

Introduction to Finnish Culture

Jaana Häkli





FINLAND: THE HAPPIEST COUNTRY IN THE WORLD



General info



- **Capital:** Helsinki
- **Population:** 5.6 millions
- **Ethnic Make-up:** Finn 93%, Swede 6%, Russian 0,5%, Sami 0.11%, Roma 0.12%, Tatar 0.02%
- **Religions:** Evangelical Lutheran 83%, Russian Orthodox 1%, none 15%, other 1%
- **Languages:** Finnish, Swedish
- **GDP per capita:** 53 188 € (World Bank 2024)
- **Most important cities:** Espoo, Tampere, Vantaa, Turku...
- **President:** Alexander Stubb
- **Independence Day:** 6 December 1917













When Finland is not sunshine and roses

What Finland looks like...



Credit: Topi Ihalainen

...when it's trying to kill you









The history of Finland – the Ice Age (about 10 000 years ago)



The history of Finland – the Ice Age



The history of Finland – Under the rule of Sweden 1200-1809



The history of Finland – Grand Duchy of the Russian Empire (1809-1917)



Independency since 1917



Independency since 1917



Finnish communication features

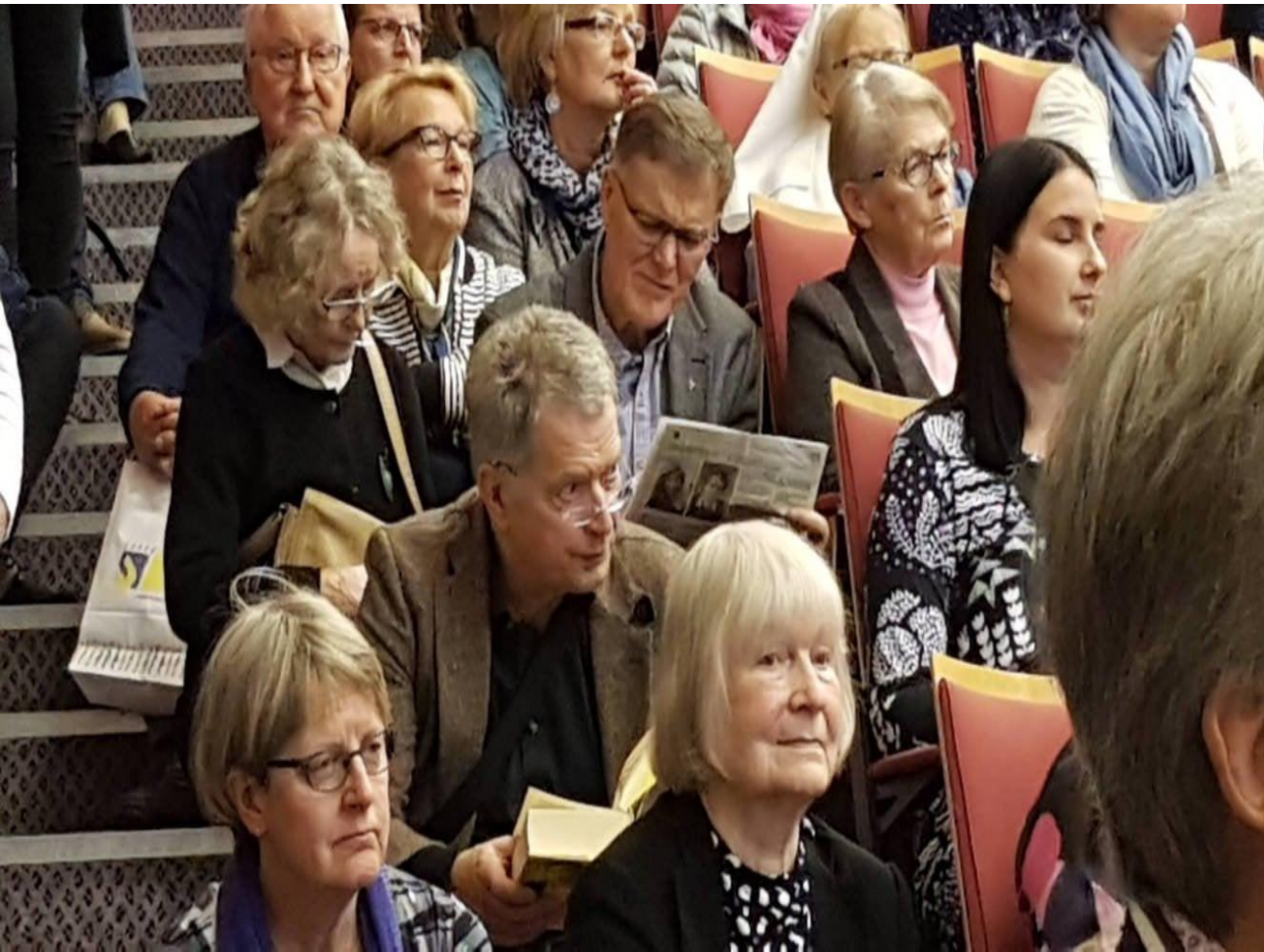
“A man’s word is his bond.”

- Spoken promise equals a written contract
- Respect for plain and open conversation
- Understatement and humour
- Silence is gold – talking is silver.
- High tolerance for silence → Silence is a positive sign.
- Long eye contact
- Personal space
- Moderate body language

Finnish communication features

- Titles are not used. Teachers and professors can be addressed by their first names Pekka, Marja etc.
 - Despite this they have their authority!
 - Students are addressed by their first name also.
- Open conversation and dialogue are very welcome!
- People communicate directly and casually but like to keep their privacy.
- Ask if you don't understand something, do not just smile! There are no stupid questions.

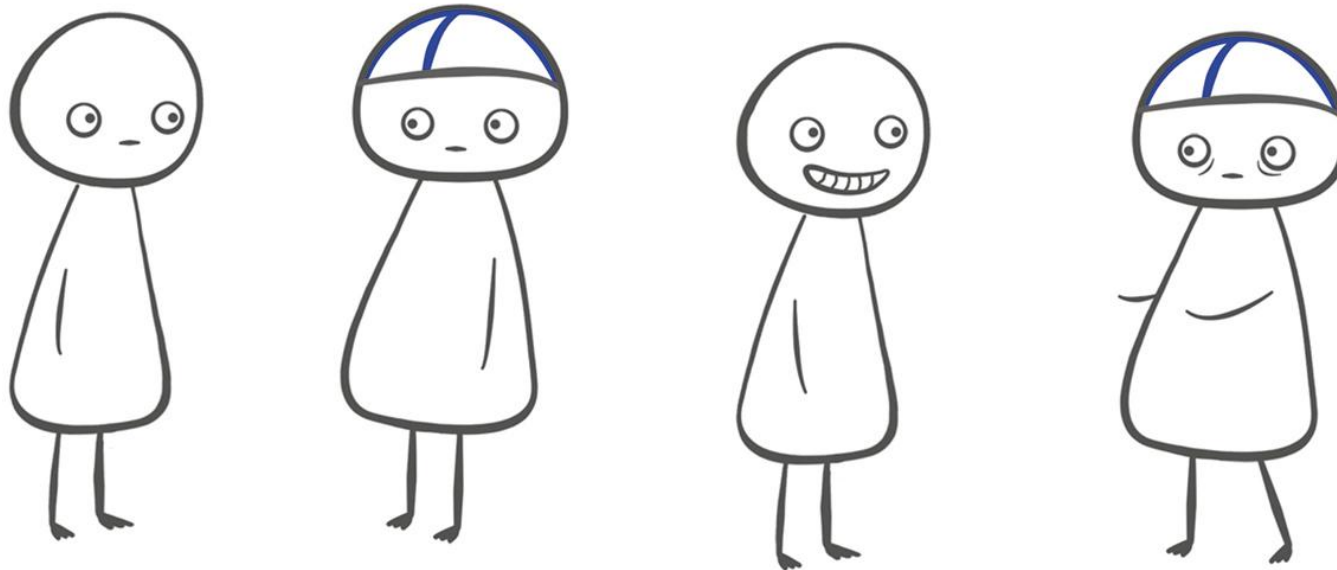
What do these pictures tell you about hierarchy in Finland?



Finnish non-verbal communication

(Korhonen, Karoliina)

FINNISH NIGHTMARES

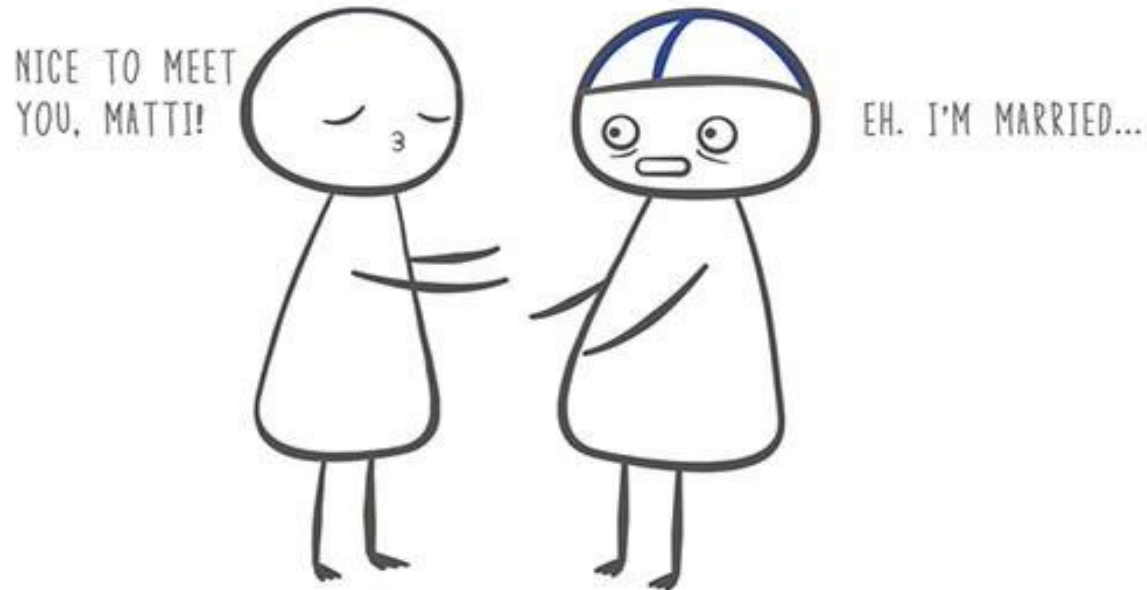


WHEN A STRANGER LOOKS
YOU IN THE EYES

AND SMILES

Finnish non-verbal communication (Korhonen, Karoliina)

FINNISH NIGHTMARES



SOMEONE YOU DON'T KNOW WELL TRIES TO GREET YOU BY KISSING OR HUGGING

Personal space in Finland

News: Coronavirus can only be
transmitted by human contact

Finnish people



Finnish values

- **Equality**
 - Equal status between a man and a woman
 - 140 years of gender equality
 - Richness doesn't give you respect

WHAT IS HÄN?

It's the inclusive Finnish personal pronoun. Hän is he and she, all at once.

Finland would like to give the rest of the world a word to encourage and support discussion about equality and inclusivity.

Hän-carrying is simple – you can compete by carrying or being carried by everyone and anyone. Already found your hän?

#hän
#thisisfinland

hän
EST. 1543

finland.fi/hän



WORKING TOWARDS
A BIAS-FREE WORLD
hän
EST. 1543

What do these pictures tell you about the position of a woman in Finland?



Important facts regarding equality in Finland

- 57.5% of Finnish women have completed a degree in higher education.
- Difference in salaries 1€ for men = 84 cents for women.
- Expressing sexual innuendos to a colleague on campus or at work can be considered sexual harassment.
- Do not touch without a permission even if the woman was wearing skimpy clothes in public.
- Long eye contact between a woman and a man does not mean she is flirting with you or is sexually interested in you.

EQUALITY IS NOT AN OPTIONAL COURSE

A community built on equality doesn't happen by itself: each of us builds it through our everyday actions and encounters. Make space for everyone to be themselves.



DIFFERENT FACES. DIFFERENT STORIES. EQUAL SPACE.

A community built on equality doesn't happen by itself: each of us builds it through our everyday actions and encounters. Make space for everyone to be themselves.



Finnish values

- **Modesty**
 - Downplaying of our accomplishments vs. patriotism
 - Being humble and modest are considered as virtues
- **Privacy**
 - Finns are difficult to get to know but once you know them, you have made a friend for life





Finnish values



The definition of

SISU

"A compound of bravado and
bravery, of ferocity and tenacity, of
the ability to keep fighting after
most people would have quit and to
fight with the will to win."

Time Magazine

Finnish values

- **Nature**
 - Finns have a very close relationship to nature
 - "kesämökki culture"
 - Picking up berries and mushrooms
 - Peacefulness



Every person's right in Finnish nature

- Free access to nature for hiking etc.
- You may pick up berries and mushrooms as much as possible.
- Fishing with a rod and a worm.
- Making a fire on signed fire sites e.g. in national parks.
- Keep a distance of 200 m to the next building.



Respect Finnish nature



What do we recycle?

- Biowaste (vegetables, fruits, leftovers, coffee filters incl. powder, tea bags etc.)
- Newspaper, magazine and copy paper
- Packaging board, liquid packaging board, paper packages
- Plastic (foils, bags, food boxes, yogurt cups etc.)
- Metal (aluminum tins, aluminum foil, soft drink cans etc.)
- Glass (jars, bottles etc.)
- Mixed waste (sanitary items, broken textiles, ceramics, make-up bottles etc.)

- Clothes, shoes, clean but used textiles of all sorts can be taken to UFF yellow container at the parking lot of big supermarkets.
- Tori.fi and second-hand stores online on Facebook sell a lot of good used items for a bargain or give out items even for free.

Why Finland?

- Clean tapwater
- No natural disasters
- Safe country
- Reliable police and free press
- Clean food
- Coffeeholics
- Dense sauna network = Finland has more saunas than cars!
- Most heavy metal bands in the world
- First in school meals. Finland was the first country in the world to serve free school meals. This began as early as 1948.



More studies in Finnish culture

- **KM00CO04-3017 Finnish Culture and Society, 3 ECTS – taught online**
- **KM00CO04-3018 – Finnish Culture and Society, 3 ECTS – taught on campus in Lappeenranta**
- **KM00CO04-3019 – Finnish Culture and Society, 3 ECTS – taught on campus in Lahti**

- **Implementations start during week 36. Remember to enroll!**

- **Available for all international LUT and LAB degree and exchange students as an elective course.**



Welcome to Finland and all the best in your studies!

- **Do you have any questions or remarks?**
- **Thank you for your attention!**

