americans in Finland and the U.S. In the field of history, oral history methods were initially used to “give voice” to subjects previously absent from historical studies because of their marginal position and to write histories of regions and peoples that do not have written records. In the U.S., oral history has had its greatest impact on the fields of labor and ethnic history, which are both closely connected to U.S. migration history. Migration has thus emerged as one of the major themes in oral history research. As Alistair Thomson points out, “migration oral history recognizes the complex inter-connections between migration and the formation and development of migrant communities and identities.” The complexities of the migration process, migrant incorporation, and identity formation in transnational and national contexts can be, in my view, only reached through analyzing narratives of migrants themselves.

I conducted 74 interviews with intermarried Finns and Americans living either in the capital region of Finland (in or near Helsinki) or in Minnesota in the U.S. (mainly in the Metro Area, with the exception of five interviews conducted in Duluth). The interviews conducted in Minnesota were done in the summer of 2004 and those conducted in Finland in the spring of 2008. Minnesota is an interesting place to study Finnish migrants because, together with Michigan, it has been the most popular migration destination of Finnish migrants for most of the twentieth century (although today larger numbers of Finns can be found in California, New York, Florida, and Texas). The history of migration from Finland and other Nordic countries (Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and

Iceland) makes Minnesota, in many ways, a relatively “easy” place for a Finnish person to live. Based on my own experience, Minnesotans often know something about Finland due to this long migration history. The choice to conduct interviews only in Minnesota was pragmatic: when I conducted the interviews in 2004, I was in Minnesota as an exchange student, and did not have the financial resources to travel around the country. Similarly, the reason why I conducted almost all the interviews in Finland (with one exception) in the Helsinki Metropolitan area was also pragmatic. First, a majority of U.S. citizens (approximately 60 percent) live in the Helsinki area, which made it easier to find American interviewees. Americans who live outside the capital area are dispersed in different parts of Finland, making it difficult for me to locate these individual migrants. In addition, living in Helsinki with a USD fellowship was financially challenging, and therefore I did not travel outside the capital area for research purposes. The one exception was an interview conducted in Turku, a university town on the southwest coast of Finland, where I was visiting friends, and had the chance to interview one couple during that visit.

I found my interviewees in both places mainly by using the snowball sampling method (i.e. I recruited research subjects through friends and acquaintances of those who had already participated in my study). When I arrived in Minnesota for the first time in 2004, I contacted those Finnish women who had filled out my questionnaire in 2001-2002 and who lived in Minnesota. Through these women, I learned about the Finnish Language School of Minnesota, which meets the first and third Saturday of each month (from September to May) in an Evangelic-Lutheran Church in South Minneapolis. I
attended the language school on several Saturdays and was able to find interviewees through these contacts, and through their networks of friends and acquaintances. In Finland, I expected finding American interviewees to be a more difficult task, due to the lack of organized activities of U.S. citizens in Finland. However, the snowball technique proved to be effective again. I found a few interviewees through friendship networks and by advertising my research on the Internet (on a blog called *Finland for Thought* and on the websites of the *International English Speakers’ Association of Finland* and the *League of Finnish American Societies*). The man who maintains the blog *Finland for Thought* is an American engineer working at Nokia, and he not only volunteered for an interview, but also disseminated information about my study to his American colleagues and friends. In addition, I visited a store in Helsinki called Behnford’s, which specializes in selling American products (such as American candy, chocolate, cereals, baking goods, snacks, and peanut butter). The store owner informed me about the *American Women’s Club* that has operated in Helsinki since 1970. I contacted the President of the Club, who enthusiastically invited me to attend their monthly meeting. I found most of my female interviewees through the club.

In the interviews that I conducted in both countries, my questions were mainly biographical, and most questions revolved around the migrants’ experiences of single or multiple migrations and of living in an international marriage (see Appendices 3 and 4 for the interview questions). I had a list of questions that I brought with me to the interviews, but often – and especially after I became more comfortable with my role as an interviewer and more confident that I would be able to keep in mind all the themes
without checking the list of questions – the interviews became more free-flowing and I gave my interviewees more space to talk about their migration and integration experiences in the order of their choice.

There were several important differences between the interviews that I conducted in Minnesota and in Finland. Because four years of training and intellectual development separated my two sets of interviews, I asked slightly different questions. The first set of interviews was conducted before I started my Ph.D. studies at the University of Minnesota and the second one after I had completed my coursework. In the second set of interviews (which were conducted in Finland), I inquired less about family traditions and the maintenance of cultural heritage in a bicultural marriage and more about experiences of being an immigrant in a new country. In other words, I had, by 2008, become more interested in the broader societal context surrounding the international marriages (rather than just the dynamics within the international marriage itself).

In addition, while I interviewed only Finnish women married to American men in Minnesota, in Finland I interviewed American men and women, as well as their Finnish spouses (if they were willing or available). Ultimately, I interviewed 35 Finnish-born women in Minnesota and 21 Americans (10 women, 11 men) and 18 Finnish spouses (13 women, 5 men) of Americans in Finland. All the interviews with Americans in Finland were conducted in English; the decision to use English seemed to be self-evident to the interviewee and to myself as well: we automatically started conversing in English. Even those Americans who were more fluent in Finnish did not offer to speak Finnish in the interview. In the case of the Finnish interviewees, all the interviews in Finland were,
unsurprisingly, conducted in Finnish. In Minnesota, only three interviews were conducted in English, the others in Finnish. In the first of these three cases, the woman was a Swedish speaker (and I was more comfortable speaking in English than in my already-rusty Swedish) and in the other two interviews, the women had lived in the U.S. for decades and therefore found it easier to communicate in English. In both of these cases, the women did a lot of “code-switching;” i.e. used both English and Finnish in the interview, sometimes switching between the languages in the middle of a sentence.

These differences between the two sets of interviews posed some challenges for my analysis. For example, in my interviews with Americans living in Finland, I inquired about the interviewees’ perceptions on the differences between Finland and the U.S. as migrant receiving countries. In the case of Finnish interviewees in the U.S., I did not ask this question directly, but many women commented on the theme in the context of other questions. Thus, through careful listening, I was often able to find common themes even though I had not asked exactly the same questions.

The duration of the interviews varied from one hour to four hours, depending on the person’s openness or “talkativeness,” as well as on how well our “chemistries” worked together. Overall, the interviews conducted with women were longer than those conducted with men. Perhaps women were more attuned to reflecting on their marital relationship. Moreover, the women may have felt more comfortable talking with an interviewer of the same gender. Furthermore, the fact that I interviewed many American men at their workplace in Finland may have contributed to the shorter duration of these interviews: it is difficult to take many hours off work in the middle of the day. In
addition, the gender, age, and power difference between me and the male interviewees, some of whom were in high positions in their companies, may have limited their desire to spend time on my research. On the other hand, in Finland, I was on my home turf, and the American interviewees were not. At the same time, I also felt many times that the American interviewees were comfortable comparing these two countries with me, as they knew that I had lived in both countries as well, and was knowledgeable of immigration and race-related issues in the U.S. in a way that most Finns were not.

In Minnesota, on the other hand, I was interviewing other Finnish women and we shared the same experience of being a Finnish woman in the U.S. The places where I conducted the interviews were also different in Minnesota and in Finland: in Minnesota, only one interview was conducted in a coffee shop; in the rest of the cases, the women invited me to their homes. They often seemed to be happy to host a guest from Finland: as I do not drive, they offered to pick me up and drive me home; they served Finnish dishes or pastries during the interview; showed me Finnish artifacts in their homes. In Finland, the setting was usually different: only seven interviewees invited me to their homes; the rest of the interviews were conducted in coffee shops or in interviewees’ offices. Perhaps the relationship between the interviewees and myself was different in Finland: I was a Finn in Finland and therefore it may be that home was not something that the interviewees thought that I would be interested in seeing.

With one exception, the interviewees were in heterosexual marriages. I interviewed one same-sex couple of two women who had met in the U.S. but got married and lived in Finland. In addition, I interviewed one cohabiting couple and one Finnish
woman who had divorced her American husband in Finland (the ex-husband did not want to participate in my study). All except one of the American interviewees were white Americans of European descent. The one exception was a Hispanic American man who had migrated to the U.S. from Chile as a child with his family. All the Finns who participated in this study were “ethnic Finns” with no immigrant background to Finland. Almost all the American husbands of Finnish women in Minnesota were white Americans of European descent, except in three cases: in the first case, the second husband of the Finnish woman was African American; in the second, the husband was born in Hawaii to a Japanese family; and in the third, the husband was originally born in India but was a naturalized U.S. citizen.

With few exceptions, the interviewees had a university degree or some college education. Of the American interviewees, only one had not completed a college degree. The oldest American interviewee (a woman) moved to Finland in 1951 and the youngest (a man) in 2007. The oldest of the Finnish respondents moved to the U.S. in the 1950s and the youngest in 2000. I did find generational difference in the education of the Finnish women in the U.S.: the seven women who arrived in the 1950s were all less educated (high school diploma or less) than the younger women (who had at least some college education).
A Note on Terminology

*International Marriages*

Researchers have used a multitude of different terms to describe marriages in which the spouses originate from different countries and/or ethnic or racial groups: intermarriage, mixed marriage, international marriage, cross-cultural marriage, exogamous marriage, outmarriage, heterogamous marriage, and so on. I conducted a survey in two major interdisciplinary article databases, the *Academic Search Premier* and *JSTOR*, to find out which terms were the most popular and to see if there were disciplinary differences in the terms used. The most commonly used term was, by far, “intermarriage” with more than 15,000 hits. The term was first used in 1820 to discuss marriages between different racial groups and the “biological consequences” of such marriages. Today, the term is widely used in social sciences, especially in sociology, and it refers to different kinds of “border-crossing” marriages: interethnic, interracial, and interreligious marriages. “Mixed marriage” was the second most commonly used concept with 1,200 hits. Like intermarriage, it has been used as a “blanket term” to describe different kinds of marriages, but most often interreligious and interracial marriages. “International marriage,” the term of my choice, is a much more rarely used concept (141 results). The first hit however was from 1896. For the first half of the twentieth century, the term “international marriage” was mainly used in studies that examined legal aspects of marriages between nationals of different countries and legal systems. The first social science study that employed the term appeared in 1963. In this study, Larry D. Barnett looked into the increase of interracial (mainly black-white) and international (partners
from different countries) marriages and related it to the growing numbers of students involved in educational exchange programs (the first study, to my knowledge, to do so). Historians have rarely employed the term “international marriage,” and when they use it, they do so in the context of legal history or in studies of marriages between U.S. military personnel and foreign women.

“International marriage” seems to be the most fitting term to describe the types of marriage that I examine. First, the couples that I study are, of course, of different nationalities. Second, these marriages occur in the context of international migration between Finland and the U.S., and, as I will show, migration and marriage are often inextricably intertwined. The term “intermarriage,” on the other hand, most often refers to marriages between groups that are permanently settled in a country, or to marriages between U.S.-born racial or ethnic groups. Thus, “international marriage” seems to capture better the transnational nature of the marriages that I study and the experiences of crossing national borders that my interviewees reflected upon.

Integration

An important goal of my dissertation is to examine and compare the incorporation experiences of Finnish migrant women in the U.S. and American migrants in Finland.

Migration scholars have used different concepts to study migrant incorporation: assimilation, integration, acculturation, and, in the U.S., Americanization. In my research, I have chosen to use the term “integration” rather than “assimilation.” Assimilation theory has, of course, had a profound impact on how migrant incorporation has been understood in the U.S. context, and also in many European countries. In its simplest form, assimilation can be defined as “the attenuation of distinctions based on ethnic origins.” In its classic form, the assimilation theory has been criticized for its ethnocentrism and for the assumption that assimilation is inevitable for all migrant groups. However, the theory has been recently re-conceptualized to capture in a more nuanced way the adaptation process of different migrant groups or racial/ethnic minorities. For example, the segmented assimilation model by Portes and Zhou acknowledges the possibility of different assimilation outcomes for different groups of second generation migrants in the U.S. As I study only first generation migrants, assimilation – as a multigenerational process – did not seem to be the most appropriate framework for my study. Integration, on the other hand, is usually defined as a more open-ended process that does not, to the same extent, carry the connotation of disappearance of ethnic distinctions. Leo Lucassen’s broad definition of integration seems to offer a good starting point for my research. He defines integration as

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35 See for example Alba and Nee’s “institutionalist theory of assimilation.” Alba and Nee, *Remaking the American Mainstream*.
“the general sociological mechanism that describes the way in which all people, migrants as well as non-migrants, find their place in society. (..) [It] explains how processes of socialization turn people into workers, consumers, voters, soldiers, and gendered beings, by looking at the school, the workplace, the neighborhood, the local state, the church, unions, the army, the family, etc. This broad definition of ‘integration’ does not assume that it produces a uniform, unitary, and harmonious society or national culture, but rather allows for important differences according to class, gender, ethnicity, and sexual orientations – to mention a number of important distinctions (…).”

Thus, Lucassen sees integration as a socialization process that does not predict one single integration outcome, and that is contingent on gender, race, class, nationality, and sexuality based differences. In addition, he notes how integration can take place in many different domains (such as in the workplace and the family) and in different roles (as workers, family members, etc.). Lucasses also makes a distinction between structural and identificational integration; the former refers, for example, to social mobility in the host society and the latter to subjective processes through which migrants see themselves as different from the dominant society. In addition, it refers to “the extent that they [migrants] are viewed as primarily different by the rest of society.” In my study, I analyze both structural and identificational integration. While my main focus is on migrant integration at the level of family life, in the context of international marriages, I also seek to gain insights about how Finns in the U.S. and Americans in Finland have

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37 Leo Lucassen, The Immigrant Threat: The Integration of Old and New Migrants in Western Europe since 1850 (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2005), 18.
38 Ibid., 19.
integrated into the labor markets of their receiving societies. In addition, I analyze their integration at the identificational level: how they identify themselves both in the context of the receiving nation and through their transnational connections to the homeland.

*Migrants, Emigrants, Immigrants*

Traditionally migration studies use the term “immigrant” to describe those who are new-comers to a country and the term “emigrant” to examine those who leave their country of origin. However, as Donna Gabaccia points out, these two terms are inventions of nation-states that seek to govern and measure both in-migration and out-migration; “the migrant herself experiences no immediate change in identity or sense of self as she moves, and is moved by state agents at any given border, from one category into the other.”39 Additionally, Dirk Hoerder demonstrates that these two terms are typically associated with “a mono-directional and permanent move into or out of a country.”40 Thus, in order to take into account the whole migration process from the sending to the receiving country and the fact that many of my interviewees migrated multiple times in their lives, I employ the concepts “migration” and “migrant” in this study. These terms give space for many possible migration trajectories. The only chapter where I use the term “immigrant” is Chapter 5, in which I specifically discuss the meaning of this term in the two nation-states, in Finland and the U.S., and the meanings that the interviewees attach to this term.

Chapter 1.

Intimate Relationships and Transatlantic Migration: Migration and Marriage Patterns between Finland and the U.S. in the Twentieth Century

Introduction

In this chapter, I document migration flows between Finland and the U.S. from the time of the proletarian mass migrations of the early twentieth century to present-day mobility of educated, middle-class persons. My central question is: how have marriage and migration patterns of Finns in the U.S. and Americans in Finland changed over the course of the twentieth century? My research shows that there have been three important developments in migration and marriage patterns. First, there has been a transition in the balance of migrations between the two countries: while for most of the twentieth century migration flowed primarily from Finland to the U.S., in the past years there has been a shift toward a balanced exchange of population. Second, there has also been a marriage transition among migrants: both Finns in the U.S. and Americans in Finland are migrant populations in which international marriage has become extremely common – even the majority experience. Finally, these changes in migration and marriage patterns are deeply gendered: in both countries, marriages between Finnish women and American men are much more common than unions between Finnish men and American women.

Concurrently, Finnish migration to the U.S. is female-dominated, and U.S. migration to Finland male-dominated. While this chapter describes these changes in transatlantic migration and marriage patterns, Chapter 2 offers an explanation for them.
Changing Migration Patterns

The U.S. was the most important single migration destination worldwide in the mid to late nineteenth and early twentieth century: it attracted more than 60 percent of international migrants worldwide. Europeans formed the largest group of migrants arriving in the U.S.: 35 million Europeans moved to America during the century after 1830. For most of the nineteenth century, the majority of migrants originated from Northern and Western Europe. After 1880, however, migrants increasingly arrived from Southern and Eastern Europe, especially from Italy, Austria-Hungary, and Russia. See Figure 1 with the total number of migrants admitted to the U.S. in 1820-2009 on its left scale and the proportion of that total arriving from Europe on its right scale. This European mass migration to the U.S. was predominantly labor migration: population increases in Europe combined with regional economic stagnation pushed many Europeans to look for better living conditions in the New World.⁴¹

As can be expected, migration between Finland and the U.S. flowed mainly from the former to the latter for most of the twentieth century. U.S. census data reveals that the largest numbers of Finns were found in the U.S. in the beginning of the twentieth century (Figure 2). It must be noted, however, that the number of Finnish-born may have been in reality higher in 1900 and 1910: many Finnish-born were recorded as Russians because Finland was part of the Russian Empire until 1917. However, the pattern is clear:

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43 Steven Ruggles et al., Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 5.0 [Machine-readable database] (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2010). The numbers for 2005-2008 are from the American Community Survey, which is conducted annually.
the number of Finnish migrants started to drop after 1920, due to U.S. immigration restrictions, the Great Depression, and improving conditions in the homeland. Since 1990, the estimated number of Finnish-born in the U.S. has hovered around 20,000 persons.

**Figure 2. Estimated Number of Finnish-Born in the U.S., with Percentage of Female, 1900-2008**

On the right scale, Figure 2 shows the proportion of women among the Finnish-born in the U.S. During the years of mass migrations, a majority of Finns moving to the U.S. were men. According to Reino Kero, 63 percent of Finns who arrived in the U.S. between 1870 and 1930 were men. However, due to men’s higher mortality rate and

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44 Ruggles et al., *Integrated Public Use Microdata Series.*
45 Reino Kero, *Suureen Länteen: Siirtolaisuus Suomesta Yhdysvaltoihin ja Kanadaan* (Turku:
their more frequent repatriation compared to women, the estimated proportion of women
increased steadily from about 30 percent female in 1900 to 60 percent female in 2005-
2008. In addition, a majority of Finns who have arrived to the U.S. in the past few
decades have been women.\textsuperscript{46}

Overall, during the years of mass migration from Eastern and Southern Europe to
the U.S. (1870-1930), approximately 350,000 Finns crossed the Atlantic Ocean. The
people who moved were mainly young and unskilled workers in search of a better
livelihood in the “land of opportunity.” The majority of Finns settled in the western Great
Lakes area, that is, northern Michigan, eastern Minnesota, and northern Wisconsin. These
areas were heavily male-dominated, and Finnish migrant men found employment as
unskilled laborers in iron and copper mines, lumber camps, and docks. Some acquired
small farms. In general, Finnish men settled in small cities or rural areas. Finnish women,
on the other hand, were more likely to be found in larger cities such as Boston, New
York, Chicago, and Minneapolis, where they most often worked as maids, cooks, or
laundresses.\textsuperscript{47}

\textsuperscript{46} According to the INS, 30,000 Finnish-born persons have moved to the country between 1943 and 2008.
The number of men and women is available only for certain years in this time period, but in all these years,
women outnumbered men. In the end of the 1960s, for example, three-quarters (76\%) of admitted Finns
were women. Today immigration to the U.S. is more gender-balanced; according to Statistics Finland, 54%
of Finns who emigrated to the U.S. in 2008 were women. U.S. Department of Labor, Immigration and
Naturalization Service, \textit{Annual Report of the Immigration and Naturalization Service} (Washington: G.P.O.,
1933-1977); U.S. Department of Justice, Immigration and Naturalization Service, \textit{Statistical Yearbook of
the Immigration and Naturalization Service} (Washington: G.P.O., 1978-2001); U.S. Department of

\textsuperscript{47} Peter Kivisto, \textit{Immigrant Socialists in the United States: The Case of Finns and the Left} (Rutherford
[N.J.]; London; Cranbury, N.J.: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press; Associated University Presses,
Due to changes in U.S. immigration law, the “age of migration” from Europe to the U.S. came to an end in the 1920s, as Figure 1 illustrates. The number of migrants obtaining legal permanent resident (LPR) status in the U.S. dropped 60 percent between 1924 (706,896 persons) and 1925 (294,314). Also Finns’ opportunities to migrate to the U.S. withered with the Immigration Acts of 1921 and 1924: they and other migrants categorized as eastern and southern Europeans were allotted fewer immigration slots than racially more desirable northern and western Europeans under the system of so-called national origins quotas. The Act of 1921 allowed 3,921 Finns to migrate per year, and the Immigration Act of 1924 further reduced the quota for Finns to only 471 persons a year.

The reduction in the volume of migration to the U.S. subsequently changed the demographics of migrant populations in the U.S. When looking at demographic data for small migrant groups, such as Finns, the impact of immigration restriction becomes immediately evident. The number of migrants arriving from Finland decreased by more than 80 percent between the time periods of 1921-1925 (when 14,348 were admitted) and 1926-1930 (2,343). Because the number of newcomers from Finland continued to be small (in the 1930s, fewer than 2,500 Finns moved to the country), the Finnish population in the U.S. aged. In 1940, for example, the largest age group among the Finnish-born in the U.S. was migrants aged 50-59. Another sign of an aging population is the percent widowed: by 1960, more than 40 percent of the Finnish-born women in the U.S. (aged 18


50 U.S. Department of Labor, Annual Report 1926, 201 and 1931, 201.
or older) were widowed. Furthermore, Donna Gabaccia has demonstrated the inverse relation between the volume of migration and the proportion of women among migrants to the U.S.: as women’s migration is not typically severely affected by immigration restrictions that focus on reducing the number of unskilled migrant workers arriving to the country, the proportion of women among all migrants grows.\textsuperscript{51} Indeed, the proportion of women among Finns in the U.S. steadily increased throughout the twentieth century: as Figure 2 shows, there have been more women than men since 1950.\textsuperscript{52} In sum, during the mid-century years, the Finnish migrant population in the U.S. was demographically “stagnant” – as were many other European migrant groups.

American migrant populations abroad, on the other hand, show a very different pattern. The dramatic changes in European migration to the U.S. – millions arriving in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, and then a steep drop after the Immigration Acts of the 1920s – have unsurprisingly captured migration scholars’ attention. Studies on overseas migration originating from the U.S. are still hard to find. A contributing factor to the dearth of studies in this field is the lack of statistical data on emigration from the U.S. This stands in interesting contrast to the detailed data available on migrants moving to the U.S. – a fact that highlights the self-image of the U.S. as a \textit{receiving}, not a \textit{sending} country of migration. As Robert Warren and Ellen Percy Kraly


\textsuperscript{52} Kero, \textit{Suureen Länteen}, 103, 260; Ruggles et al., \textit{Integrated Public Use Microdata Series}.
put it, “persons who move out of the United States do so not only unnoticed but also unrecorded.”

Luckily there is some fragmentary data on U.S. citizens migrating abroad. The first emigration statistics in the U.S. were collected in 1908 in order to find out how many of the former migrants to the U.S. returned to their country of origin. The Immigration Act of 1907 required recording the number of non-U.S. citizens leaving the country with the goal of counting the net population increase. Indeed, many migrants opted for returning to their country of origin during those years; for example, it has been estimated that about one-fourth of Finnish migrants returned to their home country. But the U.S. did not mandate record-keeping on the emigration of U.S. citizens until 1918, when the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) started recording emigration data on U.S. citizens. Unfortunately it discontinued the data collection in 1957 because the data seemed to underestimate permanent departures. The numbers recorded by the INS indicate that a significant number of U.S. citizens emigrated during the first half of the twentieth century: 789,000 U.S. citizens left the country 1918-1950. In the same time period, 2,541,000 non-U.S. citizens emigrated from the U.S. Thus, U.S. citizens made up about a quarter of the total emigration flow from the U.S. in 1918-1950.

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Additionally, there is some historical census data available on overseas Americans in the first half of the twentieth century. In 1966, Ernest Rubin compiled statistical data on U.S. citizens abroad from the *Historical Statistics of the United States* and *U.S. Census of Population, 1960*. Using these sources, he was able to create Table 1 below, showing the number of U.S. citizens residing abroad in 1900-1960.\(^\text{56}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>91,219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>55,608</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>117,238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>89,453</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>118,933</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>481,545</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>1,372,066</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The censuses were based on the completion of questionnaires distributed by U.S. embassies and legations. This method of self-enumeration usually underestimates actual counts, i.e. the number of U.S. citizens living abroad in 1900-1960 is likely to have been larger than what the figures in Table 1 indicate.\(^\text{57}\) In his article, Rubin analyzed the demographic, occupational, and educational characteristics of overseas Americans. An

\(^{56}\) Ernest Rubin, “A Statistical Overview of Americans Abroad,” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 368 (1966): 2. The numbers show a slightly inconsistent pattern in the number of Americans residing abroad in the first half of the 20th century: the number was higher in 1900 than 1910 but then it more than doubled by 1920. One reason behind the increase from 1910 to 1920 may have been the famous expatriation of artists and writers disillusioned with American materialism (known as the Lost Generation) to France – although as Nancy L. Green points out, not all expatriates in France were “café-dwelling Americans.” There were about 40,000 Americans in France in the 1920s and “most of them did not write or draw.” Instead, a significant number of American businessmen, former soldiers, rich American women married to titled Europeans, and members of the “idle rich” resided in France. Nancy L. Green, “Expatriation, Expatriates, and Expats: The American Transformation of a Concept,” *American Historical Review* 114 (2009): 321.

\(^{57}\) Rubin, “Statistical Overview,” 2. The numbers exclude those citizens who were staying abroad only temporarily for business, travel, and the like.
interesting finding is that the educational profile of Americans residing abroad differed considerably from that of U.S. domestic population: the average number of school years completed was much higher for overseas Americans (both men and women) than for Americans stateside.\(^{58}\) Interestingly (and lamentably) Rubin did not provide data on Americans’ countries of settlement. Presumably, however, the majority of U.S. citizens abroad resided either in the neighboring countries of Canada and Mexico or in Europe. For example, a complete census count of the Canadian population in 1881 reveals that there were more than 78,000 U.S.-born persons living in Canada that year.\(^{59}\)

Unfortunately, apart from this kind of fragmented information, there is not much data available on Americans’ countries of settlement in the first half of the twentieth century. Only a few groups of Americans living abroad have elicited scholars’ interest. For example, the romanticized images of the literary and artistic expatriates in Paris in the 1920s continue to captivate scholars, biographers, and writers’ attention.\(^{60}\) Other examples of overseas Americans that have been objects of scholarly work are African Americans fleeing to Canada before and after the Civil War and American missionaries in Asia, especially in China.\(^{61}\)

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\(^{58}\) Ibid., 7.


Overall, however, the majority of migrants departing the U.S. in the early twentieth century were European-origin migrants returning to their home countries more or less permanently. For migrants moving from the U.S. to Finland, *The Statistical Yearbook of Finland* provides data on the number of foreign citizens in Finland from 1928 onward. It paints a portrait of U.S. citizens in Finland that is quite different from the Finnish-born in the U.S. (Figure 3). (The number of U.S. citizens in Finland is unfortunately missing from the statistics in 1939-1940 and in many years from the late 1950s to the 1970s.) The number of U.S. citizens in Finland was higher in the late 1920s and the 1930s than in the 1940s, when less than two hundred U.S. citizens resided in the country. The number remained less than a thousand until the 1970s. Since the 1980s, however, the number of U.S. citizens has more than doubled, so that in 2009 there were about 2,400 American citizens in Finland. For most years, there is no data on the gender composition of Americans in Finland, but in all years when gender was recorded (1944-45, 1947-51, 1953-57, 1960, 1965, 1990-2009), there were more American men than women in Finland (see the right scale of the figure). The percentage of women varied from a low of 35 percent in 1950 to a high of 49 percent in 1990. In the most recent year (2009), 37 percent of U.S. citizens in Finland were women.

In order to find information about Americans in Finland before the time when more detailed statistical information becomes available, I combed through residence permit applications submitted in Helsinki in 1936 and 1950, and lists of naturalized citizens in 1936-1942 (in the Uusimaa province, where the capital Helsinki is located) and in 1947-1977 (for the entire country). These documents indicate that it seems to


63 These documents are located at the National Archives of Finland and the FIS. In addition, Antero Leitzinger, Country Information Researcher at the FIS, compiled a database of foreigners naturalized in Finland from 1834 to 1944 and extracted a list of naturalized U.S. citizens for my use. During these years, all Americans coming to Finland had to apply for a visa; a visa waiver agreement between Finland and the
have been rare for an American with no Finnish family background to move to Finland in the first half of the twentieth century. In 1936, for example, 61 Americans applied for a residence permit in Helsinki. Out of these Americans, only 16 had a non-Finnish name (admittedly a crude proxy for non-Finnish background, as some migrants may have “Anglicized” their names in the U.S.). Thus, almost three-quarters of residence permit applicants with U.S. citizenship presumably had Finnish ancestry. In 1950, 33 U.S. citizens applied for a work and/or residence permit in Helsinki. This time, both their citizenship and ethnicity was recorded. Fourteen (42 percent) out of these 33 applicants reported U.S. citizenship but Finnish ethnicity. Those 19 Americans who did not report Finnish American ancestry were planning to stay in the country only temporarily: the group included Mormons and Quakers doing missionary work, students at the University of Helsinki, businessmen with their accompanying wives, and teachers in the Roman Catholic Church.

A strong indication of an intention to stay in a country for a long time is naturalization, and luckily Finland does preserve a list of naturalized Americans covering a long period of time (1834-1977).\(^{64}\) The list of naturalized citizens from 1947 to 1977 (located at the FIS archives) also shows whether the naturalized person was a former Finnish citizen or born in Finland. The first Americans with no (reported) Finnish ancestry do not appear in the naturalization list until 1962. Between 1947 and 1961 all

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\(^{64}\) The first U.S. citizen to apply for Finnish citizenship was merchant William Hooper Rope whose application was denied for an unknown reason in 1834. The next two Americans were not naturalized until 1873 and 1888, and they both were of Finnish origin (sea captain Johan Theodor Hansen was a former Finnish citizen and seaman Johan Ruotsalainen was also most likely a Finn, inferring from his last name). Antero Leitzinger, *Ulkomaalaispolitiikka Suomessa 1812-1972* (Helsinki: East-West Books, 2008), 294.
naturalized Americans were former citizens and/or born in Finland.\textsuperscript{65} Thus, the majority of Americans living in Finland in the first decades of the twentieth century seem to have been either return migrants moving back to their country of birth or American citizens staying temporarily in Finland for studies, missionary work, business, or other work assignments.

The Great Depression pushed many migrants to return to their home countries, and it may have increased the number of U.S. citizens living abroad as well. As census data in Table 1 revealed, there were almost 90,000 Americans living abroad in 1930. By 1940, the number had increased to 119,000. Interestingly enough, Americans were not necessarily always welcomed as migrants in the mid-twentieth century Finland. In 1933, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland advocated visa exemption for Americans travelling to Finland. Many authorities objected to the proposal, referring to poor U.S. economic conditions in the 1930s as an argument against it. Esko Riekki, Director of the Finnish Secret Service (EK, \textit{Etsivä keskuspoliisi}) in 1923-1938, warned that because of the Great Depression, many Americans might try to move to countries that offered better living conditions than the U.S. In addition, Finnish officials were also wary of non-native born Americans recruited by the GPU (Soviet secret service founded by Lenin in 1917) infiltrating the country. In 1934, the Foreign Ministry repeated its proposal to exempt Americans, Britons, and French from acquiring a visa when coming to Finland. The EK opposed again by stating: “This way we would open our doors to undesirable Americans arriving from the Soviet Union. These Americans would probably stay here

\textsuperscript{65} Overall, the numbers are very small: 0-20 naturalizations per year until 1980. Statistics Finland, \textit{Suomen tilastollinen vuosikirja}. 
unable to support themselves (as they already do), and U.S. consular officers cannot financially help American citizens travel back to the U.S. What’s more, we would receive all kinds of ‘waste material’ (hylkyaines), crooks and such, from the U.S. (...)”

The number of Americans abroad continued to increase during the decade of World War II. This time the change was more dramatic: there was more than a 300 percent increase from 1940, so that almost half a million Americans lived in foreign countries in 1950. The sharp increases from 1940 to 1950 and again from 1950 to 1960 include American servicemen and other federally affiliated Americans abroad. After World War II, the U.S. sent thousands of government officials to implement and oversee relief projects in Europe and Asia and established military bases in various locations all over the world. Small American communities grew around these American establishments when army men and other federally affiliated personnel were joined by their families. These communities “transferred [American] suburbia across the Atlantic” and had often very little interaction with the society around them. As an American living in Shanghai explains: “We took very much for granted that we were Americans who happened to be living in China. We were very much a part of the Oriental world but lived in a ‘little America’ inside our compound walls.”

66 “Silloin avattaisiin ovet selälle m.m. Venäjältä Suomeen tuleville epämieluisille amerikkalaisille, jotka monessa tapauksessa (kuten jo nytkin) jääisivät tänne maamme elätettäviksi, koska USA:n konsuliviranomaiset eivät voi avustaa rahallisesti kansalaisiaan pääsemään takaisin Amerikkaan. Ja toisaalta USA:sta tänne myös tulisi runsaasti kaikenlaista muuta hylkyainesta (m.m. keinottelijoita)...” Leitzinger, Ulkomaalaispolitiikka Suomessa, 459.


Although the expansion of American communities abroad after World War II was initiated by federal government employees and military personnel, other groups soon followed. Many were sent overseas by private organizations; for example, many churches sought to spread their message abroad.\footnote{Ibid., 1.} I noted above the presence of Mormon and Quaker missionaries in Finland in 1950. Businessmen sent by American corporations also ventured abroad in growing numbers as prewar commercial ties were invigorated and expanded.\footnote{Michaux, Unknown Ambassadors, 2.} The number of American students abroad, especially in Europe, was increased by the introduction of the G.I. Bill of Rights and the Fulbright Act, which furnished internationally-minded American students with grants and scholarships.\footnote{Dulles, “Historical View,” 18.}

Migration flow from Europe to the U.S., on the other hand, continued to dwindle until the 1940s. The immigration restrictions combined with worldwide depression, and later the chaos caused by World War II, significantly curtailed movement from the Old World to the New. The number of European migrants temporarily increased after the War as refugees and displaced persons fleeing from the war-torn Europe started arriving in the U.S. However, in the post-war era, migration from other parts of the world, especially from Asia and Latin America, greatly surpassed European migration (as Figure 1 illustrated). A new wave of European migration did not occur until the 1990s, stemming from the collapse of the Soviet Union and ethnic conflict and war in Eastern Europe. As a result, the proportion of migrants arriving from Europe increased slightly in that decade (see Figure 1).\footnote{Ueda, Postwar Immigrant America, 32, 36, 73.}
In the post-World War II era, Finnish migration to the U.S. has remained fairly steady: in every decade, a few thousand Finns have moved to the country. The largest number of migrants (4,900) arrived in the 1950s. In the most recent decade, 2000-2009, almost 4,000 Finns have been granted permanent residency in the U.S.\textsuperscript{74} Although small in numbers, these migrants changed the composition of Finnish America. It seems that the Finnish population was “at its oldest” in 1950; however, after 1950, the proportion of Finns between ages 18 and 35 has grown, until a few percent drop in 2005-2007 (see Figure 4). It seems, then, that since the 1950s there have been enough new-comers from Finland to make the Finnish population in the U.S. slightly younger.

Simultaneously, there has been a significant change in the educational attainment of the Finnish-born population in the U.S., as Table 2 below demonstrates. While from 1940 to 1970 more than half of the Finnish-born had completed only grade school, the proportion of those with college education increased remarkably between 1980 and 2005-2007. In 1980, about 28 percent of Finns had completed some college education. By 2005-2007, already more than three-quarters of the Finnish-born had college education, the largest group (46%) with four or more years of college. In the same year, 74 percent of other Nordic migrants (Swedes, Norwegians, and Danes) and 63 percent of migrants

75 Ruggles et al., Integrated Public Use Microdata Series.
from the rest of Northwest Europe had attained college education. Thus, comparatively speaking, Finns are an extremely well-educated migrant group in the U.S. today. U.S. flow data are congruent with the census data results: in the 2000s, the majority of admitted Finns with a reported occupation have been employed in professional, managerial, or executive fields. Between 2000 and 2009, this proportion ranged from a low of 62 in 2000 to a high of 85 in 2007 (the majority (50%-64%) being men).  

Table 2. Educational Attainment of Finnish-Born in the U.S., Ages 25+, 1940-2007 (%)  

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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None or Preschool</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade School</td>
<td>73.7</td>
<td>67.1</td>
<td>63.0</td>
<td>53.4</td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>24.7</td>
<td>32.1</td>
<td>34.3</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-3 Years of College</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>27.4</td>
<td>30.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4+ Years of College</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>43.8</td>
<td>46.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N (weighted)</td>
<td>109,644</td>
<td>47,391</td>
<td>61,354</td>
<td>42,150</td>
<td>27,795</td>
<td>20,978</td>
<td>19,257</td>
<td>17,829</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>1,111</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>616</td>
<td>1,686</td>
<td>1,635</td>
<td>1,273</td>
<td>1,150</td>
<td>603</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the number of migrants moving from Europe to the U.S. continued to decrease, the number of Americans living abroad constantly grew. There have been only

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77 Ruggles et al., Integrated Public Use Microdata Series. In 1950 education was not asked of some respondents. They are excluded from this table.
sporadic counts of U.S. citizens abroad in the second half of the twentieth century, but the pattern is clear: a constantly increasing number of Americans are living outside their home country. Warren and Kraly estimate that emigration of U.S. citizens peaked during the 1960s and remained stable in the 1970s. The peak in the 1960s was most likely caused by the intensification of the Vietnam War and the subsequent emigration of those wanting to avoid the draft laws. Interestingly, in Cold War Finland, the question of Americans seeking asylum raised concerns at times. For example, in the 1970s, a few American soldiers and members of the Black Panthers requested asylum in Finland. However, granting asylum was considered a politically sensitive issue in Finland during the Cold War years. Finland was very careful in admitting refugees and asylum seekers because of the fear of jeopardizing the country’s relationship with the Soviet Union.

In 1984, the U.S. Department of State estimated that the number of U.S. citizens living outside the U.S. had grown to 1.8 million. Further, basing her analysis on the July 1987 and June 1988 Current Population Surveys, K.A. Woodrow estimates that there were more than 2 million American migrants residing abroad in 1988. These figures suggest that there has been a steady increase in the number of overseas Americans since the 1960 census. Decennial estimates are not available for the post-1960 period, but I have compiled data from three different sources in Table 3.

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80 Leitzinger, Ulkomaalaispolitiikka Suomessa, 216.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>64,600</td>
<td>522,274</td>
<td>1,036,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>24,800</td>
<td>335,490</td>
<td>687,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>21,900</td>
<td>214,740</td>
<td>224,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>20,900</td>
<td>159,882</td>
<td>210,880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>17,200</td>
<td>131,400</td>
<td>168,967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>8,500</td>
<td>125,000</td>
<td>105,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>3,400</td>
<td>102,830</td>
<td>102,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>3,100</td>
<td>69,000</td>
<td>101,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>2,900</td>
<td>68,945</td>
<td>94,513</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>2,900</td>
<td>53,388</td>
<td>94,195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>2,700</td>
<td>39,013</td>
<td>82,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>1,700</td>
<td>36,803</td>
<td>72,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>1,400</td>
<td>34,900</td>
<td>70,350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>1,400</td>
<td>32,784</td>
<td>65,157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>46,984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>27,655</td>
<td>40,640</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>27,586</td>
<td>39,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>23,828</td>
<td>38,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>180,200</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,586,955</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,784,693</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data for 1960-1976 were collected by Warren and Kraly from the 1977 volume of the *United Nations Demographic Yearbook* and includes U.S. citizens reported as permanent migrants in migration statistics submitted by 18 countries around the world. The countries listed were included because they were the ones that reported regularly to the UN between 1960 and 1976. Warren and Kraly estimate that about 80 percent of U.S. residents reported as immigrants were residing in these 18 countries. The figures for 1993 and 1999 include private American citizens abroad (i.e. military and nonmilitary U.S.

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government employees and their dependents are excluded). The 1993 data were collected by the U.S. Department of State as part of a noncombatant personnel evacuation survey. The 1999 count was conducted by the Bureau of Consular Affairs of the U.S. Department of State.

When we compare the figures from the 1960s and 1970s to those from 1993 and 1999, we can see, first of all, that the total number of Americans abroad was much lower in 1960-1976, perhaps because UN figures include only countries that have regularly submitted data to the UN. In addition, the UN figures include only people who are defined as long-term migrants in the host country, and this definition varies significantly from country to country. Thus, the figures probably grossly underestimate the number of U.S. citizens residing abroad. The figures for 1993 and 1999 are not completely accurate either because they are based on self-enumeration. In addition, they exclude those Americans who have become citizens of their adopted home countries.84

It is interesting to note that the most popular destinations of U.S. citizens abroad are the same in all three counts: neighboring Mexico and Canada (46 percent of overseas Americans lived in these two countries in 1999), the UK, and Germany. As for countries outside North America and Europe, the Philippines, Australia, Israel, and the Dominican Republic have drawn a considerable number of U.S. citizens. U.S. citizens include, of course, naturalized migrants and U.S.-born second generation migrants. Therefore, it is only to be expected that countries that have sent large numbers of migrants to the U.S. are

84 According to John R. Wennersten, current estimates of overseas Americans vary from four to seven million. John R. Wennersten, Leaving America: The New Expatriate Generation (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2008), 152.
also significant receivers of U.S. citizens (for example, Mexico, the Philippines, and the Dominican Republic).  

Some writers have argued that there are two kinds of Americans residing abroad today. First, there are those who live in American communities – mostly federal employees and military personnel with their families. They have their own schools and associations and often little contact with the surrounding culture. Many of them stay in the host country only for a limited number of years. The second group of Americans consists of private citizens who do not live in “American enclaves” and who have moved abroad for various reasons: for business, study, romance, or just life experiences and adventure.  

Furthermore, Americans’ motives for migration vary considerably by country of destination. For example, Arnold Dashefsky et al. conducted a comparative study on Americans in Israel and Australia. They found that Americans living in Israel had often been dissatisfied with their life in the Jewish-American community and

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85 Bratsberg and Terrell utilize multiple regression analysis to evaluate which factors affect the choice of country of destination when U.S. citizens emigrate. The data they used is from the 1993 U.S. Department of State survey and includes information from 65 countries. According to their analysis, the most important factors that increased the likelihood of U.S. citizens to be living in a foreign country were the distance between the foreign country and the U.S., the economic standing (measured by the GNP) of the host country, the country’s ties to the U.S. migrant population, and the possibility to use the English language in the country. Also the presence of U.S. military personnel stationed in the country influenced the choice of foreign residency. Bratsberg and Terrell’s findings are congruent with the countries listed in Table 2: Americans were most likely to be found in countries that are located close to the U.S. (Canada and Mexico), have sizable migrant populations in the U.S. (Mexico, the Philippines, Italy), are English-speaking countries (Canada, the UK, Australia), wealthy (Canada, Germany, the UK), and have U.S. military installations (the Philippines, Germany, Israel and Jerusalem). Bratsberg and Terrell, “Where Do Americans Live Abroad?,” 788, 797-801.

86 Michaux, Unknown Ambassadors, 1-2; Gabrielle Varro and Sally Boyd, “Introduction: Probing the Background,” International Journal of the Sociology of Language 133 (1998): 10-11. John R. Wennersten presents a few categories of “typical” American citizens living abroad today. He uses the term “Latte Generation” to describe young Americans who settle abroad for the sake of adventure. The second group that Wennersten mentions are those who feel alienated from U.S. society, politics, and culture. Additionally, there are Americans who have chosen to migrate to the country of their ancestors. This has been eased by immigration and citizenship policies of many European countries that favor migrants who can show an ethnic lineage to the country. Wennersten, Leaving America, 7-15.
reported that the opportunity to freely express their religious-ethnic identity in Israel was the most important factor behind their decision to move. The most common motive of Americans moving to Australia, on the other hand, was an appetite for adventure and travel.\(^\text{87}\)

For U.S. migrants living in Finland, the most common ground for residence permit applications is having a partner who is a Finnish citizen or who lives permanently in Finland.\(^\text{88}\) As Figure 3 illustrated, the number of U.S. citizens in Finland started to increase rapidly in the early 1990s – the time period during which international migration to Finland also picked up. Emigration from Finland was larger than immigration to the country up until the 1980s. During the time when many western and northern European nations accepted large numbers of guest workers – from the 1950s to the 1970s – Finland still struggled with unemployment and economic recessions. However, in the late 1980s, as the Finnish economy began to prosper, the Soviet Union collapsed, the Cold War ended, Finland joined the EU, and economic globalization took off, Finland began to receive more migrants.\(^\text{89}\) As a result, the number of foreign citizens in Finland has multiplied from about 26,000 in 1990 to 156,000 in 2009 (an almost 500 percent growth).

While once the majority of U.S. citizens in Finland in the mid-century years were presumably Americans of Finnish descent, this changed in the 1980s and 1990s. For example, in 1970, more than 50 percent of U.S. citizens residing in Finland reported the Finnish language as their first language. In 1990, the proportion of Finnish-speakers had

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decreased to 25 percent. By 2006, it was only 9 percent.\textsuperscript{90} These figures suggest that the proportion of Finnish Americans among U.S. citizens in Finland has dropped in the past few decades – although, admittedly, it is not very common even for later-generation Finnish Americans to be fluent in Finnish. However, in my samples of Americans living in Finland, Finnish-American descent was also rare: only one of my interviewees was Finnish American, and out of 106 survey respondents only 11 (10\%) reported having partly Finnish ancestry.

Americans have been in the top-10 of the number of residence permits granted to non-EU member country nationals in Finland in 2006-2009 (the time period from which the FIS has online data available).\textsuperscript{91} Nevertheless, Americans’ presence in Finland has not created much interest among migration scholars. One of the rare studies on Americans residing in Finland is Sirkku Latomaa’s “English in Contact with ‘the Most Difficult Language in the World,’” which was published in 1998. Latomaa notes that although the usual understanding is that Americans in Finland are mostly students and employees of international companies and the U.S. Embassy who stay in Finland only for a limited number of years, her sample of Americans (N=30) had lived in Finland on average for over 10 years at the time of study. In my sample of Americans who filled out the online survey, 65 out of 106 respondents (61 percent) indicated that they were not planning to move away from Finland in the next five years, pointing to a permanent stay. My finding thus supports Latomaa’s argument: while many Americans certainly stay in

\textsuperscript{90} Pekka Myrskylä, Statistics Finland, email message to author, February 13, 2008.
Finland only temporarily for studies or specific work assignments, many also live in Finland more permanently.  

The most common profession for both American men and women in Finland today is teaching and education. In official statistics, the unemployment rate of Americans has been close to that of the population average in the past years. For example, in 2006, 11 percent of U.S. citizens and 10 percent of the whole population were unemployed. Thus, Americans’ employment situation in Finland is better compared to many other foreign nationalities, especially many groups who have arrived in Finland as refugees or asylum seekers. The nationalities with the highest unemployment rates in 2007 were Afghans (74%), Iraqis (61%), Somalis (59%), and Iranians (51%). If we look more closely into the main activities of Americans in Finland, about 37 percent of Americans in Finland were gainfully employed in 2006. More than one-third, 36 percent, belonged to the category “others,” which may include persons who are not employed but have not registered as an unemployed person in the Employment Office. In addition, 11 percent were retired, 5 percent students, and another 5 percent children aged 0-14 years. 

Americans’ educational attainment is close to that of the majority population: in 2007, 25 percent of U.S. citizens (aged 15+ years) in Finland had completed tertiary education (a degree in a college, university, or an institute of technology or polytechnics). In the same year, 26 percent of the whole population had the same educational attainment.

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92 Although I must point out that those who are staying in Finland only for a limited amount of time might not be motivated to participate in studies like Latomaa’s and mine.  


However, 60 percent of U.S. citizens belonged to the category of “lower secondary or unknown education,” which may mean that some Americans may have had difficulties having their degrees recognized in Finland, or that their degrees are simply not recorded in the official statistics.  

As I noted in the introduction, Finnish statistics divide the population into Finnish and foreign citizens, and for most of the twentieth century, this is the only data available on the number of foreigners in Finland. Unfortunately, the use of citizenship as a measure excludes those Americans who have become Finnish citizens. Between 1990 and 2009, the number of Americans who gained Finnish citizenship each year varied between 0 in 1995 and 90 in 2004. The number of American-born in Finland has been consistently higher than the number of American citizens in Finland. From 1990 to 2009, there was a 63 percent increase in the number of U.S.-born persons in Finland. In 2009, there were a little over 3,900 U.S.-born persons in Finland, as compared to 2,400 U.S. citizens.

Figures 2 and 3 are based on stock population data, i.e. they show the number of U.S. citizens in Finland annually and the Finnish-born in the U.S. in each decennial census year (plus in the 2005-2008 American Community Surveys). When looking at recent flow data between the U.S. and Finland (Finnish flow data by country of origin is available from 1987 forwards), interesting migration patterns between the two countries

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emerge. As Figure 5 illustrates, in the past three years (2007-2009), there has been more migration from the U.S. to Finland than the other way around; net migration is now positive from Finland’s perspective.

**Figure 5. Migration between Finland and the U.S., with Net Migration (Finland), 1987-2009**

In sum, it may be said that migration flows between Finland and the U.S. have become more balanced in recent years. They have not been systematically unidirectional, which was largely the case for most of the twentieth century. In addition, Finns in the

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U.S. and Americans in Finland have both become predominantly white, middle-class populations with relatively high educational attainment. In other words, migration between the two countries seems to be a case of an exchange of similar populations rather than of migrations that fill unmet needs, for example, in the labor market, in one country or the other. Demographically speaking, thus, Finns in the U.S. and American in Finland are comparable migrant populations in many ways. Still, one clear difference between the two populations can be found in the gender ratios. Whereas only 37 percent of U.S. citizens in Finland in 2009 were women, the corresponding percentage of Finns in the U.S. in 2005-2008 was 61. In addition, flow data reveal that migration from Finland to the U.S. continues to be female-dominated – and the reverse of American migration to Finland. In 2009, 63 percent of Finns admitted to the U.S. and 47 percent of migrants arriving from the U.S. to Finland were women.¹⁰⁰ This difference in the gender ratios between the two groups of migrants is likely related to the fact that in both countries, marriages between Finnish women and American men are much more common than marriages between Finnish men and American women.

**Marriage and Family Ties in Twentieth Century Transatlantic Migration**

“Growing up in two cultures? What two cultures? I was just a little Finn kid, tucked safely in the warm bosom of a good-sized Finnish family in a Finnish

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farming community. Until I entered school, I was, at most, but dimly aware of the existence of any other culture.”

This passage is from a memoir written by Armas Tamminen, a Finnish American who lived his childhood in a farming community in Northern Minnesota in the early twentieth century. At that time, Finnish communities in the U.S. were vital and full of social activities, and most of the families interacted mainly with other Finns. Marriages across ethnic boundaries were rare; only 10 percent of Finns who married did so outside of their ethnic community. The number of intermarriages among European migrants overall during the time of mass migration from Europe was minuscule. In contrast, international marriage has become almost a majority experience for both Finns in the U.S. and Americans in Finland today. In this section, I examine these changes in marriage patterns of Finns in the U.S. and Americans in Finland over the course of the twentieth century.

As Finnish communities in the early twentieth century U.S. were mainly male-dominated, the marriage market was very favourable to Finnish women. There was even a saying, “no matter how ugly a woman is, she will find a husband in America.” The lack of women of the same ethnic group pushed many migrant men to search for a spouse

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103 See for example Suzanne Sinke, “Relating European Emigration and Marriage Patterns,” Immigrants and Minorities 20 (March 2001): 74.
in the home country through newspaper ads, visits to the home village, or correspondence. It seems that many men preferred to marry not only a Finnish girl, but a girl from the same village or region where he originated from. Indeed, marriage records in many places in the U.S. reveal that the Finnish bride and groom were often born in the same locality in Finland.\textsuperscript{105} Image 1, below, is an example of a letter by a Finnish man living in the U.S. (in this case, in California) who courted a girl in his hometown in Finland through correspondence. (This couple, however, did not end up getting married – she stayed in Finland.)\textsuperscript{106} Reino Kero notes also that women in Finland sometimes sent ads to Finnish-American newspapers, looking for a husband in the New World. A newspaper called \textit{Lemmen Sanomat} ("Love News"), dedicated to marriage advertisements of Finnish migrant men, was published for a short time in the 1920s. Indeed, many women arrived in the U.S. specifically to marry a migrant man.\textsuperscript{107}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{105} Ibid., 211-215. \\
\textsuperscript{107} Kero, \textit{Suureen Länteen}, 212-214.
\end{flushright}
There were, of course, regional differences in the availability of Finnish spouses. Gender imbalance was greatest in distant mining communities and lumber camps, where a great majority of the population was composed of men of migrant backgrounds. On the other hand, in New York City in 1920, Finnish women outnumbered Finnish men. This was due to the different employment patterns of Finnish men and women: it was common for Finnish women to be employed as domestic servants. Nevertheless, almost all Finnish women ended up getting married in the early twentieth century U.S.: less than 1.5 percent of Finnish-born women remained never married at the age of 45 or above between 1900 and 1930. The corresponding percentage for the U.S.-born women varied

108 Ibid., 210-211.
between 7 and 10 percent during the same time period. In contrast, it was much more common for Finnish migrant men to remain unmarried: about one-fifth of Finnish men at the age of 45 or older were not married between 1900 and 1930.\textsuperscript{109} In addition, some men were married before migrating and left the wife behind to attend to family matters. Later he might pay the family’s ticket to the U.S.\textsuperscript{110}

Thus, family concerns played a major role in movement between the U.S. and Finland in the early twentieth century. Finnish men looked for spouses in their home country, and Finnish women sometimes migrated to the U.S. to marry a Finnish man. Family ties also played a major role in repatriation of Finns, as Keijo Virtanen argued in 1979. The most often cited reasons for return to Finland included homesickness and longing for family in Finland, parents’ or spouse’s wishes, the death of the spouse in the U.S., and so on.\textsuperscript{111} Marriages between Finns and U.S. citizens remained rare in Finland, however. For example, in two central churches in Helsinki in 1936 (the Finnish-speaking \textit{Helsingin pohjoinen suomalainen seurakunta} and the Swedish-speaking \textit{Helsingfors norra svenska församlingen}), only 15 (out of total of almost 1,800) marriages were contracted between a Finnish and U.S.-born partner (and in these 15 marriages, only three of the U.S. born spouses did not have a Finnish name).\textsuperscript{112}

Overall, American presence abroad deeply impacted migration and marriage patterns in the U.S. during the mid-century years. A good example is the arrival of

\textsuperscript{109} Ruggles et al., \textit{Integrated Public Use Microdata Series}.


\textsuperscript{111} Virtanen, \textit{Settlement or Return}, 176.

\textsuperscript{112} And presumably marriages between Finns and foreigners were more common in Helsinki than anywhere else in the country.
military brides in the 1940s. As a result of U.S. military presence abroad, the percent of migrants admitted as spouses (mainly wives) of U.S. citizens skyrocketed from 9 percent in 1945 to 60 percent in the following year (see Figure 6). Immigration legislation played a decisive role in these migration patterns. Suzanne Sinke has pointed out that the U.S. military first discouraged marriages between service personnel and foreign women through anti-fraternization policies, but these policies proved to be largely ineffective. In 1945 U.S. Congress passed the War Brides Act and in 1946 the G.I. Fiancées Act to facilitate migration of brides of U.S. military personnel.\(^{113}\) Elfrieda Berthiaume Shukert and Barbara Smith Scibetta have estimated that as many as one million marriages between U.S. citizens and foreign men and women were contracted during and after World War II.\(^{114}\) This high number remains unverified; the INS recorded approximately 115,000 military spouses arriving to the U.S. between 1946 and 1950 (of which almost all were wives of U.S. service personnel – only 333 husbands arrived). Three-quarters of admitted spouses of U.S. service personnel came from European countries.\(^{115}\)

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\(^{114}\) Shukert and Scibetta came up with the estimate of one million war brides by using military documents, immigration tables, reports of arriving transports, and regional and local statistics as sources. They note, however, that this estimate is probable “although ultimately unverifiable.” Elfrieda Berthiaume Shukert and Barbara Smith Scibetta, *The War Brides of World War II* (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1988), 1-2.

Despite the fact that there was no American military presence in Finland, 96 Finnish military brides were admitted in 1947-1950. Some of these women may have been brides of Finnish-American volunteers who participated in the war between Finland 

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and the Soviet Union in 1939-1944. But Finnish women and American soldiers met outside Finland too, as evidenced by the oral history of Talvikki Manninen, collected by Shukert and Scibetta. In 1945, Talvikki fled from Finland to Germany, where she met her future husband, a Finnish-American soldier named Norman. After returning to the U.S., Norman invited Talvikki to join him in his home state of Michigan. In 1947, two years after Talvikki had met Norman in Germany, she flew to New York with her two young children from a previous marriage.

As can be seen in Figure 6 above, before World War II (when numbers are available), approximately 5-10 percent of all admitted migrants (quota and nonquota) arrived as spouses of U.S. citizens. Among Nordic (Finnish, Swedish, Norwegian, and Danish) migrants, only a few percent migrated through spousal preferences. In the 1940s there was a moderate increase in the percent of Nordic migrants admitted as spouses of U.S. citizens. For example, in 1945, 9 percent of Finns were granted an LPR status as a spouse of an American; in 1949 the percentage had gone up to 17. Overall, however, the war brides legislation did not significantly impact migration patterns of Finns, or other Nordics for that matter, during the 1940s. It is not until the late 1960s that the proportion of Nordic migrants admitted as spouses of U.S. citizens started to climb.

The INS collected data on spousal admissions by gender only until 1979; since then, no distinction has been made between wives and husbands in the published statistics. Every year before 1979, however, a majority of Nordic spouses of Americans were women. The proportion of wives among admitted spouses ranged between a low of

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119 Shukert and Scibetta, War Brides, 174-178.
56 percent in 1954 to a high of 92 percent in 1965 – when leaving out the arrival of war brides in the 1940s, which was almost exclusively female migration.\textsuperscript{120} Thus, spousal migration of Nordics to the U.S. is a very female-dominated form of migration, which at least partly explains the increasing proportion of women among the Finnish-born (and other Nordic-born) in the U.S. in the latter half of the twentieth century.

U.S. census data reveals that as the demographics and migration patterns of Finns changed during the mid-century years, marriage patterns of Finns changed as well. Figure 7 below, based on U.S. census data, shows the estimated number of marriages of Finns to other Finns (i.e. in-marriages) and to non-Finns (intermarriages) from 1900 to 2007 (see the left scale of the figure). The figure illustrates how the number of in-marriages started to decrease already after 1920 – a trend that corresponds with the changes in the demographics of Finns outlined above, especially with the aging of the population. Interestingly, however, the number of intermarriages increased from 1920 to 1930. This happened at an almost exactly same rate for Finnish men and women (see the right scale of the figure for the proportion of Finnish men and women who were intermarried in each census year). When these marriages are studied by age group, it appears that it was specifically the younger Finnish-born, those who were aged 20-40 in 1930, who married out in the 1920s. The older age groups remained mainly in-married – or became widowed, which explains the drop in the number of in-marriages. After 1930, the number of intermarriages started to go down as well. In 1950, there were almost the same number

\textsuperscript{120} The percent of wives among Nordic spouses of U.S. citizens was 95\% in 1947 and 96\% in 1948. U.S. Department of Labor, \textit{Annual Report} 1947 and 1948.
of in-marriages and intermarriages; after 1950, the number of marriages across ethnic boundaries has clearly exceeded the number of marriages within the Finnish community.

**Figure 7. Estimated Number of Marriages of Finnish-Born in the U.S, with Percentage of Intermarried by Gender, 1900-2007**

Figure 7 also shows (on the right scale) that after 1960 more than half of both Finnish men and women have married outside their ethnic community. (The number of international marriages also grew between 2000 and 2005-2007 for the first time since the 1920s.) Overall, the proportion of intermarried among the Finnish-born women increased steadily throughout the twentieth century. The proportion of intermarried Finnish men, on the other hand, decreased from 1970 to 2000, after which the percent of

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121 Ruggles et al., *Integrated Public Use Microdata Series*. 

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intermarried has gone up again. This difference to Finnish-born women is likely due to the fact that Finnish men more often moved to the U.S. with their families.

The marriage patterns of Finnish migrants are representative of those of other Nordic and Northwest European origin migrants in the U.S. (see Figure 8). My analysis reveals that the proportion intermarried among the foreign-born from these countries or areas constantly grew during the twentieth century. By 2005-2007, 80-82 percent of the women and 70-80 percent of the men of these groups of foreign-born were married outside their ethnic group. The change is, however, even more dramatic for Finns because in 1900, only about 10 percent of Finns were intermarried, whereas among other Nordic and Northwest European migrants intermarriages were already then more common: 22 percent of Nordic-born men and 14 percent of Nordic-born women were married outside their ethnic group in 1900. The corresponding figures for other Northwest European origin migrants were 35 for men and 23 for women. Today, the American-born (with no Finnish ancestry) form the largest group of spouses of the Finnish-born: in 2005-2007, for example, 60 percent of Finnish women and 51 percent of Finnish men were married to an American-born (only about two percent of the U.S.-born spouses reported Finnish ancestry).
Figures 6, 7, and 8 together show that the 1960s marked the beginning of a new period in the marriage and migration patterns of Finns (and other Nordic migrants) in the U.S.: international marriages have become almost the norm in this small migrant population. In addition, international marriages of Finns have become “feminized:” since 1970, Finnish women have been married to a non-Finn more often than Finnish men.

Many scholars have pointed to the increase of international marriages in different parts of the world, including the U.S. and Finland. For instance, David M. Heer wrote in

122 Ruggles et al., *Integrated Public Use Microdata Series.*
1980 that both the incidence (the number of international marriages contracted in a given period of time) and prevalence (the number of international marriages existing in a given point in time) of international marriages increased sharply in the U.S. in the course of the 1970s. Later studies, too, have noted the growing number of such marriages. U.S. researchers, however, study most often interethnic or interracial marriages of the American-born – international marriages between the foreign-born and U.S. citizens or established residents in the U.S. have received much less attention.

But increasing rates of intermarriage are not characteristic of all international migrants in the U.S. Census data reveal that marriages in which both partners are foreign-born have become increasingly common after 1970. This reflects the growing numbers of migrants arriving in the country after the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act, and the tendency of “newer” migrants to marry inside their ethnic group. For example Hung Cam Thai, who studies Vietnamese international marriages, notes the global trend of migrants (and migrant-origin people), especially men, looking for spouses in their home countries. This is by no means a new phenomenon: I have documented it above for Finns during the years of mass migration from Europe to the U.S.

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Nevertheless, variation by nationality group is considerable. For example, almost 70 percent of the Mexican-born in the U.S. were married to other Mexican-born in 2000 – a significant increase from only one-third marrying inside their ethnic group in 1960. Also, the proportion of in-married among the Chinese-born grew from 50 percent in 1960 to more than three-quarters in 2000. On the other hand, as I showed above, migrants of Northwest European origin show a different pattern. The case seems to be the same for foreign-born of Canadian origin. Since 1930, less than 20 percent of the Canadian-born have been married to other Canadians living in the U.S. In 1960, one-third of Germans were married to other German-born; in 2000 only 10 percent of Germans were in-married. Marriages between German women and American men were especially common in 2000: 80 percent of married German women had an American-born husband, either with German ancestry (20%) or without it (60%).

In other words, the increase in international marriages is not a universal trend in the U.S.: many foreign-born groups – especially those with large and recent migration flows to the U.S. – are actually showing a growing proportion of in-marriage. Nevertheless, the trends I found among the Finnish-born can be found among many other (mostly Western) migrant groups with a long presence in the U.S., such as Canadians, Germans, and Scandinavians. In addition, within these groups, women seem to marry Americans more often than do men (although there are exceptions, too: for example marriages between Italian men and American women are more common than the other way around).

127 Ruggles et al., *Integrated Public Use Microdata Series*. 
In Finland, the rising number of marriages and cohabiting unions between Finns and foreigners – the number more than doubled between 1994 and 2007 – has caught researchers’ attention.128 The majority of studies focus specifically on international marriages between Finnish and foreign citizens in the present time. Finnish migration scholars usually note that marriage to a Finnish citizen has historically been – and still is – one of the main reasons for migration to Finland.129 For example, in 1991, Magdalena Jaakkola found that a great majority – 82 percent – of married foreigners in Finland were married to a Finnish citizen.130 Ten years later, Maaria Ylänkö found that the proportion of foreign citizens married to Finns had decreased, but still almost half, 47 percent, of foreign citizens had a Finnish spouse.131

Usually this is as far as migration researchers go: the increase in the number of international marriages in the 1990s and 2000s has captured scholars’ attention, but historical perspective is missing. There are only a few studies on marriages between different groups of Finnish-born in the twentieth century, for example on interreligious marriages between Lutheran and Orthodox Finns and inter-lingual marriages between Finnish and Swedish speakers.132 One of the reasons for this lack of research may simply

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132 E.g. Gunnar Fougstedt and Tor Hartman, “Social Factors Affecting the Choice of Language by Children of Finnish-Swedish Mixed Marriages in Finland,” Transactions of the Westermarck Society 3 (1956): 34-54; Voitto Huotari, Seka-avioliitot ortodoksissaan ja luterilaisuuden kohtauspaikkana (Helsinki:
be the fact that there is very limited historical data available on international marriages in Finland: citizenship or birthplaces of married spouses were not recorded in the official statistics of Finland before the 1990s. Prior to that, the only way to indirectly measure the occurrence of marriages between ethnic groups is through language data: Statistics Finland has compiled data on marriages by language group starting in 1951. According to this language data (which divided the population into speakers of Finnish, Swedish, and other languages; in 1991, Russian speakers were added in the statistics), the proportion of Finnish speakers married to speakers of other languages did not significantly increase until the early 1990s. One of the problems with this data is that there is no way of differentiating between Swedish speakers from Finland and Sweden. As a result, marriages between Finns and Swedish speakers from Sweden are not counted as international marriages. Between 1951 and 1985, 0.1–4.0 percent of female Finnish speakers were married to a non-Finnish (or Swedish) speaker; the corresponding figures for Finnish-speaking men were 0.1–0.2 percent. In other words, only a negligible proportion of Finnish-speaking men were married to a non-Finnish/Swedish speaker. Finnish-speaking women married out more often, but the percent for both men and women did not significantly increase until the 1990s. In 1995, 4 percent of both Finnish-speaking men and women were married to speakers of other languages.\textsuperscript{133}

Statistics Finland also provides marriage data by citizenship (the number of new marriages/cohabiting unions contracted each year) and by country of birth (the number of marriages/cohabiting unions that exist each year) since the early 1990s. These data

\textsuperscript{133} Statistics Finland, \textit{Suomen tilastollinen vuosikirja}. I recorded the marriage data in 5-6-year intervals starting in 1951. After 1999, the \textit{Statistical Yearbook} records marriages by citizenship instead of language.
confirm that the 1990s were a period during which international marriages significantly increased in Finland. There were 25,612 marriages and cohabiting unions between Finnish-born and foreign-born in 1994. This rose to 53,827 by 2007, more than double the 1994 figure. Unions between Finnish men and foreign women have become increasingly common. This is a new trend: before the 1990s, Finnish women were more likely to marry out than men.

Differences between urban and rural areas of Finland also appear in these data: a majority of international marriages occur in the capital area, where half of foreign citizens also reside.\textsuperscript{134} \textit{Helsingin Sanomat} reported in February 2009 that more than a quarter (26 percent) of residents in Helsinki married a foreign citizen in 2007.\textsuperscript{135} This is significantly more than in the whole population: 11 percent of all marriages of Finnish citizens were contracted with a foreign citizen in 2009.\textsuperscript{136} Thus, international marriages have become very common in the capital region – where also the majority of U.S. citizens reside (58 percent in 2009). Table 4 summarizes the top-10 origins of foreign spouses of Finnish citizens between 1997 and 2006.

\textsuperscript{135} Additionally, in 12% of new marriages contracted in 2007 both spouses were foreign citizens. Teppo Moisio, “Joka neljäs helsinkiläinen nai ulkomaalaisen,” \textit{Helsingin Sanomat}, February 8, 2009, http://www.hs.fi/kaupunki/artikkeli/Joka+nelj%C3%A4s+helsinkil%C3%A1inen+nai+ulkomaalaisen/113524357121.
Table 4. Number of New Marriages between Finnish and Foreign Citizens in Finland, by Foreign Spouse’s Gender and Citizenship, 1997-2006\textsuperscript{137}

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Husband's citizenship</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Wife's citizenship</th>
<th>N</th>
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<td>847</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>458</td>
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<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>690</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>439</td>
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<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>422</td>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>382</td>
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<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>390</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>329</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>295</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6,209</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4,082</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>12,351</strong></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>15,151</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These numbers raise a number of interesting points. For instance, it seems that Finnish women marry Westerners more often than Finnish men do. Moreover, scholars have discovered that Finnish women who marry Western men tend to be more highly educated than women who marry Turkish or African men. On the other hand, Finnish men who are married to a Thai, Russian, or Estonian woman are generally less educated than the average population.\textsuperscript{138} These gendered, ethnic, and class-specific patterns of international marriages in Finland are still poorly understood. Ylänkö points vaguely to “the geographical or ethnic preferences of the future spouse [that] already exist prior to the first meeting.”\textsuperscript{139} However, a comprehensive analysis of these gendered intermarriage patterns of Finns is still missing.

\textsuperscript{137} Statistics Finland, *Ulkomaalaiset ja siirtolaisuus 2007*, 23

\textsuperscript{138} Elli Heikkilä, “Monikulttuuriset avioliitot sillonrajatuja Suomessa,” in *Monikulttuuriset avioliitot sillonrajatuja*, 4-5.

\textsuperscript{139} Ylänkö, “Measuring Acceptance,” 188-190.
What is most interesting for the purpose of this study is that American men constitute the largest group among Finnish women’s foreign husbands, and that they also rank in the top-10 of Finnish men’s foreign wives. It seems indisputable, then, that more American men than women live in Finland because marriages are so common between Finnish women and American men. Marriage is also one of the major reasons why Americans move to Finland. The connection between gender imbalance in a migrant population and the high prevalence of marriage to a Finnish citizen can be found in other migrant groups as well, which points to the importance of marriage as a reason for migration to Finland. For example, 81 percent of British, 71 percent of Turkish, and 61 percent of German citizens were men in 2009, and they too number among the top-5 of groups of foreign spouses of Finnish women. Similarly, 87 percent of Thai, 59 percent of Russian, and 53 percent of Estonian citizens were women in 2009, and they form the top-3 origins of spouses of Finnish men.\textsuperscript{140} In Finland, for Americans and many other migrant groups, marriage and migration are thus “inextricably entwined.”\textsuperscript{141}

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have documented changes in transatlantic migration and marriage patterns over the course of the twentieth century, focusing on Finnish migrants in the U.S. and American migrants in Finland. Mobility between these two countries has become more balanced in the past decade, and in both countries, marriage and migration


\textsuperscript{141} Penny and Khoo, Intermarriage, 59.
are closely linked, as evidenced by the gender imbalance in both countries and by the fact that most marriages between Finns and Americans occur between Finnish women and American men. Despite very different histories of migration, there are surprising similarities in the marriage and migration patterns of Western migrants in Finland and the U.S. In both countries, marriages between citizens and women and men originating from other highly industrialized countries such as Germany, Sweden, and the UK (and of course the U.S. and Finland) are increasingly common. In examining Finnish migration to the U.S. and American migration to Finland, we are not really looking at two isolated migration streams: in both cases the movements are dominated by Finnish women and American men who more often than not are married to each other.
Chapter 2.

From In-Marriages to International Marriages: Explaining Changing Marriage Patterns

In this chapter, I seek to explain the changes outlined in Chapter 1. Why did Finns mostly marry within their ethnic group during the years of mass migrations? Why has international marriage become the majority experience both in Finland and the U.S. in the second half of the twentieth century? Most scholarship on marriages between partners of different nationalities, ethnicities, or races has been conducted by social scientists who study intermarriages (interethnic, interracial, interreligious) among groups that are permanently settled in a country. Consequently, these studies posit that the conditions of settlement are the only significant context for studying the occurrence of intermarriages. They often employ quantitative methods and use measures such as group size and sex ratios, residential propinquity, group cohesion, generation, and education to explain why some groups marry out more than others. Some scholars also examine personal characteristics and preferences of those who marry out.¹⁴²

These traditional social scientific studies view the emergence of intermarriages as a measure of assimilation into the host society. For instance, James H. S. Bossard argued

¹⁴² For example, some studies have postulated that emancipated, rebellious, detached, and/or adventurous persons are more likely to marry outside their ethnic group. Another popular explanatory model is that of the exchange theory/hypergamy, which assumes that a person of lower social status (often female) marries somebody from a group of higher social status (male); in this context, the male exchanges his high social status for the youth and attractiveness of the female of lower status. Reuben B. Resnik, “Some Sociological Aspects of Intermarriage of Jew and Non-Jew,” Social Forces 12, no. 1 (1933): 94-102; Gary A. Cretser and Joseph J. Leon, “Intermarriage in the U.S.: An Overview of Theory and Research,” in Intermarriage in the United States, ed. Gary A. Cretser and Joseph J. Leon (New York: The Haworth Press, 1982), 6-7; Penny and Khoo, Intermarriage, xii.
in 1939 that intermarriage indexes the degree of social distance and assimilation process between ethnic groups. Forty years later, Richard M. Bernard, in his study on European migrants and their descendants in Wisconsin in the early twentieth century, also saw marriage as a “measure of acceptance” between ethnic groups. He argued that the melting-pot is indeed taking place among European Americans through interethnic marriage.143

While these studies help explain why some persons or groups that are settled in a country choose their marriage partner outside their own group, they are hardly sufficient for explaining the types of international marriages that I am studying. In other words, these models may be helpful in explaining situations in which intermarriage is a result of migration and settlement. However, as I pointed out in Chapter 1, in my study marriage and migration are often inextricably intertwined. In many cases, marriage was the reason for migration to Finland or to the U.S., or the reason why a stay that was meant to be only temporary evolved into a permanent one.144 Thus, while the demographic characteristics of the migrant populations that I study certainly play a role in the increase of marriages between Finns and Americans, the main explanation for the occurrence of these marriages can be found in the mobile lifestyles of students, professionals, and young people looking for adventure and experiences through travel. Moreover, immigration law provides the framework in which these marriages are contracted, facilitating or restricting them. In the pages that follow, I discuss all these aspects –

demographic, legal, and factors relating to international mobility – that affect the occurrence of international marriages between Finns and Americans across the Atlantic.

**Marriages in Finnish Communities in Early Twentieth Century U.S.**

In Finnish communities in the early twentieth century U.S. family formation was a major concern, as the migrant population was male-dominated. A majority of Finns migrated alone; family migration did not become more common until the latter years of mass migration to the U.S.\(^\text{145}\) Many researchers have argued that the likelihood of intermarriage is greater in migrant groups with unbalanced sex ratios. This simply reflects the limited opportunities to meet partners from the same country of origin.\(^\text{146}\) The fact that women were a minority in many (especially eastern and southern) European migrant groups at the turn of the century resulted in skewed gender ratios on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. This is a good example of how demographics of migration always simultaneously affect family formation in both the receiving and the sending country. However, these skewed sex ratios did not bring about large numbers of intermarriages in Finnish communities in the U.S. (or in Finland), as I documented in Chapter 1. Why, then, did Finns, both men and women, marry almost exclusively other Finns, despite the fact that it was sometimes a challenge to find a Finnish spouse?

Suzanne Sinke notes that cultural perceptions about marriage and a suitable spouse affected marriage and migration. Many migrants strongly favored marriage within

\(^{145}\) Kero, *Suureen Länteen*, 110.

their ethnic group, leading migrant men to look for a spouse in the home country.\textsuperscript{147} Thus, simple cultural preferences often discouraged the formation of relationships across ethnic borders. A Finnish woman dating a Slavic man in Canada described her problems with dating a non-Finn:

“On Saturday night, I took him to a sauna – well – he thought that he was in hell, and when I jumped into the icehole, he ran screaming to the house convinced that I was possessed by the devil. That ended that, you couldn’t make him into a Finn and no way I was going to give up my Saturday night sauna – no, not for any man.”\textsuperscript{148}

Also group norms about who is a suitable spouse affected partner choices. In Finnish communities, marriages between Finnish women and men of other nationalities were specifically not welcomed; in fact, Finnish men sometimes actively sought to prevent romantic relationships between Finnish women and foreign men.\textsuperscript{149} According to Inkeri Väänänen-Jensen, a daughter of Finnish migrants who grew up in Ely and Virginia in Minnesota in the 1920s, a marriage to an American – meaning white, Anglo-Saxon, English-speaking, and Protestant – was considered worse than marriage to another migrant. Marriage between two migrants was seen as more equal: “If a Finnish girl married a Slovenian boy, that was bad enough, but at least his family was also immigrant

\textsuperscript{149}Varpu Lindström, who has studied the social history of Finns in Canada, quotes an interview with a Finnish woman living in Canada: “The Finnish men set up guards by the dance hall in order to keep out the ‘German engineers.’ Sometimes there was serious trouble and fights, especially when the Finns were drunk. They just couldn’t stomach seeing a Finnish girl under the arm of some kielinen (one who speaks the [English] language).” Ibid., 64.
and his parents probably spoke as little English as did the Finnish parents.”\textsuperscript{150} Women courting non-Finnish men were sometimes ridiculed, too. A male character named “Matti” explains Finnish men’s opinions on Finnish women dating foreigners in a radio play broadcast in Amerikan Ääni (“The Voice of America”) in 1953: “I didn’t care for those ‘paradise birds’ wearing heavy make-up and expensive clothes, who looked down on Finns and took a fancy to the ‘yanks’.”\textsuperscript{151} Finnish women’s interest in “Irish gentlemen” (airis-kentlemanni) also ignited scornful comments among Finnish men. Kalle Koski, a Finnish poet, wrote in 1896 about a fictional Finnish maid “Mäkelän Maria” who regretted her falling for and marrying a “foreign Irishman” (wieras airis): “A deep sigh comes out from her chest, always when she looks at her child, as the child playing in her bosom, is of foreign Irish blood.”\textsuperscript{152}

The expectation was, then, that Finnish women were to marry men of their own ethnic group. Not surprisingly, men had more leeway when choosing a partner – their courtship of foreign women rarely aroused public disapproval. Yet despite the scarcity of Finnish women, marriages between Finnish men and foreign women were still few and far between. This was not unique to Finnish migrants: many other southern and eastern European migrant communities were heavily male-dominated but still showed remarkably low rates of intermarriage. The rarity of intermarriage was not only a


\textsuperscript{152} “Syvä huokaus nousevi rinnastaan, ain katsoessaan joka kerta, kun leikkivä lapsonen helmassaan, on nierasta – ‘airis’ –werta.” Kero, Suureen Länteen, 212, 208.
question of cultural preferences of migrants: also the attitudes of the surrounding society impacted their marriage choices. When unskilled migrants poured into the U.S. from Southern and Eastern Europe in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the racial status of these “new” migrants was ambiguous. Although today Finns are often linked in the popular mind with Scandinavians (Norwegians and Swedes), in the early twentieth century U.S. migration of Finns was seen as part of the (unwelcomed) migration from Southern and Eastern Europe. Consequently, the Finnish migrant experience was notably different from the experiences of Scandinavians.\textsuperscript{153}

It is not difficult to find memories of ethnic discrimination and feelings of isolation in the writings of Finnish migrants in Minnesota. Inkeri Väänänen-Jensen, for example, writes about her feelings of shame of when she was recognized as a Finn: “I felt honored when someone said, ‘But you don’t \textit{look} Finnish.’”\textsuperscript{154} Many Finnish migrant writers recollect hearing racial slurs from other migrants and “old stock” Americans. Kaarina Leino-Olli wrote in 1938 in \textit{Päivälehti}, a Finnish newspaper based in Duluth that “yes, they called us foreigners, and in less charitable moments they called us bums or dirty Finns. Geography books, encyclopedias, and social studies always used to state that Finns were Mongolians.”\textsuperscript{155} Väänänen-Jensen describes her experiences of marginalization as follows: “Perhaps without being consciously aware of it, we thought ourselves, and most certainly of our parents, as marginal people in America, not really

\textsuperscript{155} Ibid., 175, 177.
Americans, or at least not what we perceived real Americans to be – white, Anglo-Saxon, English-speaking, Protestant.”\textsuperscript{156}

In this context, it is not surprising that Finns usually found their life companions among their fellow country men and women. Scholars have pointed out that the degree of community cohesion has a profound impact on marriage patterns: segregated and/or tightly-knit communities often show low rates of intermarriage.\textsuperscript{157} Once in the U.S., Finnish migrants joined lively Finnish-American communities; co-ops, temperance and workers’ halls, and churches became “substitute homes” for migrants. Feelings of common ancestry, language, and culture and experiences of marginalization tied Finns together.\textsuperscript{158} Writings of Finnish migrants reveal that many were not comfortable with interacting with other nationalities in the intimate sphere. The radio character “Matti” explains his reluctance to court American girls: “There were of course slender American girls around but we were so slow and awkward in our speech, like Moses used to be, that we didn’t dare to call for them.”\textsuperscript{159}

A contributing factor to the absence of marriages across ethnic boundaries was the lack of language skills among Finnish migrants: they rarely mastered the English language. As a consequence, their social life was restricted to the Finnish community and many Finns never learned English well enough to be fluent in it. This is reflected in the personal histories of migrants; for instance, Väänänen-Jensen recollects:

\textsuperscript{156} Ibid., 175.
\textsuperscript{157} Penny and Khoo, \textit{Intermarriage}, 16.
\textsuperscript{159} “Olisihan täällä noita Amerikan hoikkakylkisiä vaikka paljonkin, mutta meillä on niinkuin ennen Mooseksella hidas puhe ja kankea kiel, ettemme niitäään uskalla avuksemme huutaa.” “Papers of John I. Kolehmainen, Tämä on Amerikan Ääni New York: Valikoima Amerikan Äänen suomenkielisistä radiolähetyksistä vuosina 1952-53.”
“I think many Finns were shy, embarrassed, ashamed, and also too frightened to try to carry on any kind of English conversation, which, in fact, many of them were never able to do with any great success, even after years in this country. Not so long ago, I met a Finnish woman who had been in the United States for sixty years on an isolated farm where she raised eleven children. She spoke two English words: “Haloo” [“Hello”] and “Kupai” [“Goodbye”]. For many years our mother harbored fears about answering the knock at the door (...) just as she feared answering the telephone, afraid that she could not handle the situation if the person (...) was not a Finn.”

The fact that Swedish-speaking Finns married non-Finns (especially Scandinavian migrants) more often than Finnish-speaking Finns speaks to the ways in which language difference shaped personal relationships. For speakers of Finnish, a non-Indo-European language, the language barrier often proved to be a difficult one to break.

Matthijs Kalmijn, who has studied intermarriages in the U.S. extensively, argues that there are three major social forces affecting marriage patterns: individual preferences, group influence (e.g. group identification and sanctions), and restrictions of the local marriage market. My research suggests that all these social forces were at play in the marriage choices of Finnish migrants in the early twentieth century U.S. The cultural preferences of Finnish migrants, group cohesion, norms regarding gender and marriage, residential concentration of Finnish communities, and social distance between

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the migrant and native-born populations all contributed to the predominance of in-marriage.

**From In-Marriages to International Marriages**

As I showed in Chapter 1, the marriage patterns of Finns in the U.S. started to change after the 1920s: the overall number of marriages of Finns began to decrease and the proportion of Finns married outside their ethnic group to increase. What is more, U.S. census data show that there was a clear jump in the proportion of Finns married to American-born between 1960 and 1970. Figure 9, below, shows the origins of husbands of Finnish women in the U.S. from 1900 to 2007. In the analysis, I divided husbands into four groups: husbands born in Finland; husbands born in the U.S. with Finnish ancestry; U.S. born husbands without Finnish ancestry; and other foreign-born husbands (i.e. men born outside Finland and the U.S.). As the figure reveals, the proportion of husbands who were born in the U.S. (and had no Finnish ancestry) almost doubled between 1960 and 1970 (from 23 to 44 percent). A similar rise took place in the proportion of U.S. born wives of Finnish men (figure not shown): the percent increased from 23 percent in 1960 to 47 percent in 1970.
Thus, the 1960s represents a key time period in the transformation of marriage patterns of Finns in the U.S. My research suggests that the increase in international marriages among Finns in the U.S. – as well as among Americans in Finland – is a result of the changing patterns of Finnish migration to the U.S. and of Americans’ growing international mobility (which I documented in the previous chapter). More specifically, many Americans and Finns met each other and ended up getting married in the U.S. or Finland during this time period because of escalating international mobility of students,

163 Ruggles et al., *Integrated Public Use Microdata Series*. In 1900-1970, the category “Finnish ancestry” includes men who had at least one parent born in Finland. From 1980, “ancestry” variable was used; the category includes those whose self-reported ancestry or ethnic origin is Finnish.
professionals, and young people looking for experiences through travel. If not the initial reason for migration, international marriage was often the reason why a temporary stay evolved into a permanent one, transforming a person, through the adjustment of her or his visa status, into an immigrant in official records. These new forms of mobility were brought about by changes in immigration laws and policies on both sides of the Atlantic. Both Finland and the U.S. restrict unskilled labor migration while providing opportunities for the mobility of students and other non-immigrants, professionals, and family members of citizens.

While the 1924 Immigration Act is usually remembered for its discriminatory national origin quotas, it also introduced a new nonquota class (i.e. a separate class free from numerical limitations) into U.S. immigration law. By allowing unmarried children under 18 years old and wives of U.S. citizens to migrate without numerical caps, and by granting special preferences within the quota system for other immediate relatives of U.S. citizens (husbands, children, and parents), the Act established family reunification as one of the main pillars of American immigration law.\textsuperscript{164} (Alien husbands of female U.S. citizens were not granted the same nonquota privileges as the wives until the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952.) However, the new system did not have a dramatic effect on the number of migrants arriving as spouses of U.S. citizens until the arrival of war brides of World War II. As can be seen in Figure 6 (p. 69), in the late 1920s and early 1930s, less than 10 percent of all admitted migrants (quota and nonquota) arrived as spouses of U.S. citizens (please note that admitted migrants include both new arrivals and those migrants who adjusted their immigration status after arriving in the U.S.). Less than 50

\textsuperscript{164} Ueda, \textit{Postwar Immigrant America}, 24-25.
Finnish spouses (almost all wives) of U.S. citizens were admitted annually between 1925 and 1932 (unfortunately I have not been able to access the INS records for the years between 1933 and 1944). In other words, native-born and naturalized U.S. citizens could have continued to bring wives over from Finland but fewer migrant men arriving after the immigration restrictions also meant fewer men looking for wives in Finland, and, consequently, fewer women arriving to create or unify families.

Robert McCaa, Albert Esteve, and Clara Cortina have pointed out how an interruption in the flow of migrants can have a deep impact on marriage patterns of a migrant population. Indeed, U.S. immigration law played a decisive role in changing international migration patterns of Finns, which in turn affected their marriage patterns. Scholars of intermarriages have pointed out that according to “the logic of numbers,” small ethnic groups are more likely to marry out, simply because there are not enough co-ethnics to marry. As Figure 2 showed, the estimated number of Finnish-born in the U.S. has constantly decreased from about 150,000 in 1920 to about 65,000 in 1960 and 20,000 in 2005-2008. Thus, the chances that two Finns would meet and marry in the U.S. grew smaller over the course of the twentieth century. Furthermore, as noted above, scholars have also suggested that the likelihood of intermarriage is amplified when the small numerical representation is combined with unbalanced sex ratios. As the Finnish population aged, and men reached the end of their lives, the proportion of women among the Finnish born in the U.S. grew. While the male predominance in Finnish communities

in the early twentieth century did not increase the intermarriage rate of Finnish men, it is possible that the growing proportion of women among Finns in the U.S. may have contributed to the growing proportion of women who were married to a non-Finn.

Furthermore, with few newcomers arriving from Finland, and the number of Finnish-born persons decreasing, ethnic communities of Finns in the U.S. slowly dissolved. As a result, it became more difficult for Finnish migrants to find spouses of the same nationality in the U.S. Thus, group size not only affects the availability of potential partners from within a group, but it also influences the structure and cohesion of the group itself and, consequently, the opportunities to meet other group members in social settings.\textsuperscript{168} The active social life in early twentieth century Finnish communities offered plenty of opportunities to meet suitable partners. By the mid-twentieth century, as the Great Depression and World War II diminished migration to the U.S. even further, most Finnish-American communities and organizations had disappeared.\textsuperscript{169}

Starting in the 1950s, Finnish migration patterns to the U.S. began to change, again mainly due to changes in U.S. immigration law. The 1952 Immigration and Nationality Act (the McCarran–Walter Act), established a four-tier preference system under which migrants with special skills and abilities and relatives of U.S. citizens and resident aliens received preferential migration status. In addition, in the midst of the Cold War in the 1950s, the U.S. commenced active recruitment of international (especially European) students and scientists in order to compete with the Soviet Union in technological development. Before World War II, the U.S. had left international

\textsuperscript{168} Penny and Khoo, \textit{Interrmarriage}, 16.
eductional activity mainly to private institutions, such as the Rockefeller Foundation. However, in the Cold War climate, educational exchange became an integral component of U.S. foreign policy and “an important instrument to project favorable images of the United States symbolized by its abundance of material wealth, consumer culture, technological know-how, individual freedom, and political democracy.”

To attract more international students to the country, the 1952 Immigration and Nationality Act expanded the legal definition of students to include all international students, and thousands of new schools and technical institutions were added to the list of schools that qualified for international student admissions. As Figure 10 below shows, the impact of the recruitment policies and the change in the law was profound: the number of non-immigrant student admissions to the U.S. nearly quadrupled from 1940 to 1950 and again almost tripled from 1950 to 1960. By 2009, almost one million (952,000) admissions were recorded.

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171 Please note that student admissions include the number of events (i.e., entries into the U.S.), not the number of persons entering the U.S. A student may enter the country more than once a year, and each entry produces a separate admission record.
Figure 10. Number of Student Admissions to the U.S., with Percent Change from Previous Decade, 1940-2009

The educational exchanges between Finland and the U.S. were facilitated already in 1949 by the so-called “Finnish Exchange Act,” which provided fellowships for American and Finnish academics. The act had its roots in a loan Finland received from the U.S. after World War I, the payments of which Finland met regularly despite the depression and World War II. In 1949, in recognition of Finland’s commitment, the U.S. Congress redirected the loan payments to educational exchanges. The number of students admitted from Finland to the U.S. remained minute until World War II; in most

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years, only 5-10 Finnish students were admitted under the nonquota system. The legislation of 1949 facilitated the arrival of Finnish academics to the U.S. and the number of students from Finland increased accordingly.\textsuperscript{174}

The 1952 law initiated changes in Finnish migration patterns, but it is the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act (also known as the Hart-Celler Act) that more profoundly transformed Finnish migration to the U.S., and marriage patterns of Finns as a result. Figure 6 revealed that the proportion of Finnish and other Nordic migrants who were granted LPR status because of their marriage to a U.S. citizen increased dramatically in the late 1960s and 1970s. Thus, the figure suggests that international marriage often preceded and even motivated migration: marriage seems increasingly to have provided the rationale for Finns to migrate to the U.S. However, when looking at the actual \emph{numbers} of Finnish and other Nordic migrants who were granted permanent residency as a spouse of a U.S. citizen, the increase turns out to be rather small. The main reason behind the dramatic increase in the \emph{proportion} of spouses of U.S. citizens among all admitted migrants is that other types of migration from the Nordic countries to the U.S. dropped by more than half between 1968 and 1969 (Figure 11). In 1968, a combined 4,984 migrants from Finland, Sweden, Norway, and Denmark were granted LPR status in the U.S.; in the following year, the number had gone down to 2,320. At the same time, the number of admitted spouses remained approximately the same.

Why did this drop in the number of Nordic migrants (other than spouses) occur between 1968 and 1969? The timing of course suggests that the drop is related to the passing of the 1965 law, which abolished the discriminatory national origin quotas and established family reunification rather than employment qualifications as the primary route to migration to the U.S. Instead of national origin quotas, the Act established hemispheric ceilings for the number of visas that can be granted each year (170,000 visas for migrants from the Eastern Hemisphere and 120,000 from the Western Hemisphere). Additionally, for the first time, immediate relatives of U.S. citizens and legal permanent

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residents were placed above migrants with special job skills in the “migration hierarchy.” The category of immediate relatives of U.S. citizens was expanded to include not only spouses and children but also parents of U.S. citizens.176

The Annual Reports of the INS reveal that the majority of Finnish (and also other Nordic) migrants were admitted in the “non-preference” category before the 1965 Act was fully enforced in 1968. If any visa numbers remained unused within a country quota, migrants who did not qualify for any of the preference categories were able to migrate through the non-preference category. In Finnish postwar migration to the U.S. (until the late 1960s), a majority migrated in the non-preference category (i.e. did not enter the country as migrants with special skills and abilities or as non-immediate family members). For example, in 1957, 65 percent and in 1968, 86 percent of Finnish migrants who were subject to numerical limitations were admitted in the non-preference category.177 In 1969, the percent of Finns arriving in the non-preference category dropped to 28 percent. The records do not provide more detailed information about Finns who arrived through the non-preference system, but it is likely that many who arrived in this category were unskilled labor migrants, who were excluded in the preference system. When the “last vestiges of the national origins system” were eliminated on July 1, 1968, and immigrant visas became available on a hemispheric basis, the non-preference category gradually disappeared, as all immigration slots were absorbed by the preference groups. As a result, unskilled labor migration to the U.S. effectively ended with the 1965

177 In fact, these “non-preference migrants” formed the majority, 70%, of all, both quota and nonquota, migrants from Finland that in those years.
act. By 1980, less than one percent of all migrants to the U.S. arrived in the non-preference category.\textsuperscript{178}

Thus, the result of the 1965 law for migrants from the Nordic countries was that migration was cut down by more than 50 percent between 1968 and 1969. This is ironic considering law-makers’ intentions: the law sought to perpetuate racial and ethnic homogamy achieved through the national quota system. Despite the fact that the national quotas were abolished, the law’s primary goal, as President Lyndon B. Johnson announced, was to “redress the wrong done to those ‘from southern and eastern Europe.’”\textsuperscript{179}

It was believed that the family reunification system would encourage migration of family members of the existing (European American) population in the U.S. The main beneficiaries were expected to be countries of Southern and Eastern Europe with largest visa backlogs. Erika Lee points out that the hope to “redress the wrong done” against these migrant groups “signalled the total integration of pre-1924 European immigrants into the nation and became a metaphor for the success of European immigrant assimilation and boot-strap upward mobility.”\textsuperscript{179}

The INS records reveal that migration from the Nordic countries never resumed to the pre-1969 level; only migration from Sweden increased moderately in the late 1970s and 1980s, as Figure 11 shows. Figure 12, below, provides a closer look on the number of Finns who were granted LPR status in the U.S. in 1946-2009 and on the number of Finns who were admitted on the basis of marriage to a U.S. citizen (on the left scale; in all years when there are numbers for Finnish spouses available). Additionally, the figure shows

\textsuperscript{178} U.S. Department of Labor, \textit{Annual Report} 1968, 4 and 1980, 4.
(on the right scale, when available), the percent of spouses among all migrants from Finland. Unfortunately the numbers are missing for most years in the 1970s, but the trend is still visible: at the same time as the total number of Finns granted residency in the U.S. decreased (beginning in the late 1960s), the percent admitted as spouses went up.\textsuperscript{180}

\textbf{Figure 12. Migrants from Finland Granted Legal Permanent Resident Status in the U.S., 1946-2009}\textsuperscript{181}

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{migrants_from_finland}
\caption{Migrants from Finland Granted Legal Permanent Resident Status in the U.S., 1946-2009\textsuperscript{181}}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{180} Starting in 2005, all immediate relatives of U.S. citizens were collapsed together in the INS records. I decided to include these numbers nevertheless because it is likely that the majority of the immediate relatives were spouses of U.S. citizens: between 1998 and 2004, when a more detailed categorization of immediate relatives was available, more than 90 percent of immediate relatives of U.S. citizens from Finland were spouses.

The impact of the law becomes apparent when we compare Finnish migration to the U.S. to the overall out-migration from Finland in the post-war period. The fact that there was very little unskilled labor migration to the U.S. after 1965 is mainly an effect of the fact that the U.S. doors were largely closed to unskilled laborers. In Finland of the 1960s and early 1970s, there were still economic factors that pushed people, mainly unskilled workers, to emigrate: structural changes in the Finnish economy created wide unemployment. This time, however, labor migrants flowed elsewhere: to neighbouring Sweden, whose economy was booming and unskilled labor was needed in industrial and service sectors. Additionally, after 1954, citizens of the Nordic countries were exempted from the requirement of a passport when moving from one Nordic country to another. As a result, about 450,000 Finns (almost 10 percent of the whole population) moved to Sweden during the post-World War II period. The peak years of migration to Sweden were 1969-1970, when over 80,000 Finns moved to the country; the total population of Finland actually decreased during these two years due to out-migration.¹⁸²

In contrast, as unskilled labourers were largely barred from entering the U.S., Finnish migration to the country was increasingly composed of students and other non-immigrants, workers in professional or managerial positions, and of spouses of U.S. citizens. For example, INS records reveal that the proportion of Finnish migrants in managerial, executive, and professional positions (among those who reported an occupation) constantly grew in the post-war era: from 22 percent in 1960 to 39 percent in

1971, 56 percent in 1982, and finally 77 percent in the most recent year (2009).\footnote{183}

Furthermore, the number of temporary non-immigrants (who entered the country outside the immigration restrictions for a specific purpose on a temporary basis, including students, visitors for pleasure and business, temporary workers and trainees, exchange visitors, and so on\footnote{184}) multiplied after the 1965 Act.\footnote{185} The impact of the Act was immediate: the total number of non-immigrant admissions more than doubled between 1965 and 1970, from about 2.1 million to 4.4 million. Similarly, non-immigrant admissions from Finland to the U.S. increased quickly in the post-World War II era: the number grew by almost 200 percent in every decade from 1960 to 1990. While in 1960 only 5,400 Finns entered the country as non-immigrants, in 2009 the number had climbed up to 144,000. Student migration from Finland grew as well: it tripled between 1960 and 1970 and between 1970 and 1980, and again doubled between 1981 and 1990. After that, the number of student admissions from Finland has stabilized at approximately a thousand a year. The arrival of students from Finland likely contributed to the growth in the proportion of young people (ages 18-35) among the Finnish-born in the U.S., which I documented in Chapter 1. In sum, the increase in the percent of intermarried Finns

\footnote{183} However, throughout the 1990s and 2000s, the percent of those who did not report any occupation has been high: for each Nordic migrant group, it has varied between 48 and 65 percent. These figures include those who did not report an occupation, were not working outside home (students, retirees, homemakers, and unemployed), and whose occupation was unknown.


\footnote{185} Kivisto, “U.S. Immigration Policy,” 5.
coincided with the growth in the number of professionals, students, and other temporary visitors arriving from Finland.

My research thus suggests that studying abroad may lead to romantic relationships and subsequent migration for marriage. As early as 1963, Larry D. Barnett connected the increasing number of marriages across ethnic boundaries to the internationalization of the student body in U.S. universities and colleges. He noted that “the intermingling of young adults of different nationalities and races at the high school and college levels is widely expected to be reflected over the long run in an increased rate of intermarriage.”186 To this day, unfortunately, migration researchers have failed to seriously examine how student migrations often lead to other forms of international mobility, such as marriage migration.187 This is despite the fact that migration of students pursuing higher education is an integral component of the global mobility of the highly skilled, and the numbers of international students are rapidly growing.188

During the time period when the number of student admissions has multiplied in the U.S., college-educated U.S. born have married out at an increasing rate: the percent of U.S.-born who are married to a foreign-born person and who have completed at least one year of college has grown from about 6 percent in 1960 and 1970 to about 10 percent in 2005-2007. Marriage to a foreign-born person was actually more common among

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187 Findlay et al. argue that studying abroad is often a starting point for subsequent migrations because it may turn into work-related migrations. However, they do not discuss student migration that leads to international marriage migration. A. M. Findlay et al., “Doctors Diagnose Their Destination: An Analysis of the Length of Employment abroad for Hong Kong Doctors,” Environment and Planning A 26, no. 10 (1994): 1605-1624. See however Lee and Piper, “Reflections on Transnational Life-Course,” 124.
Americans with no college education until 1970 (a product of the proletarian mass migrations); after that year, college graduates have overtaken those without a college degree in the proportion of U.S.-born married to a foreigner. Moreover, since 1980, male college graduates have been more often married to a foreign born person than female graduates. Regardless of education, the increase in the proportion of U.S.-born married to foreign-born was driven by the actions of younger Americans (ages 18-35): the percent intermarried in this age group tripled between 1970 and 2005-2007 from 4 percent to 12 percent. In the same time period, the proportion of older Americans (aged 35 or older) married to foreign-born increased only by 1 percentage point (from 7 to 8 percent). Roughly the same proportion of young American men and women were intermarried in 2005-2007, but the increase has been steeper for young men, as their starting point in 1960 was lower than that of young women.

It seems plausible that the arrival of younger Finns, often engaged in educational exchange programs, increased the percent of Finns marrying outside their ethnic group. In 1970, for example, 75 percent of Finnish-born in the U.S. aged 18-44 were married to a non-Finn; the corresponding percentage for the older Finns (aged 45 or older) was 64. Furthermore, among all Nordic-born migrants to the U.S., college-educated individuals are married to a non-Nordic person more often than those with no college education. For example, in 1980, almost 80 percent of Nordic-born female college graduates were married to a non-Nordic-born man; the same percentage for those with no college

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189 The percent of intermarried among the non-college educated was 8 in 2005-2007.
190 Ruggles et al., *Integrated Public Use Microdata Series.*
education was 55 percent.\textsuperscript{191} Thus, college education seems to predict a higher likelihood to be married outside the ethnic group.

Indeed, many scholars have found that migrants who are well-educated are more likely than those with lower educational attainment to marry outside their nationality group. Kalmijn relates the effect of education to both \textit{preference} and \textit{opportunity}. When it comes to preferences, Kalmijn notes that “more highly educated persons – of both majority and minority groups – have a more individualistic attitude, are less attached to their family and community of origin, and have a more universalistic view on life than lesser-educated persons.”\textsuperscript{192} These characteristics are assumed to make a person more likely to marry someone outside her or his ethnic group. Furthermore, highly educated persons have more opportunities to meet members of other nationalities in colleges, universities, and high-status occupations. It should be added that students in U.S. colleges can be assumed to have good English skills – a factor that also facilitates meeting members of other nationality or ethnic groups.

I noted above how the language barrier was one of the reasons why Finns married within their ethnic group in the early twentieth century U.S. By the 1960s and 1970s, language skills of Finnish migrants had improved considerably, especially after English became the first foreign language taught in Finnish schools in 1972 (before that, it was

\textsuperscript{191} Ibid.
German). Indeed, language skills of the women who participated in this study were considerably better than those of earlier migrants. Some of the older interviewees noted that they were not fluent in English at the time of migration. For instance, a woman who left Finland in 1950 at the age of 19 explains that the only things she was able to say in English were “I love you, yes, no, and a song called On a Slow Boat to China.” Most recently arrived women, by contrast, were completely comfortable with communicating in English. U.S. census data reveal that in 1910, 36 percent of the Finnish-born were reported as unable to speak English. By 2000, less than one percent did not speak English. The language barrier that prevented earlier migrants from courting women and men of other nationalities broke down over the course of the twentieth century.

Furthermore, Kalmijn notes that attending an institution of higher education may decrease the possibility that a person stays in an ethnic enclave, thus increasing the likelihood of intermarriage. As Finnish communities in the U.S. dissolved during the mid-century years (due to the small number of newcomers), Finns who have arrived in the U.S. in the past few decades have no longer been able to stay within the ethnic enclave, if they had wanted to do so. However, it seems that many recent migrants, including the Finnish-born women that I interviewed, were rarely interested in the activities of existing Finnish-American organizations. Some of the older interviewees, who arrived in the 1940s and 1950s, were still able to get some support from the old Finn halls, co-ops, and churches. A woman who arrived in the 1950s recalled that during her first years in the U.S. she participated almost exclusively in activities organized by

193 Ruggles et al., Integrated Public Use Microdata Series.
194 Kalmijn, “Intermarriage and Homogamy,” 413.
Finnish Americans in her new hometown of Duluth, Minnesota – and she ended up marrying a Finnish-American man. However, many recent migrants felt that their understandings of what it meant to be “Finnish” did not correspond with “Finnishness” represented in the remaining Finnish-American organizations, and therefore they rarely became active participants in these organizations. These kinds of tensions are not limited to Finnish Americans; new migrants from Europe are often uncomfortable with European-American culture; cultural and class differences between new migrants and European Americans discourage the formation of a coherent or unified identity.195 One interviewee, for example, stated: “That old-country culture is an ideal of what their forefathers had. They don’t necessarily even want to hear that in Finland we don’t anymore dance in rhythm of the Finnish zither around birch trees wearing birch bark shoes and national costumes.” The women whom I interviewed in the U.S. formed informal networks amongst themselves, but their other reference groups consisted of people of different nationalities – thus making it easier to meet people from other countries.

The data available do not, unfortunately, allow me to posit a direct causation between the increasing student mobility and growing intermarriage rates. However, it seems safe to assume that romantic relationships often form as a result of international student mobility: student migrants are young, often unattached individuals, and they come into contact with others of different nationalities at a time when they are likely to find and form lasting bonds. Sometimes migrants move primarily because of marriage,

other times – as in the case of many student migrants – “marriage is an unforeseen outcome of moving to a new location.”196 The U.S., together with the U.K., Sweden, and Germany, has been for decades the most popular destination of Finnish students. Interestingly enough, these countries also number among the top five nations of origin of foreign husbands of Finnish women. What is more, Finnish women seem to be more eager than Finnish men to study abroad: in the 1970s and again in the 2000s, approximately three-quarters of Finnish students abroad were women.197

In my qualitative sources – the interviews, the questionnaires of Finnish women in the U.S., and the survey of Americans in Finland – it was very commonplace to find that the way couples met was related to their international mobility as students. For example, out of the 130 questionnaires filled out by married Finnish women in the U.S., almost 60 percent (75 women) had met their future spouse in the context of international mobility. (An additional 27 women also stated that they moved to the U.S. because of marriage to an American, but it was not clear how the couple had met.)198 The largest category among the 75 women was those who met their future husband while studying in the U.S. (22 women). Interestingly, in one case, many years passed between the time when the woman was studying in the U.S. and her marriage to the man she met during

196 Katie Willis and Brenda Yeoh, “Gender, Marriage, and Skilled Migration: The Case of Singaporeans in China,” in Wife or Worker?, 101. See also Piper and Roces, “Introduction,” 1; Piper, “Wife or Worker?,” 457.


198 The remaining 28 cases included 8 women who moved as a child with their family; 8 who could be classified as a “traditional migrant” moving to the U.S. permanently for mainly economic reasons; 10 who moved together with their Finnish spouse (usually for work or studies).
that exchange year. The couple lost contact for years, reconnected through letters, and in 1991, 11 years after her exchange year, the woman moved Minnesota to be with the man. In some cases, the woman had been in the U.S. many times for shorter periods of time. For example, a Finnish woman living in Arizona came to the U.S. first as a high-school exchange student in 1994-1995, again as an au pair in 1997-1998, and finally more permanently in 1999. Her last move was motivated by a variety reasons: a job offer, friendships formed in the U.S., love of American culture and the English language – and because she was in love with an American man. The couple got married in 2000. The woman says that she “dreamed of staying in the U.S., but did not foresee that it would happen through marriage to an American.”

A few women (9) initially arrived in the U.S. as an au pair or nanny. Au pairs can be granted the same J-1 visa as exchange students; interestingly, this form of domestic labor has thus come to be understood as migration for educational or international experiences rather than as a form of labor migration. One Finnish woman who filled out the questionnaire, for example, came to the U.S. as an au pair in a family of two Finnish MDs in 1970. She fell in love with an American man of Peruvian descent a couple of months before her return to Finland. She did go back to Finland, but stayed only for a few weeks, as she was accepted to study in a U.S. college. Thus, she returned to the U.S. as a college student, but what brought her specifically to the U.S. was the man she had met during her first stay there as an au pair. The couple married in 1973.

200 Questionnaire no. 64.
As pointed out above, the 1965 law increased not only student migration to the U.S. but also other forms of temporary migration of non-immigrants. The number of Finns arriving to the U.S. as temporary visitors for pleasure grew quickly in the 1970s and 1980s, a result of not only the immigration law but also prospering of the Finnish economy in the late 1970s and especially during the economic boom of the 1980s. More Finns had money to travel abroad, and it shows in numbers: while only 9,000 Finns came to the U.S. as temporary visitors for pleasure in 1970, the number was over 30,000 in 1981 (more than 300 percent increase). By the end of the 1980s, the number had gone up to 60,000 entries. My qualitative sources reveal that even these kinds of temporary visits sometimes resulted in marriages: eleven women who filled out the questionnaire came to the U.S. just to travel or visit their friends or relatives, and stayed because of marriage. For example, one woman’s trip to the U.S. in 1989 was a high-school graduation gift from her parents. Once her vacation period ended, she stayed in the country as an au pair, met her future husband, and married in 1992. Another woman, who arrived in the U.S. in 1958, initially came to the country to “see the world” and “the sun setting on the Western shore” of the U.S. However, “a Yankee boy promised me everything except the moon,” and she stayed in the U.S.201 Yet another woman initially came to the U.S. to visit her relatives. On the second day of her vacation, her aunt and future mother-in-law organized a blind date with an American man – her future husband. The woman returned to Finland

after the vacation, but the man followed soon after. They spent 6 months together in Finland, and moved to the U.S. as a couple in 1998.  

Interestingly, I also had a number of cases (13) in which the Finnish woman had married a Mormon man and lived in Utah. Two of these women went to visit their sisters who were already married to Mormon men in the U.S., and got married as well. A few women had joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints in Finland and came to study at the Brigham Young University (BYU), owned by the Church. One woman, who had joined the Mormon Church in 1966, moved to Utah in 1970 to study at the BYU. She writes that she moved to Utah to meet young people of the same religion, and with hopes of finding a life partner. She said: “I don’t think that I would have found a spouse in Finland because I wanted a husband who professes the same religion, and in the Finnish Mormon Church there were not many young men.”

Furthermore, two women had met their future husbands in Finland, where the men were doing missionary work. These women converted to Mormonism, married, and moved to the U.S. While in most cases a Finnish woman moved to the U.S. to study, travel, or work, and met her future spouse during that stay, there were also cases where the couple met in Finland. Of 75 Finnish women analyzed above, six met their American husband in Finland, where the man was studying or working, or as in one case, staying with his family. The presence of Americans abroad – especially in American military bases – has often been linked to Americans’ marriages to foreigners in the U.S. Even though the war brides legislation is no longer in effect, marriages between U.S. service

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202 Questionnaire no. 1.
203 “Luulen, etten olisi löytänyt aviokumppania Suomessa, koska halusin samauskoisen puolison, ja Suomessa MAP-kirkossa ei ollut kovin monta ikäistä nuorta miestää.” Questionnaire no. 144.
personnel and locals are still common. Jasso and Rosenzweig point out that the presence of a military base is “the most powerful determinant” of where the foreign-born wives of U.S. men originate.\textsuperscript{204} For example, countries such as South Korea, the Philippines, and Germany were in the top ten countries of origin for foreign wives in both the U.S. Censuses of 1980 and of 2000. Furthermore, the countries where the highest numbers of American citizens can be found – Mexico, Canada, the U.K., and Germany – also formed the top four origins of Americans’ foreign spouses (both husbands and wives) in the U.S. in 2000.\textsuperscript{205} Presumably not all Americans bring their foreign spouses to the U.S. – many also move or stay abroad because of marriage to a citizen of the host society.

Thus, as Robert McCaa, Albert Esteve, and Clara Cortina point out, marriages between Americans and foreigners are no longer tied to “the ‘war-bride’ phenomenon, but rather to a relatively higher proportion of transnational courtships leading to marriage.”\textsuperscript{206} Even though American military presence is a strong predictor of the occurrence of marriages between Americans and foreigners, marriages to locals are also common in many countries with no American military presence.\textsuperscript{207} This seems to be the case with Americans living in Finland as well – but not until the past two decades. The increase in the number of Americans in Finland, and in the number of marriages between Finns and Americans in Finland, is a result of transformations of Finnish foreign policy and immigration law after the end of the Cold War.

\textsuperscript{204} Jasso and Rosenzweig, \textit{New Chosen People}, 167-168.
\textsuperscript{205} Ruggles et al., \textit{Integrated Public Use Microdata Series}.
\textsuperscript{206} McCaa, Esteve, and Cortina, “Marriage Patterns,” 362.
\textsuperscript{207} For example, Paul Brady’s study of Americans in Sweden revealed that a majority of Americans ended up in Sweden because of love: almost half of U.S. migrants in Sweden reported marriage or romance with a Swede as the reason for migration. Paul Brady, \textit{Americans in Sweden: An Assimilation Study} (Uppsala, Sweden: P. Brady, 1989), 35.
The number of U.S. citizens living in Finland remained under 1,500 until 1990. The small number can be at least partly attributed to Finland’s restrictive immigration law during the Cold War era. Finland’s geopolitical location next to the Soviet Union has played an important role in the development of Finnish migration policy. The country largely closed itself from in-migration after World War II. Scholars have argued that the post-war Finnish migration policy was built to support the image of a homogeneous and isolated population: for a long time, migration to the country required biological or family ties to Finland (Finnish parentage, former Finnish citizenship, or marriage to a Finnish citizen). Thus, it was easier for foreign spouses of Finnish citizens to migrate to Finland compared to other migrants, such as labor migrants and refugees.

Nevertheless, international marriages were still few in number, as I documented in Chapter 1.

It may also be that the circumstances of the Cold War and Finland’s location next to the Soviet Union did not entice Americans (who were otherwise increasingly moving around the world) to move to the country. Two of the Americans (both women) that I interviewed in Finland had arrived in the country in the midst of the Cold War, in 1951 and 1963. They both commented on what a “rarity” they were when they came to Finland as foreign brides. Lisa, for example, who had met her Finnish husband while they were both studying in New York, recalled how her mother was horrified when she learned that her daughter had fallen in love with a Finnish man and was planning to follow him to

Finland: “My mother cried her eyes out (...) ‘you’re going behind the Iron Curtain!’” A Finnish magazine made a story of Lisa’s marriage to a Finn – so rare were international marriages even in the capital, Helsinki, when she moved there in 1951. Thanks to the magazine story, she noted, “everybody more or less knew me, and that was difficult for a shy person like me.” The difficulty of being American in Finland in the 1960s is interestingly captured by Carl T. Rowan, who served as U.S. ambassador in Finland in the 1960s. Rowan, an African American, writes in his memoir *Breaking Barriers*:

“Most Finns gave no serious thought to what I would try to do. They were overwhelmed by the ‘oddity’ of getting a black American ambassador. One newspaper felt compelled to tell Finns that the new envoy would be ‘an educated Negro.’ (...) I soon found myself called, in a big magazine spread, ‘The Most Colorful Ambassador in Helsinki.’”

Thanks to Finland’s Cold War *realpolitik* approach to foreign policy and the emphasis on maintaining good relations with the Soviet Union, the number of migrants in the country remained small and the presence of foreigners, especially if deemed racially different (as Rowan’s writing poignantly illustrates), an oddity.

Furthermore, Finland lagged behind Western European nations in taking human rights into account in its migration policy. Finland had signed international human rights agreements (such as the UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees in 1968 and the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in 1976) but its immigration policy was in clear disagreement with the stipulations of these treaties. For example, foreigners did not have the right to appeal before courts until Finland passed its first

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Aliens Act in 1983. However, from the beginning the Act was heavily criticized for giving too much discretionary power to individual immigration officials to decide who can be admitted to the country and who is excluded. Criticism mounted during the 1980s, as the country rapidly prospered and expanded its welfare. Debates started to prioritize Finland’s responsibilities in the global arena over the country’s national interests, and NGOs and politicians called for a revision of the immigration law. Finland joined the Council of Europe (CE) in 1989, which intensified the demands for reformation of the immigration law. Advocates of immigration reform argued that Finland should follow policies of other CE countries and grant migrants civic rights close to those of citizens. The most important commitment in terms of Finland’s migration policy was the ratifying of the European Convention on Human Rights in 1990. As a result, a new Aliens Act was passed in 1991, which improved migrants’ rights in Finland and reduced immigration officials’ discretionary power by spelling out admission qualifications and categories in more detail.²¹⁰

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the end of the Cold War had an enormous effect on Finnish foreign and domestic policy, as well as on its migration policy. Finland opened up the eastern border to migration from Russia and actively sought to become part of the West. The country applied for European Community (EC) membership in March 1992 – only two months after President Mauno Koivisto had confirmed the expiration of the Agreement of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance, the Finno-Soviet Treaty signed in 1948 (which ensured Finland’s survival as a liberal democracy but simultaneously made it impossible for Finland to express any

Western sympathies during the Cold War). Finland became a member of the European Economic Area (EEA) in 1994, the European Union (EU) in 1995, and the Euro zone in 1999.\textsuperscript{211} As a result of these changes in Finnish society and the country’s foreign policy, the number of foreign citizens in Finland multiplied in the 1990s and 2000s: in 2009 it was more than tenfold what it had been in 1990. As noted above, the number of international unions (marriages and domestic partnerships) between the Finnish-born and foreign-born doubled between 1994 and 2006. Thus, international marriages have become much more common in Finland at the same time that the country has opened up and become more fully integrated into global migration streams.

During this same time period, the number of U.S. citizens living in Finland grew more quickly than in the preceding decades, increasing from about 1,400 in the late 1980s to 2,400 in 2009. Thus, the occurrence of Americans’ marriages in Finland is tied to the opening of Finnish society and to the consequent increase in migrants arriving in the country. Moreover, the 1990s has been called “the first decade of internationalisation of education in Finland;” the number of foreign students in Finland has grown throughout the 1990s and 2000s.\textsuperscript{212} In 2009, 4.1 percent of degree-seeking university students and 5.2 percent of polytechnic students were from abroad. In comparison, 3.6 percent of all students pursuing higher education in the U.S. in the 2009-2010 academic year were international students.\textsuperscript{213} Annually 200-300 Americans apply for a student visa in Finland.\textsuperscript{214}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{211} Ibid., 44-48; Forsander, \textit{Luottamuksen ehdot}, 25-26; Martikainen, Sintonen, and Pitkänen, “Ylirajainen liikkuvuus,” 9.
  \item \textsuperscript{212} Koikkalainen, “Europe Is My Oyster,” 27.
  \item \textsuperscript{213} Centre For International Mobility, “Ulkomaiset tutkinto-opiskelijat korkeakouluiissa suhteessa
\end{itemize}
A plurality of the Americans who responded to my online survey (49 persons out of the total of 106, i.e. 46 percent) mentioned marriage, relationship, or other family issues as the primary reason for moving to Finland. Many were already married when arriving in Finland; others started their family once already in the country. The second most common reason for moving to Finland was studying, followed by work, Finnish heritage, adventure, and other miscellaneous reasons. Meeting a spouse in Finland changed people’s plans; for example, an American woman who came to Finland in 1988 writes: “[I was] invited back to visit, since I’d been an exchange student here in 1981-82. [I was] invited by the guy I’d dated then. I came for the visit, decided to stay, and we married the next year.” Among the 21 Americans that I interviewed in Finland, six had come to Finland to work, study, vacation, or in one case, to get to know the country of her ancestors, and stayed after starting a relationship with a Finn. Eleven had met their Finnish partner in the U.S., where she or he was studying, working, or traveling.

Additionally, one of my American interviewees and two of the Americans who responded to the online survey moved to Finland because of their relationship to a Finnish person of the same sex. The abovementioned Aliens Act of 1991 was criticized in Finland in the 1990s for only recognizing heterosexual marriages. In 2003, a new law was passed that broadened the definition of a partner who is allowed to migrate to include...

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214 Finnish Immigration Service, “Decisions According to Nationality, the Biggest Groups.”

215 In addition, the 1991 law was criticized for the requirement that the foreign spouse’s residence permit application had to be submitted from abroad. As a result, many foreigners who were already in Finland had to travel to their country of origin to wait for the permit decision. Antti Seppälä, Muukalainen ja virkavalta: Ulkomaalaishallinto Suomessa vuosina 1973-2003 (Helsinki: Työministeriö, 2004), 164-165.
cohabiting couples and partners in a registered partnership (i.e. same-sex marriage).\textsuperscript{216} In contrast, the heteronormativity of U.S. immigration law precludes the migration of homosexual partners of U.S. citizens (as well as migration of cohabiting partners). Thus, the treatment of same-sex couples in U.S. and Finnish immigration law is a poignant example of how law crucially influences migration decisions of spouses in international marriages. For example, an American woman who filled out the online survey explained her decision to move to Finland: “The U.S. federal government does not recognize same-sex partnerships for purposes of immigration. She [her Finnish wife] was in the USA on a student visa with a one year extension. Finland does recognize our relationship and allowed me to reside here.”

\textbf{Conclusion}

Marriages between Finns and Americans on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean are mainly a result of movement of travelers, students, and workers. Workers were often professionals or, as was the case with many Finnish women in the U.S., young people employed as domestic help, such as au pairs. Immigration law plays a decisive role in this type of international mobility, as it restricts unskilled labor migration while providing opportunities for the mobility of students and other non-immigrants, professionals, and spouses of citizens. A majority of Finns who venture to the U.S. are women, and American men seem to be more likely to be living in Finland than American women. As

\textsuperscript{216} If the couple is cohabiting, they must be able to show that they have lived together for at least two years. Finnish Immigration Service, “Perheenjäsenet,” \textit{Finnish Immigration Service}, 2010, http://www.migri.fi/netcomm/content.asp?path=8,2472,2491&language=FI; Lepola, \textit{Ulkomaalaisesta suomenmaalaiseksi}, 119-121; Seppälä, \textit{Muukalainen ja virkavaltta}, 164-165.
a result, the majority of Finn-American marriages in both countries are formed between Finnish women and American men. The mobility of these privileged migrants with their U.S. or European Union passports is exemplified by the fact that many couples met while traveling or living elsewhere in the world. For example, four Americans that I interviewed in Finland had met their Finnish spouse in a third country, where they were working or just visiting. One couple met when they happened to be seated next to each in the symphony in Vienna; she (American) was there on vacation and he (Finn) on a business trip. Another couple met in a hotel lobby in Tokyo, while there for business. I also had two couples who had met in Hong Kong where both the Finnish women and American men involved were working as professionals.

Ann Baker Cottrell notes that international marriage is often building upon “an already established international life style rather than the initiator of involvement with other cultures.” In many cases that I studied, Cottrell’s argument seems fitting. For example, 12 Finnish women who filled out the questionnaire had traveled extensively and lived in other countries before marrying an American and living in the U.S. One woman married to a Mormon man in Utah had lived in the Netherlands, Zaire (the present Democratic Republic of the Congo), Malaysia, and Saudi-Arabia before migrating to the U.S. She moved to Utah “for adventure and to get away from [her] ex-husband” (who was Dutch). Another Finnish woman had lived all her life in different countries in Asia (Indonesia, the Philippines, and Malaysia) because of her father’s job with the UN. She

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218 “Seikkailu Suomesta pois, Amerikkaan halusin kauaksi ex-miehestä.” Questionnaire no. 154.
met her American husband in Manila in 1989. In 1994 they moved to Bangkok, Thailand, and finally in 1999 to New Jersey, where they were planning to stay when she filled out the questionnaire in 2002.219

My qualitative sources thus underscore how the rising international mobility of privileged people facilitates the formation of personal relationships that transcend national borders. Finns and Americans, with their U.S. and European Union passports, can often move from one country to another with relative ease. When considering the increasing mobility of Finns and Americans, it is hardly surprising that some of them find their future spouse abroad. Some couples then opted for starting their family in Finland, others in the U.S. The international marriages that I have studied are inextricably tied to “the globalizing educational systems and labor markets, that is with rising international mobility of students and employees,” as Michelle Lee and Nicola Piper succinctly point out.220

219 Questionnaire no. 6.
220 Lee and Piper, “Reflections on Transnational Life-Course,” 122.
Chapter 3.

“Money Is Not Everything and That’s the Bottom Line”

Family Ties in Transatlantic Elite Migration between Finland and the U.S.

The quote in the title is from an interview that I conducted in 2008 with Carl, a Management Consultant from New York, who migrated to Finland first in 1982 and then for the second – and possibly final – time in 1996. Carl was responding to a question about the future plans of his family – whether they wanted to stay in Finland or move back to the U.S., or perhaps to a third country. In his answer, Carl wanted to underline that despite his successful career, it was his network of family and friends that determined his plans of either staying in or leaving Finland. Using Carl’s and my other interviewees’ migration experiences, I revise research that portrays migrant elites as highly skilled and/or well-educated persons whose mobility is motivated exclusively by career and occupational concerns.

When scholars have examined elite migrants, their research has often suffered from “methodological individualism.” For example, Eleonore Kofman observes: “The international migrant remains the single person, usually assumed to be a male, disembodied and disembedded from contexts such as familial or household relationships or the wider society in which he lives.”221 Elite migrants are thus depicted as male professionals who shuttle from one work assignment or country to another, part of an international upper class that is not bound by familial relationships or national borders. My research challenges methodological individualism by revealing the very important

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221 Kofman, “Invisibility of Skilled Female Migrants,” 53.
roles that marriage and family relationships play in migration decisions, even among elite migrants, who in migration statistics and scholarly discussions typically appear merely as professionals, highly educated persons, or as students. As Kofman puts it, “skilled migrants, as much as the unskilled, cannot be treated as individuals cut off from household structures and wider social networks.”

One third of all migrants to the U.S. today are migrants at the higher-end of the economic ladder. Since the mid-1970s, more than one-third of all migrants originating from Europe have been professionals, and in 2008, almost 60 percent of European migrants admitted to the U.S. were in professional or managerial occupations. Europe, too, has experienced an increase in temporary and permanent migration of professionals since the early 1990s. Immigration laws of many European countries provide for preferential treatment for highly qualified persons. Elite migrants are thus a very large and growing group whose migrations have vast economic and cultural significance at the global level. Despite their importance, we know almost nothing about elite migrants, their migration decisions, their identity options and choices, and possible tensions between their efforts to integrate or their engagements in transnational spaces.

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222 Ibid., 54.
226 One notable exception is Aihwa Ong, *Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logics of Transnationality* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1999). In the book, Ong details migration and citizenship strategies of mobile Chinese professionals and their families. She shows how the “astronaut” Chinese husband shuttling back and forth between the Pacific coasts is inextricably tied to transnational family structures.
Allan M. Findlay relates this disinterest in migrant elites by migration scholars to the “unthreatening” character of this migrant population: highly educated, professional migrants are not seen as economic or social “burdens” for the host society.\textsuperscript{228}

In 2006, Adrian Favell et al. proposed studying elite migrants because “the lives and experiences of these frequent-flying, fast-lane, global elites are better known from the editorial and marketing content of glossy magazines or corporate brochures than they are from solid social science research.”\textsuperscript{229} They call for “human level” research on these “avatars of globalization” and expand the concept of highly skilled migrants to include groups such as students, nurses, and ambitious and adventurous mobile middle classes – groups that have been left out of migration research that has focused upon either the “high-flying corporate elites” or “desperate, poverty-stricken labor migrants and asylum seekers.”\textsuperscript{230} While Favell et al.’s agenda is important in that it includes groups that are usually ignored in migration research and puts a “human face” on highly skilled migrants, it is striking that their ten chapter book does not touch on the role of family relationships in elite migrants’ lives.

Scholars of skilled migration have not systematically employed biographical methods, nor have they attempted a critical analysis of gender relations in the world of globalizing labor markets and the increasing movement of professional migrants.\textsuperscript{231}

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\textsuperscript{227} Kofman, “Invisibility of Skilled Female Migrants,” 51.
\textsuperscript{229} Favell, Feldblum, and Smith, “Human Face of Global Mobility,” 2.
\textsuperscript{230} Ibid., 2-3.
\textsuperscript{231} See, however, Katie Willis and Brenda Yeoh, “Gendering Transnational Communities: A Comparison of Singaporean and British Migrants in China,” \textit{Geoforum} 33, no. 4 (November 2002): 553-565.
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Women usually appear only as dependents who follow their husbands abroad and take care of the household while the husband is working (the so-called “trailing wife effect”). Women are assumed to be bound by family and household structures while the male migrant remains “the heroic individual” whose life-decisions are not tied by familial concerns. Those researchers who have employed a gendered family or household analysis of migration networks have focused on unskilled migrants.

Interestingly, then, highly skilled female migrants are invisible both in literatures on unskilled and skilled migration. As Kofman puts it, “feminist studies of international migration have oddly enough played their part in creating the invisibility of skilled female migrants.” It is my goal to challenge the related assumptions that women migrants are unskilled workers or dependents of male migrants and that professional male migrants are “heroic individuals” unaffected by family ties.

Finns in the U.S. and Americans in Finland are part of the international movement of migrant elites: they are both predominantly white, middle-class populations with relatively high educational attainment. However, my research also highlights the importance of critically analyzing who exactly can be categorized as “elite.” The racial status of Finnish migrants in the U.S. has transformed over the course of the twentieth century, underscoring the importance of putting the category of “elite” migrants into historical perspective. Furthermore, my research also challenges the common assumption

233 Kofman, “Invisibility of Skilled Female Migrants,” 46, 48.
235 Kofman, “Invisibility of Skilled Female Migrants,” 54.
that elite migrants automatically enjoy an “elite status” in the receiving society and that they are always able to choose the extent to which they integrate in their host destination.\textsuperscript{236} In fact, my research reveals how many migrants, particularly Americans who have moved to Finland, have experienced a loss of occupational status when moving to the new country. Finally, I document that elite migrants’ high social status does not necessarily guarantee that they will feel part of the society in which they live.

**Finns and Americans – Elite Migrants?**

If elite migrants are defined as professional workers or highly educated persons, then Finnish migrants in the early twentieth century U.S. were hardly elite. Arriving in a later period than other Nordic migrants, Finns faced unwelcoming attitudes toward “new” migrants from Southern and Eastern Europe. With free farmlands no longer readily available, Finnish men often engaged in the most menial jobs in iron and copper mines, lumber camps, and docks.\textsuperscript{237} Experiences of racial discrimination and marginalization were not uncommon among Finnish migrants. Recall also the Finnish girl who “felt honored when someone said, ‘But you don’t *look* Finnish.’” By comparison, the Finnish women in the U.S. who participated in this study often took pride in their Finnish background. For example, one woman who filled out the questionnaire noted: “Being a Finn has always given me a unique position (...) because Finns, in general, have a good reputation around the world, I am able to draw on that, and I am always proud to let

\textsuperscript{236} Favell, Feldblum, and Smith, “Human Face of Global Mobility,” 17.
\textsuperscript{237} Riippa, “Finns and Swede-Finns,” 298.
How did Finnish migrants move from the marginalized position to the migrant elite? The explanation can be found in the reconfiguration of U.S. racial classifications during the twentieth century and in the changes in Finnish migration patterns to the U.S. outlined in Chapter 2, accomplished mainly by U.S. immigration law.

U.S. scholars have pointed out that racial status plays a crucial role in a group’s hierarchical location in U.S. society. Michael Omi and Howard Winant argue that from the beginning of the U.S. state, its institutions have been structured by the racial order. As a growing number of unskilled migrants from Southern and Eastern Europe poured to the U.S. in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, these migrants were perceived as a political, economic, and increasingly also a racial threat to the functioning of the republic. Consequently, these southern and eastern European migrants occupied a position in the racial hierarchy somewhere between “blacks” and “whites” (Anglo-Saxon, English-speaking Protestants). In other words, sharp racial distinctions were drawn between the “old” and “new” migrants from Europe. For instance, Italian migrants, who were often called “the Chinese of Europe,” occupied “an ambiguous, overlapping...

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238 Questionnaire no. 69.
and intermediary position in the binary racial schema.” They were considered neither black nor white, but as “inbetween” – “yellow,” “olive,” or “swarthy.”

As the court case of John Svan illustrates, Finnish migrants also occupied an ambiguous racial position between whites and non-whites in the early twentieth century U.S. In Minnesota in 1908, Svan (along with 16 other Finnish men) was denied citizenship by St. Paul District Attorney John C. Sweet on the grounds that “being a Finn, he is Mongolian and not a ‘white person’ within the meaning of Sec. 2169.” However, the case was overturned two weeks later, on January 17, 1908, by Federal Judge William A. Cant, who stated that “if the Finns were originally Mongols, modifying influences have continued until they are now among the whitest people in Europe.”

Interestingly, as Peter Kivisto notes, Cant believed that human races could “improve” their qualities through racial mixing – a view opposed to the popular notion that miscegenation produced degenerate races.

Despite Cant’s belief in the fluidity of racial categories, the memory of the John Svan case lingered among Finnish Americans well into the mid-twentieth century. For instance, a second generation Finnish-American woman recalled how her junior high teacher in Waukegan, Illinois referred to Finns as belonging to the Mongolian race. The next day, she brought three books to school to “prove that it wasn’t so.”

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244 K. Marianne Wargelin, “Finnish American Folklore: A Survey of Research and a Definition of the
evidence in Michael Karni’s work that Finns’ insecurity about their racial position in the U.S. continued into the 1970s. Kivisto writes:

“While serving on a curriculum committee for the public schools in Minneapolis, in choosing materials to be used in sessions devoted to Finnish-American history, he [Karni] was surprised to discover that for a number of the Finnish-American members of the committee, ‘the first order of business was to include data which would prove that Finns are White.’”

In spite of this evidence of lingering concerns among Finnish Americans about their racial status, this topic did not come up in my interviews with Finnish-born women or in the 135 questionnaires filled out by Finnish women in the U.S. It may be that the memories of the insecurity regarding Finns’ racial status remained fresh in the minds of children and grandchildren of early twentieth century migrants from Finland. My informants, who grew up in Finland and did not move to the U.S. until the post-war years, did not seem to be aware of these concerns. Or, if they had heard about the John Svan case, they thought of it as nothing more than a curious incident in the past that had no relevance to their lives. Something had changed in the racial configuration of the society that received these “new” migrants from Finland.

After the immigration restrictions of the 1920s and the subsequent plunge in the number of migrants arriving to the U.S., political and social anxieties concerning migrants in the U.S. momentarily subsided. As Matthew Frye Jacobson puts it, “in ‘solving’ the immigration problem, the Johnson Act [of 1924] laid the way for a

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245 Kivisto, “When Did America’s Finns Become White?”
redrawing of racial lines, and so that year does mark the beginning of the ascent of monolithic whiteness.”

During the mid-century years, Finns and other European migrants that were earlier categorized as racially inferior came to be considered as belonging unquestionably to the Caucasian race and as one of many different “ethnicities” within the monolithic white race. Between the 1920s and 1960s, the black-white divide became the major organizing principle in racial thinking in the U.S. Jacobson attributes this transformation in racial conceptions in part to the Great Migration of African Americans from the South to the urban North and West and, later in the century, to the unrest caused by the civil rights movement. These developments “nationalized Jim Crow as the racial issue of American political discourse.” Consequently, divisions among Americans of European origin lost salience. Furthermore, with the ethnic revival of the 1960s, Americans of European descent started to express pride of their ethnic roots and chose to identify in ethnic terms. For example, the woman who expressed her pride of being a Finn also pointed out that her son “is very proud of his Finnish background, even though he doesn’t speak the language. He has a cottage with a sauna, cooks Finnish foods and is in many ways ‘Finnish’.” In this context, the new arrivals from Finland were not confronted with the same racial hierarchies for European migrants faced by those who arrived in the early twentieth

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247 Ibid., 95.
249 Questionnaire no. 69.
Of the Americans in Finland who participated in my study, a majority also met the usual “qualifications” of being an elite migrant: they enjoyed high social status thanks to their nationality and the high status of the English language, and their reasons for migration to Finland were unproblematic: they came to the country for marriage, professional employment, or as students. Data on their ethnic composition in Finland do not exist, but almost all of the Americans who participated in this study were Americans of European descent. In addition, the American participants formed a very highly educated group: almost all my interviewees had a college or university degree (one had a high school diploma and another one some college studies but no degree), and of the 106 survey respondents, 40 percent had a Bachelor’s degree, 33 percent a Master’s degree, and 9 percent a Ph.D. degree. Thus, due to their nationality, ethnicity, language, and class status, the Americans in Finland participating in my study) can also be defined as elite migrants.

Overall, American migrants in Europe are assumed to be elite migrants (white, well-off, and middle-class) – not only by members of the receiving societies but also by many American scholars. This assumption results partly from the lack of research on Americans as migrants in other countries. An American living abroad is normatively expected to remain just that – an American living abroad, not an immigrant, or an emigrant (as I will discuss in more detail in Chapter 5). The bulk of research on migration

\[^{250}\text{Peter Kivisto, “The Place of Race in American Immigration History” (paper presented at the Finnish-American Immigrants in Transition Conference, Institute of Migration, Turku, Finland, June 2, 2009).}\]
in European scholarship has been, and still is, conducted by social scientists who are very concerned with the social usefulness of their research. As Varro and Boyd put it, “why study a population that poses no problem to the receiving society?” As a result, “white and middle-class” becomes “the unmarked, self-evident description of an American abroad.” And again, almost like a self-fulfilling prophecy, this very presupposition renders American migrants as uninteresting for migration researchers and consequently perpetuates the idea that all American migrants are white and middle-class.

The fact that most European countries do not collect data on racial or ethnic characteristics of their migrant populations also contributes to the equation of Americanness with whiteness. It is likely, however, that different groups of Americans may have different experiences of being a migrant in Europe. For example, American scholar Lauren Rhodes has done ethnographic field work on being a black migrant in contemporary Latvia, and reflects through her own experiences as a woman of color how black bodies become objects to be stared at and even ridiculed in public spaces in Latvia. Thus, in the case of American migrants, too, race plays an important role in determining migrants’ position in the receiving society. At the same time, scholars have also suggested that being an American almost automatically guarantees the person higher social status compared to many other migrant groups. U.S. citizenship subsumes other characteristics – gender, race, religion, education – and the person becomes “enshrouded

252 Ibid., 6.
253 Lauren Rhodes, “Racializing Latvia: Producing and Inhabiting Difference in a Post-Soviet State” (paper presented at the Joint Conference of the Society for the Advancement of Scandinavian Study and the Association for the Advancement of Baltic Studies, Seattle, WA, April 24, 2010).
in American-ness.” Thus, the argument goes, while an African American migrant may experience racial discrimination in Europe, “the fact of citizenship” still positions him or her hierarchically higher than, for example, a black migrant from Africa.

Moreover, scholars have noted that the position of the U.S. as a global political, cultural, and economic superpower may create negative reactions in many countries. Varro and Boyd, for example, argue in their study on Americans in Scandinavia that people are often curious about the U.S. but also see “Americanization” in culture, academia, and politics as a threat. Individual Americans are sometimes confronted with questions regarding U.S. foreign policy. However, despite the fact that being an American abroad is sometimes “a very ambivalent honor,” Americanness still also fascinates people. For example, some Finnish spouses of the Americans who participated in this study noted that their family and friends found an American spouse “exciting.” Ingrid Piller found also that there is something “cool” in Germany about having an American partner. For example, a German man noted when relating how his friends and colleagues reacted to his American wife: “(W)ith friends or co-workers, when they hear (...) that I am married to an American, I can hear and see (...) this little like surprise and coolness about it.”

The high social status of the English language contributes to people’s fascination with Americans; English is “iconic of the West and modernity.” In sum, then, while I employ the concept “elite migrant” in what follows, it is important to keep in mind that a migrant’s social status does not depend only on his

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254 Smith, *Absentee American*, 44.
257 Ibid.
or her education and profession (as is usually assumed in studies on elite migrants) but also on hierarchies based on nationality, race, ethnicity, and language in each receiving country.

**Family Ties in Elite Migrants’ Lives**

Elite migrants are not only presumed to be highly educated and professional but also “nongendered beings who do not form part of a household and whose migration experiences are purely related to paid employment.”\(^{258}\) My interviews with American men residing in Finland put this presupposition in question, as the story of Carl, whom I quoted in the beginning of this chapter, demonstrates.

**Carl and Hanna**

Carl is a 57-year old Management Consultant from New York who first came to Finland in 1982 for business; he helped establish a major international bank in Helsinki. He moved to Finland from London where he had been working since 1980. During his first year in Finland, in Christmas 1982, Carl met Hanna on a blind date organized by their mutual friend. Hanna is a Swedish-speaking Finn, an artist, and a creative designer. The couple got married in 1985 and had their first child soon after. Hanna also had a son from her first marriage.

Carl stayed in Helsinki for four years but because of his work, the family moved to Istanbul, Turkey in 1986. They stayed there for two years, before moving to Brussels, Belgium, for three years, and to London for five years. They

\(^{258}\) Willis and Yeoh, “Gender, Marriage, and Skilled Migration,” 102.
finally moved back to Finland in 1996. This time Carl migrated based on his family ties – marriage to a Finn. Since 1996, the family has lived in Helsinki, and today Carl is running a consulting business from home.

Throughout the interview, Carl emphasized the importance of family to him. He calls his family ties truly “transatlantic relationships:” despite the fact that he has lived outside the U.S. for about 30 years, he is still very close with his family and friends in the U.S. When asked about his marriage to Hanna, Carl says that “what defines us is that our shared values are the same.” These shared values are the importance of the family and friends and the understanding that the value of life does not come from material things. When asked about their future plans, Carl states that it is their children and future grandchildren that will determine where they end up. “Why would we leave from here if our children are here?”

With a successful career that took him to several different countries in Europe, Carl would be a perfect “cover boy” for glossy magazines or corporate brochures advertizing the life-styles of the “transnational capitalist class.” Indeed, he initially left the U.S. for Europe because of his career, and for many years the family moved around Europe because of his work. However, his last migration to Finland was motivated solely by his desire to live there with his family. He was in his mid-forties, in the middle of his career, when he made the decision of refashioning his profession in a way that allowed him to stay in Finland with his family. What is more, throughout the interview, he praised his wife and family and underlined that it was his family that was the most important

thing for him. His story shows the inadequacy of analyses of elite men migrants that focus only on their career aspirations.

There were other stories like Carl’s in my interviews. For example, James, a 45-year old IT professional with a Ph.D. degree, who moved to Finland in 2004 with his Finnish wife, pointed out in his interview that he would not have considered moving to Finland if his wife had not desired to return to her home country. Even though his migration to Finland was facilitated by the fact that he found a good position in an international company, the reason why the couple moved there was her longing to be closer to her family. Before moving to Finland, the couple had lived together in the U.S. for years; they met in Vermont when they were both college students there. In the interview, James stated that “home is where my family is, wherever it might be.” Thus, like Carl, James emphasized the importance of family to him: for James, “home” is not tied to a certain place – he feels at home when he is with his family.

Furthermore, in some cases the elite man’s family ties were the reason why he did not want to migrate. The life-story of Laura and Eino illustrates this kind of situation:

**Laura and Eino**

Laura, who was born in 1965 in Yosemite, California, was traveling around Europe with her mother and sister when she met her future husband, Eino from Finland, in 2002. Laura’s mother and sister had already returned to the U.S., and she continued the trip alone to one more destination: Vienna, Austria. One night she happened to be sitting next to Eino in the symphony in Vienna, where
he was on a business trip. The following night Laura and Eino went to the opera together. Laura was scheduled to fly back to the U.S. only two days later, which she also did.

The couple kept in touch via email and phone, and met each other at various times in Europe and the U.S., for example in Amsterdam, London, and San Francisco. Laura was planning to visit Eino in Helsinki in November 2002, but Eino thought that the chilly grayness of November was not the best time of year for California-born Laura to get to know Finland. Instead, the couple spent an American Thanksgiving together in California. In May of 2003 Laura then came to visit Eino in his hometown of Helsinki, and the couple got married soon after. In a way, the couple noted, it may have been easier for Eino to move to the U.S., since he knew English and had been in the country 20-30 times on business trips of different lengths. However, they decided to settle in Finland because of his family ties in Finland. Eino has two sons from a previous marriage and elderly parents with whom he is close. As Eino is the only child, he felt that he needed to be close to his family, and Laura did not have similar family responsibilities in the U.S. Today, they both work in the education sector in Finland: Laura has a Master’s degree in Social Work and teaches at a university of applied sciences, and Eino, a Ph.D. in Physics, teaches at a university in Helsinki.

Migration trajectories of highly skilled families are often examined from the viewpoint of the “trailing spouse syndrome,” which describes women as more likely than
men to sacrifice their career aspirations and “trail” the husband wherever his job takes them to. For example, feminist scholars who theorize about bargaining power within patriarchal frameworks often affirm the passive role of women migrants by claiming that it is usually “the woman who bridges the distance [rather] than the man because the man’s occupation is considered more important.” Indeed, several studies have found that the decision-making process regarding family migration is often not entirely egalitarian: wives are seen as “tied movers because family migration is embedded within the system of male domination of family decision making, women’s acquiescence to male decision making, and gender-based labor-market segmentation.” Wives are assumed to “put their family first” and not to be willing to move for work if that is not beneficial to the whole family. Husbands, on the other hand, are considered as disposed to “uproot their families and require that their wives find new jobs if it means that their own career prospects will improve.” In 1978, Wallston, Foster, and Berger found in their longitudinal study on dual-career couples with Ph.D. degrees that even among those couples who originally stated that both the husband and the wife were willing to be the “trailing spouse” if need be, several years later it was the wife who was much more likely to have accommodated to her husband’s career aspirations. In a recently completed Ph.D. study Satu Nivalainen found that in Finland too even well-educated women more

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261 Cooke, “Family Migration.”
262 Ibid.
often moved because of their husband’s work than the other way around.\textsuperscript{264} Nivalainen’s study focused on couples moving within Finland, just as Wallston, Foster, and Berger’s research examined U.S.-based couples (instead of families formed through international marriages). Nonetheless, the assumption seems to be the same in studies on bi-national couples: scholars typically argue that it is the wife who in most cases follows her husband to his home country or to his country of work assignment.\textsuperscript{265}

My goal here is not to discredit the often unequal bargaining power within families or the ways in which patriarchy operates in family migration decision making. Among my interviewees, too, I had cases of women – like Carl’s wife Hanna – who followed their husbands to a new job or a country, taking care of the family and sometimes giving up their own career aspirations. Another example is the marriage of Kristin and Timo. He, a Finn, and she, an American, met in Minnesota while he was working there for a few years in the 1980s. She moved to Finland to marry Timo when she was only 18 years old (in 1987), right after high school graduation. Timo’s work took the family to three different countries, Sweden, France, and the U.S., in the late 1980s and 1990s. Since 1998, the couple has lived in Finland, this time to stay. Kristin has been a home-maker most of her life, moving with Timo from one place to another and taking care of their three children. She has held only occasional substitute teacher positions in various kindergartens in the capital area of Finland. Thus, Kristin gave up her dreams of higher education to support Timo’s career and to “trail” him to different countries and work assignments.

\textsuperscript{265} Willis and Yeoh, “Gender, Marriage, and Skilled Migration,” 101.
However, my research also indicates that it is over-simplified to assume that every couple’s decision to move to the husband’s country of origin is “rooted in traditional or patriarchal elements.” Most of my interviewees emphasized that the decision was made on an egalitarian basis. Of course, educated young women may not be willing to admit, or necessarily even recognize, situations in which they conform to the common expectations of women accommodating to their husband’s career goals. However, the fact still remains that many men that I interviewed had also made career concessions for the sake of their families. In some cases, both the husband and the wife “trailed” at different points of their life together. The story of Jenni and Tom illustrates this pattern:

**Jenni and Tom**

Tom, born in 1956, is an acclaimed photographer who originates from New York City. He was in England on a Fulbright Senior scholarship in 1990, when he met Jenni, a Senior Consultant in a management company, who was working in England at the time. Jenni has a Master’s degree in Economics, and she has worked in many American and British companies; her career has taken her to many countries all over the world. When Tom and Jenni started dating, they first met almost every month in his home town of New York, where she traveled for business. In 1995, she decided to move to New York, “only for love,” as she put it. Thus she left her well-paying job to be with Tom – but, to her relief, found a good job soon after moving to New York.

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266 Lee and Piper, “Reflections on Transnational Life-Course,” 128.
The couple got married and had their first child in New York. When Jenni was pregnant with their second child, the couple started talking about moving to Finland. Manhattan did not seem to be the right place for them to raise small children. In 1997, then, the couple moved to Helsinki, Jenni’s hometown, as they both agreed that it would be a better place for their children. Tom’s career prospects, however, were dampened because of his move to Finland. He noted in the interview that it has been difficult for him to create a career as a photographer as a foreigner in a small country like Finland.

In Jenni and Tom’s case, both took the risk at different times of leaving the familiar working environment and starting a new life in a new place. Jenni’s career was, however, more easily transferable from one country to another than Tom’s: she had already worked for many years in international corporations. Consequently, her career advancement was not severely affected by her migration to the U.S. Tom, on the other hand, as an artist, had a more difficult time establishing himself occupationally in Finland. Nonetheless, their move to Finland was a joint decision that the couple made purely for family reasons: to raise their children in Finland.

Many couples also emphasized that their migration decision was based on very rational calculation of pluses and minuses in both countries. Katri and Julian, for example, who lived in Pittsburgh when she got pregnant, were very “methodological” (the term Julian used) when deliberating where they would start their family. The couple – who had met in the U.S. when she was working there as a freelance journalist for a year
– had three options: their current home city of Pittsburgh, California (where his family lived), or Finland. They took into account all the different factors they thought to be important when deciding where to settle in, including schools, crime level, public transportation, and their networks of family and friends. In the end, Finland came out on top and they moved to the country in 2001. Julian, too, admitted in the interview that he had had a difficult time finding good employment in Finland. I heard from Katri and Julian a year after the interview was conducted in 2008, and they had moved back to Pittsburgh. In the email they sent me, they explained that the main reasons for their return to the U.S. were Julian’s difficulties of finding a job in his field in Finland and of “feeling at home in the Finnish social atmosphere.” The couple also thought that it would be easier for Katri, as a freelance journalist, to find work in the U.S.

Furthermore, it seems that the Finnish spouses were often more “qualified to trail” than the American spouses, as they were fluent in English. Some of the Finnish women whom I interviewed in Minnesota noted that the decision to settle in the U.S. instead of Finland was a very practical one: she knew how to speak English and had often already lived in the U.S. before. In contrast, almost none of the American husbands of the women living in Minnesota knew much Finnish (with one exception, John, whose life-story I recap below) or had extensive knowledge about Finland. Also those Americans whom I interviewed in Finland did not usually know much about the country before going there for the first time. Carl, for example, answered in the following manner when I asked how much he knew about Finland before he visited the country for the first time in 1981:
“Nothing. I came [for the first time] in December 1981 to see people here about the job. It was really cold and snowy […] it was exotic. I bought a book [about Finland], it still had black and white pictures, [it was] very somber and basic. I was going north but I didn’t realize how far east the county was. I was as ignorant as many people still are about Finland as a country. I didn’t know anything about history but remembered my father telling me about Finns being great fighters but I didn’t know who they fought [against]. I was asked to go to a new frontier; [I was] going to an outpost of Europe. It lived up to that, it was cold and grey.”

Those who had met their Finnish spouse in the U.S. knew more, as they had learned about the country from their spouse and visited her or his family in Finland. The Finnish spouses, unsurprisingly, knew more about the U.S., although many noted that their ideas were often stereotypical impressions originating from American TV shows and other popular media. Overall, however, many couples felt that living in the U.S. was the more practical choice. For example, one Finnish woman who filled out the questionnaire explained their decision to stay in the U.S. as follows:

“My husband has a small enterprise, and it would be difficult for him to practice this business in Finland. I don’t think we would have good chances of finding jobs in Finland.”

Many women suspected that the U.S. labor market was more flexible than the Finnish one, and therefore it would be easier for the Finnish spouse to find work in the U.S. than for the American partner in Finland. One of the Finnish interviewees noted: “It

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267 “Miehelläni on pienyritys, eikä hän voisi harjoittaa samaa alaa Suomessa. En tiedä minkälaiset mahdollisuudet meillä olisi työpaikkoihin.” Questionnaire no. 30.
would have been wrong for me to ask and beg my husband to move to Finland because it’d be difficult for him to find employment there.” (Interestingly enough, I heard from this couple this year and they had, after all, moved to Finland, and both spouses had found work without any great difficulties.) A couple of women also directly stated that their husband would not be willing to move to Finland – for these husbands, Finland seemed too far away and too different.

Michelle Lee and Nicola Piper found in their study on international marriages between Malaysian-born men and women of other Asian nationalities that also for these couples the choice between his or her home country was sometimes dictated by practical concerns. They use the case of Ika and Chan as an example. She is from Japan and he is Malay. After meeting and getting married in the U.S., where they both studied, the couple settled in Malaysia – not because it was Chan’s home country, but because he failed to find a job in Japan. Lee and Piper note that the language barrier was one of the main reasons for this. Ika, on the other hand, did not have any difficulties finding employment in Kuala Lumpur. Thus, their decision to live in Malaysia was not just a question of “patriarchy at work;” as Lee and Piper put it, “it is not as if foreign husbands would not contemplate moving to their wives’ country of origin.”268 Another example is the way Ron and Heli, a couple who met in Texas while she was pursuing a degree at the University of Texas at Austin, reached their decision to move to Finland: they agreed that whoever gets a better job first would determine where they moved. Heli got a good job offer from Finland, and thus the couple moved there in 2001.

268 Lee and Piper, “Reflections on Transnational Life-Course,” 128.
My research thus shows that while women undeniably often (more or less consciously) accommodate to their husbands’ career wishes, sometimes at the expense of their own career or educational goals, in many cases “the trailing spouse syndrome” does not accurately describe the families’ migration decisions. In many marriages that I studied both the husband and the wife had made career concessions. Most couples considered multiple factors – family responsibilities and both spouses’ job prospects in the two countries – when contemplating where they would move. Having children was a second moment of decision-making, when couples carefully weighed pluses and minuses of both countries, as I will detail in Chapter 4.

Considering the elasticity with which the couples reached their migration decisions, the “transnational life-course perspective” provides a more appropriate approach than “the trailing wife syndrome” for studying the lives of my interviewees. With this framework, Lee and Piper highlight how migrants go through several phases in their lives: a migrant can be an independent mover in one phase and a “trailing spouse” in the next. Lee and Piper’s work focuses on experiences of migrant women in Asia, but my interviews with American men suggest that it is also applicable to many highly educated male migrants. The story of Kati and John works as an example:

**Kati and John**

When I interviewed Kati in 2004, she was 33 years old. She is from a middle-class family from a small rural town in Eastern Finland. She completed her Master’s Degree in Swedish and German at the University of Joensuu,

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269 Ibid., 121-127. See also Piper and Roces, “Introduction,” 10.
Finland in 1996. Her family used to travel often on the European continent, and Kati herself lived four months in Sweden, one year in Germany, and one summer in California when she was a student.

Kati met her American husband, John, in Finland; he studied for three years in the same university as Kati in an English language program. While in Finland, John learned to speak Finnish fluently. After Kati and John finished their Master’s degrees in Joensuu, they got married in Finland. Soon after, the newlyweds moved to Colorado because John was admitted to a graduate program there. The plan was to stay in the U.S. only temporarily. John was open to going back to Finland and Kati, at this point, did not want to stay permanently in the U.S. Kati and John had two children, both born in Colorado, who were two and four years old at the time of the interview.

After John finished his Ph.D. degree in Colorado (and Kati also completed two more Master’s degrees in languages), the family moved to Minnesota. This time they moved because of Kati’s career; she was admitted to a Ph.D. program at the University of Minnesota. At the time of the interview, the family was leading a busy life as Kati was teaching and finishing her degree at the University and John was working full-time. Kati wanted to stay in Minnesota but hoped that she and the whole family could continue their yearly visits to Finland. She remains very close to her family, who still lives in Eastern Finland.
Kati and John’s story is a good example of spouses’ changing roles in different migrations and in different phases of their life together. Kati and John met each other because John moved to Finland as an international student. After they finished their degrees, Kati followed John to Colorado so that he could fulfill his dream of pursuing a Ph.D. degree – a “trailing wife” as some researchers could coin it. However, the family’s move from Colorado to Minnesota was initiated because she was admitted to the graduate school at the University of Minnesota – now John “trailed” his wife to this new location. Thus, Kati and John’s story challenges the common assumption that migration is a unidirectional movement from one place to another initiated by a single motive – either for work or for family. Migration research typically depicts migrants either as overseas workers or as marriage migrants. My research shows that in reality, for both women and men migrants, multiple motives and multidirectional movements are often involved, as a final story of the transnational life-cycle of my interviewees demonstrates:

**Helena and Peter**

At the time of the interview in 2004, Helena was 50 years old. She was born in 1954 in a small town in Eastern Finland to a family of two older brothers and shopkeeper-parents. She spent one year as an exchange student in Illinois in the 1970s. All the siblings in Helena’s family have university degrees; Helena completed a Master’s degree in Economics in the 1970s. After finishing her degree, she worked in Finland for several years.

\[270\text{Ibid., 1-4.}\]
In 1981, Helena moved to Hong Kong to work with a missionary organization. It was in Hong Kong where she met her future husband, Peter, from Nebraska. The couple got married in Hong Kong and lived there until 1996. That year, the family of four - Helena and Peter had adopted two children in Hong Kong - decided to move to Minnesota. The move was initiated by a lucrative job offer that Peter received. Helena states that one of the reasons why they chose to move to Minnesota was the fact that there was an international airport with easy and frequent connections to Finland, and also that she felt that Scandinavian heritage was still strong in Minnesota. Even the climate reminded Helena of Finland. At the time of the interview, Helena was back at work after being at home with the children for five years.

Helena moved to the U.S. because her American husband found a good job in Minnesota. Thus, in migration statistics she appears simply as a spouse of a U.S. citizen. However, she only met Peter in the first place because she independently left Finland for Hong Kong (to relive the international life-style that she had enjoyed while she studied in Illinois). Her story is another example of how migrants may occupy various roles during the different migrations that occur at different times of their transnational life-cycle. Similarly, James, whom I mentioned above, moved to Finland because his wife missed her home, family, and friends in Finland. At the same time, the company that hired him sponsored his migration to the country. In statistics, then, James appears as a highly skilled migrant, even though the reason why he looked for a job in Finland in the first
place was his wife’s desire to return to her home country. In other words, many migrants who on paper appear merely as highly skilled migrants motivated to move by their work, have moved or stayed because of marriage or other family reasons. Categorizing migrants simply as labor migrants or marriage migrants therefore fails to capture their multiple impetuses for migration.

**Problematizing the Integration of Elite Migrants**

Despite the high educational attainment of the Americans who participated in this study, many had had difficulties with finding employment that fit their educational qualifications in Finland. Tom, Julian, and Laura, for example, had been able to find only temporary positions and were largely financially dependent on their Finnish spouses. In my online survey, because I provided space for respondents to expand freely on their experiences of living in Finland, many commented on their difficult employment situation in Finland. Many felt their career development had been dampened in Finland.

Thus, the experiences of my American interviewees and survey respondents call attention to the fact that even those who on paper seem to belong to the global mobile elite experience problems that are more often associated with migrants of lower social status. Americans and other elite migrants are often seen as jetsetters who evidence “the reality of globalisation and a borderless world.” However, as Adrian Favell, Miriam Feldblum, and Michael Peter Smith argue, “behind the image of global elites lie other socially differentiated realities.” The socioeconomic profile of migrants does not always correspond with their actual migration experiences: “Many educated, highly skilled
migrants must leave their human capital behind at the border. To illustrate this, Krisztina Csedő makes a distinction between “highly qualified” and “highly skilled” migrants. A migrant may be qualified for a highly skilled position, but only those migrants who manage to transfer their skills to the labor market of the receiving country can be considered highly skilled. Whether the migrant succeeds in this or not depends, according to Csedő, “on the ability of migrants to signal the value of their general and specific skills to potential employers in the destination labour market.”

It would be, however, a simplification to claim that the difficulty with finding work reflects only the ability of the migrant to transfer his or her skills to the labor market. Even highly qualified migrants may encounter “glass ceilings” in their professional advancement because of their status as foreigner. Batalova and Lovell found downward mobility among highly skilled foreign workers in the U.S. and also elsewhere in the world. Similarly, some scholars have recorded downward mobility among Americans residing in Europe. European integration excludes non-EU nationals and puts them at disadvantage in European labor markets. For instance, Boyd’s study on North Americans in Finland, Sweden, and Denmark notes their loss of occupational status. Varro conducted a study on American women living in France and married to a Frenchman, and found that the women had difficulties finding any employment after

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271 Favell, Feldblum, and Smith, “Human Face of Global Mobility,” 2, 7.
274 Batalova and Lowell, “The Best and the Brightest.”
moving to France. Many of them thus lived “an imposed life of leisure.” Moreover, Annika Forsander found in her study on migrants in the Finnish labor market that many migrant groups – especially refugees and asylum seekers but also migrants originating from Western countries – found it difficult to transfer their skills and education to the labor market. An American interviewed by Forsander stated: “To be honest, what I did before coming [to Finland] does not have much value here.”

In my research, too, experiences of discrimination in the Finnish labor market were not uncommon. For example, an American wrote: “I do feel that I haven’t excelled professionally as I may have back in the work environment of America.” Many suspected that their lack of Finnish language skills prohibited them from finding a good job: “It is very difficult to find employment here if you do not speak the native language, despite how much education you have.” It seems that many Americans ended up teaching English in Finland as they could not find work in their own field. For example, an American woman who moved to Finland in 2004 wrote:

“It’s pretty much impossible for me to get a job here apart from teaching English, since my Finnish skills are sub-par. At this point, I don’t think my Finnish will ever be quite good enough to work in my field (Social Policy), so we’ll probably move either to London or somewhere in the States after having children. (...) I would love to stay in Finland forever. But I’m just so sick of teaching English and failing at all other things that I’ve tried.”

277 “Ollakseni rehellinen, sillä mitä minä tein ennen ei ole täällä juurikaan arvoa.” Forsander, Luottamuksen ehdot, 218.
Some Americans commented that the real problem was the attitudes of Finnish employers:

“\[\text{I love living in Finland and Finnish culture, especially the winters. I have adapted well within the culture and built my network of contacts and friends. My Finnish language ability is fluent but I find that Finns are closed minded in terms of internationality and giving jobs to expats whom are not engineers. The lack of finding equal employment is pushing me away from Finland.} \]

“Finding employment as a foreigner has been nearly impossible outside of the Helsinki area. Foreigners are still treated with distrust and suspicion – of course, by law a potential employer cannot tell you that, but he can tell you the position is no longer available, and like other foreigners, I hear it all the time, despite my degree and work qualifications. I also hear about my lack of language skills, which is another well known excuse that foreigners hear when Finnish employers are xenophobic.”

This American suspected that Finnish employers use language requirements to hide their xenophobic attitudes. Laura Huttunen argues that foreigners looking for a job in Finland are often clumped together into a homogenous and abstract category of “foreigners” that contains ideas about inadequate language skills and unfitting education. In other words, the foreigner is not seen as a concrete individual with personal characteristics, skills, and educational qualifications. A foreigner is, by default, an unwanted employee.\(^{278}\)  Seppo Paananen points out that the language requirement may

\(^{278}\) Laura Huttunen, “Kasvotulakkaalainen ja kokonainen ihminen: marginalisoiva kategorisointi ja maahanmuuttajien vastastrategiat,” in Puhua vastaan ja vaieta: Neuvottelu kulttuurisista marginalisoista,
function as a euphemism for only wanting Finnish employees: “Today an employer cannot post a sign on the door saying “only for Finns;” instead, the sign says “only for Finnish speakers.””

Ironically, it seems that Americans’ high social status, combined with the fact that they are often not seen as migrants by the members of the receiving society, may actually contribute to their labor market integration problems. A majority of the Americans who participated in this study were not fluent in Finnish, even after years in the country. It seems that many American migrants in Finland were, indeed, following an American Paul B. Finney’s advice that was published in 1965 in *The Businessman’s Guide to Europe*: “The first lesson to learn about Finnish is not to learn it; (…) no matter how brave you are linguistically, resist the temptation to try it out.” Many Americans who participated in this study lived in a completely English-speaking environment in Finland. Thus, it seems that as they were not seen as migrants, they were not expected to learn Finnish. For example, an American woman who moved to Finland in 1990 wrote:

“I have attempted to learn the language, hoping that it will make me feel more at home, but my language skills are still rudimentary after all these years, probably because it is too easy in Helsinki to speak and get by in English. And my husband’s family all use English with me.”

After 18 years in Finland (the survey was conducted in 2008), the woman still lived in an English-speaking world, unintegrated into Finland in ways that would not be

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ed. Arja Jokinen, Laura Huttunen, and Anna Kulmala (Helsinki: Gaudeamus, 2004), 140-143.
acceptable for migrants from poorer countries. For example, the Finnish Parliament passed an Integration Act in 1999 to guarantee migrants’ equal participation in the economic, political, and social life of Finland. To help migrants integrate into the Finnish labor market and educational system, migrants are offered (to the extent that municipalities – whose responsibility it is to implement integration policies – have resources available) classes in the Finnish language and the workings of Finnish society. In many European countries, including Finland, integration programs are required of those hoping to qualify for state benefits. As Elspeth Guild points out, in this context “the linkage between integration and poverty is apparent.” She continues to point out that migrants with high social status are typically not expected to meet integration requirements. Migrants who already have a job when moving to Finland or who are married to a Finnish citizen (the Finnish spouse must be able to show that she or he can support the foreign spouse, if she or he is not employed), are usually not affected by integration policies. Consequently, migrants from Western countries generally do not participate in these “integration classes” organized by municipalities. Only one of the Americans that I interviewed had attended an integration class. Thus, they are not part of the integration scheme that might actually encourage labor market integration. One American felt bitter towards the benefits that “immigrants” were receiving from the state:

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“I am bitter because the employment agency here will pay immigrants who are unemployed to learn the Finnish language and culture (...) but if you already have a job you are entirely on your own.”

The lack of Finnish language skills affected Americans’ integration into Finnish society on a broader level too. Many Americans felt that the lack of Finnish skills played a crucial role in their experiences of feeling like an outsider in Finnish society. For example, an American who moved to Finland in 1992 wrote:

“The language is a big issue, it’s very difficult, and although Finns think it doesn’t matter because so many people speak English, it does matter, because the culture is Finnish, in Finnish. It’s very hard to feel like part of the culture here.”

Not knowing the language made many Americans feel like “a permanent tourist” in Finland.284 “There is a vicious cycle about not feeling at home here because I don’t speak the language, and not really feeling motivated [to learn the language] because I don’t feel at home.” Another American man, who moved to Finland in 2003, noted in the online survey:

“I have little opportunity here, as I don’t speak the language. (...) I just don’t fit in this culture. I wish I’d never agreed to move here in the first place. I feel so oppressed.”

Sirkku Latomaa has also recorded Americans’ difficulties of learning Finnish in her 1998 study. She argues that this is partly because Americans and other native speakers of English are not expected to learn Finnish (unlike groups that are seen as

migrants, as I pointed out before). As she puts it, this lack of expectations “may in part be due to the misconceptions about why and for how long speakers of English stay in Finland, as compared to some other groups.” In this situation, Americans’ language learning depends largely on their own initiative. Many were simply not motivated, or felt that they did not have time, to learn the Finnish language. The characteristics of Finnish itself – the self-proclaimed “most difficult language in the world” – were also discouraging to some Americans. Because Finnish is a non-Indo-European language, the learning curve can be steep for an English speaker. Moreover, Finnish is a small language worldwide and therefore when “a speaker of a globally very powerful language (English)” enters Finland, he or she might assume that learning Finnish is not expected or even necessary. Especially if the American is not planning to stay in Finland for the rest of his or her life, learning Finnish seems futile. Ironically, Americans’ efforts to use the Finnish language are sometimes discouraged by Finns themselves. An American interviewed by Latomaa commented: “Many people will not try to understand when they realize you are a foreigner.” And a survey respondent noted: “Ironically, my experience learning Finnish is hindered by so many Finns wanting to speak English.”

Labor market integration of the Finnish women in the U.S. who participated in this study has been generally less cumbersome than that of my American informants in Finland. This difference may be related to many factors. First, the women were typically fluent in English, and thus there was no language barrier to prevent them from finding work in the U.S. Many had also acquired their education in the U.S. In addition, as a

285 Ibid., 57-58.
286 Ibid., 56.
287 Ibid., 62.
small, white migrant group, Finns rarely face discrimination in U.S. society today. Moreover, it is possible that gendered differences regarding the importance of career building may also influence the fact that work concerns were a more prevalent theme in my interviews with Americans in Finland than in the interviews that I conducted with Finnish women in the U.S. It may be, then, that career issues might have come up more often, had I interviewed the much smaller number of Finnish men who have migrated to the U.S.

At the same time, some of the Finnish interviewees did note that they were forced to “reinvent” their careers after moving to the U.S. Feminist migration scholars have found that international migration often dampens women’s career prospects.\footnote{Louise Ackers, “Citizenship, Migration and the Valuation of Care in the European Union,” \textit{Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies} 30, no. 2 (2004): 379.} For example, Kaisa – the woman mentioned in Chapter 2, who ended up marrying her American spouse Michael eleven years after her exchange year in the U.S. in 1978-1979 – worked as a psychologist in Finland before she decided to move to be with Michael in Minnesota (in 1991). Once in the U.S., she was not able to get a license to work in the same profession, as a psychologist. At the time of the interview in 2004, she was completing her degree as a family therapist and working part time. She noted: “It took me a lot of energy to get back on my feet. I am now almost at the same point as I was in Finland.” Kaisa was 32 years old when she moved to the U.S., and when I interviewed her, she had been in Minnesota for more than ten years. In other words, it took her more than a decade to establish herself professionally in the U.S. Migration may, then, disrupt the career development of even privileged migrants like Finns in the U.S.
Additionally, differences between Finland and the U.S. regarding the timing of marriage (typically younger in the U.S.), along with differing ideas of gender roles in marriage, altered some women’s career paths in the U.S. For example, some Finnish women implied that they would have likely pursued higher education if they had stayed in Finland. When answering the question, “do you think your life would have been different, had you stayed in Finland,” one woman who filled out the questionnaire answered: “I would have probably continued my studies, because I was good at school. I would not have married this young, because of cultural differences.”289 And another woman wrote: “I probably wouldn’t have married this soon (…) and I would have educated myself further.”290 These women ended up marrying sooner than they expected, and because of that, did not follow their hopes of pursuing higher education. Moreover, one woman whom I interviewed in Minnesota noted that because her husband worked longer hours than she did, she “had let herself slide into the ‘American women’s role,’” by which she meant that she had taken the main responsibility for household chores – something that she would not have done in Finland, she claimed. These examples of Finnish women accommodating to what they perceived as “American” gender and family norms speak to the gendered dimensions of integration of elite migrants in these two countries.

290 “En olisi varmaankaan mennyt naimisiin näin nopeaa (…) Olisin todennäköisesti mennyt jatkokoulutukseen.” Questionnaire no. 28.
Conclusion

While researchers often discuss “the emergence of new ‘global elites’ or ‘a transnational capitalist class,’ with unprecedented mobile and cosmopolitan lifestyles,” they often forget that most elite migrants do not make their most important life decisions apart from their networks of family and friends.\(^{291}\) The life-stories that I outlined in this chapter illustrate the important role of marriage and family ties in life decisions of migrants, who in migration statistics and scholarly discussions appear merely as professionals, highly educated persons, or as students. Furthermore, my research highlights how elite migrants’ high social status in society does not necessarily guarantee privileged treatment by the host society or that elite migrants feel themselves part of the society in which they live. As Varro and Boyd point out, although Americans are not usually considered as “migrants,” they still share some experiences with other migrants: “‘us-against-them’ dichotomy (…) [and] language and culture ‘gaps,’ causing people to feel like strangers in both places.”\(^{292}\) Favell, Feldblum, and Smith note that “those with human capital mobility are thought to be able to exist ‘outside’ of society and yet be able to integrate when they choose in their host destination.”\(^{293}\) My research indicates that even for elite migrants, integration may not always be a matter of choice. For example James, the IT professional I quoted above, commented: “I will move away from Finland, as nice as this country is… I don’t think I want to [stay], you know, even if I knew the language. I didn’t grow up here, I don’t feel I belong here.” His family of four – James and his wife have two children – were planning to move away from Finland in the next

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\(^{291}\) Favell, Feldblum, and Smith, “Human Face of Global Mobility,” 2.
\(^{293}\) Favell, Feldblum, and Smith, “Human Face of Global Mobility,” 17.
few years. As the quote reveals, James did not feel very well integrated in Finland, despite his good position in the company that sponsored his migration to Finland. Luckily for James and his Finnish wife (who is also an IT professional), elite migrants from the U.S. and Europe, with their U.S. and European Union passports, can often move from one country to another with relative ease. Ironically, however, their privileged status as migrants who are not expected to assimilate may, in fact, amplify their feelings of being and remaining an outsider.
Chapter 4.

Transnational and National Belongings: Transnational Family Life and the Multiple Identities of Elite Migrants in International Marriages

Introduction

“See that’s one of the big things you lose when you’re moving, is you’re losing part of your identity when you’re coming to another country. And you, you have no roots, you have no, you know, um, job, and as I say, you have no identity. You are just, you know, a thing there.”

This quote is from an interview that I conducted with an American woman, Ann, who moved to Finland in 1963 after meeting and marrying her Finnish husband in the U.S. The quote illustrates how crossing national borders often challenges migrants’ feelings of belonging. In this chapter, I examine how my interviewees negotiated their national or ethnic identities and feelings of belonging in transnational social spaces in both Finland and the U.S. The international marriages in which my research subjects live create a specific context in which these negotiations take place. I am interested in what kind of transnational family patterns the migrants in international marriages form.

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Were there differences between the interviewees who lived in Finland, as compared to those who lived in the U.S.? And if so, what were the origins of those differences?

The pioneering work of three anthropologists in 1992 ignited a proliferation of multi-disciplinary studies on transnational migration. With Nina Glick Schiller, Linda Basch, and Christina Blanc-Szanton’s *Towards a Transnational Perspective on Migration* emerged a new theoretical model for studying global migration.\(^{295}\) Glick Schiller, Basch, and Blanc-Szanton defined transnationalism as the “emergence of a social process in which migrants establish social fields that cross geographic, cultural, and political borders.”\(^{296}\) Later on, researchers of transnationalism have examined, for example, formations of border-crossing communities, transnational consciousness marked by multiple identifications, modes of cultural reproduction, transnational political activity, webs of social fields that connect transnational actors to many localities, and capital flows spurred by transnational corporations.\(^{297}\) Moreover, historians have shown that transnational connections and consciousness are by no means a new phenomenon; as Mae M. Ngai acknowledges, “the transnational did not drop from the sky or simply appear as part of the recent interest in ‘globalization.’”\(^{298}\) Even before modern

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\(^{295}\) It should be noted that well before Schiller et al.’s publication, migration historians such as Donna Gabaccia and Walter D. Kamphoefner utilized transnational methodologies in their work but did not use the term “transnationalism.” See Donna R. Gabaccia, *From Sicily to Elizabeth Street: Housing and Social Change Among Italian Immigrants, 1880-1930* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984); Walter D. Kamphoefner, *The Westfalians: From Germany to Missouri* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987).


communication technologies and modes of transportation, migrants “maintained extensive, and intensive, transnational ties and operated in what social scientists now call a transnational social field.”

Most studies of transnationalism at the level of family life have focused on the transnational relationships of unskilled migrants in a monoethnic setting. There are, for example, studies on transnational families of female overseas workers who have left their children in the country of origin. In addition, there is new scholarship on international marriages of migrants of the same ethnicity. For example, Hung Cam Thai studies international marriages between Vietnamese men in the U.S. and Vietnamese women in Vietnam. Transnational theory has had surprisingly little influence on research on international marriages of spouses of different nationalities. The assimilation paradigm is still the most influential framework in which intermarriages have been analyzed, especially in social sciences.

My research indicates that this traditional model of studying identity formation and migrant incorporation in the context of international marriage is insufficient. The conventional, teleological model of migrant incorporation suggests that through time,


301 Thai, For Better or For Worse.

migrants become more integrated and transnational engagements wither away. The narratives analyzed in my study indicate that this is not always the case. I argue that in important life stages, such as when a migrant has a child, transnational engagements and relationships often intensify. At the same time, these important life changes may also make the migrant feel more incorporated into the host society. Additionally, my research reveals that while transnational practices may help migrants get through important changes in life, the same practices may also create emotional anxiety or discomfort in migrants.

Thus, a more appropriate approach for studying migrant incorporation and transnational family patterns seems to be Michelle Lee and Nicola Piper’s “transnational life-course perspective,” introduced in the previous chapter. In this chapter, I expand the transnational life-course perspective by showing how a migrant’s life may involve not only multiple migrations in different roles and for different reasons but also multiple, simultaneous identifications in transnational and national spaces. My interviews highlight the impossibility of studying migrant identity construction only in the context of the country of settlement: as I will show, the interviewees articulated simultaneous, sometimes even contradictory feelings of belonging to the home country and to the country of residence.

Migration scholars have acknowledged that engagement in transnational spaces does not preclude migrants’ involvement with the host society. For example, Ewa Morawska and Christian Joppke argue that among ethnic minorities in the U.S.,
assimilation is still occurring despite migrants’ transnational affiliations. However, most studies on the interplay of migrant incorporation and transnationalism are based on studies of workers at the lower-end of the economic hierarchy. My study contributes to the research field of international migration and marriage by analyzing elite migrant’s transnational engagements and efforts to integrate at the level of family life. I argue that a migrant’s simultaneous engagement in her or his country of origin and in the country in which she or he currently lives highlights the weakness of treating integration and transnationalism as if they were dichotomous categories. The multiple identifications and unfolding life-stories of migrant women and men render the dual processes of integration and transnationalism visible. The fact that my research subjects are predominantly white, professional migrants enhances their possibilities to express both national and transnational belonging.

Transnational Family Life between Finland and the U.S.

“For me it’s very important that Cecilia, my baby, learns Finnish. Of course I talk to her in Finnish all the time but I’m afraid that it’s not enough. If we lived in Finland, she would learn the language quickly. And maybe my husband would

learn it too. I think the most important reason is that my parents and sister live there and it would be wonderful to be closer to them, especially now when we have the baby.”

“I might return to Finland already in 2003. In Finland I have all my relatives, all my memories, graves, and that’s where I will be buried. My financial situation allows me to live comfortably in Finland.”

I extracted these two quotes from the questionnaires that I sent in 2001-2002 to Finnish migrant women living in the U.S. The question that the women responded to concerned their possible intentions to move back to Finland. The first woman quoted was a 35-year old mother of a six month old baby who lived in Colorado when she filled out the questionnaire in 2001. She had moved to the U.S. in 1987 to study in a university, and she had married an American man in 1994. The second Finnish woman quoted was 68 years old when she filled out the questionnaire in 2001. She had migrated first to Canada in 1964 and from there to California in 1965 with her husband. After retiring and divorcing her husband, when her children were all grown up, she was contemplating a move back to Finland.

304 “(M)inulle on hyvin tärkeää että C.-vauva oppisi suomea. Tietenkin puhun sitä hänelle itse mutta pelkään koko ajan että mitäs jos se ei ole tarpeeksi. Asumalla Suomessa hän oppisi kielen nopeasti. Ja ehkä myös mieheni oppisi sen siinä samalla sitten. (...) (O)ikeastaan tärkein syy on se, että minun vanhemmat ja sisko asuu siellä ja olisi aivan ihanaa olla lähempänä heitä, etenkin nyt kun meillä on vauva.” Questionnaire no. 90.

These two quotes illustrate how migrants’ connectedness to the home country may become enhanced when important changes take place in the migrants’ life-course. In these examples, changes in life evoked hopes of returning to Finland. The first woman started thinking about moving back to her home country after having her first baby. In Finland, she would have the support of her family when raising the child. In addition, the possible challenges to her desire to teach her child Finnish in the U.S. loomed large in her hope of returning home. In the second case, life changes associated with aging – children growing up, retiring, losing one’s spouse (in this case through divorce) – made the woman contemplate moving back to Finland. With age, she felt that she increasingly missed her relatives and familiar places, such as graves of family members, in Finland. Memories of home and the hope to be buried in her home country also contributed to her wish to repatriate.

The international – and multilingual – marriage provides a specific context in which migrants negotiate and practice their transnational family life. Traditionally, scholars have argued that marriage across ethnic or national boundaries has an erosive impact on ethnicity. For example, Richard D. Alba asserts that spouses in intermarriages may find it necessary to submerge their ethnic backgrounds. He adds that the spouses may also encounter difficulties in maintaining particular customs and ethnic languages.\(^{306}\) Alba’s study, however, focuses on intermarriages formed in the context of permanent settlement in a country (in his case, the U.S.) and on intermarriages of the children and grandchildren of migrants. The simultaneity of transnational and national loyalties that

my interviewees expressed highlights how living in an international marriage may sometimes heighten the migrant’s awareness of her or his ethnic or national background. For example, Carl stated that “living in a [foreign] country, married to a foreigner, makes you go even further in your identification.”

In this section, I show how migrants’ transnational family patterns are “intimately tied to family life-cycle.”\(^\text{307}\) I argue that in important life stages, such as when migrants have a child or when their parents age or fall ill, transnational engagements and relationships often intensify and take new forms. At the same time, as the transnational life-course perspective suggests, these important life changes may also make the migrant feel more incorporated into the host society. In other words, these life transitions do not always take place in a single national context – at least at the cognitive level. Additionally, my interviews show that while transnational practices may help migrants get through difficult times in life, the same practices may also make migrants feel homesickness and emotional anxiety or discomfort.\(^\text{308}\) Furthermore, my interviews reveal that migrants’ “trans-stagional” life-cycle\(^\text{309}\) does not necessarily proceed teleologically from being more transnational to feeling more incorporated, as the traditional assimilation model suggests. Instead, migrants’ national or transnational loyalties and feelings of belonging evolve and oscillate throughout their life-course.\(^\text{310}\) I will also show


\(^{309}\) Lee and Piper, “Reflections on Transnational Life-Course,” 127.

\(^{310}\) See also Baldassar, Baldock, and Wilding, Families Caring Across Borders, 216-217.
examples of the ways in which the interplay of migrant incorporation and transnationalism are gendered processes.

**Migrating and Starting a Family**

Perhaps unsurprisingly, right after moving to a new country, migrants often feel tightly connected to their country of origin. During the first years, many interviewees felt intense homesickness and had a difficult time imagining staying in the new country for a longer period of time. Kati, who met her American husband John in Finland and moved with him to Colorado in 1996, reported that the first years in the U.S. were extremely difficult for her. She stated that “for the first four years I was fighting against everything American and wanted to return to Finland, I was like ‘terrible America.’” Similarly, an American woman, Sally, who moved to Finland in 2003 because of her marriage to a Finnish woman, said that her first year in Finland was “very difficult. I had left my whole support system behind (…), I had no familial support, no network of friends, there was the language barrier, understanding of new culture.” One of my older American interviewees in Finland, 69-year old Ann, whom I quoted in the beginning of this chapter, reminisced that

“to be quite honest, the first two years in Finland were quite difficult. So it wasn’t just dance on roses, it was a tough time. Well, partially, partially missing my family. (…) I wasn’t going to admit to anybody that (…) I had cried a lot during those two years. I was, there were times I was very depressed (…)”
Also Tiina had a very difficult time when she moved to the U.S. in 1960. She was 25 years old when she migrated. She had met her American husband in Finland in 1956, where he was sent by his religious group, the Mennonites, to participate in an international work camp. In order to not to scare her off (as Tiina put it), the husband did not tell her much about the religious community in which he grew up. When they moved to the U.S., the couple stayed with his family in the Mennonite community in Ohio for the first year. Tiina described her experiences as “extremely difficult.” She said, “I came from a relatively liberal home in Helsinki, and all of a sudden I was thrown into this community where they still used horse carriages. (…) I survived only with Finnish resilience and sisu. I was there for one year, and then told my husband that we have to either ‘leave from there or I go back home,’ and then we moved to California. (…) Also his father said to him, ‘it’s best if you take Tiina away from here, otherwise your marriage won’t last.’ He saw that, even though he was a strong supporter of that religion.”

Interestingly, neither Tiina nor Ann told anything about their difficulties in the new country to their parents. Both of them attributed this to their pride. Tiina, for example, said, “I was so proud, even though it was so difficult in Ohio, because of the religion it was terrible (…), but I never complained to my mom and dad.” One aspect of transnational family life seems to be, then, selectively sharing personal or family issues with family members in the home country, either because of pride, as in the case Tiina and Ann, or because migrants do not want to distress the family members who are often geographically far way and therefore not always able to provide concrete help.
A change in life that often helps migrants adjust to their new country of residence is when they start a family and have children.\textsuperscript{311} In my interviews, child rearing and parenting were important issues – a fact which is likely related to the age distribution of my interviewees: many were parents of young children. Kati, for example, stated that her children opened up many doors for her in American society. She said that “children [have helped me integrate] because they are Americans.” Similarly, an American man who moved to Finland in 1984 wrote in his online survey response that

“(i)n the early years, I felt that I might return to the U.S. What made the difference was to realize that my child was a Finn who also understood me. Then I accepted that I would die here.”

Furthermore, as the examples of Jenni and Tom and Katri and Julian (presented in Chapter 3) illustrated, having children often forces the couple to consider seriously where they want to settle in and raise their children. Many Finnish women whom I interviewed in the U.S. worried about the safety of their children. In their memories, Finland was a safe place where children could run around with their friends as they wished and go to school unaccompanied. In fact, some couples decided to move to Finland to raise their children there for these reasons. For instance, ten Americans who filled out the online survey specifically mentioned that the couple moved to Finland because they thought that it was a better place to raise their children. A 37-year old American father of three wrote,

\footnote{Johanna JÄrvinen-Tassopoulos found in her study on Finnish migrant women in Greece that having a child was a major factor in integration of women into the local community. At the same time, the women wanted to “make” their children as “Finnish” as possible. One of her interviewees stated: “The child is something that is really mine in this country” (“lapsi on tässä maassa jotain todella omaa”). Johanna JÄrvinen-Tassopoulos, \textit{Suomalaisena naisena Kreikassa: arki, muukalaisuus ja nykyisyys ranskalaisen sosiologian näkökulmasta} (Helsinki: Minerva, 2007), 152.}
“We wished to start our family and go to university at the same time, and it was not possible in the U.S. due to the high cost of education. Plus it is much safer for children in Finland, they have more freedom.”

A 56-year old American man wrote that he moved to Finland to “give my son a better life, safety, health care, social system.” Ann pointed out that the reason why they settled in Finland was their hope that the children would feel more “rooted.” They were afraid that if they “continue in the diplomatic corps, the children will have no roots, because they’re neither Finnish nor American.” After their first couple of years in Finland, the family lived in Stockholm and Washington D.C. for a few years because of her husband’s career as a diplomat. However, as soon as the opportunity opened up, they decided to move back to Finland, this time permanently. Thus, family matters like having children and deciding where to educate the children may work as a reason to migrate and to settle in.\footnote{Zechner, “Care of Older Persons,” 36.}

At the same time, my research shows that having children is a time in a migrant’s life when her or his transnational engagements often intensify. In my data, the use of migrants’ native language came through as the most important means of raising children transnationally in international marriages. Both the American parents in Finland and the Finnish parents in the U.S. (with few exceptions) considered teaching children their native language as extremely important. Failure to do so created anxiety among parents, especially among the Finnish women in the U.S., who had had a more difficult time maintaining Finnish language skills among their children than the American parents in Finland. One of the main reasons why the interviewees wanted their children to know
Finnish or English was the hope that the children would feel part of the family in the home country of the migrant parent. In addition, the interviewees considered it important to have a common language between the children and their grandparents. Indeed, Loretta Baldassar, Cora Vellekoop Baldock, and Raelene Wilding found in their study on transnational caregiving that grandparents often felt emotional discomfort if they were unable to communicate with their grandchildren.\(^{313}\)

In my online survey of the American-born in Finland, I asked the respondents who had children to give an example of how they promoted their culture to their children (if they did so). Out of 62 American respondents who had children, 53 chose to answer to this question, and in all cases the transmission of culture was related to language use: speaking English to the children, reading English language children’s books, watching American TV shows, and getting together with other English-speaking families. For example, a 38-year old American man explained:

“I only speak English to them, and pretend I don’t understand when they speak Finnish to me. We also have a good core group of foreigners here, and have a bi-weekly English club for our kids.”

A 39-year old American woman said: “I speak only English to them; read English language books to them; taught them to read in English; DVDs and tapes of popular movies in English.” Another woman, who moved to Finland in 1973 and was 59 years old when she filled out the survey, explained that she was determined to teach American culture to her grandchildren too. She pointed out that through teaching the English language, she was also teaching about American culture:

\(^{313}\) Baldassar, Baldock, and Wilding, *Families Caring Across Borders*, 177.
“I am now speaking English with the next generation – the grandchildren. In teaching language, I naturally teach the communication culture: customs, holidays, etc. We read familiar stories, watch movies, attend church, and try to provide social experiences in an English-speaking setting.”

It seems that it was even more important to my American interviewees to teach their native language to their children in Finland than it was to the Finnish women that I interviewed in the U.S. This can be at least partly attributed to Americans’ common lack of fluent Finnish skills: if they did not teach English, it would impede their communication with their own children. The fact that none of the parents of my American interviewees knew any Finnish provided another impetus for the Americans to teach their children English so they could communicate with their grandparents.

There seems to be a slight generational divide among the Finnish women that I interviewed in Minnesota: all the younger women – who were in their 30s or 40s when I interviewed them – had at least tried to transmit their Finnish language skills to their children. On the other hand, among the older generation women, several interviewees had not tried to keep up the Finnish language heritage. They raised their children when it was believed that bilingual upbringing may slow down children’s linguistic development.314 In fact, one of the younger women had faced these kinds of fears by her American in-laws:

“The grandparents considered it strange to teach Finnish to the children (...).

They should have first learned English properly. And in the beginning when the

kids didn’t know how to say anything in either language, it was really hard for the
grandparents (...), but it has been worth it.”

In addition, Leila, who moved to the U.S. in 1968 at the age of 22, said that she
simply did not consider it important to teach her children Finnish, even though “it would
have been useful when they visited Finland.” She explained her decision not to teach
Finnish with her own desire to learn English properly when she settled in the U.S. (she
got married and had children soon after moving to the country to study). She noted that
“such a small proportion of people speaks Finnish” in the U.S. and therefore she was
“unbothered” by her children’s lack of Finnish skills. Interestingly, her daughter wanted
to study in Finland when she was a teenager. The daughter did, indeed, spend one
semester in a Finnish high school, staying with her aunt, but did not learn any Finnish
during that time because “she got really good friends who all spoke very good English.”

These few exceptions notwithstanding, the Finnish women living in the U.S. also
saw it important to raise their children transnationally, especially through teaching the
Finnish language. For example, Kati said that having children made her determined to
teach them Finnish and visit her family in Finland every summer. She noted that she
initially decided to teach her children Finnish so that they would be able to communicate
with Kati’s mother (who does not speak English) in Finland. Later on, speaking Finnish
became the essence of her relationship with the children:

“I just can’t speak English to the children, because everything that I am is based
on that, that I speak [Finnish]. It is part of me. I just feel like I would be talking to
other people’s children if I spoke English, but they’re mine, they’ve been part of me, and they share this same heritage with me.”

Despite Kati’s determination to speak only Finnish to her children, and the importance that she placed on the language as a component of her relationship with the children, she also pointed out how difficult it was to keep up Finnish language skills in a completely English-speaking environment. She explained,

“(m)y expectations were totally different (…), it has been awfully hard. I thought that if I speak Finnish and John English, it will come automatically. But it doesn’t (…). It has been an awful amount of work; I have to tell them 150 times a day that (…) say that to mom with mom’s language.”

Overall, my research indicates that the Finnish women living in the U.S. have had more difficulties raising their children transnationally through language use than Americans living in Finland. The high status of the English language positions English-speaking parents in Finland in a completely different way from the Finnish-speaking parent in the U.S. The children in the families that I interviewed in Finland were all almost completely bilingual (by their parents’ estimate). English is widely spoken in Finland, especially in the capital region where the majority of my interviewees live. In addition, many families have put their children in an English-speaking daycare or international or bilingual school, where the teaching language is English. For example, a 33-year old American woman, a nurse and a mother of two children, wrote that her transnational upbringing consists of
“speaking English with them at home. Attending an English päiväkoti [daycare] (my son) and my daughter attends an International school. They also spend almost 2 months in the summer back home with my parents.”

Thus, Americans in Finland have plenty of resources available for teaching the English language to their children. This is not to say, however, that the children automatically grew up bicultural in Finland. For example, one online survey respondent pointed out that

“(t)he only children’s culture I can pass on to my children is the American one. And I feel it is important, as an emotional tie to my past and my own childhood and parents. However, in the Finnish setting my children have assimilated both American culture and the English language only minimally. If I had more time with them, it might be different, but as I am working full time in a demanding job, I have to be realistic in my expectations.”

Even a globally dominant language like English is still a minority language in Finland, and therefore bilingual and bicultural upbringing demands constant effort by the English-speaking parent.

Studies on English-speaking migrant-receiving countries such as the U.S. and Australia have found that minority languages rarely survive to the second generation if multilingual upbringing is not supported in any formal setting – and small languages (such as Finnish) rarely are. Baldassar, Baldock, and Wilding found in their study on migrants in Australia that second generation children were often unwilling to speak or learn the minority language because it “relegates them to membership of an ethnic
minority, rather than strengthening their position as member of the dominant ‘Australian’ majority.” Richard D. Alba argues that schools in the U.S. do not usually particularly promote ethnic cultures and languages. This reluctance to transmit ethnicity has historical roots in the Americanization projects of the early twentieth century that overtly opposed the use of ethnic languages in school. For example, a second generation Finnish American recalled that a teacher in a Finnish community in Minnesota asked her pupils to pledge to “never to speak Finnish anywhere,” not even at home.

Although these Americanization programs have ceased to exist, maintaining the Finnish language skills of the second generation still proved to be a challenging task for the Finnish interviewees. While the U.S. educational system officially acknowledges the importance of “multicultural education” in the form of recognizing “cultural pluralism” among students and providing knowledge about histories, cultures, and contributions of diverse groups, maintaining minority languages is not seen everywhere as part of this educational strategy. Some Finnish women mentioned that their children had given presentations about Finland in school, but this did not, of course, help in bilingual upbringing. As the English language dominates the surroundings and Finnish is rarely heard, the outcome is often not what the women expected. Like Kati, many other interviewees were also surprised to find out how difficult it was to teach children Finnish. Helena, who adopted two children in Hong Kong with her husband Peter, said:

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“It was clear from the beginning that I’ll try to teach them Finnish. But I expected it to be easier (...). Maybe I blame myself because I usually speak English to everybody here, so even though I try, I don’t always speak Finnish to the children.”

Typically children spoke Finnish as a child, but when they went to school, English started to dominate: “Paula spoke fluent Finnish until she was four years old. (...) When the children grew up, they spent less time with me (...) and their Finnish skills didn’t develop.”319 Another woman who filled out the questionnaire noted: “When my kids went to school, Finnish just went out of use.” Also the fact that most of the husbands did not understand Finnish discouraged some women to speak their native language: “It felt artificial to speak Finnish to the children when my husband didn’t understand.”320 In contrast, all the Finnish spouses of Americans in Finland knew English, and thus speaking English did not create a similar “language boundary” within the family. None of the Finnish women in the U.S. viewed their American husbands as opposing their teaching Finnish; on the contrary, many of them emphasized their husband’s complete support for bilingual upbringing. In-laws, on the other hand, were not always completely supportive, as Kati remarked: “I sometimes notice that John’s mother gets frustrated when I speak Finnish to the children (...) and she says ‘speak English, I can’t understand.’” Moreover, practical problems may have contributed to the slow transition from Finnish to English in the families. For instance, one of the interviewees recollected

319 “Paula puhui 4-vuotiaaksi asti täysin sujuvaa suomea (...). Lasten kasvaessa he viettivät vähemmän aikaa kanssani ja keskustelujen aiheet muuttuivat monimuotokäsennäkisi (...) eikä suomenkielentaito kehittynyt.” Questionnaire no. 91.
320 “Joskus tuntui teennäiseltä puhua suomea lapsille kun mieheni ei ymmärtänyt.” Questionnaire no. 91.
that she spoke Finnish to her children until they started going to daycare. One day her son was not able to get water to drink at the daycare because the teacher did not understand what he was asking for. After that episode, the woman started speaking English to her children more often.

While most of the Finnish interviewees thought that their bilingual upbringing was appreciated by the dominant society, some women argued that negative attitudes by “Americans” toward foreign-language speakers sometimes discouraged them from using Finnish with their children in public places. For example, one interviewee noted that speaking Finnish “is considered bad behavior. People expect that English is spoken, because it’s the dominant language.” She, however, added that her circle of friends and family had been nothing but supportive.

Negative attitudes toward minority languages may also discourage children from speaking Finnish, especially outside the home. It was not uncommon that at some point the children of the Finnish interviewees refused to speak Finnish. None of the American interviewees in Finland mentioned that their children had refused to speak English – again pointing to the high status of the English language. For example, Helena reminisced that

“both children had, when they were about 4-6 years old, a phase when they refused to speak Finnish. They didn’t want me to even read to them in Finnish; I had to reward them to get them practice the language even a little bit. I don’t know why [this happened], maybe because they started to have more friends at that age (...).”
Helena thus suspected that as her children made more friends, they did not want to be seen as different by their American friends. This challenge to bilingual upbringing came up in other interviews as well. For example, Sini, who moved to Minnesota in 2002 from Hawaii (where she had moved to study in 1988), explained that her 10-year old son sometimes refused to speak Finnish and was embarrassed of his mother being different from the “American mothers” of his friends. In the son’s view, Sini spoke a “strange” language and also behaved differently than his friends’ mothers. In his 10th birthday party, the son asked Sini to tell a joke of his choice to his friends and “smile more” so that she would appear “more American” to his friends.

To support bilingual and bicultural upbringing of their children, Finnish migrants have founded Finnish Language Schools throughout the U.S. The Finnish Language School of Minnesota was founded in the early 1990s. Classes are offered every other week on Saturdays. The school provides an important support network for the Finnish women and their children, as Sini noted: “The school helps my children accept that they are half Finnish.” In the school, the children could meet others who speak the same, rarely heard language. However, even attending the school did not always help: Sini, for example, also noted that her children found going to school as pleasant as “drinking tar” (an old Finnish saying).

In sum, the transnational connections and consciousness formed through language use seemed to be more easily maintained among English-speaking Americans in Finland than among Finnish-speakers in the U.S. In this context, visiting Finland was considered an important way of making the children feel part of the Finnish-speaking family in
Finland. Many studies of migration have pointed out that visiting the homeland is an important strategy for maintaining transnational relationships. For example, Baldassar, Baldock, and Wilding write that “(v)isits are important in establishing, maintaining and reinvigorating family relations, in reconciliation and acceptance of change, in fulfilling family obligations and duties and in the myriad issues implicit in the relationship between identity and place.”

While these visits to Finland were certainly motivated by familial sentiments, they were also a necessary way for isolated Finnish-speakers in the U.S. to expose their children to a larger language community: an individual parent can teach children a language only with extraordinary difficulty.

The interviewees’ relatively advantageous socioeconomic status enabled these regular contacts to the country of origin. Many of my interviewees visited their home country regularly even after years in the host country. For example, Tiina visited Finland twice a year when her children were small – to make sure they feel “part Finnish” – and still today visits Finland every year. Helena and Peter own an apartment in Finland, which makes it easy for them to visit her family and friends in Finland even for a longer period of time. Among Americans in Finland, visiting the U.S. was also very common. Of the 106 survey respondents, for example, 45 percent visited the U.S. once a year and an additional 20 percent twice or more times a year. For example, an American woman wrote in her survey response that “I plan to visit [the U.S.] often (…) so that my child will see and know the USA, as well as my friends and family who live there.” Visits are also reciprocal: all families received visitors from the home country from time to time.

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322 See also Patricia M. O'Connor, “Bodies In and Out of Place: Embodied Transnationalism among...
It is also important to note that while transnational practices like speaking the native language and visiting the homeland may provide emotional support during difficult times in life, these same practices may also evoke emotional discomfort and homesickness in migrants. For example, one Finnish woman who filled out the questionnaire wrote that when she celebrated Finnish holidays in the U.S., her homesickness often intensified. She explained that “on Christmas time (...) I always think that I should have stayed in Finland, where my heart always is, and so is my family.”

Another woman noted that when she visits Finland, she yearns for “that feeling of belonging [that I get] when I arrive at the Seutula airport and understand the surroundings in my own language.” While she still “senses the familiar culture,” she also feels sadness because “I have become only a passer-by” of her own culture. A Finnish woman that I interviewed in Minnesota said that even after 30 years in the U.S., she still gets “an empty feeling” upon returning from Finland to Minnesota: “like, now I’m here again (...), now I have to get used to being here, to this system again.” Thus, while transnational connections are often extremely important for migrants – “a lifeline,” as Kati put it – the emotional impact of these connections is not solely positive.

Furthermore, many Finnish women expressed anxiety or guilt over their children’s lack of Finnish skills. Sini, for example, said:

323 “Jouluisin (...) miettitään, että olisi pitänyt jäädä Suomeen, missä se sydän aina on ja oma perhe!” Questionnaire no. 29.
324 “Kaipaan (...) sitä kuuluvuuden tunnetta, kun saavun Seutulan kentälle ja yhtäkkiiä tajuan ympäristöni omalla äidinkielelläni ja vaistoan kulttuurin sen takana, mikä on tuttu, mutta minkä ohikulkija minusta on tullut.” Questionnaire no. 10.
“I feel bad that I don’t speak Finnish. But I have decided to not put too much pressure on myself. I just can’t do it (...), it’s so difficult to speak Finnish all the time, when nobody answers to me in Finnish. It’s like talking to myself. It’s hard to keep up. You have to let some things go so that you don’t stress too much.”

Kati, also, reminisced that when she had her first child in Colorado, “it was terrible for me to think that my children would not grow up as Finnish kids (...), I was almost panicking about it.” Kati, however, noted that when she had her second child, she was already more “relaxed:”

“When the first child was born, I thought that everything had to be Finnish. When I had the second one, I didn’t really care that much anymore. I first thought they would be our own little Finnish children but no, they are Americans. When we go to Finland they are different from Finnish children.”

Kati’s experiences thus suggest that anxieties about raising children transnationally may be elevated when the migrant has her or his first child in the new country. However, over time, the parents may have more realistic and – when it comes teaching language like Finnish in the U.S. – lowered expectations about what she or he can achieve through transnational upbringing. Indeed, scholars have found that the first child born to a multilingual family is more likely to know the migrant parent’s language than the subsequent children.³²⁵

promoting transnational family life, raises the question of how these processes are gendered. Historically, the “survival of ethnicity” has been often associated with migrant women. For example, in the early twentieth century U.S., social workers promoting Americanization concentrated their efforts on mothers of migrant families, who were perceived as potential threats to the assimilation of the second generation because of their “clinginess” to ethnic heritage. \(^{326}\) Also more recently, many scholars have underscored women’s role as “tradition keepers.” For example, Prema Kurien argues in her study on the creation of Hindu Indian identity in the U.S. that it is mostly women’s work that re-creates ethnicity. Women are the ones who wear traditional clothes, cook Indian food, buy or make cultural artifacts, and teach and perform dances and music that embody material culture. Thus, in Kurien’s words, “women are the primary masons of ethnic identity.” \(^{327}\)

Women’s important role in transmitting ethnic heritage to the children is usually explained by their position as the primary agents of socialization of children. \(^{328}\) For example, Alba states that “the family is the arena where the cultural substance of the ethnic group – given mundane expression in food and language, but also communicated


through family traditions – is initially acquired.” My interviews partly confirm this common emphasis on women’s importance in the transnational upbringing of children. Some of the American husbands of Finnish women, living in Finland, mentioned that it was the Finnish wife who was more active in bringing American influences into their family life. Carl, for example, praised his wife’s efforts to keep the American traditions alive in their family:

“She’s been fantastic (…) more than me. We celebrate both Christian and Jewish holidays, Fourth of July, Halloween, Thanksgiving, we celebrate everything. It comes from her. The kids have learned to expect it. She’s tremendous.”

Thus, in some families in Finland, the Finnish wife – even though she was not the migrant spouse – was the one who took on the main responsibility of practicing American traditions in the family. Micaela di Leonardo argues that women’s key role in cultural upbringing may also be explained with their important role in the work of kinship. She defines the work of kinship as encompassing “a variety of activities, including visits, letters, presents, cards, and telephone calls to the kin; services, commodities, and money exchanged among kin; and the organization of holiday gatherings.” All these activities are mainly women’s responsibilities, thus enforcing women’s importance in preserving family traditions.

At the same time, both American men and women who participated in this study considered it important to raise their children transnationally. Among the Americans who filled out the online survey, a great majority (87 percent) of both men and women said

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that it was important for them to teach their children American culture and English language. Both American wives and husbands of Finns in Finland spoke only English to their children. As noted before, this may be related to the general lack of Finnish skills among Americans in Finland. However, there is an interesting gender difference in the language skills of the American interviewees. Of the ten men that I interviewed, only one had learned to speak Finnish fluently; the others were barely able to communicate everyday things in Finnish. One man, Carl, knew some Swedish because he is married to Swedish-speaking Hanna. On the other hand, among the eleven American women that I interviewed, only three had not made serious efforts to learn Finnish, and six possessed (by their own estimate) at least satisfactory Finnish skills. In addition, Ann had fluent Swedish skills (because she is married to a Swedish-speaking Finn) and satisfactory Finnish skills. Thus, despite the fact that both men and women saw bilingual upbringing very important, there seems to be gendered factors behind the decision to speak only English to the children. Men spoke English to the children often because it was the only language they knew how to speak fluently. This finding speaks to the power relations within the international marriage, and women’s greater willingness to learn the language of their spouse – no matter how difficult the language is.

*Aging Parents, Aging Migrants*

The direction of care between migrants and their parents often changes over their life-courses: while recently migrated persons receive emotional and sometimes also financial support from their parents, later in life, as the parents age, caregiving flows...
more in the other direction: from migrants to parents.\textsuperscript{331} My research shows that another moment in a migrant’s life when transnational engagements seem to intensify is when the migrant’s parents age and need assistance. There is still little research on transnational relationships between migrants and their aging parents in the country of origin. Scholars of transnational families have paid more attention to situations of transnational mothering; i.e. when migrant women have to leave their children behind. However, as Minna Zechner points out, “children are not the only ones in transnational families who may have been left behind and are in need of care, guidance, resources, and help.”\textsuperscript{332} Even though years pass by and the geographical distance is often vast, migrants still feel responsible for caring for their aging parents. To better describe caregiving in transnational family relationships, in which constant and concrete care work is rarely possible, the concept of “care” has been expanded to include also “the mental and emotional work that is involved in caring.”\textsuperscript{333}

Many migrants who participated in this study expressed this concern over their aging parents in Finland or the U.S. The most common means for engaging in transnational caregiving among the migrants interviewed was through visits to the homeland, phone calls, and exchange of emails or letters. The opportunities to practice transnational caregiving are tied to available resources, such as time, financial means, and methods of communication. Institutional conditions in both countries involved impact these transnational practices as well. For example, countries differ in regards to what kind

\textsuperscript{331} Baldassar, Baldock, and Wilding, \textit{Families Caring Across Borders}, 213.
\textsuperscript{332} Zechner, “Care of Older Persons,” 32. See also Baldassar, Baldock, and Wilding, \textit{Families Caring Across Borders}, 3.
\textsuperscript{333} Zechner, “Care of Older Persons,” 33.
of social services governments provide for their aging citizens, thus influencing migrants’ need to care for their parents. Moreover, national borders and migration regulations of nation states provide an important framework in which transnational caregiving is practiced and negotiated. Different groups of migrants have unequal access to these resources depending on their gender, class, race, nationality, and the migration context.334

The migrants who participated in this study are privileged in their access to the resources required for practicing transnational caregiving. All of them have access to modern communication technologies, such as cell phones and the Internet.335 These communication technologies can create “virtual spaces” that allow transnational families “to be imagined as a proximate, supportive network that transcends the realities of geographic distance.”336 Some of the older interviewees marveled at the ease of communicating with their family members through phone or email today. Tiina recollected how in the 1970s she had to order a phone call to Finland a couple of days in advance. “Nowadays,” she compared, “it’s like calling your neighbor.” Ann noted that she was very happy with being able to email her family and friends in the U.S. “It’s made my life much easier,” she remarked. When she moved to Finland in the 1960s, it was “very expensive” to make a phone call to the U.S.; hence she “phoned only on important occasions, [when] it was Christmas or birthday or whatever.”

While calling and writing emails or letters were considered important, the geographical distance still remained.\textsuperscript{337} Thus, visiting home was a significant way of practicing transnational caregiving, especially if there was sickness in the family. As noted above, the migrants who participated in this study visited their home country frequently, sometimes crossing the Atlantic many times a year. An exceptional case was a 55-year old American woman, a lecturer in a Finnish university, who responded to my online survey and explained that for 15 years, she has traveled to the U.S. each month to care for her elderly parents. However, many migrants also mentioned that they traveled to their home country less often as a family, as it is expensive to buy tickets for all family members. Furthermore, while it was considered extremely important to visit aging parents, it was also emotionally difficult to visit home and then leave again. For example, Leila explained in her interview that

“when my parents turned 80, it got all the more difficult to leave Finland [after a visit], because they were so old. My dad died three years ago, when he was 91, and my mother is now 92, so it’s difficult to leave her there. So… I’m getting all teary just thinking about it…”

If the migrant’s father or mother fell ill in the home country, the migrant typically felt the need to visit home more often. Sometimes a parent’s illness also triggers return migration.\textsuperscript{338} For example, five of the Americans who responded to my online survey wrote that the initial reason why they moved to Finland was sickness of the Finnish

\textsuperscript{337} O’Connor, “Bodies In and Out of Place,” 4.
spouse’s parent. An American man, a 38-year old IT professional who moved to Finland in 1996 wrote that he “moved to Finland with my first wife after graduating from a university in the U.S. to care for her terminally ill father.” Another American man, a 42-year old teacher who runs a “Family English Club” at a community center in Helsinki, also ended up in Finland because of sickness of his wife’s parent:

“My wife and I were living in Philadelphia in 1999 when her mother became ill with cancer. My wife returned to Finland to be with her mother and family during that time. After 6 months, her mother passed away and my wife wasn’t prepared to return to the States. Having previously spent an additional 6 month period apart, we no longer wanted to be separated, so I agreed to move temporarily (two year trial) to Finland. I’m still here.”

In both of these cases, it was the migrant woman who wanted to return to her home country to care for the sick parent. Migration scholars have pointed to the gendered nature of transnational caregiving. Viruell-Fuentes, for instance, notes that “transnationalism extends women’s gendered caregiving work” as they provide emotional support for their parents and other family members in the country of origin.339 Studies on caregiving of elderly parents have, overall, found that women use more time and other resources to care for their parents than men do. Moreover, as the distance between the adult child and the elderly parent grows, men are more likely than women to limit their time commitment.340 In a transnational context, both men and women have

340 See for example Alun E. Joseph and Bonnie C. Hallman, “Over the Hill and Far Away: Distance as a Barrier to the Provision of Assistance to Elderly Relatives,” Social Science & Medicine 46, no. 6 (1998):
been found to be engaged in caregiving that crosses national borders. In my data, too, both men and women expressed concern over their aging parents, and a couple of men – both Finnish spouses of American women who filled out the online survey – moved to Finland to care for their parents. For example, a 39-year old American woman explains that when making the decision of which country to settle in, the couple compared family responsibilities of both spouses. In the end, they came to the conclusion that his family needed him more than hers:

“He’s an only child whose father passed away years ago, so he helps his mom and paternal grandmother. He’s the only one who is available to help. I have both parents and two sisters with families in the US. My parents don’t rely on me in the same way.”

At the same time, researchers have also found that migrants’ transnational caregiving takes different forms depending on gender. Scholars have found that men typically provide economic support, while women engage in emotional and personal assistance.\(^{341}\)

As U.S. or EU citizens, the migrants who participated in this study had no difficulties traveling between the two countries as often as they wanted, provided that they had the financial means to do so. National borders, in that sense, did not typically prevent them from visiting the family in the home country. Interestingly, none of the parents of the migrants had moved to Finland or the U.S. to stay with their migrant child. This may be related to the fact that the migrants that I interviewed moved to the new

\(^{631–639.}\)

\(^{341}\) Ackers and Stalford, *Community for Children?*, 154-155.
country as individuals; in other words, their larger networks of family members and relatives remained in the country of origin. This may work as a disincentive for the parent to follow their child abroad. None of the Finnish interviewees, for example, mentioned even thinking about bringing their parents to the U.S. This may be at least partly related to the government-provided caregiving services available for the elderly in Finland, as well as to the way these institutional resources impact migrants’ “cultural understandings of caregiving.” Baldassar, Baldock, and Wilding, for example, found in their study on caregiving practices of migrants in Australia that migrants from “individually-oriented European systems,” such as Denmark and Norway, were likely to resist “providing high level personal and proximate care” and, instead, resorted to institutional services when organizing their parents’ living arrangements.342 While I did not specifically inquire about this from my Finnish interviewees, it is possible that “the culture of care” into which they – and their parents – were socialized disposed them to leaning on caregiving services provided by the government instead of feeling obliged to personally care for the aging parent.343

Similarly, none of the American interviewees contemplated bringing their aging parents to Finland. Even if they wanted to do so, it would be difficult. Only spouses and minor children of Finnish citizens or foreign residents can migrate to the country automatically; parents, on the other hand, are granted a residence permit only if they are “fully dependent on the person living in Finland.”344 In practice, it is very difficult to show that a family member is “fully dependent” on her or his relatives in Finland. In

343 On cultures of care, see Zechner, “Care of Older Persons,” 40-41.
2009, only 32 percent of applications for a residence permit of “other family members” (i.e. not spouses or minor children) were approved in Finland.\textsuperscript{345} In 2009 and 2010, the Finnish media followed closely the cases of two grandmothers of migrants living in Finland, Egyptian Eveline Fadayel and Russian Irina Antonova. Despite the fact that the closest family members of the two women lived in Finland, and that Antonova required constant hospital care, the FIS and the Helsinki Administrative Court refused their residence permit applications.\textsuperscript{346} In these cases, the borders of the nation-state proved to be an insurmountable obstacle for the unification of the migrant children and their elderly parents.

In sum, the migrants who participated in this study often engaged in forms of transnational caregiving that did not always necessarily mean concrete, proximate physical care, but rather presence through caring and providing emotional support. Furthermore, as the migrants themselves aged, transnational practices often became more important to them (something not predicted by the traditional assimilation model). Helena, for example, pointed out how the meaning of Finnishness became more central to her throughout the years she had been away from Finland. The women often felt that they simply had more time to devote to transnational practices after they retired and their children lived their own lives. Another interviewee, who had been in the U.S. for almost 50 years when I interviewed her in 2004, explained,


\textsuperscript{346} The decision was later upheld by the Supreme Administrative Court, and as of June 2010, the Finnish Police has announced that “the grandmothers” (as they are called in the media) will be deported from Finland in June. “Police Order Eveline Fadayel to Buy a One-Way Ticket to Egypt,” Helsingin Sanomat, International Edition, May 25, 2010, http://www.hs.fi/english/article/Police+order+Eveline+Fadayel+to+buy+a+one-way+ticket+to+Egypt/1135257088455.
“I was too busy 20 years ago. There’s only so much you can do I guess… Maybe because I’m getting older and more sentimental. I just had too much going on when I was younger.”

She also pointed out that Finnish traditions were more important to her today than before. Leila also noted that she followed Finnish traditions more today “because I have gotten older (…), you just think about these things more than you do when you were young, you were just so busy then.” These women remarked that they did not follow closely what was going on in the home country, nor did they religiously observe cultural traditions in their daily lives, but still the emotional attachment to the home country often became stronger as the years went by.

In other words, among elderly migrants, transnationalism often evolves from regular exchanges – visits and phone calls or emails – to a more symbolic form. Yen Le Espiritu and Thom Tran define symbolic transnationalism as “imagined returns to the homeland (through selective memory, cultural rediscovery, and sentimental longings).” The resources provided by symbolic transnationalism may be crucial, even when the migrant engages in concrete transnational practices only infrequently. Some of the older women that I interviewed (I did not have any elderly male interviewees) mentioned that after their parents, and sometimes their siblings and friends, had already passed away in the home country, concrete contacts became thinner and their connections to the homeland took a more abstract and symbolic form. In a way, the homeland is at the same time present and absent: it is not necessarily part of the migrants’ everyday routines but

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still in their minds, and present in home artifacts, language, community, and memories.  
Everyday life, however, is lived in the host country; it is the context from which the relationship to the homeland is negotiated.

**Articulations of Multiple Identities**

“When you leave Finland, you’re all of a sudden like really Finnish. It is more part of my identity after leaving Finland. It’s so paradoxical.”

This is how Kaisa described her sudden awareness of her national identity after migrating to the U.S. Migration scholars have pointed out how moving from one country to another, the crossing of national and cultural borders, creates new consciousness of migrants’ national or ethnic identities, which before migration often went unquestioned. For example, Meenakshi Thapan argues that

“(t)he movement, forced or voluntary of people, from one nation to another, (…) their dislocation from their native homeland through migration, immigration or exile, marks a turn which is an embodiment of the parameters of specific historical moments which are scattered and regrouped into new points of becoming. It is in these diasporic traversals that the rigidity of identity itself – religious, ethnic, gendered and national, comes into question.”

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348 Laura Huttunen, “Bosnialainen diaspora ja transnationali eletty tila,” in *Ylirajainen kulttuuri*, 55-82.
The scholarly literature on ethnic, racial, and national identities is, of course, vast and multidisciplinary: scholars from fields as diverse as history, sociology, demography, psychology, and cultural studies have attempted to explain how ethnic, national, and racial identities are formed and expressed. In U.S. migration studies, the so-called “ethnicity paradigm” dominated research on the formation of identities for most of the twentieth century. The two seemingly opposing approaches for studying ethnic identities within the ethnicity paradigm – the approaches of assimilation and cultural pluralism – both posited one nation-state, the country of settlement, as the only “significant context for determining immigrant identity formation.” In other words, despite the very different outcomes that these approaches predicted for migrant incorporation (the loss or persistence of ethnic distinctiveness), they both “traditionalized” ethnic cultures and shared “a common nationalistic tone.” While the former assumed that migrant cultures fuse together into the “American melting pot,” the latter saw pluralism itself as quintessentially American.

Migration scholars have also employed a variety of methods for studying identities of ethnic and racial groups. In the social sciences, quantitative approaches are commonly used. For example, Mary C. Waters utilizes survey data in her research on the ethnic identities of white Americans of European descent. Using U.S. census data,
Carolyn Liebler examines racial identifications of part-American Indian children. Quantitative methods have definite advantages for identity research: they allow researchers to study large populations and make comparisons between groups. However, there are also significant problems with using census or survey data as the single source when studying identity formation. For example, quantitative data do not allow the researcher to unearth what identities mean for the research subjects and how contextual factors impact persons’ identifications in any given point in time. Waters gives a poignant example: reviewers of the U.S. Census Bureau’s monthly Current Population Survey found that when answering the question regarding ethnic identity, “people changed their minds about it from survey to survey.” These issues pose serious challenges to the study of identities by using quantitative methods only.

An important critique of the social scientific study of identities has come from the field of cultural studies. Scholars in cultural studies have argued that qualitative methods are preferable for studying the intersectional aspects of identity: by analyzing the research subjects’ own narratives, “the investigator is better able to appreciate the complex ways in which various identities may combine and overlap, as well as (...) shift over time and place.” Moreover, postcolonial scholars such as Stuart Hall have been particularly vocal in underlining the fluid, contextual, and ever-shifting nature of identities.

356 Waters, Ethnic Options, 9.
The careful analysis of my interviews lends support to these critiques of identity by scholars such as Hall. My interviews revealed that not only did migrants’ transnational and national loyalties change in different stages of their life – as I documented above – but also that migrants’ identities were often contradictory and difficult to articulate at any given point in time. During the interviews themselves, some migrants defined their national or ethnic identities in different ways, illustrating the difficulty of pigeon-holing migrant identities into neat, coherent, and separate national or ethnic categories (as census data, for example, generally do). My research also underscores the difficulty of studying migrant identity construction only in the context of the country of settlement. The interviewees often articulated belongings both to the home country and to the country of residence. Thus, when analyzing life-stories of migrants, the researcher must possess a “tolerance for ambiguity,” as Monisha Das Gupta points out.359

Kati’s interview provides a poignant example of how migrants construct their identities in a way that spans nations. In the interview, she articulated experiences of being part of American society and being an outsider thereof, as well as feelings of being connected and disconnected to Finland. Multiple times, she defined herself differently, as American or as American with Finnish roots; at times she talked about Americans from the viewpoint of an outside observer. Here are a few examples from her interview:

“I have become very American.”

359 Das Gupta also found in her study on transnational identities of second generation Indian women in the U.S. that the way her interviewees narrated their identities was continuously shifting and often contradictory. Das Gupta, “‘What Is Indian about You?’,” 575, 587. See also Pihla Vuorinen, “Family in Transition: Transnational Family Ties and Identity Negotiation,” in *Multiethnic Communities in the Past and Present*, ed. Pille Runnel, Tuuli Kaalep, and Toivo Sikka (Tartu: Estonian National Museum, 2003), 71.
“I feel myself more like an American than a foreigner; when I meet foreign students, I feel more similar to Americans. I am inside this system even though I have an accent.”

“I’m not a mainstream American but a Finn in America and that suits me fine.”

“In the beginning I hated when people noticed that I’m not American [because of her accent] (...) Now I don’t care anymore because I’m not American in any case, so it doesn’t bother me if somebody notices that I’m not American, and of course they will notice.”

“I feel that I’m American with Finnish roots. The roots are part of me, such an integral part of me that I can’t even say how important they are; the roots are who I am.”

As these quotes reveal, Kati’s feelings of belonging were sometimes contradictory. This oscillation between different sides of her identity exemplifies the interplay between transnational and national belonging, often resulting in a feeling of “in-betweenness.” She continued the wavering between different loyalties when she talked about her friends in the U.S. She said:

“I have noticed that it’s hard to make friends with Americans. I get along with them very well, you know like ‘hi, how are you’ but it’s really hard to become friends because we don’t have common things and experiences. With Finns it is much easier but I find it easiest to befriend foreigners who have lived here for a long time.”
Thus, again she placed herself separate from Americans. At the same time, she did not prioritize Finns either – she found it easiest to make friends with people who have similar experiences of migration and of being a foreigner, this time thus identifying herself most closely with them. She went on to explain that her background in rural Finland and the very distinct local accent in her Finnish marked her as different from, for example, somebody from urban areas of Finland: “It feels like there is less distance between me and somebody from, say, the Polish countryside.” Despite the identification with her rural background, Kati still underlined the importance of her education and profession in the way she defined herself and chose her social circles: “Especially if the Finn doesn’t do what I do here, if she is a stay-home mom, then I don’t think we have anything in common, even though there’s the language.” Kati’s professional ambitions set her apart from Finnish women who had opted for staying home with children.

Indeed, my interviews show that studying migrants simply as workers or spouses in international marriages fails to capture the different sides of migrants’ identities. Restrictive immigration laws that distinguish among types of migration, as if they were mutually exclusive, encourage scholars and the public to do the same. Consequently, the migrant’s entry status as a labor or family migrant determines the perspective from which she or he will be studied: as a skilled or unskilled worker or as a wife (or more rarely, as a husband). ³⁶⁰ In the interviews that I conducted, the migrants – both men and women – talked about their experiences of integration and transnationalism in relation to different

³⁶⁰ Piper, “Wife or Worker?” 458.
dimensions of their identity. In other words, the migrants did not identify themselves merely as wives, husbands, or workers.361

To give an example, in Kati’s interview, her roles as a mother, wife, sister, daughter, and a professional were all present. At many times during the interview she underlined the importance of her profession and her role as a mother as building blocks of her identity. Thus, viewing her simply as a wife of an American would fail to capture the different layers of her identity. When asked which factors have facilitated her integration into American society, Kati brought together her roles as a mother, a professional, and a wife of an American:

“I have gotten inside this society through my children. They are my family here; earlier I missed my family in Finland more but now I have my own family here. And of course John, he has been so supportive and he understands how it is to live abroad (…). I have wanted to integrate and I have been able to fulfill my personal and professional dreams. I’m doing exactly what I like to do and where I’m good at.”

Similarly, the professional men whom I interviewed did not identify themselves simply through their profession. For example, in Carl’s interview, he reflected on his roles as a father, husband, and professional worker. He noted that the support of his wife, Hanna, was the main reason why it had been easy for him to adjust to living in Finland. At the same time, he also pointed out that his work, which allows him to travel extensively, is also an important factor facilitating his adjustment into living in Finland:

361 See also Piper and Roces, “Introduction,” 6.
“I don’t think I could easily live here if I didn’t get to get out and see other things and meet other people. I don’t think I would enjoy just working in a Finnish company.”

Also Carl defined his national identity in differing ways during the interview. He first pointed out that living abroad has made him feel more “American:” “As an American living abroad, you become even more patriotic.” However, he defined his identity also in the following ways:

“I’m Finnish citizen, I took a language test in Swedish. I feel very much a Finn, I love and enjoy this culture.”

“I feel very close to my American roots, I’m lucky to have both, represent both countries. I’m proud of being an American and a Finn.”

Thus, even though Carl had become more “patriotic” when living outside his home country, he also felt like he had become partly Finnish. When he talked about his friendships, he felt that he had some kind of “special connection” to his American friends, as compared to his Finnish friends: “There’s an important link, or a wavelength, it’s not just language, it’s so much more about the culture that you grew up in.” Carl felt that growing up in the same culture is a more important connecting factor among friends than the shared experiences of being a migrant and a foreigner (which Kati emphasized).

Ann’s interview provides another interesting example. Having moved to Finland in 1963, she had lived about 45 years in the country when the interview was conducted (minus the few years the family spent in Stockholm and Washington D.C.). When I asked
her whether it is possible for a foreigner to become Finnish in the eyes of the Finns themselves, she answered by reflecting on how her Finnish friends likely see her:

“And I have friends who, um, you know, I mean know that I’m an American, very much so, but we speak Swedish together and they absolutely accept me as [a Finn]. 100 percent. I mean there are times when they completely forget that I’m not Finnish.”

At the same time, Ann underlined how difficult it was to define herself in ethnic or national terms:

“(W)hen people ask me, because people do, ‘are you a Finn?’ Well, I mean officially I am a Finn. I mean I have a Finnish passport and citizenship. But if I said to somebody, ‘Yes, I’m a Finn,’ I mean, I would be lying, because it’s not true in the ethnic... if you want to, go that way. There are parts of me that are English, Finnish, whatever that means. I mean there are parts of the Finnish culture that I have accepted as part of me. Part of my life. Am I American? Well, you know, I was born, educated in the United States. Yes, I’m American. Yes I’m Finnish, yes I’m American.”

In her answer, the first sentence implies that her “Finnishness” is not self-evident in the eyes of the Finns: she gets inquiries about her nationality even after decades in the country. In addition, she also acknowledged the difference of being officially Finnish (in terms of citizenship) and of being considered as Finnish by the dominant society. Contradictorily, she first noted that she would be “lying” if she said that she is a Finn, but in the end, she remarked that she feels both Finnish and American. Later in the interview,
when she talked about her father, who was an immigrant in the U.S. from Cyprus, she remarked that this ethnic heritage was also important to her: “So ethnically one would say, the Greek Cypriot roots are strong.” Another layer of complexity is added when Ann talked about her mother and stepmother. She lost her mother, who was born in Poland, when she was only ten months old. Her father remarried when she was three years old. Her step-mother was an immigrant from Chile, who taught her the Spanish language. She described her family life as a child as follows:

“It was an international mixture, I would say. People ask me, you know, ‘What are you?’ You know how it is in the States, everyone’s so mixed up anyway, I was very obviously, I mean, interested in the two cultures and in cultures in general, it was something I didn’t realize myself then, but I learned the Greek dances and I learned Chilean dances and I was interested in the music and the food of both counties. My father was a very good cook so I learned about the, you know, the Greek food, the Greek cooking from him. And from my mother then, of course, the Chilean.”

Through Ann’s close relationship with her stepmother, she felt part Chilean as well: “I went to Chile and that’s a very interesting thing, because (…) they’re not biological roots, but they’re roots because of all the many, many years, and she’s my mother, and I have always called her my mother.” As she grew older, she also became more drawn to her birthmother’s ancestry: “I should also have Polish roots, but unfortunately I don’t know about my mother’s family. I’m working on it. I hope to find out some more, because I really would like to.”
The different ways Ann reflected on her identity and “roots” underscores the complexity of migrant identities and feelings of belonging. Not only were the years that she has spent as a migrant in Finland formative for her identity, but also the roots of her migrant father, mother, and stepmother. Together all these influences created a transnational consciousness that spans many nation-states: Finland, the U.S, Chile, Cyprus, and Poland. This mixing of transnational and national belongings underscores the impossibility of treating migrant incorporation and transnationalism as if they were opposing strategies.

It is very likely that the elite status of American migrants in Finland and Finnish migrants in the U.S. gives them this “space for maneuvering” when negotiating migrant identities. U.S. scholars of ethnicity have pointed out that for certain privileged groups, ethnic identity may be a matter of choice. For example, Mary C. Waters argues that “(w)hites enjoy a great deal of freedom in these choices; those defined in ‘racial’ terms as non-whites much less.” The interviews analyzed here suggest that for white, well-educated, and privileged migrants, the degree to which they foreground their transnational or national connections and identities may also be a matter of choice. Interestingly, many of the Finnish women that I interviewed in the U.S. specifically underlined their possibility to choose how “Finnish” they are. For example, a Finnish woman, Tanja, articulated her identity in the following way:

“(B)eing a Finn is important to me. I don’t have to nurture it all the time or be completely Finnish (…) I feel myself international. I’ve adjusted well, and I can be as American as I want, but usually I don’t want to be one.”

Tanja emphasized her ability to choose how “American” she was, and added that usually she prefers not to be considered as American but rather as “international.” Similarly, Tiina pointed out many times during the interview that she is a very “cosmopolitan” person. When she dies, she said, she wants to “be cremated, and the ashes thrown into the Atlantic Ocean, because I don’t belong here or there (…), I float in the air somewhere between.” Val Colic-Peisker differentiates between “ethnic transnationalism” and “cosmopolitan transnationalism” in her study on lower and middle-class Croatian migrants in Australia. She argues that middle-class Croatian migrants can, “by virtue of their professional position in the labor market, turn their perceived ethnicity into a multicultural cosmopolitan position.” These middle-class migrants engage in cosmopolitan transnationalism that transcends “the ethnic/national principle in the identity” and “enables them to ‘think and feel beyond the nation’ (…) and its ethnic foundations.” The migrants form a cosmopolitan identity that consists of high socioeconomic status, higher education, professional occupation, English language skills, and “Internet-connectedness.”

Tanja, Tiina, and a few other Finnish and American interviewees expressed similar kind of “cosmopolitan identification.” For example, Kaisa argued in her interview that she did not like to define herself in ethnic terms: “I don’t like really define myself (…), I’m my own personality, and it has nothing to do with my nationality.”

My interviewees’ mobile life-styles and privileged class and racial status

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gave them the opportunity to detach from ethnic loyalties that were sometimes seen as parochial or “too traditional.”

Furthermore, both my Finnish interviewees in the U.S. and American interviewees in Finland often talked about the U.S. as a “salad bowl” where everybody has roots in other countries and could be or achieve anything they wanted. For example, Kati explained her view on the U.S. in the following manner:

“America is nice because you can be anything here, what is it to be an American, actually it can be anything. I feel that we are a real American family, because we have enough differences and nuances. I don’t feel myself different at all.”

James, the IT professional living in Finland that I quoted in the end of Chapter 3, said that “in the U.S., if you speak enough [English], people will think you’re an American. If you have an American passport, you’re an American.” In this quote, James was contrasting the U.S. to Finland and arguing that Finnish citizenship and language skills (with an accent) do not guarantee that the migrant is seen as Finnish, whereas in the U.S., in James’s view, it suffices to know “enough” English and have an American passport to be considered an American. Carl also saw his home country in this “pluralist” way when he said that “in America, we are all Americans (...) my family came from Russia and Germany although we never thought of ourselves as immigrants. People would never ask about your origins because of your name.” Also Carl was comparing Finland and the U.S. in his response and arguing that in Finland a foreign-sounding name immediately raises questions about a person’s origins. Furthermore, an American who filled out the online survey reflected in his response that

See also Baldassar, Baldock, and Wilding, *Families Caring Across Borders*, 216.
“I now really, really appreciate America, and what a welcoming environment we have there. I think it takes about 3 years to become truly integrated into an American community. Here it might take about 30 years.”

U.S. migration scholars have shown, however, that for racialized migrant groups in the U.S., it does matter “where you are from.” Groups perceived as non-white may not have much of a choice when it comes to reinventing ethnic identities in the U.S. (366) Donna R. Gabaccia has used Filipino Americans as an example: “The daughters of Filipino fathers and white mothers were assigned Filipino American identities because other Americans saw them physically like their fathers. For them, ethnic womanhood was not chosen, but imposed.” (367) Ruth Frankenberg argues in her important study White Women, Race Matters that white persons, because of their race privilege, are not capable of seeing or understanding the importance of race in society or the impact of racism on people’s – both “white” and “non-white” – lives. For Frankenberg, whiteness is, therefore, a structural privilege and “a place from which white people look at ourselves, at others, and at society.” (368) My interviewees’ view of the U.S. as a country “where it does not matter where you are from” reflect the interviewees’ privileged status as white persons and the consequent inability to see racial limitations on who can be seen as American.

366 Das Gupta, “‘What Is Indian about You?’,” 589.
At the same time, even elite migrants are not “entirely free from the ascribed identity structures.” It seems to me that there is a slight difference in this sense in the interviews that I conducted with Americans in Finland and with Finns in the U.S. For Finnish migrants, it was more common to emphasize their possibility to choose how “Finnish,” “American,” or “international” they are and to talk about the U.S. in a “color-blind” manner. For example, one of the Finnish women who filled out the questionnaire described the U.S. this way:

“America is wonderful in that way that nobody cares what nationality you are. It only matters how capable and enterprising you are. If you are good in your own field, your possibilities are unlimited.”

Americans living in Finland, on the other hand, were more likely to point to the racial limitations of “Finnishness” – quite a contrast to the way they talked about their home country. For example, when I asked if it is possible for a foreigner to become a Finn, Sally stated,

“You can become more Finnish, I don’t think you can really ever be considered a Finn, there always something, color of skin, name, accent, color of your eyes. I don’t think I’ll ever be truly considered Finnish. I’ll be considered a Finn in nationality and citizenship but not Finnish.”

There is, thus, an interesting tension between the way the migrants imagine their home countries and the way they perceive their current country of residence. This reflects

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369 Colic-Peisker, Migration, Class, and Transnational Identities, 212.
370 “Amerikka on siitä aivan ihana että kukaan ei välitä minkä kansalainen on vaan siitä onko kykenvä, tarmokas, onnistuuko. Jos on hyvä omassa erikoisuudessa niin mahdollisuudet ovat rajattomia.” Questionnaire no. 21.
the ways these two nation-states, Finland and the U.S., typically are imagined: as “the nation of immigrants” and as a nation that is exceptionally homogeneous. In the next chapter, I examine more closely how these national identities influence the migration and integration experiences of my interviewees.

Conclusion

The elite status of the migrant groups that I study inevitably shapes the transnational family patterns and national or ethnic identities they create. Most have resources – such as financial means to travel and access to modern communication technologies – to practice transnationalism to the extent they choose. In addition, they can also often choose the degree to which they foreground their transnational or national loyalties in family life. Many families solved the “puzzle” of combining elements from the cultural backgrounds of both parents by creating a kind of “third culture.” Two quotes, by Helena and Kati, illustrate how transnational family life works to create a unique familial culture that exists somewhere between Finland and the U.S.

“We have created our own life and lifestyle. We started it already in Hong Kong and have continued it here in Minnesota. Neither mine or his family or friends meddle with our life; we are our own unit here. This has made our life easier.”

“We are living our own life here, there are American things and Finnish things, but it’s not American or Finnish life, it’s our life.”

I had only one non-white person among my interviewees, a Hispanic man who migrated to the U.S. from Chile when he was six years old and to Finland with his
Finnish wife in 2004. While I cannot generalize based on just one interview, his view on
the international marriage and the culture that he wishes to transmit to his children
provides a striking contrast to the views presented above. When I asked him whether he
sees his family life as “multicultural,” he answered,

“I don’t think I call it multicultural. I try to in a way make it as single cultural as
possible even in the expense of my culture because being a Finn is much easier
than anything else, even in the U.S. Their [children’s] names are Finnish, they
have my wife’s name. The reason being that it’s much easier, if you have a
Finnish last name, everything is easier, you know how to spell it. (…) If I try to
put any of my culture, my last name, [his Hispanic last name], it would get all
complicated. In the U.S. [too], ‘are you an immigrant, are you Cuban.’ (…) There’s still like, are you Mexican or something. But [the Finnish last name of his
wife]? ‘Oh that’s an interesting name! Where are they from? Finland. Oh okay,
great!’ It works just as well here as there. When I inject my culture less, it’s
better, it has worked out perfectly. I have done that because I know that (…) less
is more. The kids have Finnish passports, names, last names, it works great.”

The family has lived both in Finland and the U.S, and the man felt that it was
easier in both countries for the children if the father’s ethnic background was hidden. The
children, for example, had their mother’s Finnish last name. This way, in Finland, the
children were seen just as “Finnish children.” In the U.S., by his observation, if the
children are seen as Finns, the reception is much more positive than if they are seen as
“immigrants,” “Cuban” or “Mexican.” This also speaks to the racial and class connotations of the term “immigrant” – a question that I will discuss in the next chapter.
Chapter 5.
Invisible Immigrants, Visible Expats, or Permanent Tourists?
White Elite Migrants in Finnish and American Immigration Discourses

“This is my fatherland. (…) All of its sons and daughters are part of the same nation (…) God has united them in the same home country (…) over the course of hundreds of years. (…) They have grown up, lived, and died next to each other in the same noble North, under the same sky, doing the same hard work to support themselves. They have the same Christian faith, same education, same rights, same responsibilities, same privileges, same misfortunes, same freedom, same love, and same hope. They are fellow countrymen, brothers and sisters at all times. They have, not two, but one fatherland. And they are, not two nations, but one nation. (…) What God has united, let no man divide.”

“America is God’s Crucible, the great Melting-Pot where all the races of Europe are melting and re-forming! Here you stand, good folk, think I, when I see them at Ellis Island, here you stand in your fifty groups, your fifty languages, and histories, and your fifty blood hatreds and rivalries. But you won’t be long like that, brothers, for these are the fires of God you’ve come to (…). Germans and

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Frenchmen, Irishmen and Englishmen, Jews and Russians—into the Crucible with you all! God is making the American.**372

I chose to start this chapter with two quotes that illustrate poignantly the contrasting ways Finnish and American nations have been commonly imagined. While the first quote captures the prevalent myth about the uniformity of the Finnish nation, the second portrays in a powerful manner the American nation as a melting pot of (European) nations. The author of the first quote is Zacharias (Sakari) Topelius, a Swedish-speaking Finnish writer, journalist, and historian, who also was an ardent Finnish nationalist during the time when Finland was an autonomous Grand Duchy in the Russian Empire (1809-1917). I extracted the quote from his authoritative book *Maamme kirja (The Book of Our Land)*, first published in 1875; it was considered for a long time as an authoritative account about Finland, its peoples, history, geography, and society. The book remained in use in Finnish elementary schools as a textbook on Finland and Finnishness for decades, from the late nineteenth century to the 1960s. The book was written to encourage patriotic feelings in Finnish students and it arguably had a long-lasting impact on the way Finns imagined their nation. Indeed, scholars have argued that Topelius’ depiction of the “sameness” of the Finnish nation still plays a significant role in the Finnish mental landscape.373 The second, oft-cited quote can be found in Israel Zangwill’s influential play *The Melting Pot*, which depicts the life of a Russian-Jewish immigrant family in the U.S. in the nineteenth century. The play first opened on Broadway in 1908. Zangwill, a Jewish writer born in London who actually never was an immigrant to the U.S. himself,

became famous precisely as the writer who popularized the idea of America as a melting pot and the promised land in which (European) immigrants will melt into one, unitary American nation.\footnote{Joe Kraus, “How The Melting Pot Stirred America: The Reception of Zangwill's Play and Theater's Role in the American Assimilation Experience,” MELUS 24, no. 3 (1999): 3-19.}

Both Topelius’s and Zangwill’s writings exemplify the different ways that the Finnish and American nations have been imagined as \textit{exceptional}. While Finland, it is often argued, is an exceptionally homogenous nation (in terms of ethnicity, religion, culture, and linguistics), the U.S. portrays itself as exceptional because of the diverse origins of Americans. As Oscar Handlin put it in 1951, “Once I thought to write a history of the immigrants in America. Then I discovered that the immigrants \textit{were} American history.”\footnote{Oscar Handlin, \textit{The Uprooted: The Epic Story of the Great Migrations That Made the American People}, 1st ed. (Boston: Little, Brown, 1951), 3.} In this chapter, I examine how these differing national understandings influence the way two groups of intermarried Finns and Americans understand their place in the receiving nation. I show how historical constructions of national identities critically shape migrant incorporation in host societies today. The specific lenses through which I tackle these topics are migrant \textit{visibility} and the different ways the term “immigrant” is understood in Finland and the U.S. These lenses bring into focus who can be considered as part of the Finnish or American nation, and for what reasons. My contention is that it is through the politics of visibility – by which I mean not only \textit{visual, physical} visibility of migrant bodies but also \textit{audible} visibility through language use, as well as “non-sensorial” visibility at the level of public discourses – that foreigners are identified as “immigrants” and positioned differently “in the hierarchy of desirability” in their host
societies. I argue that immigrant visibility is contingent on specific national and temporal contexts, in which hierarchies based on race, ethnicity, class, gender, and nationality intersect to produce different kinds of visibility for different groups of foreigners.

My research demonstrates how national identities carried by migrants to the new country play an important role in the way migrants approach their integration process. Whereas Finns are accustomed to being emigrants, due to the long history of Finnish emigration, Americans often had difficulty of seeing themselves as immigrants in Finland. This difficulty is likely related to the impossibility of seeing the U.S. as a country of *emigration*, and Americans as *emigrants* departing their home country. Furthermore, not only were Americans reluctant to see themselves as immigrants in Finland but also Finnish society did not perceive them as such: they were not expected to assimilate into the host society in the same way as migrants with lower social status are. I start my discussion by outlining how Finnish and American nations are typically depicted, especially in relation to the presence of “immigrants” and other foreigners in these two countries.

**Two Kinds of Exceptionalisms**

The idea of the U.S. as exceptional, and unlike any other country in the world, was present at the very founding of America. American exceptionalism includes ideas of the U.S. as being an exemplary nation, free from “social ills and decadence” found everywhere else in the world, and “exempt from the historical course of ‘social laws’ of

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development which all nations eventually follow.” Moreover, America’s immigration history has been, and still is, part and parcel of American exceptionalism. The idea of the U.S. as a “nation of immigrants” has been burned into the American public’s consciousness, and has been used by politicians, the media, and scholars to explain why the U.S. is exceptional. This myth of an immigrant America rests on the common assumption that the proportion of immigrants in U.S. population is larger than anywhere else – an assumption that is actually false: migration statistics of countries as diverse as Argentina, Australia, Switzerland, and the United Arab Emirates reveal that all have a higher portion of immigrants in their populations than the U.S. In addition, the myth incorporates, as Zangwill also does, the idea of America as the “crucible” that amalgamates peoples originating from different parts of the world into one – a unitary American nation. In the “land of opportunities,” immigrants achieve greater success than they could ever have, had they stayed in their stagnant countries of origin. The myth of an immigrant America is a foundational myth of the nation and “an assertion of national pride.”

Migration historians have situated the invention of the myth of the U.S. as a nation of immigrants in different time periods in U.S. history. For example, as Donna Gabaccia recaps, Aristide Zolberg and Moon-Ho Jung associate the invention of the myth with the polemics surrounding Chinese “coolie” workers in the 1860s and 1870s. Mae Ngai, on the hand, attributes it to immigrant-origin reformers of the mid-twentieth

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379 Gabaccia, “Nations of Immigrants,” 6-7. See also Honig, Democracy and the Foreigner, 78.
century U.S. Gabaccia herself dates the invention of the myth to the decades of the Civil War and the increasing demands to restrict immigration to the country. The term “immigrant” – which carried a much more negative connotation than the term “emigrant” (that was associated with migrant settlers originating from Northern and Western Europe) – was in the nineteenth century used in the context of restricting immigration from “unwanted” countries in the world, such as China and Italy. Consequently, the term “nation of immigrants” was used mainly in the context of immigration restrictions – not in celebratory accounts of the nation’s immigrant origins. As Gabaccia formulates it, “(w)ith the term ‘immigrant’ still too firmly associated with restriction, the nation of immigrants continued (…) to be invented in order to write its obituary.” The meaning of the phrase transformed gradually over the course of the twentieth century, and became widely popular after presidential candidate John F. Kennedy’s published his famous essay *A Nation of Immigrants* in 1958. Kennedy’s publication helped transform the meaning of the term into the one we now understand it to be – as a celebratory depiction of America’s immigrant past.380

The celebratory account of the U.S. as a nation of immigrants obscures the long history of exclusion, exploitation, discrimination, and disciplining that are part and parcel of the actual history of immigration to the U.S. For many groups of immigrants, the U.S. has been rather a “gatekeeping nation” than a welcoming nation of immigrants.381 Postcolonial scholar Ali Behdad underscores the significance of “forgetting” in the political project of nation-building. Indeed, embedded in the liberal myth of an immigrant

381 Lee, “Nation of Immigrants.”
America is a deep ambivalence: the myth “forgets” how immigration to the country was not so much about providing refuge for the “huddled masses” of the world as it was about “a colonialist will to power and a capitalist desire for economic expansion.” In different times in U.S. history, different groups of immigrants – Jewish, Irish, Chinese, Japanese, Mexican – have been “threatening others” that were discriminated against, exploited for capitalist purposes, or strictly banned from entering the country. This painful history, Behdad points out, has to be forgotten in order to forge a unitary imagined community and to maintain the national pride in America as a country hospitable to world’s immigrants and refugees.382 Still today, despite the continuous concerns over economic, cultural, and demographic effects of immigration and debates surrounding undocumented immigrants, this historical amnesia guarantees that the myth of a “heroic immigrant” is still very much alive.383

European nations are no strangers to historical amnesia concerning their immigrant pasts either. The difference is, as Leo Lucassen argues, that European nations have erased the history of immigration altogether from their collective memories – despite the fact that migration scholars have demonstrated how the idea of a “sedentary Europe” is false: migrations to, from, and within Europe are nothing new. As Leslie Page Moch puts it, “human movement is connected to every level of life in (…) Europe – from

383 Honig, Democracy and the Foreigner, 78. Bill Ong Hill writes about two Americas: they both claim that America is a land of immigrants, but how they view “true Americans” is very different. One still has a “Eurocentric vision of America” where true Americans are white, Anglo-Saxon, English-speaking, and Christian. The other America has a more inclusionary view of who an American can be: they do not have to have the same background or speak the same language. Nevertheless, even this America is sometimes ambivalent about migration from certain parts of the world. Bill Ong Hing, Defining America Through Immigration Policy (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2004), 5.
the intimacy of family decisions about how cash will be earned to the global scale, where it reflects Europe’s place in the world economy.”

Thus, while the U.S. celebrates the heroic heritage of European immigrants it once disparaged, European nation-states see themselves as homogeneous nations with stable and static populations, ignoring their histories of immigration. This historical amnesia renders immigration a “permanent exception” in Europe, rather than a normal and historical aspect of interaction between countries.

Finland is no different in this respect. A researcher is hard-pressed to find any studies on immigrants or other foreigners residing in Finland before the time when Finland supposedly transformed from an emigration to immigration country in the 1980s. Antero Leitzinger’s two-volume study on foreigners in Finland between 1812 and 1972, published in 2008, is literally the first one to examine foreign citizens in Finland and Finnish immigration policies before the 1980s. An important factor in this lack of historical record of immigration to Finland is the absence of reliable statistical data, which I mentioned in Chapter 1. This lack of data accentuates how profoundly Finland rejects seeing itself as a country of immigration: the presence of foreigners was deemed so insignificant that no data were collected. Leitzinger also points to the almost complete erasure of the immigrant origins of many significant Finnish business owners, political leaders, and cultural authorities. For example, the company making the “quintessentially Finnish” chocolate *Fazer* was founded by Karl Fazer, a son of a Swiss immigrant, in

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1891, and in 1819 a Russian immigrant Nikolai Sinebrychoff established one of the oldest and most well-known breweries in Finland, Sinebrychoff Brewery. These well-known businessmen are known for producing Finnish chocolate and Finnish beer and soft drinks, but their immigrant pasts have been completely forgotten.\textsuperscript{386} Thus, both Finland and the U.S. seek in their nation-building projects to forge a uniform national identity; in the U.S. the immigrant past is often celebrated (if that past is deemed racially and culturally desirable in contemporary terms) while in Finland it is erased.

This erasure allows Finns to view the Finnish nation as ethnically, culturally, religiously, and linguistically homogeneous. This myth is so common in Finland that sometimes it seems that “the most homogeneous thing in Finland is the homogeneity in which Finland is claimed to be homogeneous.”\textsuperscript{387} Antti Häkkinen and Mika Tervonen succinctly summarize typical characterizations of Finnish society as

“an exceptionally homogenous, even mono-cultural, society, not only with regard to ethnicity and religion but also to social structures, life-styles, and identities. Hundreds of years of struggle for survival in the most unfavorable natural environment have been thought to have created an exceptionally independent and persistent nation. Finland’s relatively remote position on a periphery has also been seen as a basis for its strong resistance against foreign influences, thus maintaining an authentic Finnish way of life and a mono-ethnic society.”\textsuperscript{388}

\textsuperscript{386} Leitzinger, \textit{Ulkomaalaiset Suomessa}, 9-11; Leitzinger, \textit{Ulkomaalaispolitiikka Suomessa}, 14-17, 42.
\textsuperscript{387} “Yhdenmukaisinta Suomessa on se yhdenmukaisuus, jolla Suomen väitetään olevan yhdenmukainen.” Mikko Lehtonen, Olli Löytty, and Petri Ruuska, \textit{Suomi toisin sanoen} (Tampere: Vastapaino, 2004), 111.
Of course, in recent years many scholars have contested this traditional depiction of the Finnish nation. Researchers have pointed out that the idea of a homogeneous, mono-ethnic Finland dates back to the latter half of the nineteenth century, to the nation-building project that aimed “to incorporate peripheral domains and to assimilate diverse peoples into the body-politic.”\textsuperscript{389} After Finland’s independence in 1917 and the divisive Civil War of 1918, the new nation intensified its efforts to build an ethnically and culturally homogeneous nation through ethnopolitics that were based on discourses erasing the presence of ethnic and cultural minorities and on concrete political and administrative procedures aiming to assimilate, and sometimes to downright repress, the largest ethnic minorities (the Sami, Russians, and Romany).\textsuperscript{390}

The discourse of Finnishness as a uniform, homogeneous, and essentialized identity was further solidified by the experience of World War II and the subsequent Cold War. After World War II, in 1948, Finland signed an Agreement of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance with the Soviet Union. Under this pact, the Soviet Union recognized Finland’s desire to remain outside the power struggle between the eastern and western superpowers, allowing the country to adopt a foreign policy of neutrality during the Cold War. As a consequence, for example, Finland did not participate in the Marshall Plan and kept very cool relations to the NATO and to western military powers in general. Thus, the war experiences and precarious geopolitical location between the western and eastern blocs solidified the idea of the Finnish nation as a strictly bordered, isolated entity. As Kris Clarke puts it,

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\textsuperscript{389} Ibid.  \\
\textsuperscript{390} Ibid., 21-25.; Vesa Puuronen, “Näkökulmia etnisten suhteiden tutkimukseen Suomessa,” in Ylirajainen kulttuuri, 42-43.
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“(t)he result of the trauma of the war, which served (...) to provide a focus for national unity in time of emergency, and the new post-war political reality, which effectively kept Finland separate from the eastern and western blocs, was to strengthen the sense of Finnishness with its implicit location in the unarticulated but clearly tacit no man’s land of the Europe Between in the era of the Cold War.”

Foreigners, in this context, were seen as a threat. For example, admitting refugees was a sensitive political issue during the Cold War. Finland’s refugee policy was part of its foreign policy; the country did not sign the UN treaty on refugee rights until 1968 – more than ten years after the other Nordic countries. Finland’s national security was considered far more important than human rights. Indeed, researchers have pointed to the centrality of “defense mentality” in the construction of Finnishness. Still today, Finland and Finnishness are often seen to be continuously under threat, as if Finnishness is “a project of defense and preservation of the species.”

Thus, Finland’s geopolitical position in the Europe Between, on the border of East and West, has been crucial not only in foreign policy but also for the forging of its

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391 Kris Clarke, *Breaking the Bounds of Bifurcation: The Challenge of Multiculturalism in the Finnish Vocational Social Care Education* (Tampere: University of Tampere, 1999), 96. Emphasis Clarke’s. Clarke uses Vesa Saarikoski’s definition (in Vesa Saarikoski, “Introduction: The Europe Between,” in *And Never Shall They Meet? European Space and Thought Between East and West*, ed. Vesa Saarikoski (Turku: University of Turku, 1997), 7-16) of the Europe Between as “a regionalized whole united by the historical experience of being-in-between; theoretically the Europe Between can be seen as a ‘weak region,’ a case of objective regionalization.” It is a “border zone,” “a kind of Third Europe between East and West.” See note 71 on page 83 in Clarke’s study.


national identity. Finns have typically looked down on the East and up to the West. Sweden and Russia have been the most important mirrors against which Finnishness has been reflected. Scholars have argued that Russians have been the negation against which an ideal self-image as Finns has been constructed; Russianness has been something that needs to be guarded against. On the other hand, Sweden – and later other Western countries – has often appeared as an object of envy or desire. A famous saying by a Finnish political journalist, writer, and historian A.I. Arwidsson, from the early nineteenth century, “Swedes we are not, Russians we do not want to become, let us therefore become Finns,” illustrates not only the constructed nature of the Finnish national identity (“let us therefore become Finns”) but also the difference between Finns’ relations with Sweden and Russia, which both ruled over Finland in different time periods. Whereas the difference between Finns and Swedes is stated in a rather neutral manner (“Swedes we are not”), Russianness is depicted as something Finns specifically do not want to be associated with (“Russians we do not want to become”).

The origins of the desire to be part of the West may be traced back to late nineteenth and early twentieth century racial theories that categorized Finns as racially inferior to European races because they were part of the “Mongolian race.” Finnish

396 “Ruotsalaisia emme ole, venäläisiksi emme tule, olkaamme siis suomalaisia.” Alapuro, “Kertomus suomalaisista,” 98. Originally Arwidsson wrote the phrase in Swedish, as most Finnish intellectuals did in the 19th century (including Topelius, whom I quoted in the beginning of this chapter). The original Swedish quote goes “Svenskar äro vi inte längre, ryssar vilja vi inte bli, låt oss alltså bli finnar,” in which the emphasis on becoming Finnish is clear; from the Finnish translation this act of becoming is missing (in English, the Finnish translation would be “let us be Finns.”
intellectuals, appalled by these theories, were determined to move the “Mongolian border” to the East and prove that Finns were racially European. The long-lasting impact of the “Mongolian theory” in the Finnish mental landscape can be seen in Heikki Waris’s 1948 study Suomalaisen yhteiskunnan rakenne (The Structure of Finnish Society) that presents research findings refuting these racial theories, underlining Finns’ “racial purity.” Waris writes that “the racial homogeneity of the Finnish nation is strengthened by the fact that there are only three small and completely insignificant racial minority groups,” the Sami, Romany, and Jews. He emphasizes that the two latter ones are “racially completely unrelated” to Finns.

These historical processes of nation-building and racialized construction of Finnishness have a profound effect on the ways in which the presence of immigrants and other foreigners in Finland is negotiated today. As Clarke points out, “(t)he construction and consolidation of a homogeneous sense of Finnish identity in the post-war years created a bordered and static sense of national group identity that continues to influence the discourse on multiculturalism in Finland.” It can be argued, then, that the idea of a vulnerable and homogeneous nation is at the core of current and negative immigration discourses in Finland. However, in the 1990s, with Finland’s membership in the European Union, there was a “subtle shift” in the discourse on Finnish national identity.

399 Clarke, Breaking the Bounds of Bifurcation, 98.
Finland’s integration into the European community (following the collapse of the Soviet Union) intensified efforts to link Finnishness with “an international, outward-looking perspective of Europeanness.”\textsuperscript{400} Indeed, in Finland “Europeanness” often appears as “better” and more cultured than Finnishness; it is portrayed as something that Finns are still lacking and that they need to acquire. This desire to be more European is partly rooted in Finland’s struggle to “shake off for good the remains of the nineteenth century racial science that placed Finns at the lower ends of racial hierarchies.”\textsuperscript{401}

A fascinating contrast between Finland and the U.S. can be found in the drastically different ways the nations estimate their “attractiveness” in the eyes of other nations. In the American mental landscape, there is no question of foreigners’ desire to immigrate to the U.S. – after all, it is “the land of opportunities.” In contrast, according to Lucassen, European countries are “less confident about the attractiveness of their culture” to immigrants and therefore do not anticipate that immigrants would want to “melt” into European nations. Rather than becoming part of the nation, they will “remain alien bodies” in European societies.\textsuperscript{402} In the Finnish context, this uncertainty concerning the attractiveness of Finnish culture and society to foreigners seems to be even more pronounced. A verse in the Finnish national anthem \textit{Maamme (Our Country, 1848)} proclaims, “Our land is poor, it has no hold, on those who lust for gain, and strangers pass it proud and cold.”\textsuperscript{403} This negative self-perception (visible also in parts of

\textsuperscript{400} Ibid., 99. See also Lehtonen, Lõyyt, and Ruuska, \textit{Suomi toisin sanoen}, 141, 195.
\textsuperscript{401} Sari Irni, “‘Experience is a National Asset’: A Postcolonial Reading of Ageing in the Labour Market,” in \textit{Complying with Colonialism: Gender, Race and Ethnicity in the Nordic Region} (Farnham, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2009), 180.
\textsuperscript{402} Lucassen, \textit{Immigrant Threat}, 209.
\textsuperscript{403} “On maamme köyhä, siksi jää, jos kultaa kaivannet. Sen vieras kyllä hylkääjää.” I found the English translation on the website of the Teacher Training School of Helsinki University. “Maamme,” \textit{Teacher}
Topelius’s *Maamme kirja*) has led some Finnish scholars to argue that Finns suffer from a persistent “inferiority complex.” This complex has often been attributed to Finland’s history as a dependency of first Sweden, then Russia, and the consequent “insecure minority identity.”

The self-deprecation common in Finnish mentality is characterized by depictions of Finland as a distant, cold, and isolated country in the North and Finns as close-minded, intolerant, and unwelcoming people. As Seppo Paananen puts it, in writings of Finnish authors it “becomes clear that quiet and socially ill-equipped Finns are no delight to each other – let alone to social and exuberant foreigners.”

This negatively-evaluated national identity, combined with the historical amnesia concerning foreigners living in Finland, produces a vision of a nation that never managed to attract any foreigners and therefore remained unaffected by them. As Leitzinger puts it, Finland’s “short-term memory regarding the nation’s past and the national modesty that verges on self-hatred have obscured the understanding of historical presence of foreigners in Finland.”

While the narratives concerning the national histories of Finland and the U.S. are very different – an “attractive” country of immigration and an “unattractive” homogeneous nation – the goal of these nation-building narratives is the same: to create an image of a unitary nation. National identities are always constructed against “others,”
those who are not seen as part of “us.” Immigrants specifically often work as a mirror against which national identities are reflected. ⁴⁰⁸ The category of an “American” seems to be somewhat more flexible than the category of a “Finn,” as it does acknowledge the diverse origins of American people. Nevertheless, the construction of “Americanness” is still as much about exclusion as it is about inclusion. Different groups of immigrants – depending on “different cultural conditions, economic needs, political exigencies, and social conflicts” – have been seen as menacing foreign “others” against which the U.S. defines itself as a nation. ⁴⁰⁹

In the case of Finland, researchers have pointed out that despite Finland’s desire to be part of the West, “Finnishness” still remains a given, essential, and ahistorical category. ⁴¹⁰ For example, Outi Lepola’s study on political discourses surrounding immigration in Finland in the 1990s reveals that politicians invariably talked about Finns as a collective and uniform group, repeatedly contrasting “us Finns” against immigrants to underline the fundamental difference between these two groups. ⁴¹¹ Multiculturalism, in this context, is seen as something that came to Finland with the EU membership, globalization, and increased immigration; in other words, it comes from outside of Finnish society. Finnish society itself remains unchanged and monocultural. Thus, the

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discourse on immigration and multiculturalism in Finland only reinforces the essentialized and dualistic division between “Finns” and “immigrants.”

It is through the politics of visibility that certain groups of foreigners are identified as immigrant “others” in Finland and the U.S. As noted in the beginning of this chapter, by “immigrant visibility” I refer not only to visual, physical visibility of migrant bodies but also audible visibility through language use, as well as “non-sensorial” visibility at the level of public discourses. In the next section, I show how in the case of white, middle class migrants like Finns in the U.S. and Americans in Finland, differences from the dominant population are marked through non-visual factors. More specifically, language use functions most often as the marker of Finns’ and Americans’ “otherness.”

**Visible and Invisible Immigrants**

The question of immigrant visibility – why some immigrant groups are visible and others are rendered invisible – is a complex one to tackle. Immigrant visibility is most commonly linked to the physical characteristics of migrant bodies. Scholars have importantly highlighted the ways in which “particular bodies, marked by skin colour, disability, cultural affiliation, sexuality, age, or gender, are deemed to be ‘out of place’ and disruptive of the ‘natural’ or ‘normal’ order of things.”

In other words, being visible is often a very bodily experience. For example, Heidi Ruohio’s study on

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413 Caroline Nagel and Lynn A. Staeheli, “Integration and the Politics of Visibility and Invisibility in Britain: The Case of British Arab Activists,” in *New Geographies of Race and Racism*, 85.
international adoptees from Asia, Africa, and Latin America in Finland reveals the importance of physical characteristics in becoming visible: despite the adoptees’ Finnish citizenship, Finnish-sounding names, perfect Finnish skills, and social and cultural upbringing in Finland, their Finnishness is continuously contested, for example by Finns addressing the adoptees in English.  

Immigrant visibility is contingent on specific national and temporal contexts: in different time periods and national contexts, hierarchies based on race, gender, class, nationality, and sexuality impose different kinds of visibility upon different groups of immigrants. U.S. scholars have shown how the “visual lexicon” of who can belong in the American nation has changed drastically over the course of the twentieth century: during the mid-century years, Southern and Eastern European migrants, who were formerly considered as racially “other” (or “in-between” or “not-quite-white”) became to be seen as part of one, monolithic Caucasian race with Euro-American identities. Furthermore, Lisa Lowe argues that Asians in America continue to be seen as immigrants – even when born in the county. They are categorized as culturally and racially other, as the “foreigner-within.” As Eleanor Ty point out, “(b)y being labeled through the official discourse of government and labour as ‘alien’ or a ‘visible minority,’ one is psychically and socially marked as other, as visibly different, and less than the norm, which is

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white.”

Ironically, while Asian Americans are “highly visible racially marked objects,” they are also “ideologically invisibilized as ‘model minorities’ or ‘honorary whites.’”

The very visibility of these groups of immigrants or minorities positions them in “a state of not being seen by the dominant culture.” Similarly, bell hooks has pointed to the invisibility of racialized groups in society and their simultaneous “hypervisibility” as cultural and racial stereotypes. In other words, physical visibility of migrant bodies may result in structural invisibility.

Thus, in racially structured societies – as the U.S. and Finland are – visuality plays a major role in who can be considered as “one of us” – as part of the Finnish or American nation. While some groups are able to “pass” as “one of us,” others are marked visibly different and end up (unwillingly) at the center of stigmatizing debates surrounding immigration. If we use this common understanding of immigrant visibility – visual visibility – my interviewees can be argued to be “invisible immigrants” in both Finland and the U.S. In both countries, “whiteness” is an unmarked and normative racial category that, at the same time, functions as a marker of “domination and superiority.”

Some of my interviewees – more commonly Americans but also some of the Finnish interviewees – recognized their whiteness as a factor facilitating their adaptation in

419 Ty, Politics of the Visible, 27.
Finland or the U.S. For example, two Americans who responded to the online survey noted:

“I do have the advantage of being a fair-skinned white person, and an American – so at least I stand a little bit of a chance!”

“My immigrant experience has been very good, but I am a unique case – comparatively. I have a Ph.D. and no kids. So employment has been good and expenses have been low. I have not suffered any prejudice of importance because I am Caucasian.”

The first quote ties together nationality and race as factors facilitating adjustment in Finland. The latter quote brings class into the picture: this American man relates his positive immigration experiences to his race, but also to his education and good employment situation. The Finnish interviewees (both the Finnish women in Minnesota and the Finnish spouses of Americans in Finland) were overall less likely to talk about race issues than the American interviewees, but there were exceptions, too. For example, Tiina pointed out in the interview that when she was looking for a job in California in the 1960s, her whiteness allowed her to find a job in a doctor’s office and to keep it despite her lack of work experience in the field:

“It was a big thing for me, when I left for California, and didn’t know a thing [about the work] (…), so the doctor told me, ‘if you can make it, I will keep you.’ (…) and I have to say honestly, see at that time if you were black or Mexican (…), it was a very divided society. I did well because I have white skin.”
In these examples, the migrants were, through their perceived “whiteness,” able to find work despite their status as a foreigner.

At the same time, one must be careful not to simply equate immigrant visibility with skin color or other visual characteristics. For example, assuming that white skin color renders immigrants invisible in Finnish society reinforces the common identification of Finnishness with whiteness. Sari Irni shows how even researchers who aim to criticize the mono-ethnic history of Finland often reiterate this connection between being Finnish and being white. Irni uses a study by Inga Jasinskaja-Lahti, Karmela Liebkind, and Tiina Vesala as an example. In this study, the authors note that “at the bottom of the ethnic hierarchy are those who differ most from Finnish people by looks or culture,” referring to black migrants. Another researcher writes, “(a)s Somalis’ physical appearance differs noticeably from Finns (...) they are a highly visible minority wherever they go.” With this quote, the writer ignores the fact that there is a growing number of Somalis who are Finnish citizens, not to mention second generation Somali children who were born in Finland. Thus, despite the aim of challenging racism and discrimination in Finland, the writer excludes those with black skin color from the category of “Finns.”

Furthermore, the position of Russian migrants in Finnish society also challenges the idea of racial characteristics as the only marker of immigrants’ visibility. Gabriele Griffin and Rosi Braidotti argue that

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423 Irni, “‘Experience is a National Asset’,” 181-182. The study that Irni quotes is Inga Jasinskaja-Lahti, Karmela Liebkind, and Tiina Vesala, Rasismi ja syrjintä Suomessa: maahanmuuttajien kokemukset (Helsinki: Gaudeamus, 2002). Emphasis mine.
“(t)he black-white dynamic leaves untouched the whole issue of diversity among groups seemingly of one color, the intra-group differences that account for many of the most serious racial and ethnicized conflicts in Europe. Whiteness is not just about the relation between ‘black’ and ‘white’ but about the definition of ‘white’ as such.”  

Whiteness is a socially constructed category just like any other racial category: different groups of Europeans are not equally “white.” Being a predominantly “white” immigrant group in Finland does not “save” Russians, for example, from being highly visible in Finnish immigration discourses and from persistent discrimination in Finnish society.

When considering the visibility of Russian immigrants in Finland, the discussion shifts from visual, physical visibility to visibility at the level of discourse. In public and academic discourses, it seems that immigrant visibility is often linked to being considered as threatening or problematic by the majority population in economic, social, or cultural terms. For example, migration scholars have used the term “invisibility” to describe a “lack of interest” in certain immigrant groups or minorities by the dominant society, scholars, and the media. In the two earliest studies that I found to have used the term “invisible immigrants,” MacDonald’s 1972 statistical survey of Italian, Portuguese, and

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428 Findlay, “Skilled Transients,” 515.
429 See for example Jesus Garcia, “Hispanic Perspective: Textbooks and Other Curricular Materials,” *The History Teacher* 14, no. 1 (November 1980): 105-120.
Spanish immigrants in the UK and Erickson’s 1972 study on English and Scottish immigrants in the nineteenth century U.S., invisibility was associated with being a white European immigrant group that quickly “melted” into the mainstream society.\textsuperscript{430} Invisibility in this sense has also been used in more recent research. For example, in 1999, William E. Van Vugt viewed British immigrants in the U.S. as invisible because “they could blend in readily with other Americans and engage more immediately in social and civic affairs.”\textsuperscript{431} In this case, too, white, European, and English-speaking Britons were able to absorb quickly into American society – which the author clearly imagined as white, European-origin, and English-speaking.\textsuperscript{432} Moreover, Snehendu B. Kar et al.’s research on Indo-Americans and Indian immigrants in the U.S. associates Indians’ unproblematic status, and the subsequent invisibility, with their geographically dispersed residential patterns (i.e. they do not form clustered ethnic neighborhoods), political inactivity as a group, and, perhaps most importantly, their high socioeconomic status: a majority of Indian immigrants are highly educated professionals with English skills.\textsuperscript{433}

\textsuperscript{430} Charlotte Erickson, \textit{Invisible Immigrants: The Adaptation of English and Scottish Immigrants in Nineteenth-Century America} (Coral Gables, Fla.: University of Miami Press, 1972); John Stuart MacDonald, \textit{The Invisible Immigrants: A Statistical Survey of Immigration into the United Kingdom of Workers and Dependents from Italy, Portugal and Spain} (London: Runnymede Industrial Unit, 1972).

\textsuperscript{431} William E. Van Vugt, \textit{Britain to America: Mid-Nineteenth-Century Immigrants to the United States} (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 3.


The case of Russian migrants in Finland provides an interesting example of how race, nationality, gender, class, and historical relationships between nations are all at play when immigrant groups are rendered visible or invisible in public discourses. Raittila and Kutilainen found in their analysis of media coverage of different immigrant groups in Finland in 1999-2000 that there were nearly twice as many news stories about Russians as about Somalis – arguably the two most visible immigrant groups in Finland today. Finland’s relationship with Russia has been problematic at least since the nineteenth century. Scholars have noted that despite the occasional negative stereotypes of Russians (that have been common everywhere in Europe since the sixteenth century, as a result of the expansionist politics of the Russian empire), there was no wide-spread anti-Russianism in Finland during the time when Finland was part of the Russian Empire. However, after the Finnish Civil War of 1918, which was fought between the conservative-led Senate (“Whites”) and the Soviet-supported Social Democrats (“Reds”), the relationship between the countries deteriorated and Russians and Russian-origin people in Finland became victims of intense discrimination and persecution. There is

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434 Pentti Raittila and Tommi Kutilainen, Rasismi ja etnisyys Suomen sanomalehdissä syksyllä 1999 (Tampere: Tampereen yliopisto, 2000). For example, a survey was conducted in 2002 in which 3,471 Finnish-born persons were asked, “When speaking about resident foreigners in Finland, what groups come to your mind?” The two most commonly mentioned groups were Somalis and Russians: more than half (52%) of the respondents named Somalis and 21% Russians. Säävälä, “How Do Locals,” 118-119.
even a term in the Finnish language to describe hatred toward Russians, ryssäviha. Fear of the large and powerful eastern neighbor intensified in Finland during the World War II and Cold War years. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, however, the attitude changed from fear to feelings of superiority over and contempt for Russians.435

This historical baggage makes the position of Russian immigrants in Finnish society difficult, and renders them a highly visible group in public discourses. The negative visibility is gendered, too: Russian women are more visible than Russian men in the Finnish media. The stereotypes of Russian women as prostitutes or fortune-hunters who marry Finnish men in order to immigrate to Finland are persistent.436 Even scholars have sometimes stigmatized marriages between Finnish men and Russian women as fraud marriages.437 The question of visibility is tied to class status as well: Anni Reuter and Eve Kyntäjä discovered in their interviews with intermarried Russian women and Finnish men that well-educated couples with high social status rarely encountered negative stereotypes regarding their marriage.438 Immigrants with high social status and economic power often remain invisible, while those who are poor and/or dependent on welfare are more visible.439

In earlier chapters I have already pointed to the invisibility in academic research of Americans in Finland and today’s Finnish immigrants in the U.S.: researchers tend to

439 Guild, “Cultural and Identity Security.”
focus on groups that are in one way or another considered “problematic” in the eyes of the dominant society. To gauge media visibility of migrant groups, I conducted a survey of newspaper articles on international marriages in Finland and the U.S. using online databases of the *New York Times, Star Tribune, Pioneer Press,* and *Helsingin Sanomat.* In addition, I used the library catalogue of the University of Helsinki to search for magazine articles that discuss intercultural families in Finland. Of course, my primary goal was to find articles on families in which one spouse is from Finland and the other from the U.S., but the results were (unsurprisingly) very slim. Using the search words “Finland” and “marriage,” I found in the *New York Times* between 1923 and the present time only a couple of marriage announcements of a Finn and an American tying the knot. In the *Star Tribune* (1991-present) and in the *Pioneer Press* (1988-present) I found one article in each that talked about a Finn married to an American, albeit the *Star Tribune* article was written from the perspective of the mother of the American groom (who was amazed that the Finnish bride had red hair instead of blond (“How do I know where this Finnish woman acquired red hair? Am I some kind of geneticist?”)). In the *Pioneer Press* article the Finnish woman interviewed was actually also one of my interviewees, and the article focused on her store in St. Paul in which she sells Finnish design products. My examination of articles published in *Helsingin Sanomat* (1990-present) and in magazines covered by the electronic catalogue of the Helsinki University Library was no more fruitful: I found three articles on American men who had moved to Finland


for marriage. These articles were very positive and focused on men’s observations of cultural differences between Finland and the U.S., presented in a relatively light manner.\textsuperscript{442}

Overall, I found very few articles on marriages between Westerners and Finns in my article search, despite the fact that Finnish women’s foreign husbands most often originate from Western countries. In public (and also academic, I should add) discourses, the epitomized marriage migrant is instead a woman from Russia, Thailand, or the Philippines marrying a Finnish man. These women are portrayed as either victims or gold-diggers. For example, Thai women are often portrayed as victims of sex trade or as “mail-order brides,” even though it has been shown that the mail-order bride business is uncommon in Finland. Women from Russia and Asia are exoticized as more feminine, traditional, and submissive than Finnish women. In addition, the women’s victimized position is emphasized by portraying their Finnish husbands as abusers who restrict their wives’ connections to the outside world.\textsuperscript{443} When Finnish women’s marriages with foreigners are discussed in the media, the focus is on marriages between Finnish women and darker-skinned and/or Muslim men: husbands from Africa, Turkey, or former Yugoslavia. Although articles in women’s magazines often celebrate “multicultural richness” in these marriages, the common stereotype is that of a naïve Finnish woman


who is used by her foreign husband or fiancée to get a residence permit in Finland. In addition, differences in conceptions regarding gender roles between the Finnish wife and the (patriarchal) Muslim husband are often emphasized.\footnote{\cite{Huttunen:145-146; Urponen:Monikulttuurinen parisuude.}}

A review of scholarly work on media representations of international marriages in Europe and the U.S. reveals that discourses surrounding international marriages are strikingly transnational. The media attention is largely negative and focuses on the so-called mail-order bride phenomenon. As in Finland, in the U.S. (and in many other Western countries) much attention has been paid to marriages between American men and Asian women. The tone is typically negative and moralizing (because of the commercial arrangements attached to these relationships). Again, women are portrayed either as victims of exploitation associated with international traffic in women, or as gold-diggers seeking to find a way to migrate to a Western country.\footnote{\cite{Virginia O. del Rosario:1, Palriwala and Uberoi:23-24.}} Discourses surrounding marriages between Russian women and American men strikingly resemble the Finnish discourses. Ericka Johnson, for example, found that Russian women appear in American media reports as mail-order brides who suffer from abuse and domestic violence by their exploitative American husbands, or as opportunistic foreigners looking to get a green card. Both Asian and Russian women, as well as women from Latin American countries, are seen as more traditional and feminine and less career-oriented than Western women.\footnote{\cite{Ericka Johnson:Dreaming of a Mail-Order Husband: Russian-American Internet Romance (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 1, 18. See also Lynn Visson, “Russian-American Marriages: Cultures and Conflicts,” in \textit{Intercultural Couples}, 147-166. Flemmen’s and Sverdljuk’s studies on marriages between}}
Thus, at the level of media and academic discourses, the invisibility of my interviewees is evident. Intermarried Americans in Finland or Finns in America are not seen as a threat to the dominant population because of their racial and class status and also because of the small and dispersed nature of their immigrant communities. However, as immigrant visibility is tied not only to nationality and class but also to race and ethnicity, different groups of Americans likely experience visibility differently. The case of Darryl Parker, an African American professional basketball player who left Finland in 1995 because of racial harassment by skinheads, suggests that experiences of non-white Americans may be significantly different. At the same time, even within “blackness,” there are hierarchies based on nationality. Aino Harinen demonstrates in her study on the media discourses surrounding the Parker case that in the midst of the media upheaval, groups of Somali refugees pointed out that they had been experiencing racism in Finland for years without sparking any alarm or interest in the media.

My interviews reveal a subtler way of making difference between “us” and “them” in the case of “unproblematic” white, middle class immigrants like Finns in the U.S. and (white) Americans in Finland. The way they “became visible” – or, more accurately, “audible” – was often related to language use: Americans’ lack of Finnish skills or a foreign accent when speaking Finnish and Finns’ accent in English rendered

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them visible in public places. The following quote, written by an American who arrived in Finland in 2004, poignantly reveals how language use can mark a person visible:

“I arrived in Finland the same day George W. Bush was re-elected. The first few months in Finland I faced many prejudices by random Finnish on the streets, especially in Helsinki when I would speak English out loud. They would say I was murdering people in Iraq (...). However, that just lasted for a few months.”

In this quote, it is the use of American English that marks the American visible on the streets of Helsinki and evokes negative reactions from “random Finnish.” As this example suggests, Americans’ “audible visibility” may sometimes be received negatively in Finland. However, the high status of the English language and of being an American usually guarantees positive reactions from the dominant population. As one of the Americans noted, “most Finns still want to create a positive impression on English speakers.” In addition, many Americans noted that Finns were often excited to have the possibility to speak English with a native speaker of English: “Learning Finnish is difficult, not only because it’s a difficult language, but because so many people insist on speaking English to you!”

Overall, in the Finnish context, language seems to play a major role in marking immigrants as visible. According to Seppo Paananen, in the process of nation-building, the special character of the Finnish nation was found in the Finnish language: “The language made the nation an intimate and closed community of similar-minded

449 Anna Rastas, “Rasismin kiistäminen suomalaisessa maahanmuutokkeskustelussa,” in En ole rasisti, mutta..., 58; Irni, “'Experience is a National Asset',” 181-182.
people."\(^{450}\) In this context, those with imperfect Finnish skills – let alone those who do not speak Finnish at all – are left outside the exclusive “circle of Finnishness.”\(^{451}\) Another American man, who was born in Latin America but migrated to the U.S. as a child with his family, and had lived in Finland for four years at the time of the interview, commented: “If I shave and cut my hair, people hardly see the difference (…) if I don’t open my mouth.” This Hispanic American noted that he could “pass” as a Finn if he “hides” his dark hair, but this “camouflaging” only works if he does not open his mouth and reveal that he does not speak Finnish fluently. This quote draws attention to both visual and audible factors when people make distinctions between “us” and “them.” Moreover, an American woman who responded to my online survey noted: “Now that I have learned Finnish well – about as well as it is possible – I am frustrated to find that often people withdraw from you when they pick up on the fact that you are not a native (perfect) speaker.” Thus, again, language was the factor that marked the American a foreigner, different from Finns.

Also in the interviews that I conducted with Finnish women in the U.S., language came through as the main factor that marked these otherwise invisible women as visible in public places. All of the women were fluent in English when I interviewed them, but they still had an accent in their English (by their own estimate – I interviewed them mainly in Finnish). For example, Kati noted in her interview that Americans always

\(^{450}\) Paananen, Suomalaisuuden armoilla, 22-23.

\(^{451}\) Outi Lepola uses the term “circle of Finnishness” (suomalaisuuden piiri) to discuss how some groups are included in the category of “Finns” and others are left out. Lepola, Ulkomaalaisesta suomenmaalaiseksi, 328.
notice that she is not American because of her accent. In addition, a Finnish woman who lives in one of the suburbs of the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul, MN, said,

“You’re always a foreigner, from somewhere else. The closer you get to the Metro Area, the more diversity there is, [and] people don’t notice you that much, especially if you’re white. (…) Almost every week somebody asks me where I’m from because of my accent.”

In this quote, the woman implied that being invisible was easier when she was in the Twin Cities than in the suburban town where she lived. In other words, while her whiteness “protected” her from being visible in a diverse environment like the Twin Cities, in her home town, a white suburb, where she blended in racially, her accent was the marker of foreignness. However, even if noticed as a foreigner, she did not think it affected her adversely: “But people take me seriously (…), I don’t feel that anybody is negative towards me.” Another Finnish woman, Tiina, explained that in her view attitudes of Americans toward foreigners with an accent had become more negative as Minnesota became “more diverse.” She moved to the state in 1972 from California. She noted in the interview that at that time, Minneapolis was a “totally white city.” She reminisced that when she spoke Finnish in public places in the 1970s, people would compliment her on her “lovely accent.” Today, Tiina said, people turn around when they hear a foreign accent or language “and think that I’m from South America or something, because I’m too dark to be considered a Finn.” Another woman argued that Americans’ attitudes toward foreigners had become more negative after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. She said that she almost “anticipates negative comments” when
people notice that she is not a native speaker – but she nevertheless acknowledged her racial privilege by pointing out that “well, I’m a blond, and that probably makes things easier, that I’m not dark-skinned and wearing a veil (…), then I’m sure it would be much more difficult.”

In sum, both Finns in the U.S. and Americans in Finland become visible through language use. However, the repercussions of this visibility were different for the two groups. As I documented in Chapter 3, Americans’ lack of language skills often dampened their career prospects in Finland. While their status as white Western immigrants may put them in a more privileged position than visible migrant groups, problems with the Finnish language still affect their integration and career prospects. Patricia M. O’Connor found similar results in her study on Irish migrants in Australia. Despite the fact that the Irish were native speakers of English, their accent was the factor that marked “this otherwise invisible immigrant group as ‘other’ and prevent(ed) them from appearing as a hegemonic version of ‘Anglo-Australianism.’”  

In addition, Val Colic-Peisker found in her study on Bosnian refugees in Australia that in the initial phase of settlement, the “whiteness” and “Europeanness” of Bosnians enabled them to remain invisible in Australian society. However, when the refugees attempted to find employment, “the language barrier and their non-English-speaking background became a basis of difference and potential exclusion.”  

Colic-Peisker argues that Bosnians’ integration was determined by “factors beyond visibility.” My study shows that language-

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452 O’Connor, “Bodies In and Out of Place,” 6.  
related factors not only affect immigrant incorporation, but can also mark the otherwise invisible immigrant as visible.

Finns in the U.S., on the other hand, were rarely seriously affected by their status as non-native speakers. In most cases, it took some time before the women were able to establish themselves professionally in the U.S. (although some women also opted for staying home with the children). Nevertheless, the difficulty of finding employment was not a recurrent topic in these interviews, as it was in the Americans’ interviews and survey responses. Interestingly, it seems that for many Americans in Finland, being visible as an English speaker was usually preferable to being visible as a non-fluent Finnish speaker. English is a global language with a high social status; it is “iconic of the West and modernity.” Moreover, speaking English implies that a person is staying in Finland only temporarily, as a tourist or perhaps as an expatriate, whereas “broken Finnish” marks the speaker as an immigrant in Finland. An American woman pointed out in a survey response that “in the end I discovered that if I want decent service, it’s better to use English, since the attitude is then noticeably better.” This experience is not limited to native-speakers of English: the Finnish Broadcasting Company (YLE) reported in 2009 that many immigrants received better service in Finland if they spoke English, in contrast to speaking Finnish with an accent. The news story quotes an Algerian man who has lived in Finland for a decade: “I think that if I speak English, they assume I’m a tourist, so the service is better. If I speak Finnish, they think ‘he’s just one of these foreigners who live in Finland.’” In other words, Americans living in Finland find

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454 Piller, “‘I Always Wanted to Marry a Cowboy’,” 61-62.
themselves in an ambivalent position: speaking English usually creates a positive reaction, but categorizes the speaker as somebody who is not in Finland to stay. Speaking Finnish with an accent, on the other hand, may suggest that the speaker is not an American at all, but an immigrant – which conjures up a completely different mental imagery. Finns in the U.S., in contrast, may be able to claim membership in U.S. society by evoking memories of “heroic immigrants” who came from Europe to build the country in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. These contrasting experiences of Finns in the U.S. and Americans in Finland speak to the differences in the way the term “immigrant” is understood in these two countries.

**Invisible Immigrants, Visible Expats, Permanent Tourists?**

Both in Europe and the U.S., current immigration discussions are predominantly wrapped in the vocabulary of threats, restrictions, and problems that immigrants may cause for the host societies. In Europe, immigration discourses usually focus on the (incompatible) cultural, religious, and ethnic differences between the native and immigrant populations. Before the 1980s, very little attention was paid to these differences – foreign workers were expected to return to their home countries once their labor was no longer needed. However, in the 1980s many Western European countries realized that the guest workers were not leaving and that they had brought their families with them. At the same time, the number of refugees arriving in Europe increased, amplifying anxieties over foreign-born populations. Finland also became more fully integrated into global migration streams during this time period of raising concerns over

immigration and integration. The immigration history of Finland has thus much more in common with other countries on the “geographical periphery of Europe” (Ireland, Greece, Italy, Spain, and Portugal) than with other Scandinavian or Western European countries. Finland and the other “peripheral” countries are characterized by ad hoc migration policies and public debates focusing on migration control, increases in criminality, and “fears of losing national cultural authenticity.” In other words, problem-oriented immigration discourses were adopted in Finland from the start and, consequently, immigration has been seen as a problem (rather than a resource) in Finland.

Furthermore, as Leo Lucassen persuasively argues, the European welfare state plays a major role in Europe’s relations with immigrants: “It is undeniable that the rise of the welfare state and the role of bureaucrats and policymakers at all levels (…) have contributed to the problematization of immigration and integration.” Thus, while the welfare state provides a different opportunity structure for immigrants in European societies, it also influences how immigrants are perceived by the dominant populations. The expansion of the welfare state, and the fact that in many countries, such as in Finland, welfare benefits are not reserved for citizens, create images of immigrants as “free riders” who opportunistically take advantage of welfare benefits. The bureaucratic machinery of the welfare state requires constant monitoring of immigrant incorporation.

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In other words, immigration is problematized through the constant measuring and governing of immigrants. In the U.S, the current immigration discourses revolve around the economic effects of immigration, the social welfare burden caused by immigrants, qualms concerning linguistic fragmentation, and debates surrounding undocumented immigration. Scholars have conducted revealing studies of how immigrants are portrayed in the American popular media. For example, a study on language used in the Los Angeles Times to discuss California’s state propositions concerning Latino immigrants in 1992-1998 revealed that immigrants were most commonly characterized as “disease, weeds, animals, and a threat to the national health or hearth.” Leo R. Chavez argues in his impressive study on magazine covers picturing immigration since 1965 that the overriding concern in the media discourses was the demographic impact of increasing immigration from Asia and Latin America on the racial makeup of the nation. In the discourses he studied, “an Anglo-European ethnicity” was constructed as foundational to the nation, and this national foundation was depicted to be in crisis: “Images of whites being squeezed out of the nation by growing numbers of Latinos and Asians” recurred on magazine covers throughout the time period under study. Moreover, since the 1970s the Mexican immigrant has epitomized threats that immigrants pose to the nation: not only are Mexicans threatening the sovereignty of the U.S. by crossing the southern border illegally, but they are also seen as the “enemy within” because of their high fertility rates.

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458 Lucassen, Immigrant Threat, 9, 13-15, 198, 204.
460 Terri A. Karis, “‘We’re Just a Couple of People:’ An Exploration of Why Some Black-White Couples Reject the Terms Cross-Cultural and Interracial,” in Intercultural Couples, 96.
use of Spanish, socioeconomic characteristics, and willingness to accept low wages. At the same time, the magazine covers also sought to depict America as a nation of immigrants – especially in issues published around Independence Day in July.

In contrast, the image of a “heroic immigrant” is completely absent from European discourses of immigration. Instead, the concepts “immigrant,” “refugee,” and “asylum seeker” are constantly conflated in public discussions in Europe. The small group of refugees and asylum seekers receives “disproportionate negative attention” in the media, and the concept of an “immigrant” becomes associated with ideas of oppressed victims fleeing their home country or opportunistic asylum seekers looking for social benefits in prosperous European welfare states. For example, Elisa Joy White found that in contemporary Ireland, the general assumption is that all immigrants are asylum-seekers (while in fact only one-fifth entered the country in search of refuge). She also found that “blackness” became associated with being a refugee or asylum seeker.

In France, too, “the term ‘immigrant’ has (...) frequently been used to signify those of non-European origin (or ‘appearance’), and specifically North Africans and their children. In other words, a number of distinct categories have become conflated within the term ‘immigration’ so that what has become known as ‘the problem of


immigration’ can designate specific people, irrespective of their nationality, who are defined as a threat to national unity and national identity.”

Similar processes are taking place in Finland. Negative characteristics are intrinsically linked to public perceptions of persons who are considered to be immigrants, regardless of legal status, in Finnish discourses. Migrants moving because of professional employment or marriage to a Finn are usually absent from immigration discourses – apart from a few stereotyped marriages that also receive negative media attention – because they are not considered to be immigrants. Instead, discourses focus on refugees and asylum seekers – who form only a minority (in 2009, 12 percent) of admitted immigrants in Finland. Researchers have noted that in the Finnish context, an “immigrant” is usually seen “as a hierarchically lower, helpless victim, devoid of individuality.” Furthermore, immigrants are seen as a uniform, undifferentiated mass, originating from non-Western parts of the world, and associated with pre-modern gender and family systems. Immigrant women are victimized and silenced: the stereotypical immigrant woman is a passive stay-at-home mother (as opposed to active and equal Finnish women), oppressed by her patriarchal husband, and originating from Africa or a Muslim country. Ismo Söderling’s analysis of 300 images drawn by native-born Finns to depict

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464 Laura Huttunen, “Mikä ihmeen maahanmuuttaja?,” in *En ole rasisti, mutta...,* 118.
467 Huttunen, “Kasvoton ulkomaalainen,” 135; Salla Tuori, “Erontekoja: Rodullistetun sukupuolen
Finnish and foreign families exemplifies in a poignant way what kind of families Finns associate with the term “immigrant family.” In more than half of the pictures representing non-Finnish families, the foreigners were represented as visibly black.\textsuperscript{468} Thus, “even in visual imagery, the dark-skinned African commonly rules the Finnish imagination of what constitutes a foreigner.”\textsuperscript{469} In other words, race, nationality, religion, gender, and class are all at play in meanings attached to the term “immigrant.”

Consequently, Americans are not usually seen as immigrants in Finland. When it comes to small numbers of middle-class people moving from one highly industrialized country to another (like immigrants originating from Western Europe and North America), the term “immigrant” seems incongruent in people’s minds.\textsuperscript{470} As Gabrielle Varro and Monica Boyd put it, Americans in Europe are officially immigrants, but the term conjures up “visions of uneducated, poor, and/or politically or religiously oppressed people ‘fleeing’ to another country.”\textsuperscript{471} In addition, Americans’ use of English in Finland adds to the conception that they are not in Finland to stay (as immigrants would be). They are expected to be only visiting the country temporarily, as tourists or expatriates. These two terms conjure up completely different images than the term “immigrant.” The term “tourist” gives the impression of having the freedom and resources to enter a country for pleasure and adventure for a limited amount of time. Tourists are usually welcomed as

\textsuperscript{468}Ismo Söderling, Perheitä meiltä ja muualta: suomalaisten nähden suomalaiset perheistä (Helsinki: Väestöliitto, 1999).
\textsuperscript{469}Minna Säävälä, “How Do Locals,” 128.
\textsuperscript{471}Varro and Boyd, “Introduction,” 14.
they bring capital to the receiving country.\textsuperscript{472} The term “expatriate,” on the other hand, evokes visions of international globetrotters who are privileged, middle or upper class, separate from immigrant classes. They also enjoy a greater freedom of movement than immigrants, who are often unwelcomed and subject to immigration laws restricting their mobility across borders.\textsuperscript{473} Thus, Americans’ imagined position as tourists or expatriates puts them in a privileged position vis-à-vis the foreigners who are seen as immigrants in Finland.

Migration scholars have pointed out how professional and highly skilled immigrants typically do not see themselves as “immigrants:” their technical, legal status may be that of an immigrant but they do not identify themselves as such.\textsuperscript{474} Thus, labeling Europeans who are exercising their freedom of movement within the EU as immigrants seems like a misnomer from both immigrants’ and receiving societies’ perspectives.\textsuperscript{475} Similarly, Paul Brady found in his study on Americans living in Sweden that Americans do not seem to fit the category of an “immigrant” in Sweden:

“In conversations conducted with personnel at Invandrarbyråer and Statens Invandrarverk, and in less formal conversations with Swedish people, it was apparent, and in some cases explicitly stated, that Americans are not regarded as

\textsuperscript{472} Karis, “‘We’re Just a Couple of People’,” 96.
\textsuperscript{473} Although this meaning of the term “expatriate” is a relatively new invention, as Nancy Green explains. Green, “Expatriation, Expatriates, and Expats.” See also Karis, “‘We’re Just a Couple of People’,” 96.
\textsuperscript{474} Guild, “Cultural and Identity Security”; Anja Weiss, “The Transnationalization of Social Inequality: Conceptualizing Social Positions on a World Scale,” \textit{Current Sociology} 53, no. 4 (July 1, 2005): 707. For example, Baldassar et al. found that professional or highly skilled Italians living in Australia resisted being categorized as a migrant: “I’m not a migrant (...) because here, if you are a migrant, you are a peasant. (...) I’m a migrant of choice, not of need.” Baldassar, Baldock, and Wilding, \textit{Families Caring Across Borders}, 38.
\textsuperscript{475} Adrian Favell, \textit{Eurostars and Eurocities: Free Movement and Mobility in an Integrating Europe} (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2008).
immigrants in the true sense of the word. In other words Americans did not enter into the mental imagery of immigrants held by these Swedes and instead of being associated with the term immigrant, which usually carries with it some derogatory connotations, Americans appear to be set apart and accorded a higher status.\textsuperscript{476}

It is not surprising, then, that the Americans I interviewed often wanted to distance themselves from the category of “immigrant.” For example, Carl answered the question of whether he sees himself as an immigrant in Finland in the following way:

“No, no. (…) I am thinking about Russians, the Romany, Somalis, those people are immigrants, [they have] issues of education and integration into the community. I have never felt those issues of being an immigrant.”

As was the case with many other Americans that I talked with, his self-image did not fit with the ideas that the term “immigrant” evoked in him. The quote shows how Carl associated being an immigrant with having problems of integration into Finnish society, which he personally had not experienced. In addition, many Americans emphasized how they were not immigrants because they chose to come to Finland, and they could go back to the U.S. whenever they wanted. In other words, they too conflated the categories of immigrant, refugee, and asylum seeker.

One easily finds examples of Americans living in other European countries who identify themselves in a similar way. For example, Michael Adler of the Association of American Wives of Europeans, who lives in Paris, proclaims: “We or our children are \textit{neither immigrants nor refugees}. We are \textit{Americans} (…).”\textsuperscript{477} Also the Finnish spouses of

\textsuperscript{476} Brady, \textit{Americans in Sweden}, 2 n. 5.
\textsuperscript{477} Michaux, \textit{Unknown Ambassadors}, 138. See also Penny and Khoo, \textit{Intermarriage}, 70. Emphasis mine.
the American interviewees did not regard their American spouses as immigrants. Most were surprised when I asked about the question – they had not even thought of their American partner as an immigrant in Finland. Some Americans noted that on some occasions they had felt like an immigrant; for example when standing in a line in the immigration office with people from different parts of the world. However, they still positioned themselves apart from immigrants: they were not real immigrants, only temporarily occupying the same space with them.

Of course, there were exceptions too: some Americans did see themselves as immigrants in Finland. The following American man associates being an immigrant in Finland with not being able to speak Finnish fluently.

“An immigrant? Oh sure, yeah. In Finland it’s very difficult (...) if [one] doesn’t speak Finnish correctly (...) people will pick on it. In the U.S., if you speak enough [English], people will think you’re an American; you have an American passport, you’re an American. Here the best you can do is, you’re (...) like a nationalized Finn.”

Again, “broken Finnish” appears to be the factor that immediately makes the person visible as an immigrant. As a result, as noted above, many Americans were not inclined to speak Finnish and often reverted back to English, which created a more positive reaction in the dominant population. How can these dynamics be explained? Laura Huttunen argues that there are dualistic discourses regarding globalization and immigration in Finland: on the one hand, there is a positive discourse of internationalization that produces visions of a world of border-crossings, new
perspectives, and enriching influences on monocultural Finnishness. This discourse focuses on improving Finland’s exchange with Western industrialized nations. On the other hand, immigration to Finland is depicted in more negative terms; it is something that needs to be carefully controlled and governed. The immigration discourse is thus problem-oriented and associated with people originating from Eastern Europe, Russia, and the Global South. It seems plausible to argue that the discourses of internationalization and immigration did not suddenly emerge as a result of globalization and the increasing immigration to Finland in the 1990s: the discourses have historical roots in the ways in which the Finnish nation has been imagined and constructed since the second half of the nineteenth century. The narrative of Finland as an exceptionally homogenous and vulnerable nation and Finland’s desire to be considered a Western nation have been key factors in producing the dual discourses of internationalization and immigration. While not unique to Finland, these dualistic discourses are an outgrowth of the ideological tug of war between homogeneity and fascination with the West.

In this context, immigrants from the U.S. and other Western countries are typically considered as unproblematic, even desired, foreigners in Finland; they may be seen as bringing international “flavor” to Finnishness that often appears as boring, banal, and bland. In other words, Americans, with their use of American English, can be argued to be part of the discourse of internationalization in Finland, not that of immigration. At the same time, as I documented in Chapter 3, many Americans talked

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478 Laura Huttunen, Kotona, maanpaossa, matkalla, 14.
about their feelings of not “fitting in” in Finland, often related to difficulties with the language and finding employment that fits their educational qualifications. In other words, many Americans who participated in this study reported having experienced similar problems in Finland as many groups who are seen as immigrants. In some cases, these problems resulted in a “permanent tourist” attitude.\textsuperscript{480} For example, an American woman who moved to Finland in 1993 because of her Finnish boyfriend articulated her feelings of not belonging in Finland in the following way:

“'I still can’t believe I am here. I came for one year and it has gone over 10 now. I can’t say that this is where I want to live, but it is where I live, so I have to make the best of it. (...) This is a very hard place for non-Finns to live. (...) I won’t ever fit into Finnish society and it just has to be something that one has to come to terms with to survive and/or thrive here.’”

After 15 years in Finland, she felt detached from Finnish society, partly because of language difficulties. Thus, my study shows that despite the fact that Americans’ presence in Finland is seen as part of (welcomed) internationalization of Finland, their actual experiences of living in Finland is still influenced by the negative immigration discourses.

While immigration discussions in the U.S. tend to focus on the problems caused by immigration and on immigrants originating from certain parts of the world (especially from Mexico), the myth of the heroic (European) immigrant continues “to retain its narrative power as a metaphor for American society (...)”.\textsuperscript{481} My research suggests that

\textsuperscript{480} Latomaa, “English in Contact,” 60.  
\textsuperscript{481} Chavez, \textit{Covering Immigration}, 7.
white European immigrants like the Finnish women that I interviewed are able to claim membership in their communities with the help of this grand narrative. In a state like Minnesota, with a long history of immigration from the Nordic countries, being a white Nordic migrant often evokes positive images of European forefathers who came to build the country in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. This was a theme that came up repeatedly in my interviews: the women almost invariably received positive reactions by Minnesotans when told that they were from Finland. Often Minnesotans had relatives or friends who had Finnish ancestry. For example, Sini stated:

“I’m a first generation immigrant in the U.S. so I have an accent in my English. People often ask me where I’m from, and I get only positive feedback when I say that I’m from Finland. Finnish migrants have a reputation of being honest and hard workers. I feel only pride in my Finnish roots in Minnesota.”

This excerpt illustrates in a fascinating way how the history of Finns in Minnesota has been glorified and modified to fit the model of the heroic European immigrants over the course of the twentieth century. The history of discrimination that Finnish migrants experienced in early twentieth century Minnesota has been erased from the collective memory. During the twentieth century, Finns were transformed from a racially undesirable eastern European (or Mongolian?) race into representatives of “Scandinavian” ethnicity. During my years in Minnesota, I have personally witnessed how Finland, Sweden, and Norway are constantly conflated in people’s minds. For example, I have received comments about my “Scandinavian accent” – even though Finnish is not linguistically related to Swedish and Norwegian. As one Finnish
interviewee put it, “they [Americans] associate us [Finns] with Swedes, Norwegians, we’re like part of them. We’re like part of Scandinavia now.” It may be, then, that the integration process of my Finnish interviewees is aided by the association of Finns with Scandinavian immigrants – who have always been celebrated as one of the founding groups of the American nation.

When I conducted interviews with Finnish women in Minnesota in 2004, I did not ask whether the women saw themselves as “immigrants” in the U.S. (as I did in the interviews that I conducted with Americans in Finland in 2008). To get insights into this issue, I emailed those women for whom I had functioning email addresses to ask this specific question. Seven women responded. While this sample is, of course, too small to make any generalizations, it gives interesting insights into the different associations that the term “immigrant” conjures up among Finns in the U.S., as contrasted to Americans in Finland.

Six out of the seven women who answered my email saw themselves as immigrants in the U.S. The woman who did not consider herself as an immigrant in the U.S. echoed in her answer the meanings that are often attached to the concept in Finland: “The term ‘immigrant’ makes me think of refugees who have not come here for marriage [like I did].” Thus, the woman did not see herself as an immigrant because of her migration motive: she moved to the U.S. because of her marriage to a U.S. citizen. The six women who did consider themselves as immigrants in the U.S. explained their answers in differing ways. Two women associated the term with Finnish (or other
Nordic) immigrants who came to “build the U.S.” in the early twentieth century, and saw themselves as continuing this tradition:

“Yes, I’m an immigrant in the U.S., among all other immigrants. American literature, media, etc. give a positive image of immigrants from the Nordic countries. They are persistent people who work hard.”

“I recognize the category in myself. (…) The term ‘immigrant’ makes me think of Finns who came here earlier to build this country. Finnish immigrants have a positive image here, they are hard workers.”

Another woman who had, since my interview with her, moved first to Texas and then to Arizona (because of her husband’s military career), compared her experiences in these three states when answering the question. She also saw herself as an immigrant in the U.S., but noted that her experience of being a foreigner had been easier in Minnesota and Texas than in Arizona:

“Yes, I’m an immigrant. I became a U.S. citizen in 2005, but I still feel more Finnish than American. But they don’t rule each other out. [After moving to] Arizona I have become more aware of my status as ‘an outsider.’ In Minnesota and also in Texas I blended in more easily, or maybe the population at large was more open and positive toward immigrants.”

The current immigration debates in Arizona thus clearly affected this woman’s experiences of being an immigrant: it had been easier in Minnesota and Texas, where she had not been reminded of her “foreignness” as frequently as in Arizona. Furthermore, one woman attached a temporal aspect to the term “immigrant” in her answer. She noted that
during her first years in the U.S., she would not have thought of calling herself an “immigrant.” This changed, however, after she had let go of any plans to move back to Finland:

“‘Immigrant’ is an appropriate category [to describe me]. (...) Over the years, I have accepted that I’m living here permanently. The term ‘immigrant’ describes my status well: I have moved away from Finland permanently to live in this country.”

Finally, two women chose to emphasize that they are immigrants in the U.S., just like millions of other immigrants. For example, one woman wrote simply: “Yes, I’m an immigrant among all the millions of immigrants.” The other woman wanted to underline how an immigrant in the U.S. could be anybody, no matter when or where they arrived from and what their class status was:

“Yes [I am an immigrant.] [When I hear the term,] I think about old pictures of immigrants who came to the country in the nineteenth century; Latinos who cross the border by foot; my friends who are highly educated multinationals.”

In sum, unlike Americans in Finland who did not see themselves as immigrants, the Finnish women who responded to my question did not generally have problems with being associated with the term “immigrant.” The images of immigrants as threats to the American nation are highly racialized but the responses of the Finnish women suggest that for a white European immigrant, there is an alternative narrative they can claim to be part of – that of European immigrants who founded the nation. On the other hand, in the case of Americans in Finland, the meanings attached to the term “immigrant” in Finland
did not fit their self-image – or the image that the dominant society held of them. It may be that Americans, as citizens of a global superpower that does not see itself as a country of emigration, assume from the start that they are not immigrants in their host societies. The attitudes of many Americans toward learning Finnish support this argument: many expected to be able to live in Finland in English and not to be required to learn Finnish. For example, an American who moved to Finland in 1993 wrote in the online survey: “Language was a barrier but now I feel the English-language is more prevalent so one doesn’t have to live in a non-English world.” After 15 years in Finland, she reported her language skills to be “fair” and expressed relief that she can now live in an English-speaking environment. Thus, Americans were not expected to “assimilate” and learn Finnish – as immigrants typically are – either by themselves or by the dominant population. From a Finnish immigrant’s perspective in the U.S., this would be simply inconceivable today, as there are no Finnish communities, not even in Minnesota.

Conclusion

My research on American immigrants in Finland and Finnish immigrants in the U.S. underline the crucial role that national identities of host societies play in immigrant incorporation. In the U.S., Finnish immigrants, who were transformed from a racially suspect immigrant group to a Scandinavian nation over the course of the twentieth century, were generally more willing to call themselves immigrants and, overall, felt that their adjustment into American society had been relatively unproblematic. Despite the fact that their foreignness came up in conversations with Americans on a regular basis,
mainly because of their accent, this status as a foreigner did not significantly diminish their position in American labor market or in U.S. society at large. In fact, many were pleased to note how positively Minnesotans reacted to their Finnishness.

Americans in Finland, on the other hand, have the privilege of not being associated with the negative connotations that the category “immigrant” carries with it in Finland. They are often welcomed Westerners, seen as expats or tourists, and not expected to assimilate or even learn the Finnish language. In other words, they are generally seen as welcomed signs of internationalization of Finland. Despite sometimes harsh criticism of the U.S. as a political, economic, and cultural superpower, the U.S. still fascinates people in Finland. Thus, one could assume that Americans’ integration into Finnish society would be smooth and unproblematic – and of course in many cases it had been. At the same time, the difficulties of finding work that fits Americans’ educational qualifications and their discouraging experiences of speaking “broken Finnish,” reveal that even these privileged foreigners feel the impact of the negative immigration discourses in Finland. Furthermore, the category of a visitor or an expat is a very restricted one: it denies the possibility of ever belonging to Finnish society.

Thus, the experiences of American migrants in Finland provide good examples of “the amazing difficulty of becoming a Finn.”\footnote{Leena-Maija Rossi, “Licorice Boys and Female Coffee Beans: Representations of Colonial Complicity in Finnish Visual Culture,” in Complying with Colonialism, 195.} They reveal how persistent the image of a homogenous nation is in Finland. It is this perception of vulnerable homogeneity that prevents foreigners and immigrants in Finland from claiming membership in the “exclusive circle of Finnishness.” As the logic of the dual discourses of
internationalization and immigration suggests, there seems to be two forms of “othering” that take place when Finns negotiate the presence of immigrants in their country. There are exclusive others that are at the margins of society: they are the opposite of self, victims and/or threats – such as Russian wives of Finnish men or Muslim husbands of Finnish women. However, others can also be inclusive others. Inclusive others can be seen as part of us, maybe even part of our (desired) identity, different, yet not opposite. It seems that Americans – and other Western immigrants – can be seen as inclusive others in Finland. Meeting an American in Finland might be exciting to many Finns, but the American still remains “the other,” and not part of Finnishness. “Othering” is fundamentally based on an unequal relationship and always denies the possibility of complete belonging. As an American who responded to my online survey noted, “many Finns seem to have a dualistic attitude towards Americans – on the other hand they seem to idolize all things foreign, but on the other hand being different in even a minor way creates distance.”

483 Lehtonen, Löytty, and Ruuska, Suomi toisin sanoen, 258-259; Sirkkilä, Elättäytyttä vai erotikkaa, 56-57.
The discourses that surround international marriages in Finland and the U.S. today do not differ much from discourses found elsewhere in the world. In fact, we can see signs of an emerging transnational discourse on international marriages. Its focus on fraud and on the acquisition of a privileged migration status through commercially or instrumentally based marriages contrasts sharply with the lives of the elite migrants that I have described in my dissertation.

These concerns about marriage fraud are not, of course, completely unprecedented. In the U.S., for example, in 1931, the Commissioner General of Immigration was alarmed by foreign men marrying U.S. citizen women and using these marriages as a “loophole” for migration to the U.S. Marriage fraud cases were increasingly commented upon in annual reports of the INS starting in the late 1950s; these cases usually involved foreign men and U.S. women, who received monetary compensation for marrying a foreigner. For example, the 1958 report mentioned a case in which a Greek crewman married a 17-year old American high school girl to gain entry to the U.S. The girl involved received a $500 compensation for marrying the crewman, “with the understanding that the marriage would not be consummated and a divorce would be secured at the expense of the crewman, after he gained legal status.”

U.S. scholars have suggested that the changes in U.S. immigration law in 1965 may have encouraged the use of marriage to a U.S. citizen as a migration strategy.

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Guillermina Jasso and Mark R. Rosenzweig, for example, write that “there is no doubt that increases in marital immigration were propelled in part by the restrictions on other types of immigration.”\textsuperscript{486} By the 1980s, there was enough alarmism in the U.S. media concerning immigration marriage fraud that the U.S. Congress passed the Immigration Marriage Fraud Amendments (IMFA) in 1986. The IMFA aimed to prevent fraudulent marriages entered into only for the purpose of receiving immigration benefits by imposing a conditional permanent resident status of two years on the migrant spouse. After the two-year period, the couple must jointly petition for full permanent resident status for the migrant spouse and appear together for an interview with an immigration official. If the marriage is deemed to be \textit{bona fide}, the migrant spouse is granted full permanent residency in the U.S.\textsuperscript{487}

In Finland, too, there were occasional cases of Finnish authorities expressing concern about foreign “schemers” – usually foreign men using gullible Finnish women to gain access to the country – even before fraud marriages began to cause alarm in the media in the mid-1990s and 2000s, as migration to the country picked up. In 1963, the director of the passport office of the Helsinki Police J. K. Vartiainen claimed in the newspaper \textit{Uusi Suomi} that “almost every day we receive [Finnish] women whose

\textsuperscript{486} Jasso and Rosenzweig, \textit{New Chosen People}, 186.
‘prince’ has run away, often taking the woman’s heart with him, sometimes also her money, and left her expecting a child.” Vartiainen estimated that approximately 85 percent of marriages between Finnish women and foreign men failed and the police had to deport “even one adventurer a day” from Finland. Considering that today an estimated 100-200 (alleged) marriage fraud cases are processed in Finnish courts each year, Vartiainen’s claim of daily deportations of foreign husbands in the early 1960s seems highly exaggerated and was likely meant to discourage Finnish women from marrying foreign men.

While early debates in both countries centered on foreign men using citizen women in order to gain access to the U.S. or Finland (and women were depicted either as accomplices, as in many INS reports, or as naïve victims, as in Vartiainen’s comment), more recent alarmism about international marriages and immigration fraud has focused almost exclusively on the so-called mail-order bride phenomenon. This discourse is strikingly similar in the U.S., Finland, and in other Western countries. While the practice of introduction through mail is by no means a new phenomenon – it was widely used, for example, by migrants in the nineteenth and early twentieth century U.S. – the matchmaking business has expanded dramatically since the 1960s, due to “intensified industrialization, rapid urbanization and improved international mobility, (…) [and]

488 “Lähes joka päivä passitoimistoon saapuu naisia, jotka ovat havainneet ‘prinssinsa’ kadonneen, joskus mukanaan tytön sydän, toisinaan rahatkin. Ja jälkeen on usein jäänyt tuleva äiti.” Vartiainen is quoted in Leitzinger, Ulkomaalaispolitiikka Suomessa, 518.
concomitant ideological, social, and demographic changes." Computerization in the 1990s further expanded correspondence matchmaking into a global industry.

In the U.S., most of the publicity surrounding fraud marriages, which led to the passing of the IMFA in 1986, was centered on the mail-order bride industry. In Finland, the first widespread media attention on mail-order brides took place in 1995 when a Finnish man known as “Sir Vili” started a business introducing Filipino women to Finnish men through mail. Scholars pointed out later that Finnish newspapers grossly exaggerated the number of wives who moved to Finland through Sir Vili’s mail-order business: while *Helsingin Sanomat*, for example, wrote about “a thousand” Filipinas arriving in Finland in 1995, the actual number has been estimated to have been somewhere between 100 and 150 women.

After the 1995 “Sir Vili” episode, the Finnish media has regularly reported about alleged increases in immigration marriage fraud cases. The legitimacy for the heightened concern over marriage fraud is sought by highlighting how widespread the problem is in other EU countries and in the U.S. In addition, news stories are often worded so that they create an illusion of a problem that is greater than what the actual numbers suggest. For example, while almost 90 percent of residence permit applications submitted in Finland in 2004-2008 on the basis of marriage to a Finnish citizen or permanent resident in Finland were successful (and many permits that were first denied by immigration

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officials were later granted by courts), *Helsingin Sanomat* still reported on September 19, 2008 that “marriages of convenience have become a popular way of circumventing migration policies.”

Furthermore, concerns over marriage fraud overall and mail-order brides specifically on both sides of the Atlantic are bound to ethnocentric conceptions of what constitutes a “real marriage.” In Western industrialized societies today, romantic love is often seen as the only legitimate base for marriage. As Palriwala and Uberoi put it, “much of the academic and activist interrogation of transnational marriages has been predicated on the assumption that the introduction of material calculations or commercial operations into the process of spouse-selection self-evidently impugns the authenticity of the marital relationship.” This emphasis on “love marriage” is not only ethnocentric but also ahistorical: romantic love as the only acceptable reason for marrying is a relatively recent invention, dating to the late eighteenth century in Western Europe. In addition, the emphasis on love marriage disregards the fact that many marriages between citizens of the same country are also contracted not for love, but for pragmatic reasons—or, rather, that in most marriage decisions, different motives and incentives are at play.

Finally, not only is the growing alarmism over immigration marriage fraud transnational, but so are the criteria that immigration officials and courts use to determine

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which marriages are *bona fide* and which are not. In both Finland and the U.S., marriage is often suspected to have been contracted only for immigration purposes if the spouses have not met each other before marriage and if there is a big age difference or no common language between the spouses. Cases in which the foreign spouse has, in the past, unsuccessfully petitioned for asylum and/or he or she is subject to deportation proceedings are particularly susceptible to allegations of marriage fraud. In addition, international couples are expected to lead a family life that is tied to a strictly prescribed view of marriage. For example, immigration authorities and courts often expect the couple to be living together, have a joint bank account, and preferably have children together – all requirements that spouses of the same citizenship are not expected to fill.\(^{496}\)

Both in Finland and the U.S. marriage fraud investigations have been criticized for placing the burden of proof on the couple who is applying for residency for the migrant spouse. The couple must be able to show that their marriage is “real,” as opposed to immigration authorities having to prove that their marriage is fraud.\(^{497}\) Despite such criticism, there is no sign that the alarmism surrounding immigration marriage fraud is subsiding. A Google news search that I conducted on November 24, 2010 using the terms “immigration” and “marriage” immediately resulted in news stories about fraud


marriages and countries’ attempts to detect fraud cases and prosecute the perpetrators. The top news headlines included stories of U.S., Canadian, and British authorities trying to restrict immigration marriage fraud. While Canadian authorities reported that “Marriages of Convenience Problems Persist” in Canada, U.S. immigration officials announced that a group of Kenyans in the U.S. were charged with organized marriage fraud. The coalition government in the UK aimed to cut the number of non-EU migrants in the country by restricting language requirements of those hoping to marry British nationals and settle in the country: “[A]ll those applying for marriage visas must demonstrate ‘a minimum standard of English,’” Home Secretary Theresa May explained in the news story.498

Moreover, in both countries, migrant spouses originating from certain parts of the world are most susceptible to allegations of marriage fraud. For example, in Finland in 2004-2008, petitions of Somali, Turkish, and Ethiopian spouses were most likely to be unsuccessful (as opposed to petitions of Canadian, Australian, and U.S. spouses being the most successful).499 In both countries, marriage fraud is also increasingly associated with national security concerns. On December 9, 2004, Tom Depenbrock, Special Agent at the U.S. Bureau of Diplomatic Security, offered his remarks on an immigration marriage fraud investigation in a press conference held in Seattle, WA. In his statement, Depenbrock made a direct connection between marriage fraud and terrorism: “Marriage

499 Keränen, email message to author.
and visa fraud potentially threaten the national security of the United States. (…) Americans who marry strangers from countries known to harbor terrorists make the United States more vulnerable to terrorism, plain and simple.500

Discourses surrounding marriage fraud reveal in a poignant way how marriage seems to lose its private character when a citizen marries a foreigner: an intimate relationship becomes an object of public discussions and assessments. International marriage is not just a union between two individuals: the foreign spouse becomes a member of a family and, on a broader scale, a member of a nation.501 Therefore, in discussing marriages between citizens and foreigners, we are by extension forming views on who can and cannot become a member of the nation, and on what terms. The unproblematic nature of the marriages that have been the topic of this dissertation, as opposed to the growing concerns about migrants from “unwanted” areas of the world using marriage as an immigration route, again reveals the profound gendered, racialized, and class-based hierarchies of desirability that exist among foreign spouses in Finland and the U.S.

501 Huttunen, Kotona, maanpaossa, matkalla, 254-255.
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Note: The Institutional Review Board of the University of Minnesota determined that this survey is exempt from review (IRB Approval Number 0803E28441). No identifying data were collected.

1. State and year of birth:

2. Sex

3. Place of residence:

4. Highest degree obtained:

5. Occupation:

6. Ethnic ancestry:

7. Previous and current citizenships:

8. Marital status

9. Partner’s country of birth:

10. Number of children and their birth years:

11. When and why did you move to Finland?

12. a) What is your immigration status in Finland?
   Citizen Permanent resident Fixed-term resident

b) If you have a residence permit, on what grounds was it granted?
   Family Employed or self-employed Student
   Returnee Something else, what?

c) If you have a residence permit, when did you apply for it for the first time?
   When did you receive it?

d) If you have Finnish citizenship, when did you apply for it?
   When did you receive it?

13. Do you plan to move away from Finland during the next five years?
If yes, please state the main reason and destination.

14. How important is being an American to you?
   Not at all   Little   Quite important   Very important

15. How often are you in touch with other Americans living in Finland?
   Several times a week   Once a week   Once a month
   Once every couple of months   Never

16. What is the country of origin of the majority of your friends?

17. How often do you visit the U.S.?
   Twice or more times a year   Once a year
   Once every second year   More infrequently

18. Do you actively try to promote your culture and language to your children?
   If yes, please state an example.

19. How frequently do you follow current events in the U.S.?
   Several times a week   Once a week   Once a month
   Once every couple of months   Never

20. How do you follow current events in the U.S.?
   Radio   TV   Internet   Newspapers
   Through friends/relatives   Some other way, how?

21. What languages do you speak?

22. In which language(s) do you communicate with your partner?

23. In which language(s) do you communicate with your children?

24. In the space below, please write freely about your experiences of coming to and living in Finland.
Appendix 2. Questionnaire for Finnish-Born Women Living in the U.S. or Canada (2001-2002)

1. Date and place of birth

2. Parents’ occupations

3. Education in Finland

4. Education in North America

5. Occupations in Finland

6. Occupations in North America

7. When did you move to North America?

8. Why did you move?

9. Did you know anybody in North America before moving there?

10. How did you travel to North America?

11. How did you fund your trip?

12. Did you plan to stay permanently in North America? If not, why did you stay?

13. Where was your first place of residence in North America?

14. How did you end up in your current place of residence?

15. What was your marital status when you left Finland?

16. Year(s) of marriage(s)

17. What is the nationality of your partner (if applicable)?

18. When did you divorce/become widowed (if applicable)?

19. Names of your children (if applicable)?

20. Children’s education
21. If your children are married, what are their spouses’ nationalities?

22. Do your children understand Finnish?

23. Have they visited Finland?

24. Have you? How often? When was the last time?

25. What kind of relationship does your family have with Finland/Finnishness?
   a) Do you celebrate Finnish holidays? Which?
   b) Do you prepare Finnish food? Which?
   c) Do you participate in activities of Finnish organizations? Where?
   d) Do you have any Finnish-made home artifacts or decorations? Please give an example.

26. Do you read or subscribe to any Finnish newspapers or magazines?

27. Do you read or subscribe to any Finnish-language newspapers published in North America?

28. Do you think your life would have been different, had you stayed in Finland? How and why?

29. Have you ever considered moving back to Finland permanently? Why?

30. Would you like to add something?

Note: The Institutional Review Board of the University of Minnesota determined that this study is exempt from review (IRB Approval Number 0712E22985). To protect informants’ privacy, only pseudonyms are used in the text.

Background

- Background in Finland: year of birth, home town, education, occupational history; parents’ background
- Special memories from childhood/youth
- Traveling before moving to the U.S.
- Moving to the U.S. – when, why? Why did you stay permanently?
- Any foreknowledge or preconceptions about the U.S. or Americans? Did they change?
- Where did you meet your husband? How did you decide to stay in the U.S.?
  Husband’s background
- What did your husband know about Finland? Has he been interested?
- How did your family/friends react to the fact that your husband was not Finnish?
  How about your husband’s family/friends?
- The wedding ceremony – where, when, how?

Family life

- Life at present: work, education in the U.S., place(s) of residence, family, children
  - Housewife?
- Living in intercultural marriage: difficulties, joys? Would it be different, if husband was from Finland? How?
  - Cultural differences in every day life? Misunderstandings, disagreements? Are they due to cultural differences, or differences between individuals?
  - Communication (topics, way of communication) – verbal and non-verbal
  - Women’s and men’s roles
  - Values
  - Religion
  - Upbringing of children
    - Choice of names
    - Religious upbringing
    - Nationality
• Education
  o The language spoken at home?
    ▪ Finnish (Swedish)/English? In what kind of situations? Between spouses? Husband’s language skills?
    ▪ Children’s language skills. Which language do they speak? In what kind of situations?
    ▪ How did they learn Finnish?
    ▪ If not Finnish – how does it feel?
    ▪ Have they refused speaking Finnish? When?
    ▪ Difficulties, surprises in teaching Finnish?
    ▪ Differences between children?
    ▪ Husband’s and his family’s attitude towards bilingual upbringing (society, school)
    ▪ Personal relationship with Finnish/Swedish language: When and which circumstances do you speak? Reading, writing (Finnish magazines, internet)... Which language do you prefer? Why? What does it mean to speak your mother tongue? Any language problems?
  o Have you changed as a person in the intercultural marriage?

Cultural heritage in everyday life

• Finnishness/Americanism in everyday life
  o Traditions: holidays (St. Urho!), food, home furnishing
  o Sauna
  o Hobbies, organizational activities
  o Friends: Finns, Americans, other nationalities? Did you try to find other Finns? Making friends with Finns and others – differences? Friends in Finland? What do they mean for you?
  o Relationship with Finnish Americans? Scandinavians?
  o Contacts to Finland: visits; do you follow what is happening in Finland?
  o Has the meaning of Finnish traditions changed during the time?

Views on Finland and the U.S.

• Finland and U.S.: differences, similarities, good and bad sides?
• What do you miss from Finland? What not?
• What is the best in living in the U.S.? The worst?
• Images of present-day Finland?
• Symbols of Finnishness?
• Finnish people? Americans? Do you find these qualities in yourself?
• Meaning of Finnish roots?
• Reaction of others towards Finland. Stereotypes of Finnish people? How did you react?
• What would you like people to know about Finland?
• Your nationality? Citizenship?
• What is your homeland? Where do you belong to?
• Is it important to keep up Finnish heritage in the U.S.? Why? Do you see any threats? Any pressures to assimilate?
• How well have you adjusted? Problems? Are there any factors that would have helped your adjustment?
• Have you been able to fulfill yourself here? Compared to Finland?
• If you had the chance, would you do something differently? Would you make the same choices?

Future

• Where do you want to live in the future? Is there a situation in which you would move to Finland?
• Finnish traditions in the future? In children’s lives? The choice of their future spouses?
• How do you see your life after ten years?

• Would you like to add something?
Appendix 4. Interview Questions for Americans Living in Finland (2008)

Note: This oral history project had been approved by the Institutional Review Board of the University of Minnesota (IRB Approval Number 0712P22323). To protect informants’ privacy, only pseudonyms are used in the text.

MEETING / MOVING

Where and how did you meet your partner? When? Before or after moving to Finland? Why did you move to Finland?

What was your immigration status when you moved to Finland? Now? How long did it take to get the residence permit / citizenship etc.?

Tell me about the process of moving here: your interactions with immigration officials, getting permits etc. Was it easy, cumbersome, fast, slow? Did you get help? Interviews?

Do you know how moving to Finland compares to the process of immigration to the U.S.?

Dealing with Finnish authorities more broadly, for example Kela? Have you heard of similar/different experiences?

Citizenship: Why? Why not? What kind of process was it to acquire it? How long? The meaning of citizenship? Plans to apply for it?

What did you know or think about Finland or Finns before moving here? Have these views changed? (What did you partner know about Americans or the U.S.?)

Why did you decide to stay here? Have you lived in other countries (together/alone)? Have you traveled a lot before meeting your partner? Together?

Where did you get married? (Plans?)

LIVING / STAYING

How did your family and friends react to your binational relationship? Has your relationship with your family and friends changed as a result of this relationship? Your spouse’s? Community? Have you noticed any reactions? Stereotypes about Americans?
Have you noticed what people generally think about interethnic or interracial marriages? Or media? How about immigration and immigrants? Compared to the U.S.? Have these opinions affected your life or relationship in any way?

Do you consider yourself as an immigrant? Which group do you associate yourself with in Finland? Immigrants, Finns, foreigners, or something else?

How do you think Finland as a state treats immigrants? Does it treat different groups differently or equally? Are you treated differently from other immigrants? How about the state/authorities and interethnic unions?

How would you define your relationship? Would you call it multicultural?

Life in the “binational” relationship: any special difficulties, joys? Cultural differences? Gender roles? If not, why not?


IF CHILDREN: any differences in opinion as to how your kids should be raised? Names, religion, nationality, bilingual upbringing – experiences, opinions?

Do you follow Finnish/American traditions in your daily life? Sauna?

How would you define your ethnic or national identity? Who are you ethnically speaking? Importance of your ethnic ancestry? Has it changed here? Why? (What is it?)

How important is your home country to you? What does it mean to you? Do you keep in contact with people at home? How and how often? Visits? Do you follow events in the U.S.? How and how often? What do these connections mean to you?

Who are your friends here, where do they come from? Americans? Any ethnic activities?

How well have you adjusted to living here?

Where is your home? What do you miss from the U.S.? What is better, if anything, here in Finland? What annoys you the most here? In the U.S.? (Finns vs. Americans?)

How does a typical Finn look like?

Future: Are you going to stay in Finland or move somewhere else? Why? Where?

Would you like to add something?