Chapter 2. The Society and Its Environment

Medieval church with uncoursed stone walls and brick-decorated gables, built circa 1480 at Hollola, approximately 100 kilometers from Helsinki

FINLAND HAS BEEN on Europe's periphery, both physically and socially, for almost all its history. It is Europe's northernmost country, with a quarter of its area above the Arctic Circle. By the late 1980s, however, modern means of communication had substantially reduced its physical remoteness from the rest of Europe. Modern technology also had lessened winter's hold on the country. Finns lived comfortably, and they moved about freely the whole year. In the social realm, Finland had left its traditional poverty and backwardness behind. Since World War II, it had become one of the world's most advanced societies. Its citizens enjoyed prosperity and meaningful employment, as well as benefits from the social measures they had forged, which guaranteed everyone a decent and humane share of the prosperity.

During the course of their history, Finns have always moved about, both within their country and abroad. The years after World War II saw, however, an unprecedented population shift away from the countryside to the increasingly more urbanized south. New industries and a rapidly growing service sector meant that the work force not only relocated, but also changed in character. Agriculture's and forestry's combined share of the work force declined from about 50 percent in 1950 to about 10 percent in 1980. Industry's share remained unchanged at about 20 percent, while that of the service sector doubled from 9 percent to 18 percent. Between 1950 and 1980, the number of students and pensioners quadrupled, going from 6 to 24 percent, reflecting a wealthier and healthier society.

Personal relationships also changed. Families became smaller; divorce became more common. A growing public sector meant that many tasks previously managed by the family could now be entrusted to the state. Lessened dependence on the family also meant greater freedom for women. This was reflected in new legislation that gave women greater equality with men. Traditional habits persisted, however, and in the late 1980s Finland's women still had a secondary place at home, in the workplace, and in politics.

Finland was a remarkably homogeneous country. It had no racial minorities. The largest minority group, the Swedish-speaking Finns, was so well assimilated with the majority that there were fears it would eventually disappear. In fact, the group's share of the country's population had dropped from 12 percent to 6 percent in the twentieth century. Two very small minorities, the Lapps (or Sami) and the Gypsies, remained apart from the majority. They still

suffered from some discrimination and from poor living standards, but legislation and more open attitudes on the part of the majority were improving their lot.

Finland was virtually free of the religious divisions that bedeviled many other societies. One of the two state churches, the Lutheran Church of Finland, had nearly 90 percent of the population as members. Religious freedom was guaranteed by law, and Finns also belonged to several dozen other churches. Because Finnish society had become increasingly secularized, differences of opinion about moral issues caused less friction than they had in the past.

Finns maintained their traditional respect for education. Education had gradually become more accessible, and an ever greater number of Finns were studying at all levels. The old system, which excluded many, had been replaced by one that attempted to meet individual schooling needs and to keep open as many options for further training as possible; no one went without education for lack of money.

Finland, like its Nordic neighbors, had created a system of public welfare measures that was among the most advanced in the world. Through a steady progression of legislation, Finns came to be protected from many of life's vicissitudes. Coverage was virtually universal, and it was seen as a right rather than as charity. Income security measures guaranteed Finns a livelihood despite age, illness, or unemployment. The state also provided many services that assisted Finns in their daily life, such as child care, family counseling, and health care. Although some social problems persisted, the quality of life for Finns overall had steadily and, in many instances, dramatically improved. Better medical care meant that Finns enjoyed improved health, while subsidized housing brought them better and roomier shelter. Efforts also were being made to protect the natural environment.

Geography

Finland is the northernmost country on the European continent. Although other countries have points extending farther north, virtually all of Finland is north of 60 degrees north latitude; nearly a quarter of the land area and fully one-third of the latitudinal extent of the country lie north of the Arctic Circle (see fig. 1).

Size, External Boundaries, and Geology

In area, Finland has 304,623 square kilometers of land and 33,522 square kilometers of inland water, a total of 338,145 square kilometers. It shares borders on the west with Sweden for 540 kilometers, on the north with Norway for 720 kilometers, and on the

east with the Soviet Union for 1,268 kilometers. There are approximately 1,107 kilometers of coastline on the Gulf of Finland (south), the Baltic Sea (southwest), and the Gulf of Bothnia (west). The rugged coastline is deeply indented with bays and inlets. The offshore region is studded with islands.

The most predominant influences on Finland's geography were the continental glaciers that scoured and gouged the country's surface. When the glaciers receded about 10,000 years ago, they left behind them moraines, drumlins, and eskers. Other indications of their presence are the thousands of lakes they helped to form in the southern part of the country. The force of the moving ice sheets gouged the lake beds, and meltwaters helped to fill them. The recession of the glaciers is so recent (in geologic terms) that modern-day drainage patterns are immature and poorly established. The direction of glacial advance and recession set the alignment of the lakes and streams in a general northeast to southwest lineation. The two Salpausselkä Ridges, which run parallel to each other about twenty-five kilometers apart, are the terminal moraines. At their greatest height they reach an elevation of about 200 meters, the highest point in southern Finland.

Landform Regions

Many countries of the world can be divided into distinct geographic regions, in each of which some physical characteristic is dominant, almost to the exclusion of others. In Finland, the same physical characteristics are common to each of the four geographic regions into which the country is divided (see fig. 8). Regional differences in Finland lie, therefore, in subtle combinations of physical qualities. In archipelago Finland, rock and water are dominant. Coastal Finland consists of broad clay plains where agriculture plays a leading role. The interior lake district supports extensive forests. Upland Finland is covered by Arctic scrub. Nonetheless, each of these regions contains elements of the others. For instance, patches of agriculture extend far northward along some rivers in Lapland, and in southern Finland a substantial bogland, the Suomenselkä, is sometimes referred to as Satakunta Lapland because it has the character of Arctic tundra.

Archipelago Finland, consisting of thousands of islands and skerries, extends from the southwestern coast out into the Baltic Sea. It includes the strategically significant Åland Islands, positioned at the entrance to the Gulf of Bothnia. After World War I, both Finland and Sweden laid claim to the islands, which are culturally more Swedish than Finnish. For strategic reasons, however, the League of Nations awarded the Åland Islands to Finland in 1921

(see Finnish Security Policy Between the Wars, ch. 1). A principal reason for this decision was that, during the winter, the islands are physically linked to Finland by the frozen waters of the sea and are hence essential for the country's defense. This myriad of forest-covered and bare bedrock islands was formed and continues to be formed by the process of uplift following the last glaciation.

The rest of the country is also still emerging from the sea. The weight of the continental glaciers depressed the land over which they moved, and even now, a hundred centuries after their recession, Finland is rising up from this great load through the process of isostatic rebound. In the south and the southwest, this process is occurring slowly, at a rate of twenty-five to thirty centimeters a century. Farther north in the Ostrobothnia area, uplift is more rapid, amounting to eighty or ninety centimeters a century. The process also means that Finland is growing about seven square kilometers yearly as land emerges from the sea.

Coastal Finland consists of broad clay plains extending from the coast inland, for no more than 100 kilometers. These plains slope southward from the morainic Salpausselkä Ridges in southern Finland. Along the Gulf of Bothnia coast, the plains slope southwest from upland areas. The land of coastal Finland is used for agriculture and dairy farming.

The interior lake district is the largest geographic region, and it is perhaps what most foreigners think of when they imagine Finland. The district is bounded to the south by the Salpausselkä Ridges. Behind the ridges extend networks of thousands of lakes separated by hilly forested countryside. This landscape continues to the east and extends into the Soviet Union. As a consequence, there is no natural border between the two countries. Because no set definition of what constitutes a lake and no procedures for counting the number of lakes exist, it has been impossible to ascertain exactly how many lakes the region has. There are, however, at least 55,000 lakes that are 200 or more meters wide. The largest is Lake Saimaa, which, with a surface area of more than 4,400 square kilometers, is the fifth largest lake in Europe. The deepest lake has a depth of only 100 meters; the depth of the average lake is 7 meters. Because they are shallow, these many lakes contain only slightly more water than Finland's annual rainfall. The hilly, forest-covered landscape of the lake plateau is dominated by drumlins and by long sinuous eskers, both glacial remnants.

Upland Finland extends beyond the Arctic Circle. The extreme north of this region is known as Lapland. The highest points in upland Finland reach an elevation of about 1,000 meters, and they are found in the Kilpisjärvi area of the Scandinavian Keel Ridge.

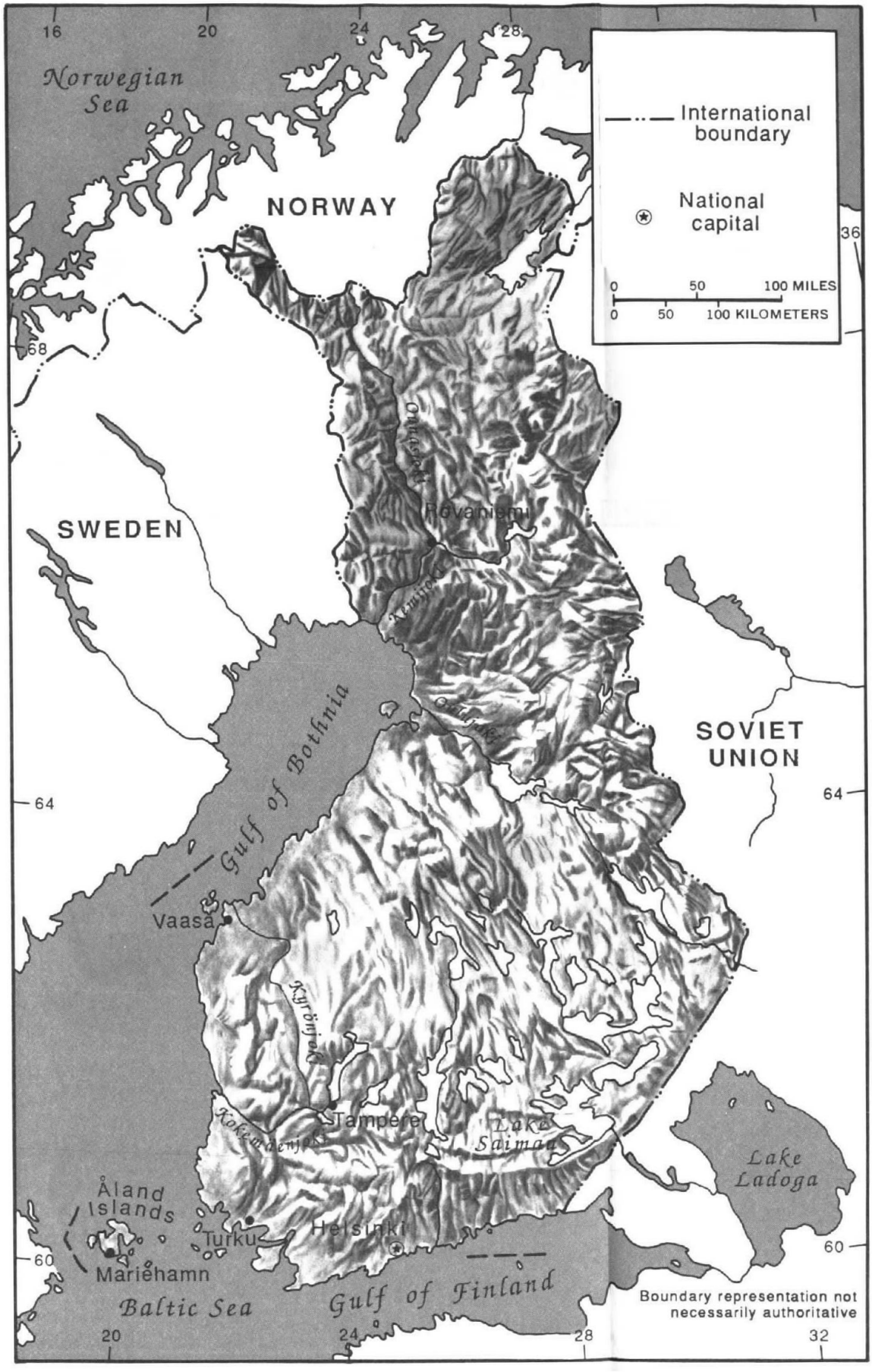


Figure 8. Topography and Drainage

In the southern upland region the hills are undulating, while in the north they are rugged. Much of upland Finland is not mountainous, but consists of bogs.

Finland's longest and most impressive rivers are in the north. The Kemijoki has the largest network of tributaries. Farther south the Oulujoki drains the beginning of the north country. Most of the streams flow to the Gulf of Bothnia, but there is a broad stretch of land in the north and northeast that is drained by rivers flowing north across Norway and northeast across the Soviet Union to the Arctic Ocean.

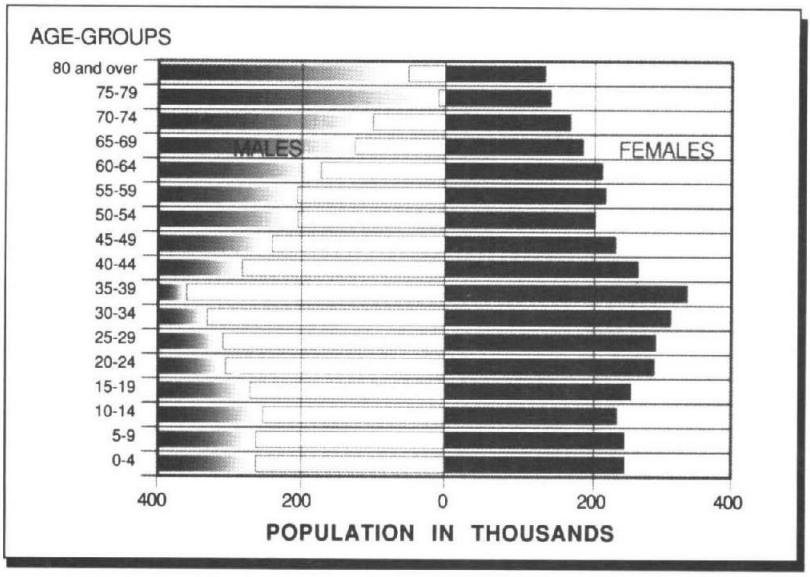
Climate

Latitude is the principal influence on Finland's climate. Because of Finland's northern location, winter is the longest season. On the average, winter lasts 105 to 120 days in the archipelago and 180 to 220 days in Lapland. This means that southern portions of the country are snow-covered about three months of the year and the northern, about seven months. The long winter causes about half of the annual 500 to 600 millimeters of precipitation in the north to fall as snow. Precipitation in the south amounts to about 600 to 700 millimeters annually. Like that of the north, it occurs all through the year, though not so much of it is snow.

The Atlantic Ocean to the west and the Eurasian continent to the east interact to modify the climate of the country. The warm waters of the Gulf Stream and the North Atlantic Drift Current, which warm Norway and Sweden, also warm Finland. Westerly winds bring the warm air currents into the Baltic areas and to the country's shores, moderating winter temperatures, especially in the south. These winds, because of clouds associated with weather systems accompanying the westerlies, also decrease the amount of sunshine received during the summer. By contrast, the continental high pressure system situated over the Eurasian continent counteracts the maritime influences, causing severe winters and occasionally high temperatures in the summer.

Demography

Finland had 250,000 inhabitants in the sixteenth century. As a result of wars, the population did not reach the 1 million mark until about 1815 (see table 7, Appendix A). Mortality remained high even in the nineteenth century. The famine of 1867 to 1868, for example, killed 5 to 10 percent of the population, and it was not until 1880 that there were 2 million Finns. In the last part of the century, improved living conditions began to lower the death rate, but a simultaneous fall in the birth rate and increased emigration



Source: Based on information from Nordic Council of Ministers, Nordic Statistical Secretariat, *Yearbook of Nordic Statistics, 1987,* Copenhagen, 1988, 22.

Figure 9. Population by Age and Sex, 1986

retarded growth. As a result, shortly before World War I the country's inhabitants still numbered only 3 million. A short-lived "baby boom" in the first five years after the upheavals of World War II allowed the population to reach 4 million by 1950. Since then the country's population growth has been among the lowest in the world. Low birth rates coupled with heavy emigration resulted in a population of only 4,937,000 in 1987. The annual birth rate since the early 1970s has averaged fewer than 14 births per 1,000 persons, a rate that has caused demographers to estimate that Finland's population would peak at just under 5 million by about the turn of the century, after which it would decline (see fig. 9).

At the beginning of the 1980s, Finland's average population density, fourteen persons per square kilometer, was the second lowest in Western Europe, just behind Norway's thirteen and ahead of Sweden's seventeen. Actual population density varied widely, however (see fig. 10). The province of Lapland, covering 29.3 percent of the nation's area but containing only about 4 percent of its population, had a population density of about two persons per square kilometer, making it one of the earth's emptiest regions. Uusimaa, Finland's second smallest province, which contains the capital city, Helsinki, accounted for only 3.1 percent of the

national territory; however, it was home for more than 20 percent of the country's inhabitants, who lived together at a density of 119 per square kilometer, a figure identical to that of Denmark. The provinces of Kymi, Häme, and Turku ja Pori in south-central Finland, which had a mix of rural and urban areas with economies based on both agriculture and industry, were perhaps more truly representative of Finnish conditions. During the 1980s, their population densities ranged from thirty to forty persons per square kilometer.

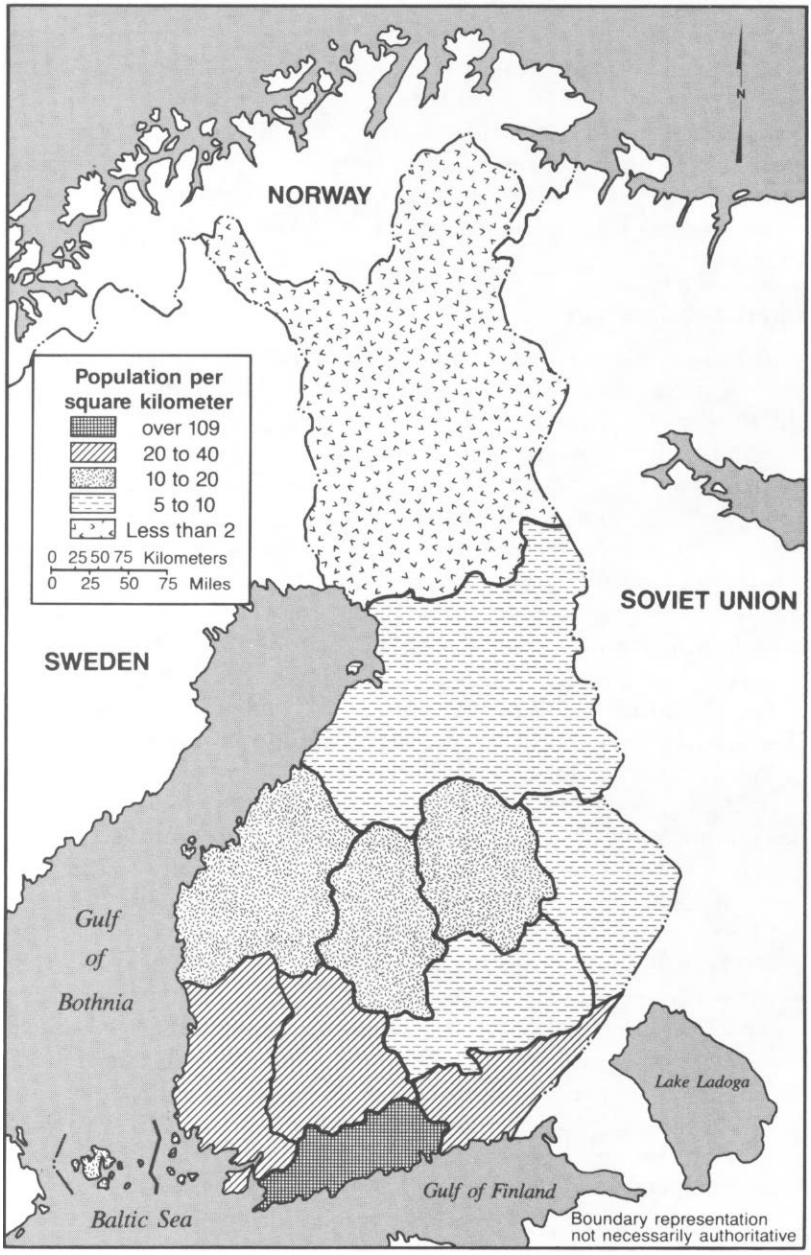
External Migration

Demographic movement in Finland did not end with the appearance of immigrants from Sweden in the Middle Ages. Finns who left to work in Swedish mines in the sixteenth century began a national tradition, which continued up through the 1970s, of settling in their neighboring country. During the period of tsarist rule, some 100,000 Finns went to Russia, mainly to the St. Petersburg area. Emigration on a large scale began in the second half of the nineteenth century when Finns, along with millions of other Europeans, set out for the United States and Canada. By 1980 Finland had lost an estimated 400,000 of its citizens to these two countries.

A great number of Finns emigrated to Sweden after World War II, drawn by that country's prosperity and proximity. Emigration began slowly, but, during the 1960s and the second half of the 1970s, tens of thousands left each year for their western neighbor. The peak emigration year was 1970, when 41,000 Finns settled in Sweden, which caused Finland's population actually to fall that year. Because many of the migrants later returned to Finland, definite figures cannot be calculated, but all told, an estimated 250,000 to 300,000 Finns became permanent residents of Sweden in the postwar period. The overall youthfulness of these emigrants meant that the quality of the work force available to Finnish employers was diminished and that the national birth rate slowed. At one point, every eighth Finnish child was born in Sweden. Finland's Swedish-speaking minority was hard hit by this westward migration; its numbers dropped from 350,000 to about 300,000 between 1950 and 1980. By the 1980s, a strong Finnish economy had brought an end to large-scale migration to Sweden. In fact, the overall population flow was reversed because each year several thousand more Finns returned from Sweden than left for it.

Internal Migration

However significant the long-term effects of external migration



Source: Based on information from Federal Republic of Germany, Statistisches Bundesamt, *Länderbericht Finnland, 1986,* Wiesbaden, 1986, 8.

Figure 10. Population Density by Province, 1981

on Finnish society may have been, migration within the country had a greater impact—especially the migration which took place between the end of World War II and the mid-1970s, when half the population moved from one part of the country to another. Before World War II, internal migration had first been a centuries-long process of forming settlements ever farther to the north. Later, however, beginning in the second half of the nineteenth century with the coming of Finland's tardy industrialization, there was a slow movement from rural regions toward areas in the south where employment could be found.

Postwar internal migration began with the resettlement within Finland of virtually all the inhabitants of the parts of Karelia ceded to the Soviet Union (see The Continuation War, ch. 1). Somewhat more than 400,000 persons, more than 10 percent of the nation's population, found new homes elsewhere in Finland, often in the less settled regions of the east and the north. In these regions, new land, which they cleared for farming, was provided for the refugees; in more populated areas, property was requisitioned. The sudden influx of these settlers was successfully dealt with in just a few years. One of the effects of rural resettlement was an increase in the number of farms during the postwar years, a unique occurrence for industrialized nations of this period (see Agriculture, ch. 3).

It was, however, the postwar economic transformation that caused an even larger movement of people within Finland, a movement known to Finns as the Great Migration (see Economic Development, ch. 3). It was a massive population shift from rural areas, especially those of eastern and northeastern Finland, to the urban, industrialized south (see table 8, Appendix A). People left rural regions because the mechanization of agriculture and the forestry industry had eliminated jobs. The displaced work force went to areas where employment in the expanding industrial and service sectors was available. This movement began in the 1950s, but it was most intense during the 1960s and the first half of the 1970s, assuming proportions that in relative terms were unprecedented for a country outside the Third World. The Great Migration left behind rural areas of abandoned farms with reduced and aging populations, and it allowed the creation of a densely populated postindustrial society in the country's south.

The extent of the demographic shift to the south can be shown by the following figures. Between 1951 and 1975, the population registered an increase of 655,000. During this period, the small province of Uusimaa increased its population by 412,000, growing from 670,000 to 1,092,00; three-quarters of this growth was

caused by settlers from other provinces. The population increase experienced by four other southern provinces, the Åland Islands, Turku ja Pori, Häme, and Kymi, taken together with that of Uusimaa amounted to 97 percent of the country's total population increase for these years. The population increase of the central and the northern provinces accounted for the remaining 3 percent. Provinces that experienced an actual population loss during these years were in the east and the northeast—Pohjois-Karjala, Mikkeli, and Kuopio.

One way of visualizing the shift to the south would be to draw a line, bowing slightly to the north, between the port cities of Kotka on the Gulf of Finland and Kaskinen on the Gulf of Bothnia. In 1975 the territory to the south of this line would have contained half of Finland's population. Ten years earlier, such a line, drawn farther to the north to mark off perhaps 20 percent more area, would have encompassed half the population. One hundred years earlier, half the population would have been distributed throughout more than twice as much territory. Another indication of the extent to which Finns were located in the south was that by 1980, approximately 90 percent of them lived in the southernmost 41 percent of Finland.

Urbanization

The Great Migration was also a process of urbanization. Mechanization of agriculture and forestry meant fewer jobs in these sectors that had traditionally taken the bulk of Finland's work force. Redundant workers found new employment in the economically burgeoning south. Just before World War II, three out of four Finns lived in rural areas; it was not until 1969 that more than half the population had come to live in urban communities. The trend continued, and by the early 1980s some 60 percent of Finns lived in urban areas. The largest urban settlement in Finland was greater Helsinki, which, with a population of about 950,000 in the 1980s, contained one-fifth of the country's total population. Two of Helsinki's suburbs, Espoo (established in 1963) and Vantaa (dating only from 1972), were, by a wide margin, the country's fourth and fifth largest cities. The greater urban areas of the cities of Tampere and Turku each contained about 250,000 inhabitants.

Social Structure

The economic and political transformations that Finland has experienced since the last decades of the nineteenth century have radically altered the country's social structure. In the first phase of this transformation, industrialization expanded the economy,

created hitherto unknown occupational groups, and forced the old bureaucratic and clerical elite to share power and prestige with a new entrepreneurial class. The political transformation established a democratic republic in which parties representing workers and farmers successfully contended for the highest public offices. After World War II, the two processes of transformation quickened. In one generation, the manner in which Finns lived and earned their livelihood changed in an unprecedented way. An essentially rural society moved to the city; farmers, for centuries the most numerous class, ceded this position to white-collar workers; and prosperity replaced poverty.

Occupational and Wage Structure

Finland's export-dependent economy continuously adapted to the world market; in doing so, it changed Finnish society as well. The prolonged worldwide boom, beginning in the late 1940s and lasting until the first oil crisis in 1973, was a challenge that Finland met and from which it emerged with a highly sophisticated and diversified economy, including a new occupational structure (see Economic Development, ch. 3). Some sectors kept a fairly constant share of the work force. Transportation and construction, for example, each accounted for between 7 and 8 percent in both 1950 and 1985, and manufacturing's share rose only from 22 to 24 percent; however, both the commercial and the service sectors more than doubled their share of the work force, accounting, respectively, for 21 and 28 percent in 1985. The greatest change was the decline of the economically active population employed in agriculture and forestry, from approximately 50 percent in 1950 to 10 percent in 1985. The exodus from farms and forests provided the manpower needed for the growth of other sectors.

Studies of Finnish mobility patterns since World War II have confirmed the significance of this exodus. Sociologists have found that people with a farming background were present in other occupations to a considerably greater extent in Finland than in other West European countries. Finnish data for the early 1980s showed that 30 to 40 percent of those in occupations not requiring much education were the children of farmers, as were about 25 percent in upper-level occupations, a rate two to three times that of France and noticeably higher than that even of neighboring Sweden. Finland also differed from the other Nordic countries in that the generational transition from the rural occupations to white-collar positions was more likely to be direct, bypassing manual occupations.

The most important factor determining social mobility in Finland was education. Children who attained a higher level of

education than their parents were often able to rise in the hierarchy of occupations. A tripling or quadrupling in any one generation of the numbers receiving schooling beyond the required minimum reflected the needs of a developing economy for skilled employees. Obtaining advanced training or education was easier for some than for others, however, and the children of white-collar employees still were more likely to become white-collar employees themselves than were the children of farmers and blue-collar workers. In addition, children of white-collar professionals were more likely than not to remain in that class.

The economic transformation also altered income structure. A noticeable shift was the reduction in wage differentials. The increased wealth produced by an advanced economy was distributed to wage earners via the system of broad income agreements that evolved in the postwar era (see Industrial Relations, ch. 3). Organized sectors of the economy received wage hikes even greater than the economy's growth rate. As a result, blue-collar workers' income came, in time, to match more closely the pay of lower-level white-collar employees, and the income of the upper middle class declined in relation to that of other groups.

The wage structure of the 1980s contrasted sharply with that of 1900. At the turn of the century, the pay of a senior government official was many times greater than that of an industrial worker, and households headed by professionals customarily employed servants. By the 1980s, the household of a university-educated professional had an average income not quite twice that of a manual worker in the farming or forestry sector. According to the Central Statistical Office of Finland, if the average household income is measured at 100 in 1984, that of a professional household is 169; of a salaried employee, 118; of a construction worker, 112; and of an ordinary service sector employee, 104. Among households with incomes below the average are those of farm and forestry workers, with an average income measured at 92; those receiving unemployment benefits at 73; and those retired at 44.

Despite a more even distribution of income, Finnish government statistics showed that a considerable portion of taxable income was earned by small segments of the population. In 1985 the top 10 percent of taxpayers earned 26.9 percent of taxable income, and the top 20 percent earned 43.7 percent of income. The bottom 10 percent of taxpayers earned only 0.5 percent of taxable income; the bottom 20 percent, only 3 percent. These figures had remained stable since at least the late 1970s, and they were unlikely to change greatly by the early 1990s, as Finnish taxes remained relatively modest compared with those of other West European countries.

Saimaa, a system of interconnected lakes covering 1,000 square kilometers in eastern Finland
Courtesy Embassy of Finland, Washington

Although Finland's income distribution was the most unequal of the five Nordic countries, it did not differ greatly from its neighbors. Sweden, for example, had the most equal distribution, with the top 20 percent earning 38.1 percent of taxable income, and the bottom 20 percent, 5.3 percent.

Class Structure

For centuries Finnish society consisted of the nobility, clergy, burghers, and peasants. The nineteenth century saw the eclipse of the nobility and clergy and, with the coming of industrialization, the formation of socially significant entrepreneurial and working classes. The civil war and subsequent periods of repression helped to create hostile relations among labor, land, and capital, and in the interwar period Finland was a country marked by deep social fissures along class and language lines. The common national goals of World War II closed some wounds, but it was not until the coming of consensus politics in the second half of the 1960s that constructive relations among competing social groups became possible. An unprecedented prosperity, widely distributed through incomes agreements and a Nordic-style welfare system, served to integrate all groups into society; a more open education system, coupled with the internationally pervasive consumer culture of the

postwar era, planed away many differences of taste and conduct related to class.

Finnish scholars have examined the composition of the new consensus society, and their varied findings have prompted serious discussions of its class makeup. Among many issues debated have been the definition of the working class, the extent to which it has been affected by a process of "embourgeoisement," and the constitution of the ruling elite, if any, that has steered the country. One noted Finnish sociologist, Matti Alestalo, familiar with academic studies in these areas, divided Finnish society of the 1980s into six classes: farmers, working class, petite bourgeoisie, lower middle class, upper middle class, and upper class.

For Alestalo, the two most striking changes in Finland's class structure after World War II were the steep drop in the size of the farming population and the great expansion of the lower middle class. During the early 1950s, the number of those working in agriculture actually increased, but thereafter it fell steadily. By 1980 the sector was about one-quarter of its size thirty years earlier, and it consisted almost entirely of farm owners and their families because the number of hired agricultural workers had dwindled. The farmers who remained enjoyed a higher standard of living because it was the smaller and poorer farms that had been abandoned. Another reason for farmers' new prosperity was that they were a highly organized and homogeneous class that successfully lobbied for government policies that benefited them. Farmers differed from other classes in that they were, to a far higher degree, self-recruiting; about 80 percent of farmers were the offspring of farmers. The rationalization of agriculture made small businessmen out of most farmers, but farmers differed from other owners of small enterprises in that they passed on to their children something that was more a way of life than a business.

Alestalo classified as a worker anyone employed for primarily manual work, and he included in this class some white-collar wage earners whom others judged to belong to the lower middle class. According to his calculations, the working class had accounted for about 50 percent of the economically active work force during the entire postwar period, but the sectors in which it was employed had changed. The share of workers employed in agriculture and forestry had dropped from 22 to 4 percent by 1980, while the share active in manufacturing and services had increased to 60 and to 26 percent, respectively. Workers' living standards had improved greatly—more than those of other groups—since the war, but even in the 1980s workers still had poorer health and less job security than other classes. They were also housed more poorly, and one

of their primary concerns was to acquire homes of their own. By the 1980s, Finnish workers had become much more integrated into society than they had been in the immediate postwar period, but they still identified strongly with their labor unions and with the parties that had traditionally represented them. Although workers no longer lived in the isolated enclaves of the interwar period, Alestalo believed it would be premature to say that they had become part of the middle class.

Finland's petite bourgeoisie of shopowners and small entrepreneurs had never been an economically important class. It had declined slowly in size, beginning in the 1950s, until by 1980 it accounted for only 5 percent of the work force. Many small shops operated by this class had closed because of the growth of large retail firms. Many small grocery stores, for example, had gone out of business. There was little intergenerational stability in this class because many of its members came from outside it.

Alestalo divided the large group engaged in nonmanual, white-collar occupations into a lower middle class and an upper middle class. Educational level, recruitment criteria, complexity of tasks, level of income, and commitment to the organization were among the factors that determined to which of these two classes a person belonged. Both classes had grown since the war, doubling in size between 1960 and 1980, but the lower middle class share of the total work force in 1980 amounted to 24 percent, making it the second largest class in Finland and dwarfing the 8 percent of the upper middle class. Both levels of the middle class had many members born in other classes, but the lower middle class had more, one-third having a farming background and another third coming from the working class. Women dominated in the lower middle class, constituting 60 percent of its membership in 1960 and 70 percent in 1980, an indication of their heavy employment in lower-level service-sector positions such as those of office workers, elementary school teachers, and nurses.

According to Alestalo, the country's upper class accounted for about 1 percent of the economically active population; it was made up of the owners, directors, or managers of large industrial concerns, banks, and commercial institutions in the private sector, as well as the heads of large state companies and agencies, and senior civil servants in the public sector. Some members of the country's upper class inherited their wealth or position. In the postwar era, however, most appeared to be hired professionals. Much of the membership of the upper class came from the upper reaches of Finnish society, but several factors resulted in its having a more heterogeneous composition than earlier—the coming to power of

socialist parties with leaderships from various classes, the common practice of politicizing senior civil service appointments, and the greater importance of state institutions.

Family Life

The profound demographic and economic changes that occurred in Finland after World War II affected the Finnish family. Families became smaller, dropping from an average of 3.6 persons in 1950 to an average of 2.7 by 1975. Family composition did not change much in that quarter of a century, however, and in 1975 the percentage of families that consisted of a man and a woman was 24.4; of a couple and children, 61.9; of a woman with offspring, 11.8; of a man and offspring, 1.9. These percentages are not markedly different from those of 1950. Change was seen in the number of children per family, which fell from an average of 2.24 in 1950 to an average of 1.7 in the mid-1980s, and large families were rare. Only 2 percent of families had four or more children, while 51 percent had one child; 38 percent, two children; and 9 percent, three children. The number of Finns under the age of 18 dropped from 1.5 million in 1960 to 1.2 million in 1980.

Marriage

Attitudes toward marriage have changed substantially since World War II. Most obvious was the declining marriage rate, which dropped from 8.5 marriages per 1,000 Finns in 1950 to 5.8 in 1984, a decline great enough to mean a drop also in absolute numbers. In 1950 there were 34,000 marriages, while in 1984 only 28,500 were registered, despite a growth in population of 800,000. An explanation for the decline was that there was an unprecedented number of unmarried couples. Since the late 1960s, the practice of cohabitation had become increasingly common, so much so that by the late 1970s most marriages in urban areas grew out of what Finns called "open unions." In the 1980s, it was estimated that about 8 percent of couples who lived together, approximately 200,000 people, did so without benefit of marriage. Partners of such unions usually married because of the arrival of offspring or the acquisition of property. A result of the frequency of cohabitation was that marriages were postponed, and the average age for marriage, which had been falling, began to rise in the 1970s. By 1982 the average marriage age was 24.8 years for women and 26.8 years for men, several years higher for both sexes than had been true a decade earlier.

The overwhelming majority of Finns did marry, however. About 90 percent of the women had been married by the age of forty,

and spinsterhood was rare. A shortage of women in rural regions, however, meant that some farmers were forced into bachelorhood.

While the number of marriages was declining, divorce became more common, increasing 250 percent between 1950 and 1980. In 1952 there were 3,500 divorces. The 1960s saw a steady increase in this rate, which averaged about 5,000 divorces a year. A high of 10,191 was reached in 1979; afterwards the divorce rate stabilized at about 9,500 per year during the first half of the 1980s.

A number of factors caused the increased frequency of divorce. One was that an increasingly secularized society viewed marriage, more often than before, as an arrangement that could be ended if it did not satisfy its partners. Another reason was that a gradually expanding welfare system could manage an ever greater portion of the family's traditional tasks, and it made couples less dependent on the institution of marriage. Government provisions for parental leave, child allowances, child care programs, and much improved health and pension plans meant that the family was no longer essential for the care of children and aged relatives. A further cause for weakened family and marital ties was seen in the unsettling effects of the Great Migration and in the economic transformation Finland experienced during the 1960s and the 1970s. The rupture of established social patterns brought uncertainty and an increased potential for conflict into personal relationships.

Status of Women

After examining the position of women around the world, the Washington-based Population Crisis Committee reported in 1988 that Finland, slightly behind top-ranked Sweden and just ahead of the United States, was one of the very best places in which a woman could live. The group reached this conclusion after examining the health, educational, economic, and legal conditions that affect women's lives.

When compared with women of other nations, Finnish women, who accounted for just over 50 percent of the population in the mid-1980s, did have a privileged place (see fig. 10). They were the first in Europe to gain the franchise, and by the 1980s they routinely constituted about one-third of the membership of the Eduskunta (parliament) and held several ministerial posts. In the 1980s, about 75 percent of adult women worked outside the home; they made up about 48 percent of the work force. Finnish women were as well educated as their male counterparts, and the number of women studying at the university level was slightly higher than the number of men. In addition to an expanding welfare system, which since World War II had come to provide them with

substantial assistance in the area of child-bearing and child-rearing, women had made notable legislative gains that brought them closer to full equality with men.

In 1972 the Council for Equality was established to advise lawmakers on methods for realizing full legal equality for women. In 1983 legislation arranged that both parents were to have equal rights for custody of their children. A year later, women were granted equal rights in the establishment of their children's nationality. Henceforth any child born of a Finnish woman would have Finnish citizenship. After a very heated national debate, legislation was passed in 1985 that gave women an equal right to decide what surname or surnames they and their children would use. These advances were capped by a law that went into effect in early 1987 forbidding any discrimination on the basis of sex and providing protection against it. Once these laws were passed, Finnish authorities signed the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, in 1986.

In a number of areas, however, the country's small feminist movement maintained that the circumstances in which Finnish women lived needed to be improved. Most striking was the disparity in wages. Although women made up just under half the work force and had a tradition of working outside the home, they earned only about two-thirds of the wages paid to men. Occupations in which women predominated, such as those of retail and office personnel, were poorly paid in contrast to those in which men constituted the majority. Despite the sexes' equal educational attainments, and despite a society where sexual differentiation played a smaller role than it did in many other countries, occupational segregation in Finland was marked. In few of the twenty most common occupations were the two sexes equally represented. Only in occupations relating to agriculture, forestry, and school teaching was a rough parity approached, and as few as 6 percent of Finns worked in jobs where 40 to 60 percent of workers were of the opposite sex. Studies also found that equal educational levels did not—in any category of training—prevent women's wages from lagging behind those paid to men. Women tended to occupy lower positions, while males were more often supervisors or managers. This was the case everywhere, whether in schools or universities, in business, in the civil service, or in politics at both the local level and the national level.

In addition to their occupying secondary position in the workplace, women had longer workdays because they performed a greater share of household tasks than did men. On the average, their workweek outside the home was several hours shorter than

men's because a greater portion of them were employed only part-time or worked in the service sector where hours were shorter than they were in manufacturing. Studies have found, however, that women spent about twice as much time on housework as men—about three hours and forty minutes a day, compared with one hour and fifty minutes for men. Men did twice as many household repairs and about an equal amount of shopping, but they devoted only one-third to one-fourth as much time to cleaning, cooking, and caring for children. Given that the bulk of family chores fell to women, and that they were five times more likely than men to head a single-parent family, the shortcomings of Finland's child day-care system affected women more than men.

The Equality Law that went into effect in 1987 committed the country to achieving full equality for women. In the late 1980s, there was a timetable listing specific goals to be achieved during the remainder of the twentieth century. The emphasis was to be equality for everyone, rather than protection for women. Efforts were undertaken not only to place women in occupations dominated by males, but also to bring males into fields traditionally believed to belong to the women's sphere, such as child care and elementary school teaching. Another aim was for women to occupy a more equal share of decision-making positions.

Minority Groups

Compared with many countries, Finland was quite homogeneous. There were few foreigners, and the ones who were present were usually white-collar employees required for commercial reasons. Very few persons of other races were seen on the nation's streets, and only a handful of refugees were granted asylum. Finns were open about their desire to avoid admitting workers from distant southern countries and hence to avoid the kinds of situations that had led to minor racial incidents in neighboring Sweden and Denmark, let alone those that had caused the serious social problems experienced by Britain.

Finland did have one significant minority, the Swedish-speaking Finns, who had been in the country for more than 1,000 years and who, for centuries, had been the source of its ruling elite. Nineteenth-century nationalism, some fierce struggles in the twentieth century, and changing demographic patterns had deprived this group of its traditional dominance, but law and compromise had allowed the Swedish-speaking Finns a secure and peaceful place within Finnish society. Two smaller minorities had not been successfully assimilated. One, the Lapps, was descended from the original inhabitants of the land; the other, the Gypsies, was a much

later addition. The former lived mostly in the high north; the latter were found throughout the country. Neither group was a threat to Finnish society, but both occasionally posed problems for social workers, and their treatment at the hands of their fellow Finns was sometimes cause for regret. Also present in Finland were tiny Jewish and Muslim communities, both of which had roots going back into the nineteenth century.

Lapps

The oldest known inhabitants of Finland are the Lapps, who were already settled there when the Finns arrived in the southern part of the country about 2,000 years ago. The Lapps were distantly related to the Finns, and both spoke a non-Indo-European language belonging to the Finno-Ugric family of languages. Once present throughout the country, the Lapps gradually moved northward under the pressure of the advancing Finns. As they were a nomadic people in a sparsely settled land, the Lapps were always able to find new and open territory in which to follow their traditional activities of hunting, fishing, and slash-and-burn agriculture. By the sixteenth century, most Lapps lived in the northern half of the country, and it was during this period that they converted to Christianity. By the nineteenth century, most of them lived in the parts of Lapland that were still their home in the 1980s. The last major shift in Lapp settlement was the migration westward of 600 Skolt Lapps from the Petsamo region after it was ceded to the Soviet Union in 1944. A reminder of their eastern origin was their Orthodox faith; the remaining 85 percent of Finland's Lapps were Lutheran.

About 90 percent of Finland's 4,400 Lapps lived in the municipalities of Enontekiö, Inari, and Utsjoki, and in the reindeer herding-area of Sodankylä. According to Finnish regulations, anyone who spoke the Lapp language, Sami, or who had a relative who was a Lapp, was registered as a Lapp in census records. Finnish Lapps spoke three Sami dialects, but by the late 1980s perhaps only a minority actually had Sami as their first language. Lapp children had the right to instruction in Sami, but there were few qualified instructors or textbooks available. One reason for the scarcity of written material in Sami is that the three dialects spoken in Finland made agreement about a common orthography difficult. Perhaps these shortcomings explained why a 1979 study found the educational level of Lapps to be considerably lower than that of other Finns.

Few Finnish Lapps actually led the traditional nomadic life pictured in school geography texts and in travel brochures. Although

Lapps in traditional dress
Courtesy Embassy of Finland, Washington

many Lapps living in rural regions of Lapland earned some of their livelihood from reindeer herding, it was estimated that Lapps owned no more than one-third of Finland's 200,000 reindeer. Only 5 percent of Finnish Lapps had the herds of 250 to 300 reindeer needed to live entirely from this kind of work. Most Lapps worked at more routine activities, including farming, construction, and service industries such as tourism. Often a variety of jobs and sources of income supported Lapp families, which were, on the average, twice the size of a typical Finnish family. Lapps also were aided by old-age pensions and by government welfare, which provided a greater share of their income than it did for Finns as a whole.

There have been many efforts over the years by Finnish authorities to safeguard the Lapps' culture and way of life and to ease their entry into modern society. Officials created bodies that dealt with the Lapp minority, or formed committees that studied their situation. An early body was the Society for the Promotion of Lapp Culture, formed in 1932. In 1960 the government created the Advisory Commission on Lapp Affairs. The Lapps themselves formed the Samii Litto in 1945 and the Johti Sabmelazzat, a more aggressive organization, in 1968. In 1973 the government arranged for elections every four years to a twenty-member Sami Parlamenta that was to advise authorities. On the international level, there was the Nordic Sami Council of 1956, and there has been a regularly occurring regional conference since then that represented—in

addition to Finland's Lapps—Norway's 20,000 Lapps, Sweden's 10,000 Lapps, and the 1,000 to 2,000 Lapps who remained in the Kola Peninsula in the Soviet Union.

Swedish-speaking Finns

The largest minority group in Finland was the Swedish-speaking Finns, who numbered about 250,000 in the late 1980s. The first evidence of their presence in the country, dating from the eighth century, comes from the Åland Islands. After the thirteenth century, colonization from Sweden began in earnest, and within two centuries there was a band of territory occupied by Swedish speakers that ran along the western and the southern coasts and had an average width of about thirty kilometers (see fig. 11). Cycles of Finnish and Swedish assimilation have changed the linguistic makeup of this strip of land. In Ostrobothnia, for example, the area of Swedish settlement extended inland as much as sixty kilometers and still existed in the late 1980s, while other areas had eventually reverted to being once again overwhelmingly inhabited by Finnish speakers. By the end of the nineteenth century, the areas of Swedish settlement had shrunk to basically what they were in the second half of the 1980s: Ostrobothnia, the Åland Islands, and a strip along the southern coast that included the capital (see fig. 12). The settlers from Sweden gradually lost contact with their relatives in the old country and came to regard Finland as their country. They were distinguished from other Finns only by their language, Swedish, which they retained even after hundreds of years of separation from Sweden.

Although most Swedish-speaking Finns worked as farmers and fishermen, for centuries they also made up the country's governing elite. Even after the country was ceded to Russia in 1809, the aristocracy and nearly all those active in commerce, in the courts, and in education had Swedish as their native language. The country's bureaucracy did virtually all its written work in Swedish. Finnish speakers who desired to enter these groups learned Swedish. Only the clergy used Finnish on a regular basis, for they dealt with the bulk of the population who, for the most part, knew only that language. There were no campaigns to force Swedish on Finnish speakers, however, and the problem of language as a social issue did not exist during the period of Swedish rule.

Swedish retained its primacy until the second half of the nineteenth century, when, as a result of budding nationalism, it was gradually displaced by Finnish. A good many of the strongest advocates of Finnish nationalism were Swedish speakers who used their own language in the patriotic pamphlets and journals of the

time because few of them could write Finnish. By the end of the century, the nationalist movement had been successful in fostering the birth of Finnish as a written language and in bringing about the formation of an educated Finnish-speaking elite. Numbering 350,000 and constituting 13 percent of the country's population in 1900, Swedish-speaking Finns were still disproportionately influential and wealthy, but they were no longer dominant in the country of their birth.

Independent Finland's new Constitution protected the Swedish-speaking minority, in that it made both Finnish and Swedish national languages of equal official status, stipulating that a citizen be able to use either language in courts and have government documents relating to him or her issued in his or her language, and that the cultural and economic needs of both language groups be treated equally. The Language Act of 1922 covered many of the practical questions engendered by these constitutional rights. Despite these legal provisions, however, there were still currents of Finnish opinion that wished to see a curtailment of the Swedish-speaking minority's right to protect its cultural identity. Attempts at Finnicization failed, however, and the advent of the national crisis of World War II submerged disagreements about the language issue. Since the war, there have been occasional squabbles about practical measures for realizing the minority's economic and cultural rights, but none about the inherent value of the policy of equality.

The Language Act of 1922, and its subsequent revisions, arranged for the realization of the rights of the Swedish-speaking minority. The basic units for protecting and furthering the exercise of these rights were the self-governing municipalities. After each ten-year census, Finland's nearly 500 municipalities were classified as either unilingual or bilingual with a majority language. In the 1980s, there were 461 municipalities: 396 Finnish-speaking; 21 bilingual with a Finnish-speaking majority; 24 Swedish-speaking; 20 bilingual with Swedish as the majority language. A municipality was bilingual if the number of speakers of the minority language exceeded either 3,000 or 8 percent of its population. If a municipality had been classified as bilingual, it could not revert to unilingual status until the minority population declined to less than 6 percent.

Language classification had important consequences for the inhabitants of a municipality, for it determined which language was to be used for government business. In bilingual municipalities, all documents affecting the general public—tax forms, for example—had to be published in both languages. In addition, national and local government officials had to be bilingual—a requirement

Source: Based on information from Erik Allardt and Karl Johan Miemois, *Roots Both in the Center and the Periphery: The Swedish Speaking Population in Finland,* Helsinki, 1979, 7.

Figure 11. Areas Inhabited by Swedish-speaking Finns up to 1910

not always met, however—and public notices and road signs had to be in both languages. In unilingual communities this was not the case. Documents relating directly to an individual case could be translated, but otherwise official business was transacted in the municipality's language. If someone were involved in a court case, however, and did not know the prevailing language, translation would be provided.

The method used to classify municipalities had to be regarded as successful because, although the overwhelming majority of municipalities were unilingual Finnish-speaking communities, only 4 percent of the Swedish-speaking minority lived in municipalities where their language was not used. Finnish-speaking Finns fared

even better, for less than 1 percent of them lived where their language was not used officially. Some of the Swedish speakers who lived apart from their fellows did so voluntarily because they had management positions at factories and plants in regions that were nearly entirely Finnish-speaking areas. Because they were educated, these managers knew Finnish. They were also representatives of the tradition of "*brukssvenskar*" (literally, "factory Swedes"), and were sometimes the only Swedish speakers their brother Finns knew.

On the national level, all laws and decrees had to be issued in both languages, and the Swedish-speaking minority had the right to have Swedish-language programs on the state radio and television networks. Swedish-language schools had to be established wherever there was a sufficient number of pupils. There were several Swedish-language institutions of higher learning, and a specified number of the professorial chairs at the University of Helsinki was reserved for Swedish speakers, as was one brigade in the army. A drawback for the Swedish-speaking minority, though, was that because of its small size, the national government could not, for practical reasons, publish in Swedish all parliamentary deliberations, committee reports, and official documents.

The Swedish-speaking minority was well represented in various sectors of society. The moderate Swedish People's Party (Svenska Folkpartiet—SFP) got the votes of most Swedish speakers, with the exception of workers who more often than not voted for socialist parties. The SFP polled enough support to hold a number of seats in the Eduskunta that usually matched closely the percentage of Swedish speakers in the country's total population. It very often had ministers in the cabinet as well (see The Swedish People's Party, ch. 4). An unofficial special body, the Swedish People's Assembly (Svenska Finlands Folkting), representing all members of the minority, functioned in an advisory capacity to regular governing institutions. Most national organizations, whether economic, academic, social, or religious, had branches or separate equivalents for Swedish speakers. Because of its long commercial and maritime traditions, the Swedish-speaking minority was disproportionately strong in some sectors of the financial community and the shipping industry. In general, however, with the exception of the upper middle class, where there were more Swedish speakers than usual, the class distribution of the minority matched fairly closely that of the larger community.

The size of the Swedish-speaking minority increased fairly steadily until 1940, when it numbered 354,000 persons, or 9.6 percent of the country's total population. Since then it has declined, dropping to 296,000, or 6.1 percent of the population, in 1987. In