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CHAPTER 1

Finns in the Colonial World

Raita Merivirta, Leila Koivunen, and Timo Särkkä

Colonialism is often understood as control of a geographical area overseas obtained by invasion or settlement. As Finland only gained independence in 1917 and never held any overseas colonies, Finns have been able to claim innocence and non-involvement in colonialism and colonialist practices. The Finnish nation has historically been positioned in Europe between western and eastern empires. Finland was part of the Swedish Realm[1]from c. 1150 to 1809 and occupied a subordinate position as the Grand Duchy of the Russian Empire from 1809 until 1917, when Finland declared itself independent. This subordinate position has contributed to the commonly held view that the Finns have been victims of colonization, rather than colonizers or even beneficiaries of colonial practices. Vocal criticism of Russia's imperialist policies did arise within Finland under the

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[1] Known in 1611–1721 as the Swedish Empire.

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policy of Russification in 1899–1905 and 1908–1917—a policy which many Finns regarded as a direct threat to the Finnish nation and culture.[2] These views grew into broader criticism of imperialism and global inequality. However, the Finnish relationship to colonialism, was a complex one: Finns were not merely victims of Swedish or Russian imperial rule but also in many ways involved in colonialism.

The chapters of *Finnish Colonial Encounters* demonstrate that Finns have not only engaged in colonial projects with regard to Sápmi[3] and the Sámi people in the North, which is a more familiar claim to Finns, but also produced and circulated colonial knowledge and constructed racial hierarchies. Furthermore, this volume shows how some individual Finns were caught up in colonial conflicts or actively sought out employment in colonial contexts. The main focus of *Finnish Colonial Encounters* is on the wide acceptance and active involvement in the production of European colonial knowledge. We argue that colonial ways of knowing were also produced, developed, and circulated in those European regions that did not have formal colonies and that their inhabitants, by consuming, applying, and replicating these knowledges, participated in the processes, whereby Western epistemology and ideas of modernity became hegemonic.

There has been a strong tradition in Finnish historiography of investigating the position of the region that came to be known as Finland as part of the Swedish and Russian empires.[4] In contrast, until now, there has been very little research concerning potential linkages of Finland or Finns to western colonialism prior to the twenty-first century; a gap resulting in part from the dominant idea that Finland itself struggled and negotiated over its position within these empires, but did not play a role in other western colonial activities. For instance, an increasing number of scholars took part in writing the history of Finnish overseas migration from the

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[2] See Rantanen and Ruuska (2009). To maintain that the consciousness of Finland was predominantly Finnish at this period is not to deny an enhanced sense of difference within the different ethnicities and language groups of Finland.

[3] We use the Sámi term Sápmi, or Sámiland, to refer to the entire Sámi area in northern Fennoscandia. The part of Sápmi under Swedish and later also under Finnish sovereignty is referred to as Lapland. The latter term thus refers to an administrative area, while Sápmi refers to the actual area across state borders where the Sámi live in the North.

[4] See, for example, Juva (1951), Klinge (1987), Karonen (1999), and Fogelberg (2011).

1960s onward, but their focus was not on encounters of these mobile individuals with colonial powers or colonized people, on the similarity of their activities to settler colonialism, or on their responses to colonial thought. Colonialism was typically depicted as a self-evident circumstance in foreign countries, but its many connections to the lives of Finnish immigrants, or Finns at home, evaded scrutiny. Finnish participation in European colonialism was largely left uncharted until quite recently.

The last two decades have witnessed an increasing historical interest in Finns' relationship to colonialism,[5] and several new openings have been made and projects begun in the last five years.[6] This new awareness of the need to reconsider and examine Finnish connections to the colonial world has been a result of many simultaneous developments. It has been influenced by contemporary Euro-American discussions on colonialism and its different legacies, most recently raised by Black Lives Matter, movements to topple colonial statues and questions of repatriation of various ethnographic collections, as well as increased immigration to Finland and the rest of Europe from non-European countries. Furthermore, the strengthening conceptualization of colonialism as a transnational phenomenon that affected the globe in its entirety has also widened the idea of its influence outside the primary domains. The research done on the colonial history of the other Nordic countries—Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and Iceland—together with the impetus given by the recent decolonizing movements has given rise to increasing discussions on the question of colonialism in the Finnish context in seminars, scholarly publications and newspapers, radio programs, and other media. Despite this recent historiographical and media interest in colonialism, a book-length study aimed at international audience has thus far been lacking: *Finnish Colonial Encounters* is the first volume written in English on the topic.

Literary and cultural scholars began addressing Finnish colonial encounters somewhat earlier than historians. Influenced by postcolonial theory and its key texts, many of which were translated into Finnish in the 1990s, they questioned the alleged Finnish exceptionalism and outsider status and examined the entanglement of contemporary popular culture with (the history of) colonialism.[7] The volume entitled *Complying with Colonialism: Gender, Race and Ethnicity in the Nordic Region* (2009) was an important opening in the field of Finns and colonialism. It introduced the concept of "colonial complicity", which has been used in the past decade to describe participation in overseas colonialism by a country which "has neither been historically situated as one of the colonial centres in Europe nor has it been an 'innocent victim' or mere outsider of the colonial projects".[8] The Finnish social anthropologist Ulla Vuorela discusses the attraction behind the complicity "for those of us who are not quite situated in the centre": it is the "seduction by the hegemonic" that lures those off-center.[9] In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Finns desired to belong, to be Europeans, "civilised", modern—and White.

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[5] For example, Gustafsson (2003), Kuokkanen (2007), Särkkä (2015), Koivunen (2015), Lehtola (2015), Weiss (2016), Rabow-Edling (2017), Groop (2017), Aaltonen and Sivonen (2019), and Kokkola and Merivirta (2020).

[6] The main Finnish historical journal, *Historiallinen Aikakauskirja*, for instance, published a theme issue on Finland and colonialism in December 2020 and an anthology in Finnish, *Kolonialismi Suomen rajaseuduilla* ("Colonialism in Finnish Border Areas") is expected to come out in 2022. Many more projects are on the way.

Although noting the usefulness of the concept in analyzing certain types of Finnish involvement in colonialism, Suvi Keskinen has recently raised the question, in the light of work by Sámi and other indigenous scholars, of the adequacy of the concept "colonial complicity" to cover all forms of Finnish or Nordic colonialism, especially the continued colonialism in Sápmi. She suggests that the concept introduced by Anibal Quijano (2000), "coloniality of power", should be applied to amend the idea of "colonial complicity" in order to better grasp the complexities of Finnish involvement in European colonialism, especially in the Arctic.[10] Another possible way to broaden the scope of "colonial complicity" is to apply the concept "colonialism without colonies", developed in the context of Switzerland by Purtschert, Falk, and Lüthi; this concept in some ways resembles that of "colonial complicity".[11] The framework of "colonialism without colonies" addresses "the persistence of colonial structures and power relations" in countries that have not been regarded as actual or official colonial powers.[12]

Through the lens of "colonialism without colonies", one can dismantle the prevalent ideas of "colonial innocence"[13] and "Nordic exceptionalism". Kristín Loftsdóttir and Lars Jensen argue that "Nordic exceptionalism" can be taken to refer either to the belief that the Nordic countries have been peripheral in relation to European colonialism or to the difference in self-perception of the citizens of these countries from the rest of Europe "as global 'good citizens', peace-loving, conflict-resolution oriented".[14] As a case in point, Bjørn Enge Bertelsen has discussed how many Norwegians perceive their country as a "benign global influence". For the most part of the post-World War II era, Norwegian past has been constructed through the international lenses of humanitarianism and peace-making. Bertelsen notes that Norway has, in fact, actively branded itself "as a nation of benevolence and peace", which includes claims of "colonial nonpresence and nonparticipation".[15] Kirsten Alsaker Kjerland and Bertelsen's edited collection *Navigating Colonial Orders: Norwegian Entrepreneurship in Africa and Oceania* (2015) challenges this interpretation in their examination of Norwegians' colonial business ventures.

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[7] For example, Kuortti et al. (2007) and Rossi (2009).
[8] Vuorela (2009, 19) and Keskinen et al. (2009).
[9] Vuorela (2009, 20).
[10] Keskinen (2019, 164, 179).
[11] Purtschert et al. (2015) and Lüthi et al. (2016).
[12] Lüthi et al. (2016, 2–3).
[13] Purtschert and Fischer-Tiné (2015).

Kjerland and Bertelsen's volume can be seen as perhaps the closest preceding parallel project to *Finnish Colonial Encounters* in Scandinavian context.[16] As in Finland, discourse on colonialism in the context of Norwegian national history has largely been non-existent until very recently. In addition to the country's rather self-conscious agenda of building an image of a benevolent and peaceful nation, Norway, too, has been seen as a country, which has, in fact, historically suffered from its subjugated colonial relation to its much stronger neighbors—first as a part of Denmark-Norway (1521–1814) and then in union with Sweden from 1814 to 1905 when the country gained full sovereign independence. However, despite the apparent similarity of Kjerland and Bertelsen's edited collection to this volume, there are major differences as well. The most notable of these is that *Navigating Colonial Orders* focuses on Norwegian "non-colonial colonials" in the specific African and Oceanic maritime context, whereas the case studies of *Finnish Colonial Encounters* range from global north to global south, examining Finnish involvement in colonialism both at home and overseas.

Finnish Colonial Encounters, like many other recent studies in the emerging field of Nordic colonialism, is based on the broadening definition of colonialism, on the concept of "colonialism without colonies". In an anthology of articles on Scandinavian colonialism, the editors Magdalena

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[14] Loftsdóttir and Jensen (2012, 2).

[15] Bertelsen (2015, 4, 1).

[16] Kjerland and Bertelsen (2015).

Naum and Jonas M. Nordin point out the need to move beyond the "narrow definition of colonialism, which reduces it to the possession of colonies in the far corners of the world" and has facilitated the claim "of minimal or non-involvement in colonial expansion" in Scandinavia.[17] They note that colonialism is a much broader phenomenon than just territorial expansion; it includes exploitative economic practices, the appropriation of material culture, and the production of racial hierarchies and ideologies of difference, which, in turn, are used to justify conquest and subjugation of peoples, along with "civilising" and missionary activities among those classed as Others. The volume edited by Naum and Nordin invites its readers "to rethink the definition of colonialism" and consider "economic strategies and appetites for exotic commodities, political and cultural aspirations and ideologies as a part of colonial politics and imperial mindsets".[18] In the same vein, the Swedish historian Gunlög Fur has argued as follows:

> If colonialism is limited to the study of overseas holdings, structures and sentiments that influence people's lives and relations today become difficult to understand. It supports the argument that the Nordic countries were no real colonial powers and therefore stood apart from the history of global-wide inequality and distrust.[19]

Fur recommends directing "attention to the many curious ways in which the Nordic north was caught up in European expansion and how this expansion was brought into the weave of local and regional social polities".[20] *Finnish Colonial Encounters* follows this line of investigation and examines the hitherto understudied question of the colonial involvement of Finns.

Though perhaps more easily recognized as colonial practices, overseas adventures and settler colonialism in Sápmi are not the only or even the most common forms of Finnish encounters with colonialism. Much of Finns' involvement in colonialism, we argue, took place at home, in everyday situations. Finns circulated, shared, adopted, adapted, and created colonial discourses: texts, scientific studies, objects, imagery, and artifacts. Influenced by wider western aspirations to document and arrange the world in its entirety, numerous Finnish individuals and organizations brought ethnographic objects and botanical and zoological samples to Finland from the early nineteenth century onward. The ethnographic collection at the University of Helsinki, which formed the basis for the later National Museum, received objects from mission workers, seafarers, migrant workers, and scholars who had traveled in various parts of the world and now wished to contribute to the development of academic collections and research in Finland. In the museological context, objects brought from Sápmi, Siberia, Congo, Owambo, Melanesia, and numerous other places were organized to provide a contextualizing narrative for the display of the Finnish national collection and to suggest the progress and superiority of the Finnish culture and population.[21]

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[17] Naum and Nordin (2013, 4).

[18] Naum and Nordin (2013, 4–5).

[19] Fur (2016, 13).

[20] Fur (2016, 13).

Finnish business companies benefited from colonial trade, ranging from iron and timber to sugar and cotton, and when Finns consumed colonial goods, they became exposed to stereotypical visual imageries closely connected to colonialism and its worldviews. Rather than merely circulating foreign advertising material, Finns made use of similar visual tropes and racialized characters in designing wrappings and packages for locally produced sweets and other commercial goods. Leena-Maija Rossi has shown that such visual representations became incorporated in Finnish national imageries to such an extent that their removal has raised criticism. Rossi refers to visual or representational complicity in colonialism, which she considers to be still vibrantly alive.[22] Finns were also entertained by colonial literature, exhibitions, and films, encountering foreign material cultures, for instance, at temporary exhibitions arranged by mission and geographical organizations. In 1911–1912, a touring exhibition of the Finnish Missionary Society visited fifteen Finnish towns, informing large audiences of the ostensibly low stage of development among African peoples.[23] As discussed by Leila Koivunen in this volume, several live ethnographic exhibition groups of colonized people also visited and performed in Finland in the late nineteenth century, en route to St. Petersburg, Stockholm, or venues in northern Germany. Colonial forms of knowledge were transferred to new generations of Finnish children, as evidenced by textbooks, teaching materials, and children's literature (as shown by Raita Merivirta in this collection), particularly at a time when a Finnish national identity was being constructed and a "civilised" and modern Finnish nation created, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

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[21] Harju (2018) and Koivunen (2020).

[22] Rossi (2009).

[23] Koivunen (2015, 171–172).

Finnish Colonial Encounters applies the concept of colonialism in this broad cultural sense as well and examines the many ways in which colonialism and colonial ideas have been present in Finnish lives. Here we follow in the footsteps of recent studies on imperialism and (cultural) colonialism that have challenged the traditional notion of imperialism and colonialism, as primarily political and economic phenomena taking place "out there", beyond the seas; we focus equally on their various cultural and ideological implications "at home" in Europe[24] and extend this perspective beyond the main colonizing metropolitan centers. We argue that Finns adopted ideologies and identities that are not easy to disentangle from the more typical trajectories of colonialism. They contributed to common European knowledge about colonized areas, cultures, and people; sent out missionaries to spread ideas of Western/White/Christian superiority; and participated in the construction of racial hierarchies. Arguably also the construction of Finnish national identity was in many ways connected to colonial endeavors.

The Finnish case has many similarities with the Swiss. Patricia Purtschert, Francesca Falk, and Barbara Lüthi have noted that Switzerland and the Nordic countries, including Finland, have shared "an explicit self-understanding as being outside the realm of colonialism, but nevertheless [they have] engaged in the colonial project in a variety of ways and benefitted from these interactions".[25] The construction of national identity in Finland and Switzerland has included the idea of being exceptional in the European context, of being innocent of colonialism. Yet, in both countries, the construction of national identity and nationhood in the latter half of the nineteenth century was interlinked with missionary workand the production of (colonial) knowledge of Africa that was then circulated in the home countries. Historian Patrick Harries has written about the significance of Swiss mission work in South-East Africa on the home community in Switzerland in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Missionary work, images and knowledge of Africa influenced life in the home country and unified the Swiss, divided by language, religion, and region, as a community. Evangelical Christianity, universal compassion, and the idea of neutrality were elements that bound the Swiss together as a nation.[26] Harries notes that "Switzerland was a nation without colonies, but its very sense of nationhood emerged just as Swiss evangelists, traders, scientists and soldiers spread into the peripheries of their world".[27] The image of Africa as the dark continent "served as a foil against which the Swiss could measure the evolution of their own society […] Institutions such as the Sunday school, the museum and the botanical garden introduced the Swiss—a people without colonies or a population of slave-descent—to this exciting new world". He notes that these elements were crucial in normalizing imperialism in Swiss culture.[28]

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[24] See Studies in Imperialism series (Manchester University Press); Howe (2010).

[25] Lüthi et al. (2016, 1).

Like the Swiss sense of nationhood, the Finnish national identity was being constructed as the intense period of the formation and circulation of European colonial knowledge of Africa took place, and it can be argued that these two processes were to some extent interlinked, and "Africans" constructed as the ultimate Other to the Finns. The Finnish Missionary Society began its work overseas in Owambo[29] in South-West Africa in 1870. The Owambo region (in present-day Namibia) became an especially meaningful place for Finns. Approximately 500 Finnish missionaries have spent varying periods of time in the region since 1870. At first, Finns were the only people of European origin staying in the area; even under the German regime, starting in 1884, the grip of colonial administration in this provincial region was weak or non-existent. Yet, the Finnish presence in the region resulted in activities and long-lasting effects similar to those that were typical in a colonial relation. The Finns introduced the Owambos, the main ethnic group in the area, to Western modes of education, medicine, material culture, and social practices, in particular, the Evangelical Lutheran faith and a written language.[30] Thus, in seeking to transform the Owambos' ways of being in the world, Finns played an active role in advancing informal Western empires.

In the early twentieth century, the Finnish Missionary Society began its work in other parts of the world, especially in China. Due to a strong xenophobic sentiment in China and its own long imperial history, Western mission workers, including the small group of Finns, encountered entirely different challenges than elsewhere in the world. Rather than attempting to change the society, they were themselves forced to adopt local customs to approach Chinese people.[31] Therefore it is debatable whether Finnish missionary work in China was colonial in nature. Scholars have long discussed whether Christian missionaries who lived and worked in colonized countries assisted consolidating empires or whether they served to weaken the colonial rule. The extent and character of the missionary participation in colonial projects has also divided scholars who, as Karen Vallgårda points out, may have actually based their arguments on fundamentally different conceptions of colonialism.[32] Missionary work and colonialism have often intertwined and both have indisputably created structures that benefited or sustained the other. Yet, as Vallgårda reminds, to avoid dichotomous descriptions and to achieve a more nuanced understanding of the complex connections between missions and colonialism, new historical examples that evade fixed categories, such as colonizers and colonized, should be brought to scrutiny.[33]

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[26] Harries (2007, 4, 35–66).

[27] Harries (2007, 35).

[28] Harries (2007, 4).

[29] To refer to this region (and its inhabitants), we use the local, present-day term Owambo instead of the colonial designation Ovamboland.

[30] Eirola (1992); Miettinen (2005); Löytty (2006).

Lüthi, Falk, and Purtschert note that the continuities of colonial structures and power relations are interlinked with the persistence of racial notions central to colonialism. People in European countries without colonies "frequently participated in colonialism through the replication of a racist and dehumanizing worldview, thereby complying with one of the most effective means of colonial power".[34] To disseminate information about their progress, the Finnish Missionary Society published a variety of reading materials: mission journals, novels, and other promotional material in Finland. Information was also transmitted in educational materials and schoolbooks, photographs, postcards, and graphs. A map of the world published by the Society in 1870, portraying the global advance of the Christian mission, was so widespread that it was said to be found in almost every household in Finland (the map is discussed in detail by Johanna Skurnik in this volume).[35] Knowledge about Owambo, which was mostly colonial in nature, and its position as part of the colonial quest, spread widely in Finland, creating long-lasting representations and imagery of Africa and Africans that were passed on to several generations of Finns.

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[31] Juntunen (2012, 20–21, 23).

[32] For an overview to these discussions, see Vallgårda (2016, 866, 868–870).

[33] Vallgårda (2016, 868, 870).

[34] Lüthi et al. (2016, 2).

[35] Paunu (1909, 14).

In short, Finns were complicit in colonialism, where complicity implies "participation in hegemonic western discourses and their universalistic modes of thought and practices of dominance".[36] This approach emphasizes transnational movement and the reciprocity of colonial links rather than focusing on national histories. It also includes a great variety of actors: from explorers to missionaries and scientists to settlers and their role in negotiating colonial meanings and creating imaginaries, in addition to examining their activities as such.[37] *Finnish Colonial Encounters* engages with this framework and examines Finnish transnational experiences in colonial contexts as well as the transnational flow of colonial ideas and knowledge to and from Finland, shedding light on the connectedness of Finnish people to a global phenomenon. In addition to "colonial complicity" and "colonialism without colonies", we refer to "cultural colonialism", a concept we apply in examining the creation, circulation, and consumption of colonial(ist) ideas, knowledge, and imagery in Finland.

In *Finnish Colonial Encounters*, we examine the phenomenon of colonialism and—where applicable—anti-colonialism (Suonpää and Välimäki's and Rantanen, Ruuska and Särkkä's chapters) in the context of Finnish history, offering a more nuanced understanding of colonialism and its global mechanisms and effects on those previously regarded as colonial "outsiders". The contributors discuss ways in which Finns took part in various undertakings led by colonial powers in different parts of the world, as well as how they engaged in colonial activities and knowledge production close to home, in Sápmi; in counterbalance, they also examine forms of Finnish anti-imperialism. In addition, articles in the volume explore Finnish cultural colonialism at home as well as abroad, for example, in Finnish missionaries' photographic representations of the Owambo (Shiweda). Rather than offering an all-encompassing account of the Finnish relationship to colonialism, the articles included in the volume shed light on a variety of topics and perspectives so as to open up new approaches in the field of "colonialism without colonies". This introduction, however, offers a brief overview of some of the overseas colonial activities of Finns not discussed in the individual chapters so as to provide a fuller idea of the phenomenon. The individual articles in the volume cover a time-span ranging from the era of high imperialism in the late nineteenth century to post-World War II decolonization and beyond, with the primary focus on the early twentieth century.

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[36] Purtschert et al. (2015, 4).

[37] Lüthi et al. (2016, 2–3).

In the following sections, we contextualize the chapters in the volume by providing background information on the construction of Finnishness and Finland within the Russian Empire, as well as on Finns' colonial relationship to the Sámi. The discussion of Finnish (settler) colonialism vis-à-vis the Sámi—a discussion which began among activists and some researchers already in the late 1960s—has recently become more mainstream.[38] The Professor of Arctic Indigenous Politics Rauna Kuokkanen, for instance, has recently argued that Finland has a history of (settler) colonization in Sápmi.[39] We are not suggesting that all aspects of the Finnish-Sámi relationship have been colonial; as the Sámi historian Veli-Pekka Lehtola has argued, nuanced interpretations are needed to uncover the complexity of Finnish-Sámi relations, although the concepts of colonialism and oppression may serve as fruitful starting points. The relationship between the groups has always been complex, and has included intermarriage and other forms of proximity as well as shared goals. Moreover, neither the Sámi nor the Finns are a homogenous group.[40] The historian Jukka Nyyssönen, one of the contributors to this volume, has argued that while the Finnish-Sámi encounter has included many colonialist policies and practices, the multiplicity of the encounter is lost if it is interpreted solely through the lens of colonialism.[41] The sections on Finnishness and colonial Finnish-Sámi relations is followed by an overview of Finnish colonial activity overseas. The introduction ends with brief introductions of the individual chapters.

The Construction of the Finnish Nation and State Within Imperial Russia

Finnish Colonial Encounters is informed by the realization that an analysis which engages with questions of colonialism also potentially illuminates questions of Finnish national identity and self-understanding.[42] We therefore briefly examine the history of the Finnish nation and state, which emerged through a conflict between the authoritarian tradition characteristic of the late-nineteenth-century Russian Empire and the constitutionalism which began to emerge in Finland.

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[38] For example, Kuokkanen (2007); Nyyssönen (2013); Lehtola (2015); Ranta and Kanninen (2019).

[39] Kuokkanen (2018).

[40] Lehtola (2012, 15–17, 20).

[41] Nyyssönen (2013, 104).

[42] We include the Swedish-speaking minority as "Finns", although, as discussed later in this chapter, the Finnish language became a central element in the construction of Finnish

The proximate area now known as Finland was ceded by Sweden to Tsar Alexander I in the aftermath of the Russo-Swedish War of 1808–1809. In the centuries preceding 1809, Finland had formed roughly one-third of the kingdom of Sweden. In the multinational Russian Empire, Finns composed about 2% of the population. However, the transition from constituting the eastern part of Sweden to forming a Grand Duchy in the Russian Empire included becoming a political unit and gaining autonomy. The Grand Duchy of Finland remained an autonomous polity within the Russian Empire for over a hundred years.[43] This "imperial century" has been at the heart of various attempts to conceptualize Finland as a nation in relation to the Russian Empire and its imperial power and to the idea of empire-building in political theory.[44] In these conceptualizations, Finnish ethnic affiliations and racial origins, as well as the role of language, occupy a significant place. Finnish had been a minority language in the Swedish realm, but in the new Grand Duchy of Finland, four-fifths of the population spoke (though did not write) Finnish.[45] The educated, ruling élite were all Swedish speakers in the early nineteenth century. The Grand Duchy was a self-governing polity within the Empire, but its autonomy was achieved by avoiding any challenge to the Russian Government and by working for the extension of national rights and privileges rather than for guarantees enshrined in law. The Act of Assurance, framed in Porvoo

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national identity in the latter half of the nineteenth century. In 1809, the Russians tended to use a person's place of birth to classify a person as a Finn. Those born in Finland were "native Finns". Some officers born on the Swedish side of the new border but residing in Finland were also included as Finns and stayed on. Those who wanted to stay had to give up lands they possible owned in Sweden by 1817. Engman (2018, 33).

[43] Engman (2009, 9–10).

[44] See, for instance, Luntinen (1985); Polvinen (1995); Jussila (1999).

[45] Engman (2009, 10). On the other hand, Engman has noted that early on, the language of the Finns was not considered to be a significant societal question—the first reliable statistics was put together as late as 1880. At that time, there were 294,000 Swedish-speaking Finns, which was about 14.3% of the population. Most of them lived in municipalities where Swedish was the majority language. Since then, the proportion of Swedish-speaking Finns to Finnish speakers has steadily declined. It is noteworthy, however, that these statistics do not take into account bilingualism but record only a person's main language. Engman (2018, 35–37).

in March 1809 and solemnly and formally promulgated by the Governor-General in the presence of the Tsar, placed Finland “in the rank of nations, under the empire”, but left the Tsar the possibility of issuing a wide range of prerogatives that would interfere with the country’s affairs.[46]

The Swedish constitutional statutes—the Form of Government from 1772 and the Acts of Union and Security from 1789—were championed as the Fundamental Laws and Constitution of the Grand Duchy. As a result, the Grand Duchy of Finland was governed under the eighteenth-century constitutional principles of Sweden, which, in practice, ensured that Finnish subjects alone could enter the service of the State by reserving the right to Lutherans. These administrative principles kept the Swedish administrative system, legislation, and language alive in the Grand Duchy and simultaneously safeguarded Finnish autonomy from Russian administrative principles.[47] In addition to earlier Swedish legislation and the Lutheran Church of Finland, the chief safeguards against the Russian Government’s supremacy over the Grand Duchy were the Diet and Senate, as bodies of national self-government, the Finnish conscription army (raised from 1878 onward), and a gold-based currency, the Finnish Mark, minted from 1863 onward. More importantly, Finland had a growing, liberal-minded middle class, who felt a greater affinity with Western European countries, especially Sweden and its history, language, and culture, than with Russia, its own history, language, and culture, as well as its authoritarian tradition.

The ethnographic cohesion of the Finns, their genetic affiliation, and the origins of the Finnish language were subject to speculation throughout the nineteenth century; for most of Europe, however, the Finns remained remotely situated and scarcely known subjects of the Tsar. There was no clear perception of a “Finnish race” in the nineteenth century. Some philologists treated “Sueco-Fennic” inhabitants and “Finns” or “Finlanders” as identical, while to others the latter two terms described the inhabitants, who specifically belonged to the “Ugrian race”. In the first half of the century, the study of comparative philology, especially as connected with the migrations of the human race, was still in its infancy. It was not until the 1840s that the noted Finnish ethnolinguist M. A. Castrén, who traveled among the easternmost Finno-Ugric peoples in Siberia, shed new light on the origins of the Finns. By comparing the linguistic peculiarities of Finnish and the mythological conceptions of the Finnish epic *Kalevala*, first published in 1835, Castrén determined that Turkish and "the Mongolian tongues" were related to Finnish; he concluded, conflating language and race, that they thus belonged in the same "Turanian" linguistic family as the Sámi and other Finno-Ugric races, scattered through the western parts of the Empire.[48]

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[46] For the various interpretations of the autonomous status of the Grand Duchy, see Mechelin (1889); Danielson-Kalmari (1891); Fisher (1899); *The Reply of the Finnish Estates* (1900).

[47] Ihalainen (2014).

From the 1840s onward, numerous Finnish archaeologists, ethnologists, and linguists traveled across wide areas in Central Russia and Siberia to discover the assumed original prehistoric home of the Finno-Ugric language family in the region between the Ural and Altai Mountains. In his study of the development of Finno-Ugric scholarship, Timo Salminen suggests that Finns regarded Russia and Siberia as lands of scientific conquest. They aimed at taking a leading position in this field of research over other, allegedly less developed Finno-Ugric populations, some of which were expected to become extinct in the near future. Large amounts of archaeological and ethnographic material were brought back to Finland, and a debate evolved over the question of a Finnish obligation to establish a central Fenno-Ugrian museum in Helsinki.[49]

European theories of the inequality of the human races, most notoriously advanced by the French aristocrat Joseph Arthur Comte de Gobineau in the mid-nineteenth century, classified Finns as belonging to the "yellow race", and thus occupying a rank in the racial hierarchy somewhere between Indo-Europeans and Blacks.[50] According to Aira Kemiläinen, until the early twentieth century, Finns largely accepted being categorized as Mongols. However, the belief in racial hierarchies and in the superiority of the White race in many European countries prompted some Finns to pay more attention to these racial classifications. From the first decade of the century onward, the issue of race was discussed by experts in Finland and the Mongol theory was challenged and criticized as unscientific.[51] After independence, Finns increasingly desired to formulate a Finnish national identity and to resolve the question of the relation of Finno-Ugric peoples to other Europeans. Studies in physical anthropology increased the certainty that the Central European classification of Finns as Mongols was erroneous.[52] Racial theories, and the origin of the Finns, were discussed outside expert circles as well.[53] The Finnish newspaper *Ilkka*, for instance, reported in 1925 on an article written by one Johs Ubbesen and published in one of Copenhagen's biggest newspapers. The title of the article had been "Finland—Mongolia in Europe", and it had described the Finns as Europe's Mongols. The writer of the Finnish report highly disapproved of this, calling it slander.[54] The educated élite in Finland was working toward linking Finns with Europeans and Whiteness.[55] According to Maija Urponen, the 1952 Summer Olympics, held in Helsinki, played a significant role in achieving this goal.[56]

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[48] Castrén (2016). See also Halmesvirta (1993).

[49] Salminen (2003, 63–65, 271, 276–277).

[50] Kemiläinen (1993, 57–62, 139–144).

[51] Kemiläinen (1985, 306). See also Tallgren (1985, 395–398).

The Helsinki Olympics, along with the crowning of a Finnish young woman, Armi Kuusela, as Miss Universe in the same year, were seminal events in the process whereby Finland became a modern, Western nation, Urponen notes. Both these events, and the public discussion around them, offered points of comparison for the construction of a national identity. The public debate over (possible) relationships between Finnish women and (southern) visitors to the Olympics, together with the representation of a racialized Orient in the publicity surrounding Armi Kuusela's travels, her marriage to the Filipino businessman Virgilio Hilario, and their subsequent move to the Philippines, placed Finland and Finns firmly within the fold of Western Europe. The representation of these events marked a "Whitening" of the Finns, and distanced them from their earlier place in racial hierarchies.[57]

The Finns' interest in their origin and racial make-up are explicable at least in part by the emphasis on racial qualities, together with the cultural achievements of the inhabitants of Finland, which had been decisive in estimating their capacity for a (limited) political freedom. At the close of the nineteenth century, the discourse of nationality was no longer linked solely to the collective identity of an ethnic group, but came to refer more broadly to the principles of national sovereignty. Such a drastic change in perception is traceable to the rise of the idea of the nation in Europe in general[58] and in Finland in particular. Following the French historian Ernest Renan's *Qu'est-ce qu'une Nation?* (1882), Peter Kropotkin, a Russian emigrant anarchist living in London, analyzed the question "what is a nation?" in his 1885 article "Finland: A Rising Nationality". This was the first straightforward political statement published in English supporting a separate and specifically Finnish national entity. Kropotkin writes:

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[52] Kilpeläinen (1985, 193).

[53] Tallgren (1985, 398–405).

[54] "Suomen solvaamista Tanskassa", *Ilkka*, September 16, 1925, 2. The piece was also mentioned in another Finnish newspaper, *Helsingin Sanomat*, on 18 September 1925, "Suomen tunnetuksi tekemistä Tanskassa".

[55] Jokisalo (2010, 9, 21).

[56] Urponen (2010).

[57] Urponen (2010).

> With the perseverance, however, that characterises the men of the North, and particularly those of Finland, this small yet rising nationality has within a short time achieved results so remarkable that it has ceased to be a Swedish or a Russian province more or less differing from its neighbours: it is a *nation*.[59]

Since the 1860s, language had become the main criterion used to define nationality in Finland—a political arena divided by a language issue, with separate parties, societies, clubs, and newspapers attracting supporters of Finnish or Swedish language and culture. According to Kropotkin, the watchword of the Fennomans, the proponents of the Finnish language—*yksi kieli, yksi mieli* (one language, one spirit)—was an example of the common aspirations and conceptions to which Renan was referring in his definition of a nation. In addition to language, Kropotkin considered the ethnographic cohesion of the Finns to be a decisive factor in defining a nation. The Finns comprised three different ethnic "types" or "tribes", Karelians, "Sawos", and "Tawastes", each with distinct anthropological features. The three ethnic types—speaking the same language, living in the same manner, and having so much in common in their national characteristics—merge together into a single ethnic group—the Finns.[60]

The Finns thus had ethnographic cohesion, which according to Renan is the first condition for constituting a nation. They possessed the historical inheritance of shared struggles on the battlefields, a shared glory, and shared misfortunes, which were to be found in a shared repository of folklore and literature, such as Zacharias Topelius' *Boken om vårt land* (The Book of Our Land). Topelius' book, published in 1875, has been seen as the supreme definition of the Finnish race and nation for much of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

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[58] Baycroft and Hewitson (2006, 2).

[59] Krapotkin (1885, 528) (Kropotkin's italics).

[60] Krapotkin (1885, 529).

Topelius' national-romantic view emphasized the Finns' connection to the rest of Europe but also noted the role played by the country's natural environment in creating Finnishness, as opposed to the Fenno-Ugric heritage pointed out by philologists:

> The fact that the Finns still exist, that they have preserved their national individuality and succeeded in attaining to European civilization, is in great part due to the peculiar nature of their country, which is so bleak and cold, but at the same time so sunny, so enclosed and yet so open, so sheltered, yet so accessible to European influences.[61]

The above quotation is from *Finland in the Nineteenth Century*, published by Topelius and other Finnish intellectuals in 1894 to describe the Finns to an international audience. It tells the myth of the creation of a nation as an independent, self-governing State, to which accident, or rather the arbitrariness of history, had given a sovereign monarch, the Tsar—who happened to be at the same time the imperial and absolute ruler of all the Russians.

In the course of the nineteenth century, the Russian Empire was increasingly being transformed into a multinational state. Along with its chief national group, the Great Russians, the Empire included Ukrainians, Belorussians, Poles, Lithuanians, Latvians, Estonians, Finns and other Finno-Ugric peoples, Germans, Jews and Romanians, as well as numerous other nationalities and ethnic minorities. Attitudes toward ethnic minorities shifted over time. Before the reform era of Peter the Great (reigned 1682–1725), religion had played a central role and the primary aim had been the conversion of non-Christians to the Orthodox faith. With the secularization of the monarchy, religious concerns gave way to more explicit political and economic interests, with the purpose of unifying the Empire under a single administrative standard.[62]

The principal catalyst for the period known as the "attempted Russification of Finland, 1899–1905" was Tsar Nicholas II's Imperial Manifesto of February 1899 (a new Army Bill, aimed at assuming direct control over the Finnish conscription army). This was followed by a series of repressive measures, aimed at bringing the Grand Duchy into closer union with the Empire. The Manifesto and subsequent repressive measures largely unified the Finnish people, who saw Russification as an erosion of their national privileges that had been granted by Alexander I in 1809 and confirmed by Alexander II in 1863. The new Imperial policy gave rise to social unrest and political violence, which dominated the Finnish political scene until the restoration of Finland's privileges as a separate constitutional entity by Tsar Nicholas II's Imperial Manifesto of 4 November 1905.[63]

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[61] Quoted in *Finland in the Nineteenth Century* (1894, 81–82).

[62] Jussila (1999, 3–91).

Finns did not widely regard Russia as a colonizer until the late nineteenth century, when some liberal-minded intellectuals started to openly express anti-imperialist attitudes. The attempted Russification of Finland created a sensitivity toward those who were subjugated under colonial rule; this reaction has been dubbed "the wisdom of the oppressed" by Pekka Rantanen, Petri Ruuska, and Timo Särkkä in this volume. This wisdom, however, was lost after independence, when Finland embarked on its own programs of unification and integration based on race, class, and ethnicity. These hierarchies were at the heart of the unification policy of the sovereign Finnish State, which impacted Finland's own ethnic minorities, including the Sámi—as shown by Janne Lahti and Jukka Nyyssönen in their respective chapters in this volume.

In the early twentieth century, the political sphere developed in ways unacceptable to liberal-minded intellectuals. To them, the Russian Government's repressive measures were yet another illustration of the indifference of colonial empires to their relations with imperial minorities. Simultaneously, various attempts emerged to conceptualize Finland as a nation in relation to the Russian Empire, to its imperial power, and to the idea of empire-building in political theory. The birth of the fully sovereign Finnish State on 6 December 1917, however, was not a direct consequence of this subjugation of Finland, but the result of a power vacuum created by the collapse of the Empire. Finally, the vulnerable social and economic condition of the landless class resulted in 1918 in a Civil War, thus bringing Finland's imperial century to a close.

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[63] Polvinen (1995, 17ff).

Colonialism and the Sámi

The Sámi have been oppressed by Finns since at least the eighteenth century, especially through legislation concerning the use of natural resources, the Church, and the school system.[64] The competing Scandinavian kingdoms encroached on the territories inhabited by the Sámi from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century. A special Lapland border had officially prevented Swedish settlement from spreading to the territory of Sámi villages, but this protection was broken by the Crown's settlement decrees of 1673 and 1692, which made settlement free.[65] Lehtola notes that the Finnish population differed from Scandinavians in their relation to the Sámi in that early on Finns did not treat the Sámi as a special group but utilized the same "ecological niches as the Sámi".[66] Specifically, Finnish settlement spread to the north after the fourteenth century and Finns also utilized areas extending to Sámi territory. The decrees of 1673 and 1692 had an effect also in Kemi Lapland, where the "village system collapsed quickly under the pressure of Finnish colonization". Subsequently, Fennicized Sámi families took part in expanding settlement.[67]

The major impact of the Swedish colonization of the Sápmi was felt from the late eighteenth century onward, when a growing amount of land was granted to non-Sámi farmers after the *Lapland Regulations* of 1749. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Lapland was surveyed, mapped, and subsequently divided into units and areas for administrative purposes, including taxation. Sámi *siida* or village systems were replaced with Nordic administration and settlement, which guaranteed possession of Sámi lands. The Sámi people were "domesticated" (to use Lindmark's phrase) as well through missionary activities and social control.[68] The sociologist Vesa Puuronen has noted that the Swedification of the Sámi was not voluntary; conversions to Christianity and the destruction of the traditional Sámi religion, for example, took place through force and violence. These religious activities continued when Finland became a Grand Duchy within the Russian Empire.[69] The frontier zone between the Finns and the Sámi was one of two-directional influences but it kept moving to the north and became Fennicized. While some Finnish settlers took up reindeer husbandry—in contrast to other Scandinavians who left this occupation to the Sámi—the late-nineteenth-century legislation regulating it was built on the basis of Finnish-style, small-scale reindeer husbandry rather than the large-scale, nomadic reindeer husbandry of the Sámi.[70]

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[64] Puuronen (2011).

[65] Lehtola (2015, 25). See also Enbuske (2006, 65–72).

[66] Lehtola (2015, 27, 25).

[67] Lehtola (2015, 28). See also Enbuske (2008, 154–170).

[68] Lindmark (2013, 131–133); Lehtola (2015, 25).

[69] Puuronen (2011, 113).

A way of life based on permanent settlement, a stationary livelihood, and agriculture was an ideal in Finnish society, consistent with the aim of efficient utilization of regions and land.[71] This Finnish lifestyle was valued more highly than the semi-nomadic life of the Sámi. It also served as a point of difference between Finns and Sámi, with the latter placed lower in the cultural hierarchy. The historian Pekka Isaksson has noted that in the latter half of the nineteenth century, all the "great men" of Finnish culture, from J. V. Snellman to Zacharias Topelius, were in agreement over the idea that it was the duty of Finns to extend cultivation as far north as possible.[72] These Finnish ideals were promoted by legislation, whereby some Sámi in fact became settlers in the nineteenth century. The change of some of the Sámi into settlers was largely forced as settlers received significant benefits, whereas the hunting population's way of life was not supported. In Inari, for example, the Sámi lost court disputes over fishing waters and meadows in the late nineteenth century. The establishment of a new farm was required for right of possession—the continued use of traditional territories was not sufficient grounds. Furthermore, becoming a settler often Fennicized the Sámi's culture from clothing and customs to language and names.[73] According to Lehtola, "the way the original lifestyle of the hunting population, based on seasonal migration, changed into settlement is fully consistent with the characteristics of colonialism", especially since this change was directed by the authorities.[74] The demarcation of the boundary between Finland and Norway in 1896 ended centuries of free movement throughout Sápmi, thus further regulating reindeer husbandry and making it more complicated. The Sámi culture was seen as being frozen in time, having stopped evolving beyond a hunting culture. It was considered to be incapable of evolving to the next level, that of agriculture; in any case, such "progress" was perceived as leading to cultural degeneration and abandonment as well as inauthenticity. The Sámi were thus deemed to be a vanishing race.[75]

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[70] Lehtola (2015, 28).
[71] Lehtola (2012, 443).
[72] Isaksson (2001, 204–205).
[73] Lehtola (2015, 25, 28). See also Nahkiaisoja (2006, 88–90).
[74] Lehtola (2015, 25).

In the latter half of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth, when the Finnish nation-building project was at its height and its shared Finnish language, history, and culture were foregrounded, the Sámi became defined as an Other to Finns.[76] The nature and people of Sápmi were seen as differing from the idea of "the ideal Finn" in direct relation to their Northernness.[77] According to Lehtola, this image of the Sámi was created as a by-product of the construction of Finnishness, thus much of "Sámihood" in the Finnish imaginary came to be constructed as a sort of flip side to Finnishness. In the early twentieth century, the educated Finnish élite saw the Sámi as differing racially from Finns and considered that this "racial retardation" would lead to their destruction. Various leading Finnish researchers suggested that the Sámi—rather than the Finns, as had been argued earlier in Continental Europe and Sweden—were Mongols.[78] The international relations scholar Vilho Harle and the geographer Sami Moisio have pointed out that the Finns wanted to distinguish themselves from the Sámi, especially when they themselves were regarded as Mongols and thus placed lower in the racial hierarchy than Western Europeans.[79] Vesa Puuronen has written that the small minority of the Sámi has been a significant Other to Finns, who have constructed their identity as against them as well as other Others.[80]

The status of the Finnish language in Lapland was strengthened after World War II, when the municipal administration and welfare services from Southern Finland were extended in the region. The status of Finnish was also strengthened by the building of (residential) schools in the North. According to Nyyssönen, the two post-war decades can be regarded as the most extensively assimilationist period in Finnish-Sámi history.[81] The Education Act of 1921 had made education compulsory, but its remit had not covered the peripatetic schools of the far north, where teachers had traveled along with the Sámi. An amendment to the Education Act in 1947 made education compulsory for all children up to the age of thirteen

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[75] Lehtola (2012, 182, 191).

[76] Isaksson (2001, 197); Puuronen (2012, 231).

[77] Päivärinne (2010, 65). See also Lehtola (2012, 186–195).

[78] Lehtola (2012, 111, 114, 180, 184).

[79] Harle and Moisio (2000, 121).

[80] Puuronen (2012, 229–243).

[81] Nyyssönen (2014, 70).

(raised to fifteen a decade later). This amendment also applied to sparsely populated areas, which meant that residential schools were built for children living relatively far from villages in Lapland, and the peripatetic schools were discontinued.[82] These residential schools were not exclusively for Sámi children; they were mixed schools “for anyone living too far to be able to attend school from home”.[83]

The impact of the residential schools on the Sámi, however, was very different from that on Finnish pupils. Sámi scholar Minna Rasmus has written that very few Sámi children born in the 1950s spoke Finnish before going to school. As the teachers often did not speak Sámi, the Sámi children had to learn a new language, Finnish, before they could follow the teaching.[84] While the 1921 Act had permitted minority language education, the 1957 Education Act restricted even voluntary education in Sámi, a practice that continued until the 1970s, as the Act only mentioned oral teaching of the Sámi language. Under the 1921 Act, minorities had the possibility of being taught in their first language, even if this did not always happen in practice.[85]

The language and cultural heritage of the Sámi were also not included in the curriculum, which was based totally on Finnish educational ideals.[86] Kuokkanen mentions the “indoctrination of values of the dominant society, including the notion of Sami inferiority” in the residential schools.[87] Subsequent research has shown that pupils in residential schools were punished for Sáminess at many levels,[88] and that depending on the (residential) school, speaking Sámi could be forbidden under pain of punishment from the 1950s onward.[89] Finnish culture and values prevailed in the residential schools; due to spending much of the year in them, many Sámi children lost contact with their home language, traditional handicrafts, and reindeer-herding skills. Lehtola argues that many Sámi internalized a belief in Finnish superiority.[90]

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[82] Lehtola (2018, 273–274).

[83] Kuokkanen (2003, 706).

[84] Rasmus (2014, 254).

[85] Lehtola (2012, 411, 415).

[86] Lehtola (2018, 274).

[87] Kuokkanen (2003, 706).

[88] Nyyssönen (2014, 70).

[89] Rasmus (2014, 254).

[90] Lehtola (2018, 276).

Harle and Moisio argue that attitudes toward the Sámi became more positive in all the Nordic countries in the 1950s after the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the discarding of racial theories. While Finnish respect for the Sámi increased, however, they were not granted any special status; Sámihood was in fact expected to gradually disappear as a separate identity as the Sámi became integrated with Finns.[91] This approach can be seen, for example, in Finnish textbooks, which have very little to say about the Sámi. In her study of the Sámi as represented in Finnish textbooks from the 1990s, Kuokkanen found that the Sámi were often described in the past tense, very briefly, and in stereotypical ethnographic terms. A more comprehensive description of the Sámi—their history, social structures, and ways of life—is still absent from textbooks.[92]

Today, Finnish Lapland includes a special Sámi Homeland area, within which the Sámi have cultural autonomy, as legislated by the Sámi Act; the area is governed by a Sámi Parliament, established in the 1990s. Of the approximately 10,000 Sámi in Finland, the majority live outside the Sámi Homeland, often in large southern cities. Only some 1950 people consider Sámi as their first language. To date, Finland has not ratified the ILO 169 Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention; it has been debated in Finland and Lapland since it was drafted in 1989. The official reason given for failing to ratify the Convention is that some of the Articles of the Convention are inconsistent with national Finnish legislation. The bone of contention involves the articles on land rights.[93]

Finnish Colonial Activity Abroad

Finns, as members of or participants in Swedish, Russian, and other European empires, have been involved in colonial endeavors across the globe. Some of the chapters in this volume (Huhta, Shiweda, Kennedy and Holdridge, Särkkä) examine Finnish colonial encounters overseas; here we discuss some other notable examples so as to give a wider account of Finnish colonial complicity.

The Swedish colony on the Delaware River in North America was established in 1638. A number of the people settling in New Sweden

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[91] Harle and Moisio (2000, 126).

[92] Kuokkanen (2007, 152).

[93] See Joona (2020).

(1638–1655) on the Delaware River were of Finnish origin.[94] To increase interest in migrating to New Sweden, the Crown offered petty criminals a reduction of their sentence to a few years of indentured labor in the colony. In 1641, a group of 57 such settlers and their family members arrived in New Sweden, the majority of them Finns from Värmland in Sweden.[95] Many of the Finnish settlers in New Sweden were Forest Finns from central Sweden and used to clearing forests.[96] Although the Dutch took over New Sweden in 1656, the emigration of Forest Finns continued until the 1660s. During the Dutch era of 1656–1664, some 53% of the population in Delaware were Finns.[97] The area of New Sweden occupied by Swedish, Finnish, and Dutch settler-colonialists had originally been inhabited by Native Americans, the Lenapes, and the Susquehannocks, with whom the immigrants came into contact. The Swedish Crown was keen to have the settler-colonialists spread European culture and Christianity.[98]

People of Finnish origin were also involved in Swedish attempts to establish colonies in West Africa—where Sweden had already briefly held a trading post and a fort at Cabo Corso in the 1650s—in the latter half of the eighteenth century. The brothers Ulrik and August Nordenskiöld, born to a Swedish family in Southern Finland, were active in planning these endeavors. In 1776, Ulrik Nordenskiöld, a lieutenant in the Nyland Brigade in southern Finland, wrote a treatise on the benefit to Sweden of trade and colonies in the West Indies and Africa, pointing out, in particular, how England had benefited from its colonies. Nordenskiöld argued that the best option for Swedish colonizing endeavors was on the Guinea Coast. The historian Holger Weiss suggests that Nordenskiöld's treatise can be seen as one starting point of Swedish colonial interest in Africa, the West Indies and the Indian Ocean.[99] Ulrik Nordenskiöld's brother August drafted a plan in 1778 to set up a trading company that was to operate on the Guinea Coast and establish a colony in the area between Cape Palmas and Cape Mesurado. Its purpose was not to trade slaves or gold but farm produce—such as pepper, cotton, ginger, sugarcane, indigo, rice, and coffee—bought from local farmers or grown by Swedish settlers in the new colony to be established. Slaves, however, were to be used as a labor force in the colony.[100] Neither the Guinea company nor the colony were ever established, but it was only six years later that Sweden acquired a colony in the West Indies.

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[94] Ekengren et al. (2013).
[95] Ekengren et al. (2013).
[96] Ekengren et al. (2013); Aaltonen and Sivonen (2019, 26).
[97] Herou (2001, 255).
[98] See e.g. Ekengren et al. (2013, 174).
[99] Weiss (2016, 25–26).

Sweden held the colony of St. Barthélemy in the Lesser Antilles from 1784 to 1878. The newly acquired colony did not attract great numbers of Swedes, but Finns, who had suffered from recurrent crop failure and famine, were enthusiastic about the Crown's proclamation of freedom of occupational choice on the island in 1785. The Finnish "Barthélemy-fever" was suppressed by a new proclamation by the Crown, explaining that there was no real possibility of large-scale migration to the colony.[101] The first Governor of St. Barthélemy, Major Salomon Mauritz von Rajalin, was of Finnish origin; Rajalin declared in 1785 that St. Barthélemy was to become a free port, and promoted the idea of developing the colony into a hub of the international slave trade. In the eighteenth and nineteenth century, Sweden, including its eastern province (i.e. Finland), was involved in global trade, including that in slaves. As the documentary filmmaker Jouko Aaltonen and the historian Seppo Sivonen have emphasized, Finns were no outsiders or bystanders, but instead benefited directly from global trade and slavery; the profits flowed both to the Swedish State Treasury and to individual investors.[102]

The renowned British navigator and cartographer James Cook, who claimed and named New South Wales for the British Crown, also had a Finn aboard his vessel *Endeavour* during his first Pacific expedition in 1768–1771. That Finn was Herman Dietrich Spöring (1733–1771) who studied first at the Academy of Turku and then in Uppsala, where he was inspired by Carl Linnaeus to focus on the natural sciences. Spöring then worked as a sailor and later as a clocksmith in London, where he met and was hired as a scribe by Daniel Solander, the well-known Swedish botanist and student of Linnaeus. Solander had befriended the naturalist Sir Joseph Banks, who was now joining Cook on his voyage; upon hearing this, Solander signed up for the voyage too and invited Spöring to come along as his secretary. Spöring had skills and knowledge that were useful to the expedition: he had studied natural science and was a skilled clocksmith and draughtsman. When one of the expedition's two artists passed away in Tahiti, Spöring took over his job, producing drawings and notes that are now held in the British Library and the British Museum. From Tahiti, The *Endeavour* sailed to New Zealand and the east coast of Australia, where Cook claimed land for the British Crown. (Southeastern) Australia was occupied and turned into a British penal colony only eight years after Cook's claim.[103]

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[100] Weiss (2016, 28–30).

[101] Weiss (2016, 141–142).

[102] Aaltonen and Sivonen (2019, 10–13, 91–98, 118–119); see also Weiss (2016).

The period from the 1830s to the 1890s in Finnish history has been described by the historian Max Engman as the "imperial decades"; the growth of imperial Russia provided the Finnish population with numerous new career opportunities in various parts of the empire. Individual Finns held positions in the Russian administration and in academia, the army, and the navy, bringing them into contact with imperialist thought and with newly colonized regions and populations.[104] Finns played especially important roles in developing a Russian America in Alaska. Here the leading figure was Arvid Adolf Etholén, born to a Swedish-speaking bourgeois family in Helsinki; he served the Russo-American Company as a naval officer, rising eventually to the position of Chief Manager of the Company. This was the highest administrative position in the Russo-American Company, and meant that Etholén was *de facto* governor of the colony of Alaska. During the years he served in Sitka or Novo Arkhangelsk (1840–1845), Etholén was in key position in building and consolidating Russian rule over Alaska. He was involved in establishing new trading posts and organizing scientific expeditions. Numerous islands, bays, straits, and other geographical landmarks were named after him, following the Russian form of his name, Etolin. Etholén also promoted the adoption of Christianity and a western educational system in the area. He was accompanied by a number of other officials and scientists of Finnish origin, including a young clergyman, Uno Cygnaeus, who later came to be known as the creator of the Finnish system of public education.[105]

Empire-building was typically a highly transnational enterprise, engaging large numbers of workers, military, and other officers, as well as a labor force from outside the main colonializing countries. For instance, King Leopold II's personal colony, the Congo Free State, which later became the Belgian Congo, actively recruited workers from around Europe in order to be able to control a region that was nearly eighty times the size of the mother country. Young men with training in engineering or with experience as mariners were especially sought after to work as river-boat machinists and captains on the Congo River. Between the 1880s and 1930s, some 2000 individuals were recruited from the Nordic countries,[106] approximately 200 of whom were Finns.[107] One of these Finns was Akseli Leppänen (1879–1938), whose story has been documented by Jouko Aaltonen in his film *A Man from the Congo River* (2009). The French Foreign Legion has also been a transnational enterprise involved in colonial encounters, and has admitted some 500 to 600 Finns into its ranks since its founding in 1831. It is estimated that dozens of Finns fought in the Indochina War in 1946–1954 in the ranks of the Foreign Legion used by France in the war to maintain its hold over its colonies.[108]

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[103] Leikola and Löytönen (2009, 21–27).

[104] Engman (2000).

[105] Varjola (1990) and Lepola (2002).

The cases and phenomena discussed here are by no means an exhaustive catalog of Finnish colonial involvement abroad, but they serve, together with the individual chapters, to give an idea of the wide variety of Finnish colonial complicity. Even without holding any formal (overseas) colonies, Finns have demonstrably participated in multifarious colonial activities across the globe.

Structure of the Book and Chapter Division

The volume is divided into three sections, each of which sheds light on different aspects of Finnish colonial encounters. The first section, *State, Nation, and Colonialism in Finland*, focuses on internal political and ideological developments and debates over colonialism in the Grand Duchy of Finland. In the opening chapter, Pekka Rantanen, Petri Ruuska, and Timo Särkkä analyze the diversity of attitudes toward Russian imperial politics that developed in the Grand Duchy of Finland (1809–1917). While the Grand Duchy was an integral part of the Russian Empire, it also enjoyed a remarkable degree of autonomy owing to its self-governing status. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, when the Russian state-building process began to intensify, the majority of the Finns resisted the empire-led policy of homogenization. The authors argue that the experience of political oppression, in the form of the attempted Russification of

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[106] Tygesen (2006, 6). See also Eroma (2011, 15, 17, 33).

[107] Estimations on the exact number of Finns in Congo are complicated by the fact that many Finns were categorized as Swedes because of their names. See Uola (1979, 12); Eroma (2011, 17–18). See also Koivukangas (1998, 51–52).

[108] See Kallonen (2020).

Finland, offered a real possibility of developing an equality-driven political insight and understanding. But this understanding was largely lost when Finland's own nation-building process got fully under way.

In their chapter, Mika Suonpää and Matti Välimäki discuss the operationalization of the concepts of imperialism and colonialism in Finnish parliamentary debates from Independence (1917) to EU accession (1995). They show that Finnish parliamentarians viewed imperialism and colonialism mainly from a perspective of outside observers, and portrayed them almost exclusively in negative terms. In their self-perception, Finland was not complicit in past or present global, colonial, or imperial structures. The concepts of empire, imperialism, colony, and colonialism entered the parliamentary vocabulary almost exclusively in reference to international developments and events, and reflected transnational intellectual currents and debates. Finnish politicians also perceived imperialism and colonialism as an ever-present danger threatening small nations, and as ideas that had shaped the characteristics of international institutions from the League of Nations to the EU.

The next two chapters focus on the Finnish colonization of Petsamo and attitudes toward the local Skolt Sámi people. Connecting Finnish Petsamo to histories of settler colonialism and colonial travel writings, Janne Lahti looks at four Finnish travelogues through the settler colonial lens. He argues that these Finnish travel writers looked at Petsamo through settler colonial eyes: in other words, they made claims for Finnish settler colonization, promoted the idea, and assessed its feasibility. They commented on the nature of the region and its potential riches; described the villages, homes, and domestic customs; and commented on the outlook and habits of the people. The travelogues thus made the colonized land familiar to their Finnish audience and occupied it in language that combined views of its past with its new reality as a Finnish space.

Jukka Nyyssönen examines early Skolt Sámi research by the geologist Väinö Tanner (1881–1948) in the context of nation-building and colonialism. In 1929, Tanner published an extensive study in human geography on the economic and social adaptation of the Skolt Sámi. He aimed at an understanding and respectful approach, and today he enjoys the reputation of a culturally sensitive scholar: one who tried to see the Skolt Sámi culture from within and who wrote against the most aggressive discourses of his time. There are indications, however, that the relationship between Tanner and the Sámi was more complex than previously assumed. Nyyssönen examines Tanner's book in the light of recent theorizing on colonial knowledge production, revealing aspects of his relation to the object of study that can be seen as colonialist.

The second section, *Colonial Encounters in Finland*, focuses on the cultural effects of colonialism for Finnish home audiences. In the first chapter of this section, Leila Koivunen examines the visit of a live ethnographic exhibition group of Australian Aboriginals in Helsinki and Vyborg in 1886. This exhibition, together with others of the same genre that followed a few years later, became an influential new means for Finns to encounter ideologies, imageries, and individuals closely associated with colonialism. Koivunen demonstrates that the highly standardized exhibition concept did not ensure uniformity of either performance or reception. The Finnish example illustrates how the meaning of an exhibition was always locally embedded and thus subject to new interpretations. In the Finnish context, the visit by the Aboriginals became a means to express membership in a western, allegedly superior civilization, with its rationality, its practices of overcoming and mastering other human populations, and its privilege of being entertained by those very populations.

Raita Merivirta focuses in her chapter on colonialism, race, and White innocence in Finnish 1920s' children's literature, arguing that children's literature was an influential channel through which colonial discourse and public colonial imagination were created, consumed, and circulated in Finland in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. As an example of such literature, Merivirta examines the Finnish children's author Anni Swan's serial "Uutisasukkaana Austraaliassa" ("Living as Settlers in Australia", 1926). The serial depicts a Finnish settler family's life in Queensland, focusing on their encounters with First Nations people . The chapter explores how colonialism and race in the Australian context are depicted and racial and cultural hierarchies constructed in Swan's text. Merivirta shows that Swan's text circulates a number of common European and American colonial tropes, as well as portrays Finnish settler colonialism in Australia as innocent and non-colonial.

In her chapter, Johanna Skurnik examines how the Finnish Missionary Society made use of mass-produced maps and related reading materials to fuel geographical imaginations concerning non-European populations and lands to gain support for the missionary cause between 1859 and the mid-1890s. Skurnik shows how the maps and texts entangled Finnish audiences with the processes of colonization in complex ways: they reproduced discussions concerning human difference, generated geographies of cannibalism, and entwined Finnish missionary work with a discourse of colonial philanthropy. Once the Finnish Missionary Society started its own mission in Owambo in present-day Namibia, the maps were used to bridge the geographical distance and make the colonial space of "Ovamboland" their own.

The third section turns to *Finns' Colonial Encounters Abroad*, examining ways in which Finns were involved in or influenced by diverse colonial activities. In the first chapter, Aleksi Huhta investigates Finnish encounters with imperial and colonial powers during the World War I through a biographical and microhistorical analysis. He explores the experiences of a Finnish metalworker during the war and the immediate post-war years, charting the protagonist's trajectory from a volunteer in the Russian imperial army to life as a mineworker and Communist radical in Canada. By exploring the protagonist's encounters with different imperial powers—Russian/Soviet, British/Canadian, German, Belgian, and American—the chapter highlights the trans-imperial character of the Finnish encounter with colonialism and imperialism. The writer pays particular attention to the role of the Russian Empire in shaping Finnish colonial and imperial encounters.

In her chapter, Napandulwe Shiweda provides a critical analysis of photographs taken by Finnish missionaries in the Owambo region in present-day Namibia, highlighting their different intentions and photographic practices. It addresses their various genres of photography, especially ethnographic scenery and group and individual portraits, which missionary photographers used to document life in Owambo, and interrogates not simply what these photographs represent, but how, where, when, by whom, and why they were taken. Shiweda shows that the photographs were deliberate constructions of the missionary experience, along the lines of a prevalent reference to a missionary conversion narrative signaling modernity and development. She further concludes that Finnish missionaries' photographs should be seen in relation to how colonial photographs were constructed and supported, through labeling, marginalization, and other techniques, contributing to the way the Owambo were represented in a colonial context.

The chapter by Wm. Matthew Kennedy and Chris Holdridge examines the colonial encounters of Finnish emigrés in the South African War (1899–1902) in terms of the experiences of Finnish volunteers during mobilization and combat, and nuancing Finnish "adventure stories" by including a discussion of how the Boer high command actually used foreigners in their combat operations. The authors also discuss Finnish experiences of military internment as prisoners of war, during which they were subject not only to detention but also to political surveillance, intended to structure the process of post-war colonial reconstruction in Southern Africa by preventing foreigners or intransigent Boers from returning there. Such experiences contributed significantly to the construction of "Finnishness" as a national identity pursuant to the needs of Britain's apparatus of imperial security.

In the final chapter, Timo Särkkä approaches the origins of Rhodesian settler identity from the perspectives of Finnish ethnicity and migration. According to the author, Finns formed a defined group of settlers that has been ignored as a social variable in the study of colonial identities in general and in colonial Southern Africa in particular. In the forefront of the analysis are the life and times of one particular Finnish-born settler, Carl Theodor Eriksson, whose life in Southern Africa is exceptionally well documented thanks to the survival of his diary, letters, and photographs. In the case of Eriksson, identification as a Rhodesian settler also seemed to provide a space within which national identity building could be manifested, for instance, through language and photography.

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