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# How different are we?

Survey results on identities, values and attitudes  
among the Finnish majority population and  
the largest ethno-linguistic minorities

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## Introduction

In 2017, the Finnish Cultural Foundation and e2 Research (a multidisciplinary research institute) started a joint research project that aimed to study values, attitudes and identities in Finland. For the project, exceptionally comprehensive, representative survey data (N=6 938) were gathered between 5 October 2017 and 11 January 2018 through face-to-face interviews and from an internet panel (Finns between the ages of 18–79 years old living in mainland Finland).

The results were published in 2018 in four research reports. The first report focused on identities, the second on values and attitudes, the third analysed the values and attitudes of Swedish-speaking Finns, and the fourth focused on things which Finns consider sacred.

The data did not enable the analysis of foreign-based language minorities, so it was decided that further research was needed. In 2018, the cities of Helsinki, Vantaa and Espoo (in the capital region of Finland) and the Ministry of Justice joined the consortium. The second project was implemented in 2018–2019. It focused on the values, attitudes and identities of the members of the biggest foreign language groups (speakers of Russian, Estonian, English, Somali, Arabic) in the capital region.

The data (face-to-face interviews in the respondents' native language, N=1527) were gathered between 4 October 2018 and 15 March 2019. The data consisted of approximately 300 interviews from each language group. The results were published in autumn 2019 in two reports. The first report focused mainly on the integration of the language groups and the second on their values, attitudes, identities and institutional and social trust.

This report summarises the results of the six research reports that were published in 2018 and 2019. The publication is divided into two main parts. Part 1 focuses on the Finnish- and Swedish-speaking Finns and the second on the biggest language minority groups living in the capital region.

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### PART 1:

## Identities, values and attitudes in the Finnish- and Swedish- speaking population



## Occupation and education are important ingredients of identity for over 80 per cent

"Trump's victory had to do with voters' identities", "the Internet is an arena for building identities among the youth", "professional identities are in constant change", "the game identity of the national ice hockey team builds on defending", "museums strengthen local and regional identities". As we can see from these examples, identities have to do with almost anything nowadays. In our study, we conceived of identity as different ways that people perceive themselves and relate to others and the surrounding society (see e.g. Tajfel & Turner 1986; Swann 2005; De Fina 2007; Waterman 2010).

Figure 1 shows the importance of basic categories that have been found to be important in previous studies on identities (see Scabini & Manzi 2011, pp. 565–566; Roth & Pasanen 2017). Not surprisingly, closest family, conditions in which one grew up during childhood and youth and friends are important for almost everyone. Since Finnish is a quite isolated language and not spoken elsewhere in the world, Finnish migrants notwithstanding, it is understandable that over 80 per cent of the population consider their mother tongue important.

In Finland, the tradition and ethos of a hard-working ethic and the right to equal opportunities for education have been regarded as highly important. Furthermore, Finland is one of the most highly educated countries in the world (Statistics Finland 2014). This is why it is not surprising that over 80 per cent consider their vocation and education important to their identity.

On the other hand, while social class has had major political importance in Finland, for example in terms of party choice (see e.g. Paloheimo & Sundberg 2005), only 8 per cent of Finns consider it very important to their identity and 38 per cent somewhat important. Religiosity is about as important as political stand (33%). Over 70 per cent of the Finnish population belong to the Evangelical Lutheran Church, but over 40 per cent do not consider themselves religious (Grönlund & Kestilä-Kekkonen 2015).

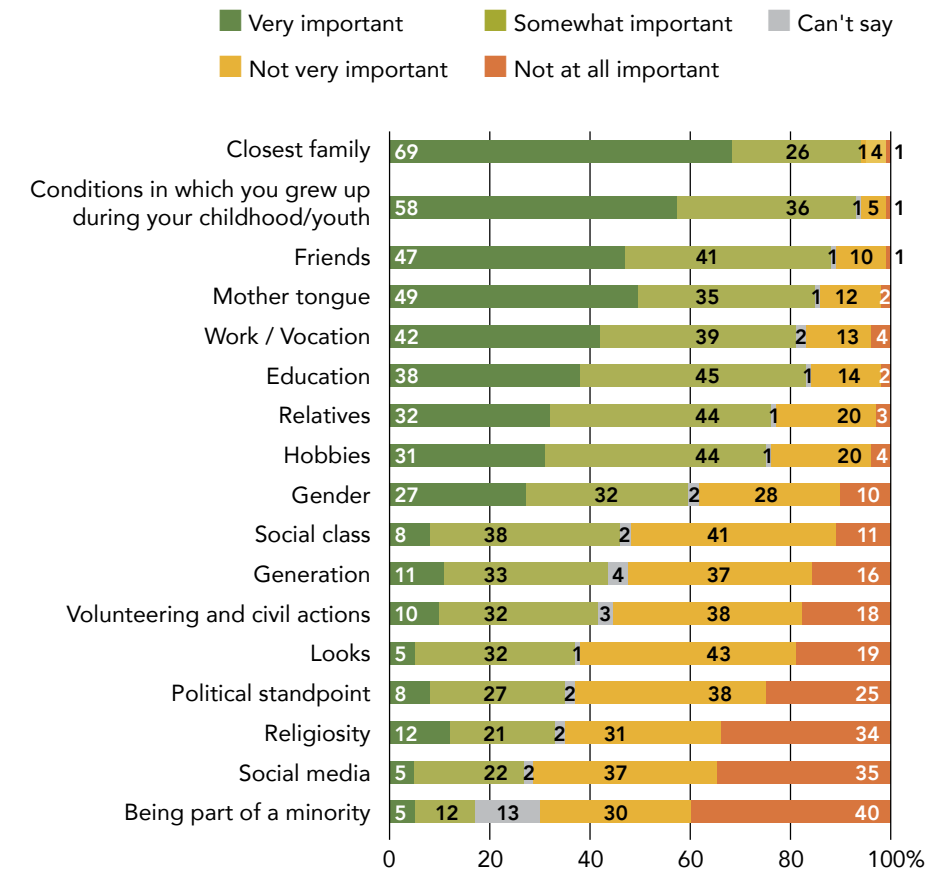


FIGURE 1: How important do you consider the following factors in your identity? (%)

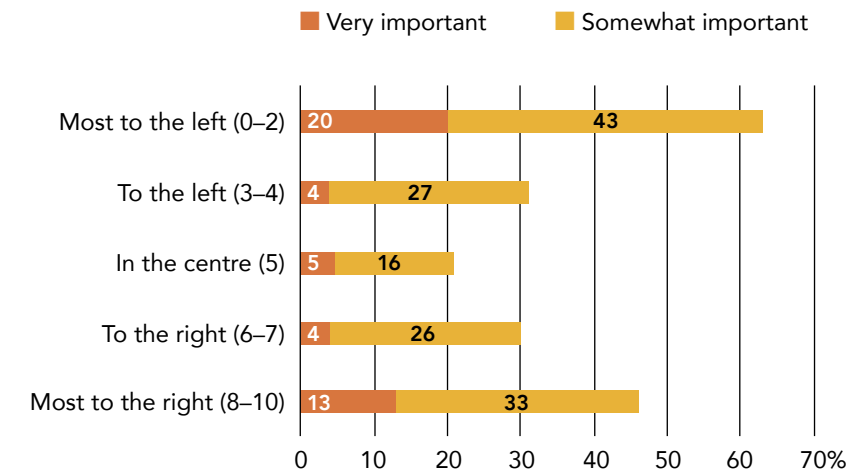
## Political stand emphasised at each end of the left–right and liberal–conservative scales

Political stand is important to 35 per cent of the population in terms of identity. Finland has a stable multiparty system that reflects several divisions and where, in practice, every party group is represented in the parliament (see Westinen 2015). Traditionally, the left–right dimension has dominated the political sphere, but the contradiction of liberal and conservative values has become more and more important within the Finnish electorate (see Paloheimo & Sundberg 2005; Grönlund & Westinen 2012; Westinen 2015; Kestilä-Kekkonen et al. 2016).

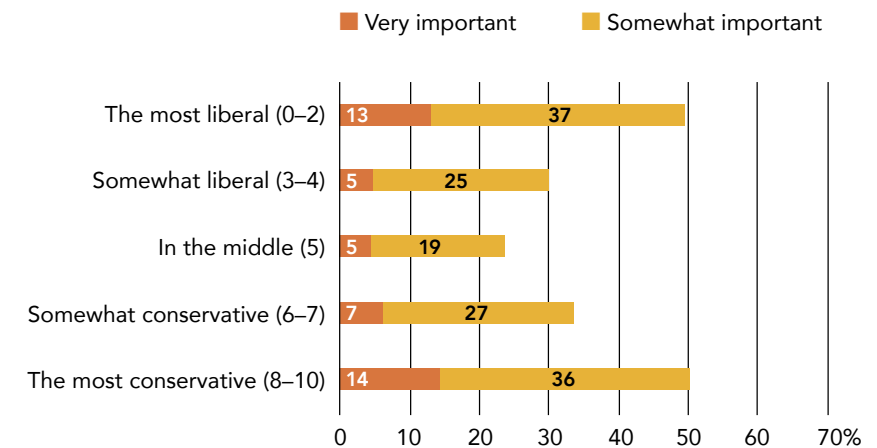
**Figures 2 and 3** illustrate the importance of political stand in identities according to the self-placement of the respondents on the left–right and liberal–conservative scales. **Figure 2** shows that political stand is especially important for those who place themselves furthest to the left on the left–right scale (from 0 to 2 on a scale of 0–10, where 0 is the most to the left and 10 the most to the right). Of the most left-wing respondents, 63 per cent consider political stand as very or somewhat important to their identity. The corresponding figure among the most right-wing voters is 46 per cent. For those who position themselves somewhat to the left or somewhat to the right, political stand is far less important. Only one fifth of those who position themselves in the political centre consider their political stand important. Eleven per cent of all respondents are most to the left and 17 per cent are most to the right. This means that the ‘extremes’ together make up about one quarter of the respondents.

**Figure 3** shows that almost the same pattern can be seen on the liberal–conservative scale. Half of the respondents who are the most liberal and half who are the most conservative say that political stand is important to their identities. For those who are somewhat liberal or somewhat conservative, political stand is less important. Nineteen per cent of all respondents are the most liberal and 9 per cent are the most conservative. This means that the ‘extremes’ together make up about one quarter of the respondents.

**Figures 2 and 3** indicate a much expected, yet interesting result: the extreme ends of political dimensions have incorporated political stand even as a part of their personal identity. This explains partly why it is so difficult to reach agreement among opponents, whether it has to do with left–right issues, which have been predominantly socioeconomic (see e.g. van der Eijk 2004; Thomassen 2005) or liberal–conservative issues, which have dealt



**FIGURE 2: Importance of political stand in identity according to self-placement on a left–right scale (0–10) (%)**



**FIGURE 3: Importance of political stand in identity according to self-placement on a liberal–conservative scale (0–10) (%)**

mostly with moral values, attitudes towards minorities, authoritarianism and environmental protection (see e.g. Inglehart & Welzel 2005).

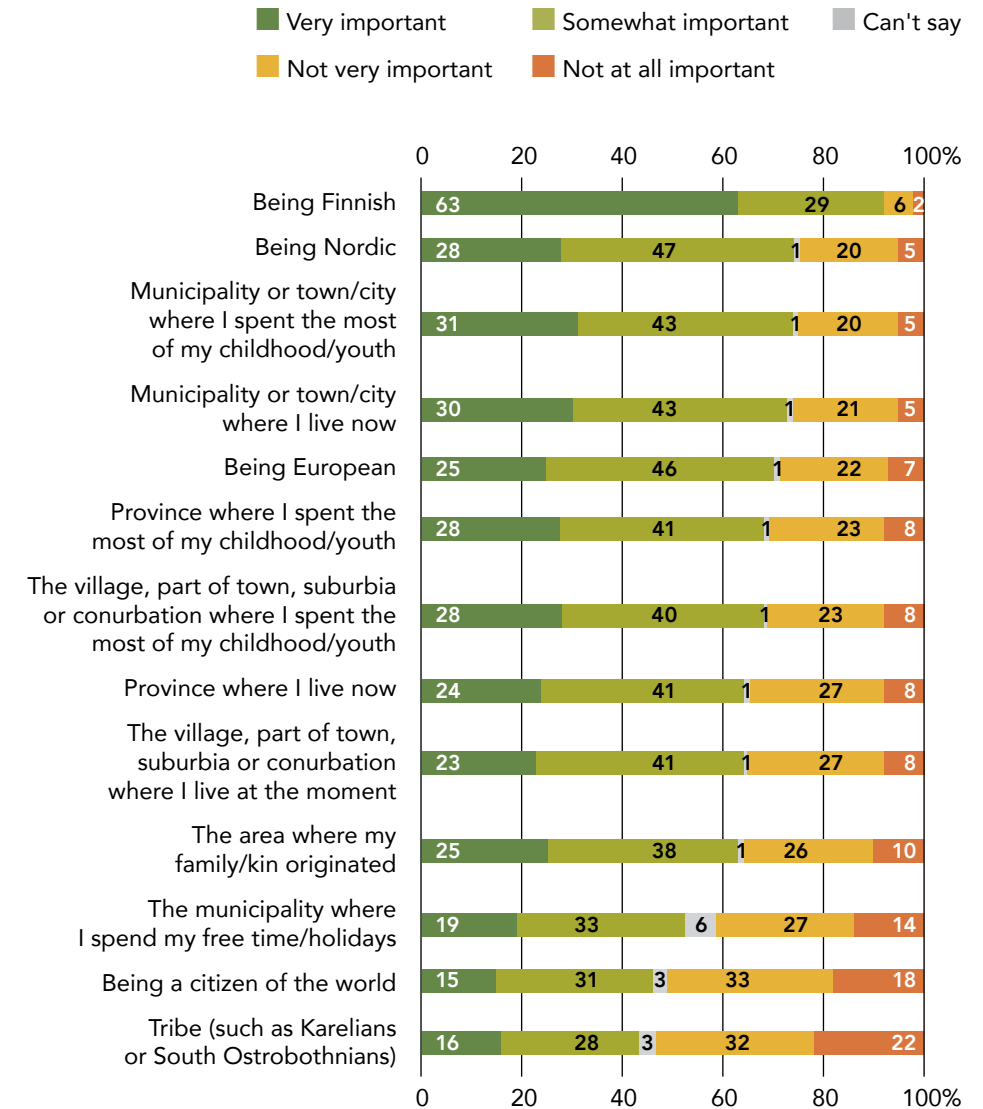
### Both local and regional identities are important, as are supranational identities

Internal migration and urbanisation have been ongoing trends in Finland for decades (Kytö & Kral-Leszczynska 2013; Aro 2017), but this has not led to weakened regional and local identities. Research has even shown some signs of a new increase in locality. Moreover, local and global identities combine to form 'glocal' identities (Robertson 1995; Torkington 2012). In Finland, also parallel urban–rural identities are quite common: about 40 per cent of Finns consider themselves both rural and urban in identity (Vesala et al. 2011). This is especially common for people living in urban environments with rural roots from childhood. In addition, national identities have proven to be persistent despite, or because of, growing immigration and the formation of supranational organisations, such as the European Union.

**Figure 4** shows the importance of local, regional, national and international identities among Finns. Being Finnish is important to almost everyone. Being Nordic and being European are roughly equally important to Finns: both over 70 per cent. The importance of being a world citizen divides Finns: it is important to 46 per cent and unimportant to 51 per cent. It is far more important to the younger generations in comparison to the older ones but surprisingly there are no differences between the educational groups, even though internationalism is more often associated with the upper social strata (see e.g. Teney et al. 2015).

About two thirds of Finns consider the village, part of town or suburb and municipality, or town and region in which they grew up as important to their identity. Additionally, the current living environment on a local and regional level is important to two out of three. Furthermore, a bit against the expectations, as much as 62 per cent of the under 30-year-old Finns consider the region they live in an important factor in their identity.

Roots are valued also in the sense that the area where the respondent's family originated from is important to 63 per cent, while regional-based tribes, in the sense that they have their own dialect and archetypal features in personality, such as Karelians, are important to 44 per cent. The municipality where people spend their holidays is important to 52 per cent of the population, which further emphasises the attachment that Finnish people have to multiple places.



**FIGURE 4: How important do you consider the following factors in your identity? (%)**

## Poor, elderly and unemployed people and people with a temporary job in a weak position in society

Figure 5 shows how Finns feel about different groups of people. The groups were analysed according to labour-market position, income level, minority position, place of residence, age and gender.

A vast majority (84%) of Finns feel that people who work in a short-term contract are in a weak position in Finnish society. In Finnish discourse, those with short-term contracts are often associated with precariousness. This refers to people with income problems, lack of job security and social benefits, and lack of overall predictability in life. This problem concerns many and especially blue-collar workers. Part-time jobs are more common among women than among men, given that women often work in sales and catering occupations, that is, in the lower strata of service employees (Findikaattori 2019).

Three out of four feel that the unemployed are disadvantaged. The unemployment benefits are rather good for those whose allowance is based on their salary in their latest job, but the basic unemployment daily allowance is much lower. Even though there has been talk that the unemployment benefits are too good in Finland, that is, they do not encourage people to search for a job that pays, only six per cent of Finns think that the unemployed have it too good.

Around 60 per cent think that students and farmers are treated poorly. Agricultural subsidies have also been criticised in Finland since some people demand more market-orientated food production. Yet again, the results show that the loud voices in the media do not necessarily coincide with a large audience. Only 11 per cent think that farmers are in too good of a position. In a previous study, it was found that 87 per cent of Finns think that farmers should get a higher percentage of food prices (Pitkänen & Westinen 2016).

Compared to the above groups, by far fewer respondents think that workers (29%) or entrepreneurs (31%) are in a difficult position. The number of respondents who think that researchers have it too good in society is about the same as those who think that they are in a weak position. Most likely, the reason for the less-sympathetic responses has to do with the debate on what is considered useful science and research.

From a gender perspective, some Finns think that efforts are still needed to achieve equality. One quarter (26%) believe that women are in a weak position in society and roughly an equal number (29%) believe that men have it too good in Finland. Party choice seems to explain the differences to some extent.

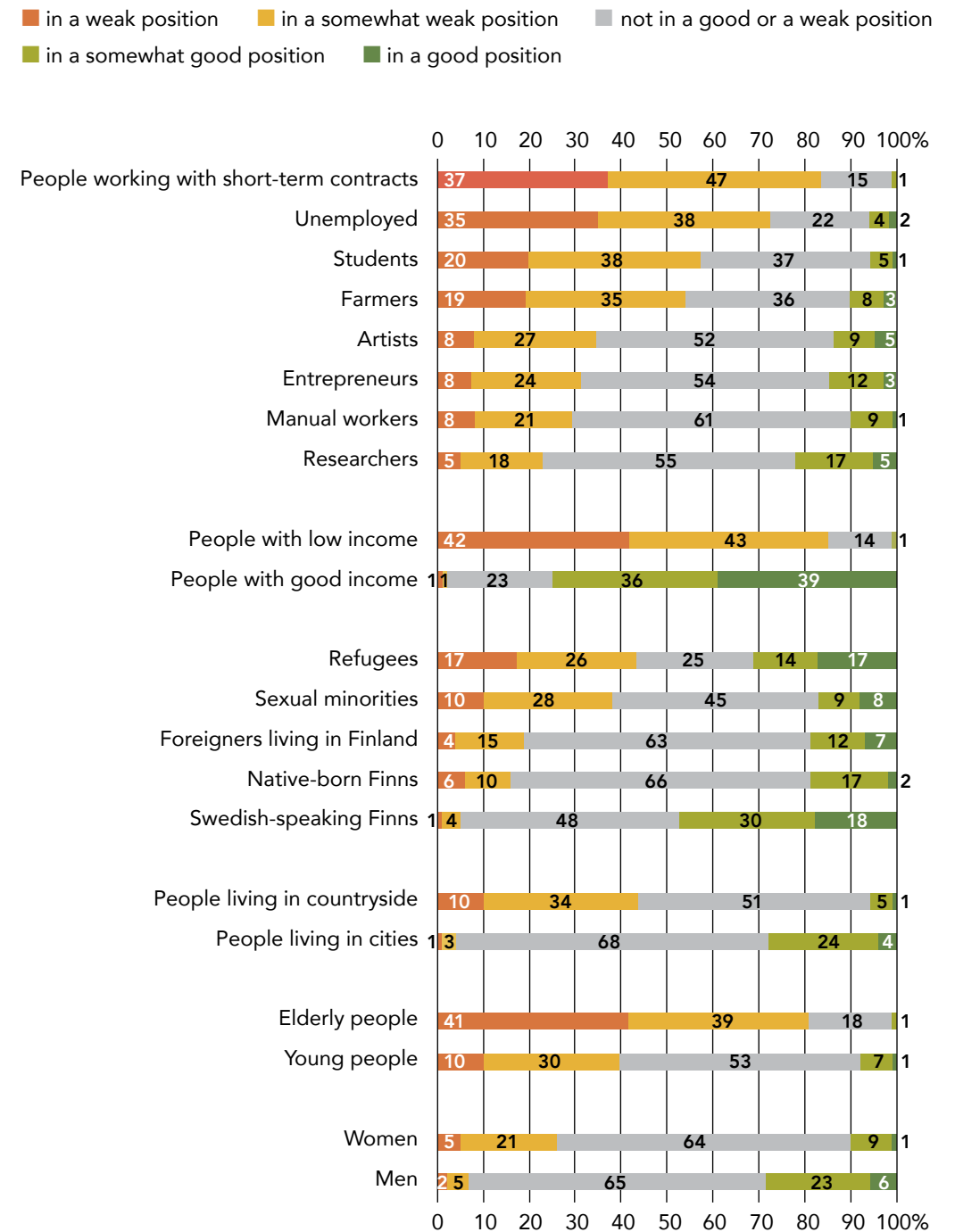


FIGURE 5: Who do you think is in a weak position nowadays and who is in a good position in Finnish society? (%)

Forty-one per cent of the Left Alliance (a red–green New Left party) consider women’s position to be weak, while only 16 per cent of the supporters of the Finns Party (a nationalist–populist party) think that men have it too good.

Owing to the disparities in regional equality (see e.g. Moisio 2012; Grunfelder 2020), it is not surprising that 44 per cent of the respondents think that people living in the countryside are in a weak position in society. Even in Helsinki, the capital city, 33 per cent share this view. In addition, 28 per cent of all respondents think that those living in towns or cities are in a good position, while a majority does not lean to either side. The figure would likely be even higher if the question had concerned the largest cities in Finland. These results underline the differences between rural and/or small communities and urban areas (see Westinen 2015).

**Figure 5** also shows that the attitudes towards the position of different minorities divide people the most. Immigration to Finland has remained at a relatively low level, compared with, for example the other Nordic countries, or with Ireland, Italy and Greece. In 2015, Finland received a record number of asylum seekers, mainly from Iraq (Migri 2016). This development intensified public debate on the issue and caused polarisation in people’s opinions, especially at the extreme ends, where there were those who wanted to welcome all refugees and those who wanted to close the borders completely.

Two years later in 2017, when this survey was conducted, 43 per cent thought that asylum seekers were in a weak position in Finnish society and 31 per cent that they were in a good position. Only one fourth remained neutral or did not take a stand on the issue. The question is highly political: two thirds of the most liberal voters state that the position of the asylum seekers is weak and two thirds of the most conservative voters state that the asylum seekers have it too good.

Views on the position of the foreign-based population permanently living in Finland are not as polarised as the ones concerning asylum seekers. Only 19 per cent consider their position weak and the same amount considers their position good. The results show that the immigration debate centres on asylum seekers and whether it is beneficial or humanitarian to welcome them as a part of society. However, it seems that a considerable number, two fifths of the population, views the position of foreign-born people as unbalanced in general.

Interestingly, one sixth (16%) also think that all native-born Finns are in a weak position in society and 19 per cent think that native-born Finns, who constitute roughly 90 per cent of the population, have it too good. This result underlines the fact that ethnic background causes conflict between

many people. Unsurprisingly, the most conservative voters and the supporters of the Finns Party are strongly of the opinion that the position of the native-born majority is threatened. There seems to be somewhat of a universal anti-minority segment, since 17 per cent of the population also feel that sexual minorities have it too good. The views towards minorities reflect the value dimension between traditionalist–authoritarian–nativist values and green–alternative–libertarian values (see e.g. Hooghe & Marks 2009).

The perceptions of the position of the Swedish-speaking minority are striking. Roughly half (48%) of the population think that the Finnish–Swedes have it good in Finland and only 5 per cent think that they are in a weak position. Finland is an officially bilingual country, and the linguistic rights of the Swedish-speaking minority are guaranteed in the Finnish Constitution and in other legislation. In international comparisons, Swedish-speakers have a comfortable position and a uniquely wealthy position in society (see e.g. Bengtsson 2011). In socio-economic terms, the Swedish-speaking population is quite diverse, but there is a prevailing image of the language community as “bättre folk” (better people). According to research results, Swedish-speakers are also more satisfied with their life than are Finnish-speakers, their employment rate is higher, and they are socially more active (see e.g. Heikkilä 2011).

## Everybody holds something sacred

**Figure 6** focuses on matters that Finns consider sacred. In the Finnish context, the term sacred is not just associated with religion, even though it is historically connected to religion. Rather than being only a religious term, it is a category that defines matters that individuals consider protected, undisturbed and pure (Saarikivi 2017).

The categories that were used are based on a prior study in which respondents, in their own words, evaluated matters they considered sacred (Ranta et al. 2017). The answers to the open question were coded into 15 categories and were used in the survey of this research project.

The figure shows that matters considered sacred vary a lot among the respondents and practically everyone holds something sacred. The average Finn names six categories and approximately one in ten names over ten categories. Only one per cent feels that nothing is sacred to them.

The most common choice (68%) is ‘love, close ones’, but also ‘peace, home, rest’, ‘safety’ and ‘human dignity’ are sacred to more than half. Over 40 per



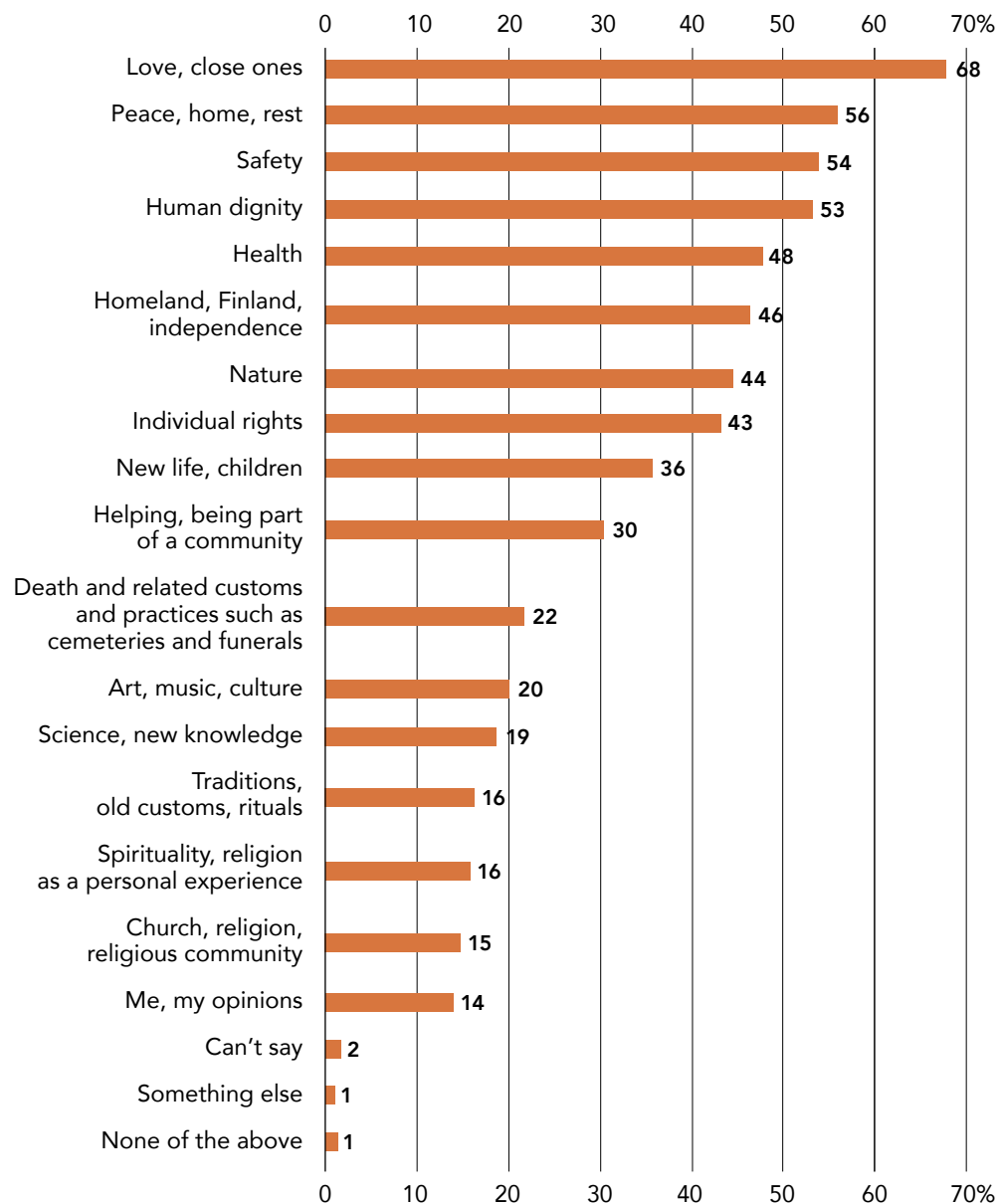


FIGURE 6: Which of the following matters are sacred to you? (%)

cent also think that 'health', 'homeland, Finland, Finland's independence', 'nature' and 'individual freedom' are sacred. The remaining categories are regarded as sacred by one out of three or fewer.

The analysis of the basic background variables (gender, age, occupation, education, income) shows that the background of the respondents does not provide much of an explanation for their choices. Variables such as gender and age reveal only a few minor differences: women (58%) think that 'dignity' is sacred somewhat more often than men (49%), and Finns over 60 years of age (56%) think that Finland and its independence is sacred somewhat more often than do Finns who are under 40 years old (39%). Under 30-year-old Finns choose 'science', 'arts' and 'themselves, their opinions' somewhat more often than do representatives of older generations.

### Independence and traditions sacred to conservatives; dignity, arts and individual freedom sacred to liberals

The differences become clearer when the responses are analysed according to each respondent's self-placement on a liberal-conservative scale (Figure 7). For liberals, they consider 'dignity', 'individual freedom', 'science, new knowledge' and 'arts, music, culture' sacred more than conservatives do. Conservatives, on the other hand, value 'homeland, Finland, independence', 'church, religion, religious community', 'traditions' and 'spirituality' more often than liberals.

The most divisive issue between liberals and conservatives is the sacredness of 'homeland, Finland, independence'. Only 20 per cent of the most liberal respondents consider these issues sacred, while the most conservative ones were more united (70%) around this theme than around any other.

These results are well in line with other attitudes that divide conservatives and liberals. For example, liberals are more concerned about the situation of asylum seekers, sexual minorities and other minority groups and they stress secular-rational values and are open towards multiculturalism and globalisation. Conservatives, on the other hand, emphasise patriotism, traditional family values, Christian heritage and the priority of the nation-state (see e.g. Inglehart & Welzel 2005).

There are thus differences along the liberal-conservative scale when it comes to views of what is sacred, but only the sacredness of the homeland seems to set the two groups worlds apart. Other than that, the differences are not dramatic.

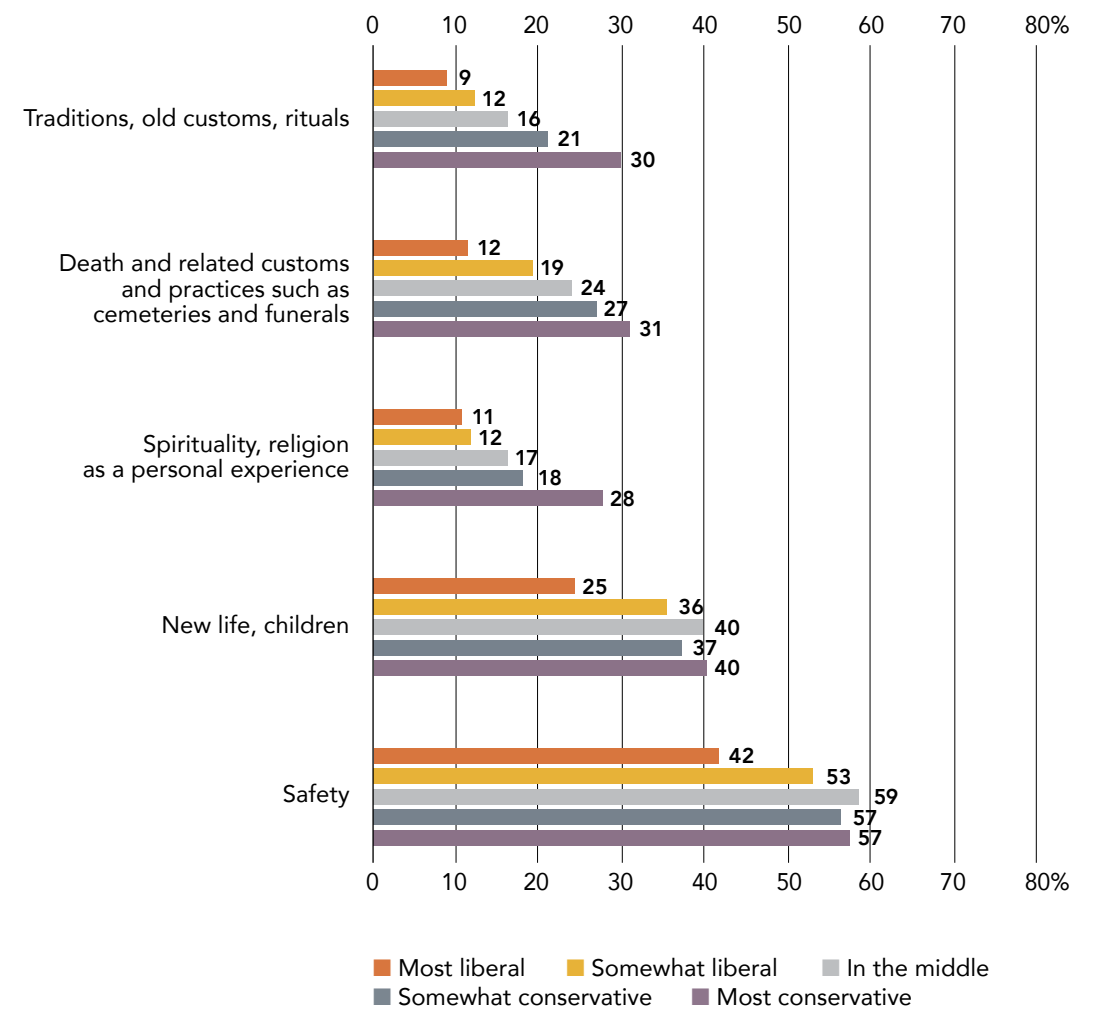
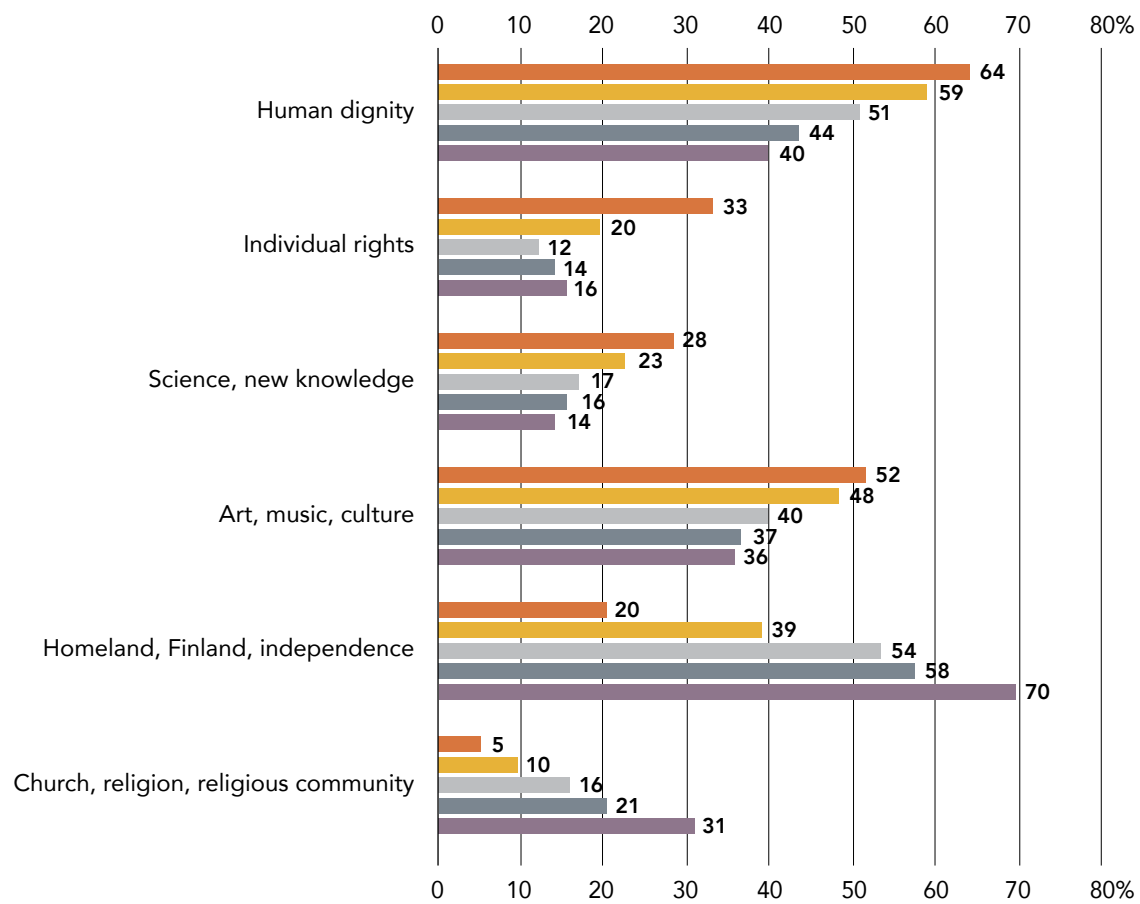


FIGURE 7: Matters considered sacred according to position on the liberal-conservative scale (%)

Even though the results are somewhat expected, these differences interestingly highlight the dissimilar worldviews that exist in Finnish society. As the figure illustrates, not only is the list of sacred matters comprehensive, it also touches upon several areas in the political sphere. When a person insults something that another person holds sacred, the act is probably considered hugely offensive, which weakens our ability to make compromises. If we respect the definition that sacred means something protected, undisturbed and pure, then perhaps we could be more diplomatic when communicating with each other.

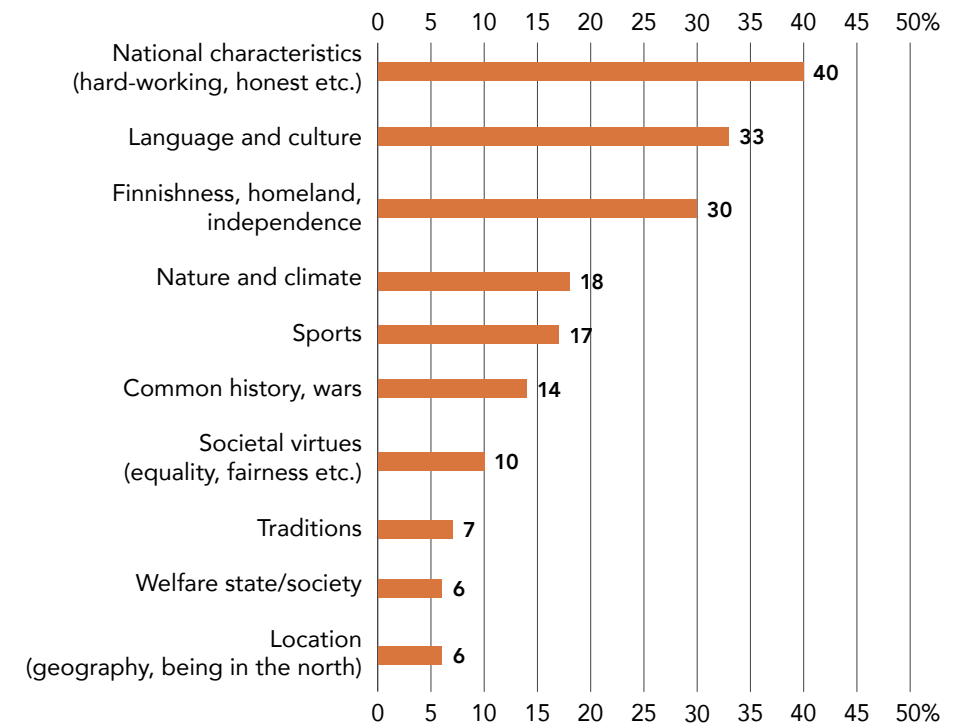
### National characteristics, mother tongue and patriotism unite the Finns

The respondents were asked what issues especially unite and divide the Finnish people. This was asked with open-ended questions. The respondents answered the questions in their own words and the answers were hand-coded into some main categories. Since many responses included several unifying points, only the first and second features mentioned were taken into account in the coding.

**Figure 8** shows that typical national characteristics are seen to unite Finns the most (36%). The respondents describe Finnish people as determined, hard-working, honest, relentless, helpful, reliable and reserved. This is a typical way to distinguish between different nationalities. There are certain prototypes of what can be considered typical French, German, Italian and Dutch people, for example.

The second and third features that were mentioned the most were language and culture (33%), and Finnishness accompanied by homeland, patriotism and independence (30%). Language and culture are ingredients of patriotism as they describe loyalty towards and identification with the nation (Anttila 2007, p. 39).

Moreover, history in general and wars (e.g. Winter War and Continuation War during the Second World War) in particular (14%) are seen to unite the Finns. The national awakening in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and gaining independence from Russia in 1917 are further monumental events and sources of pride. Finnish nature and climate (18%) are also perceived to unite the Finns. Geographical location was mentioned separately by 6 per cent. Nature and geography probably shape the national imagery: it is not uncommon that



**FIGURE 8: Which issues especially unite the Finns? (open-ended question: the combined percentage of the first and second features that were mentioned) (%)**

nationalist features and the often-inhospitable climate are combined in people's minds (Anttila 2007, p. 39).

Sports and sports achievements were mentioned by one out of six respondents (17%). Historically, these can also be combined with patriotism and sovereignty as athletes 'ran Finland onto the world map' in the early years of the Summer Olympics. In this study, 77 per cent think that Finland's success in sports is a good thing that unites people regardless of their background.

Given Finland's position as one of the most equal societies in the world, when it comes to education or distribution of income, and given the rapid and successful construction of the welfare state after the Second World War (Karvonen 2015), it is a little surprising that only 10 per cent name

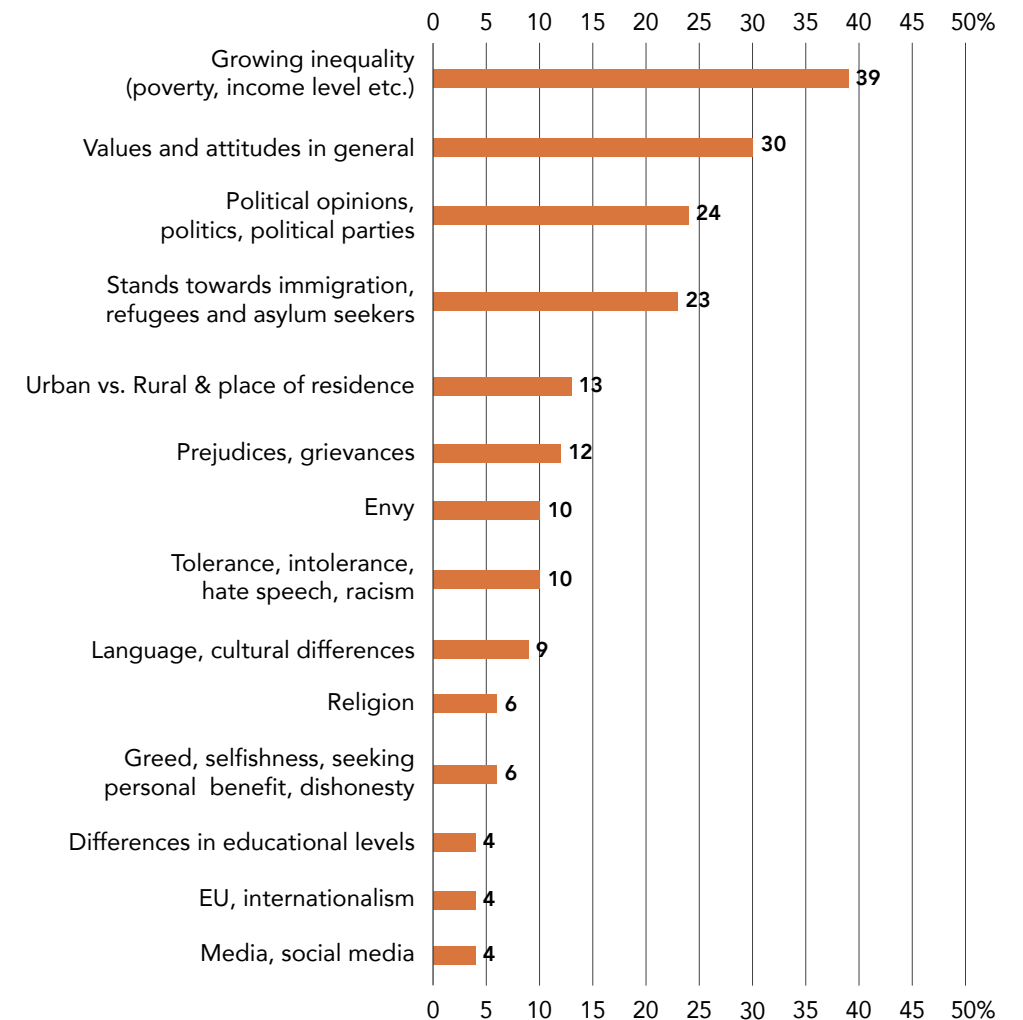
societal virtues, such as social equality, obedience to law, a functioning democracy and fairness as uniting factors among the Finns. Perhaps societal virtues are conceived as something that are so automatic that they do not suffice for uniting people. Moreover, 6 per cent named the welfare state and society separately.

The ideas of the respondents about what unites the Finns produced a prototype citizen who has a patriotic mindset and who values Finnish history, culture and language. This Finn is supposed to be honest, hard-working and modest. The nation-building process strongly emphasised national unity, and it has frequently been mentioned as an important asset in times of crises and conflict. Notwithstanding this impact, in contemporary circumstances these same ideas set tough requirements for newcomers and minorities who are expected to 'do as Finns do', and to adapt to essential Finnish features. Furthermore, some people consider increasing diversity as a threat in itself to the existence of the nation that traditionally hinges upon the assumption of a homogeneous population (cf. Saukkonen 1999; 2019).

### Social inequality is seen as the major divisive factor

**Figure 9** shows the issues that are considered the most divisive factors among Finns. At the top of the list is the growing inequality and poverty (39%). It was stated in the answers that “income inequalities grow, and the position of children has weakened”, “politicians don’t do anything about it even though they claim to be on the side of the little people”, “the rich people get richer, and the poor people get poorer”. The income differences have not actually grown in the 2010s when measured with the Gini index, rather they have stayed the same (Findikaattori 2020). The equality of income distribution is at a better state in Finland in comparison to Sweden, Norway and Denmark, for example (Eurostat 2020).

Despite these facts, it is not surprising that themes of social inequality top the list. The themes have been constantly present in political agendas. Finns react strongly to inequality, which inevitably appears in different forms in different times. Nowadays, there are worries over school dropouts, lengthy unemployment, poverty that passes from parents to children, poverty among the elderly and loneliness in old people, the challenging position of those who do not have access to occupational health care, and so on. In this study, 61 per cent of respondents consider social justice a very important value.



**FIGURE 9: Which issues especially divide the Finns? (open-ended question: the combined percentage of the first and second features that were mentioned) (%)**

Thirty per cent name values, attitudes and opinions in general and 24 per cent political opinions, politics and parties as divisive factors, which is normal in a functioning democracy. Moreover, 12 per cent emphasise prejudices and grievances as divisive factors.

Of the specifically named issues, stances toward immigration, refugees and asylum seekers were mentioned by one out of four respondents (23%). Under the same topic, intolerance, hate speech and racism were mentioned by 10 per cent. These results were expected as the debate on immigration has grown rapidly in recent years. Finland has been a country with one of the lowest number of immigrants in Western Europe (Migri 2017) and not even the wave of asylum seekers in 2015 changed that fact.

Because of the image of Finland as an ethnically and culturally homogeneous nation, which did not have much experience in large-scale migration of refugees, the asylum crisis in 2015 evoked strong feelings and increased tensions in Finnish society. Sociocultural questions are thus connected to socioeconomic questions as in any other Western European country (see e.g. Kriesi et al. 2006; Hooghe & Marks 2009).

In the context of divisions in the Finnish political system (see Westinen 2015), it is not surprising that the urban–rural divide and differences and disputes regarding community structure and regional disparity are named by 13 per cent of the respondents. Geographically, Finland is a vast and sparsely populated country, and regional equality, for a long time, has been a cornerstone of societal development. However, in the 2010s, there were increasing demands to densify the urban structure and to leave the areas that were suffering to cope on their own without implementing redistribution policies (see e.g. Moisio 2012).

Typical (positive) Finnish characteristics were seen as unifying Finns the most. However, negative Finnish characteristics were also named by some (6%) as dividing people in Finland. These are, for example, greed, selfishness and seeking personal benefit. One out of ten (10%) named envy separately: Finland is not a country where you can succeed and show it. In a way, these are the antitheses of the Finnish virtues depicted in **Figure 8**.

Linguistic and cultural differences were mentioned by 10 per cent. Among the Swedish-speaking population, as many as 52 per cent mention this one. The Swedish-speaking population constitutes 5 per cent of the population and the position of the Swedish language is secured in the Constitution. The Swedish-speaking minority is geographically concentrated along the coastal areas and the linguistic barriers are distinct on the municipal and village

levels. Additionally, in cultural terms, the Swedish-speaking population has its own traditions somewhat apart from the Finnish-speaking majority. This is why it is logical that the Finnish–Swedes emphasise language and culture as a divisive factor. Moreover, during the 21st century, Swedish speakers have frequently lamented the loss of opportunities to speak their mother tongue in certain situations in society, along with the difficulties in receiving public services in Swedish, and the increasing negative attitudes towards linguistic freedom and their right to speak their mother tongue (see e.g. Suominen 2017).

Religion is named as a divisive factor by only 6 per cent. Religion or religiousness is not a major source of identity for Finns. Over 70 per cent belong to the Evangelical Lutheran Church and over 20 per cent do not belong to any church, because many of them with a Lutheran background have resigned from it. Interestingly, only 4 per cent name the relationship with the European Union or internationalism as a divisive factor even though these themes divide Finns when it comes, for example, to deepening EU integration and viewing the European Union as a trustworthy actor (see Westinen 2015; Karv & Raunio 2019).

### Patriotism is common among Finns

In addition to the open question on the core issues uniting Finns, the questionnaire also included questions that measured patriotism, the support of national defence, the unifying national power of sports, and trust in Finns solving problems together (**Figure 10**). Over 80 per cent think that a stable national defence spirit is a positive thing and that national spirit is rather more a positive feature than a negative one. In addition, almost 80 per cent think that Finland's success in sports is a great achievement because it unites people regardless of their background and it means that the Finns can solve common problems together.

In previous research, it has been noted that cherishing national unity is important to Finns because as a small nation it had to struggle to achieve independence (Helkama 2015). Even though nationalism and patriotism have been associated with negative issues such as hatred toward immigrants and ethnocentrism, 63 per cent of the respondents in this survey stated that Finnishness is not dependent on a person's ethnic background.

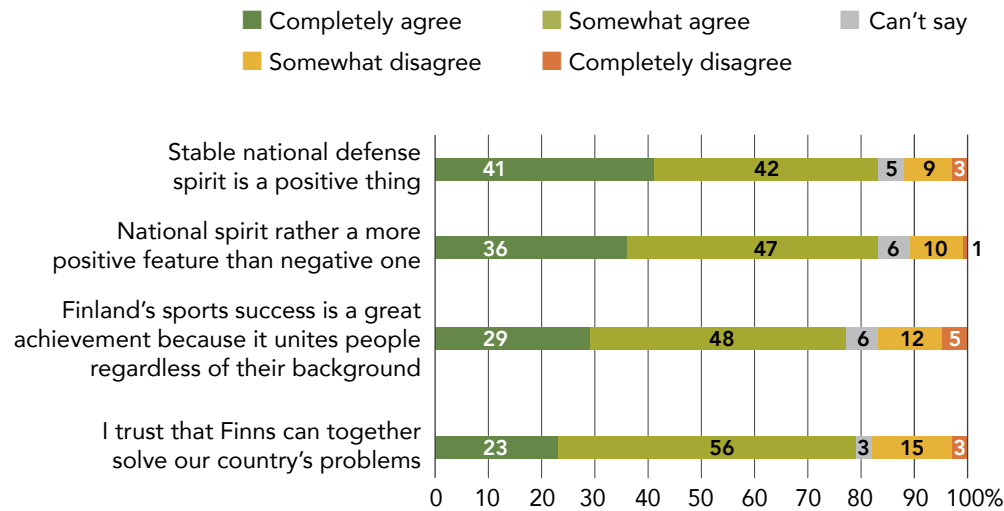


FIGURE 10: Statements that formed the patriotism dimension (%)

### The voters who support the centre-right parties are the most patriotic

The options in **Figure 10** correlate with each other and they form the patriotism dimension (dimension that is formed on the basis of a factor analysis). **Figure 11** presents the differences between sociodemographic and other groups in this dimension. The figures in **Figures 11a** and **11b** represent the means derived from the options shown in **Figure 10**, where 1=completely disagree=1, 2=somewhat disagree, 3=don't know, 4=somewhat agree and 5=completely agree. The scale in **Figure 11** is from 1 to 5, where 1 = those who put little emphasis on national spirit and 5 = those who put a lot of emphasis on national spirit.

The results show that especially sociodemographic differences are narrow in the patriotism dimension. People over 60 years old and those living in northern and eastern Finland put only slightly more emphasis on national spirit than do others. Even the respondents who are under 30 years old value national spirit. Educational level also does not explain the variances in attitudes.

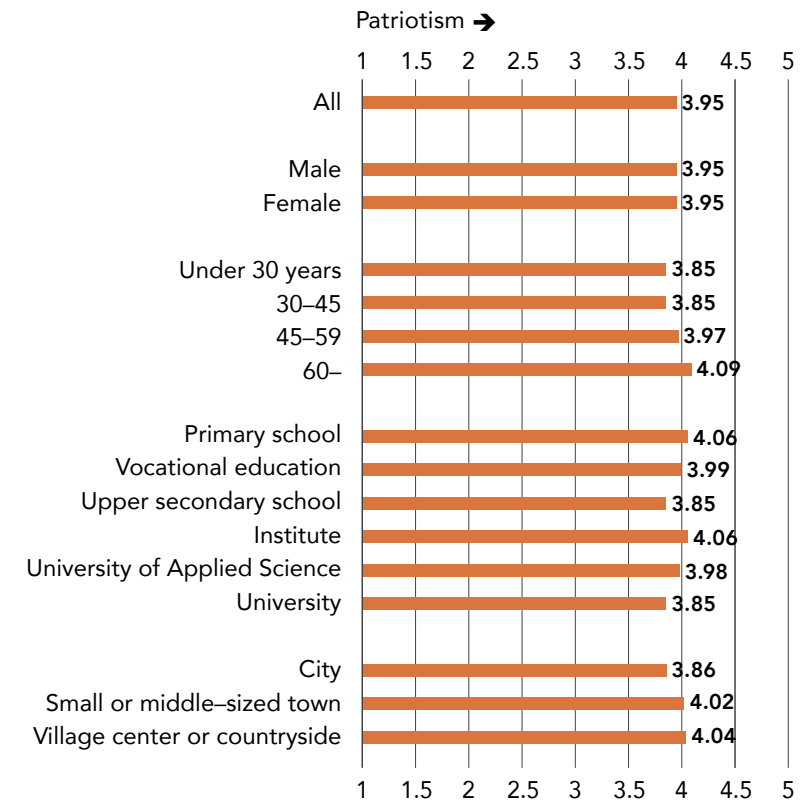
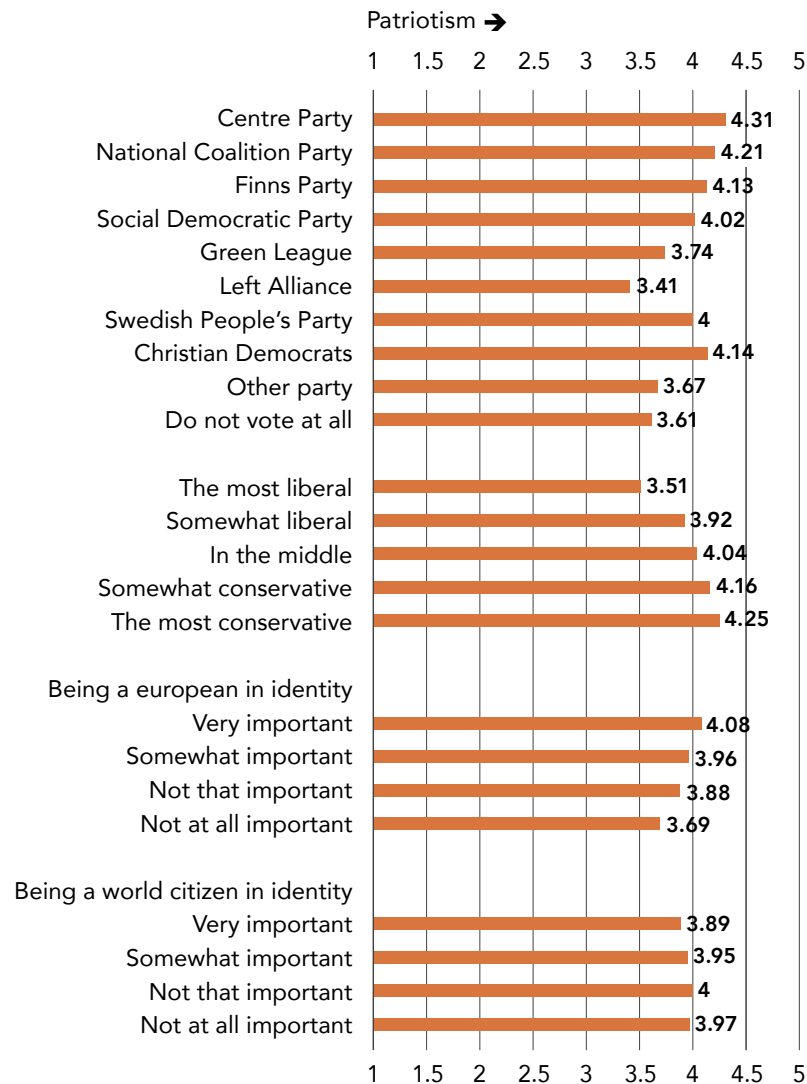


FIGURE 11A: The position of different groups in regard to the patriotism dimension (mean on a scale of 1 to 5)



**FIGURE 11B: The position of different groups in regard to the patriotism dimension (mean on a scale of 1 to 5)**

The most variation is seen with political stand. The voters who support the agrarian Centre Party put the most emphasis on national spirit. The supporters of the nationalist–populist Finns Party are not exceptional in any sense in this dimension. The supporters of the Green League and those of the Left Alliance place less emphasis on national spirit than average, which suits the all-European picture of green and New Left parties where internationalism and multiculturalism are emphasised over nationalism (see e.g. Rovny & Edwards 2012). Yet again, the supporters of all parties lean rather towards placing emphasis on national spirit rather than not putting any value on it.

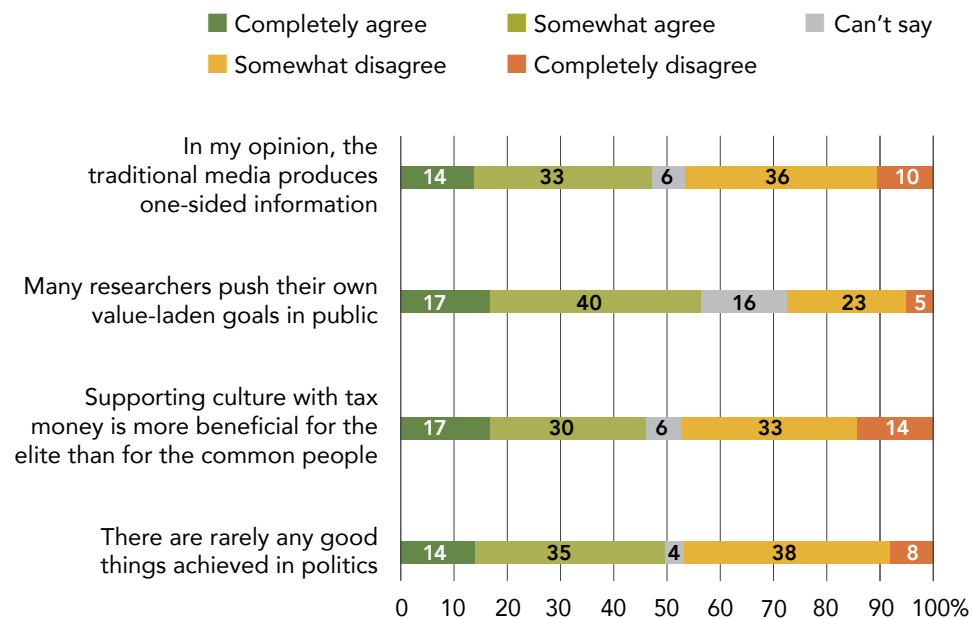
It is logical also that a person's self-placement on the liberal–conservative scale has importance. The more conservative the respondent is, the more likely he or she values national spirit. Interestingly, the sense of being a world citizen does not fall at all under this dimension — people who regard being a world citizen very important to their identity are as patriotic as those who do not feel that this identity is important to them at all. As regards European identity, the pattern is even more surprising. People who feel that being a European is very important put more emphasis on patriotism than the ones who do not feel that they are European at all.

### Anti-elite stance: Are the media and researchers biased?

**Figure 12** shows the results for questions measuring four independent issues connected to populism and anti-elitism. In populist rhetoric, elites often consist not only of decision-makers in politics and business life, but also of representatives of the mainstream media and academic institutions. The latter are often criticised for being incompetent, biased and seeking personal benefit (Mudde 2007; Ruostetsaari 2014; Stanyer, Salgado & Strömbäck 2017). Some people also believe that journalists and researchers are politically correct and that they do not care how common people really feel and do not know what they think.

Firstly, we asked if the respondents found that traditional media produces one-sided information. Secondly, we asked about their ideas on the political values or neutrality of researchers. The third question dealt with the issue of supporting elite culture with taxpayers' money. Lastly, we asked about their perception of whether Finnish political decision-makers deliver good results.

The options in **Figure 12** correlate with each other and they form an 'criticism of the elite' dimension based on a factor analysis. About half (47%) of the respondents think that the traditional media produces one-sided information. This figure can be considered high although it is logical when it



**FIGURE 12: Statements that formed the 'criticism of the elite' dimension (%)**

is compared to previous survey results. In a survey from 2016, 38 per cent of Finns had lost their faith in the traditional media (Pitkänen 2016). In addition, our study included a question on the media that did not fit in with the elitism dimension. The results to this question showed that 57 per cent of people think that the media exaggerates the differences of opinion among Finns.

The motives of academics were also questioned. A majority (57%) of the respondents feel that many researchers have value-laden goals, which they publicly promote. This result can probably be partly explained by the prominence of social scientists in public debate, even though their position nowadays is much weaker than at the peak of the welfare state. Some academics are given a kind of celebrity status where they are asked to comment on political developments even though they have not carried out research on the issues in question (see e.g. Pitkänen & Niemi 2016; Peters 2013). When academics participate in heated debates on social issues, their comments are often easily politicised. Some studies have found that a majority of Finns feel that the fields of humanities and social sciences are not particularly

useful in contributing to the development of society (Saarinen et al. 2018). Even though the motives of the academics are questioned, Finns trust in science. Only the police and the army are shown to be more trusted than science. One in four people, however, gravitate towards alternatives to scientific knowledge (Kiljunen 2016, p. 36).

Finns are divided when it comes to the competence of politics to deliver: 46 per cent think that politics rarely achieves anything good and a similar percentage feels otherwise. The general trust in political institutions is comparatively high in Finland but for concrete issues, criticism arises. Over half of the people think that political parties are merely interested in people's votes, not their opinions, and about 75 per cent think that problems in Finland would be solved better if politicians stopped talking and would act instead (Grönlund & Kestilä-Kekkonen 2015).

The question on culture also divides people into two groups. Forty-six per cent think that supporting culture with tax money benefits the elite more than it does the common people, while 47 per cent are of the opposite opinion. Perhaps the most typical example of an elite-associated form of culture is the opera, even though the question in this study does not address any particular form of culture.

Previous studies show that 57 per cent of Finns think that elites should pay for the arts they like themselves. Two thirds think that the arts should be supported with tax money, which would give non-elites a chance to enjoy the arts as well (Finnish Cultural Foundation 2013). These results show that the arts at large are worth supporting but that issues concerning the elite and the arts are often criticised.

### Even people with higher education are suspicious of the motives of academics

The statements in **Figure 12** form the criticism of elites dimension and the results in **Figure 13** present the differences between sociodemographic and other groups in this dimension. The figures in **Figure 13** represent the means derived from the options shown in **Figure 12**, where 1=completely disagree=1, 2=somewhat disagree, 3=don't know, 4=somewhat agree and 5=completely agree. The scale in **Figure 13** is from 1 to 5, where 1 = those who are the least critical of elites, 5 = those who are the most critical of elites.

Age, gender or place of residence does not affect the attitudes in the elitism dimension, but education does have an effect. People who have attend-



ed school only through the primary level or who have attended vocational school are far more sceptic than are the more highly educated. Especially in terms of criticism towards the elitism of culture and in believing in the competence of politicians to deliver, the differences are drastic. However, the differences are not so great when it comes to the motives of academics in terms of publicity. Of those with only vocational education, 63 per cent believe that researchers have value-laden motives, while, even among those who are academically educated, as high as 46 per cent also believe this.

People working at higher professional levels are not as critical towards elites as are farmers or blue-collar workers. Those who identify with the upper middle class are likewise less sceptical than those who identify with the working class.

With this dimension, the voters who support the Finns Party can be differentiated from the supporters of the other parties. Criticism of the established political parties, mainstream media, academics and postmodern arts has been a part of their public profile. The voters of the Green League are the opposite of the Finns Party: they are the least critical of these. The supporters of the Green League and the Left Alliance believe in the impartiality of academics and do not see culture as something driven by elites. Furthermore, the criticism of elites is more logically seen as a reflection of the liberal-conservative divide than of the left-right divide. People who fall in the middle of the left-right scale are the most critical, while the logic in the liberal-conservative scale is that the more you lean towards conservatism, the more frustrated you are with the elites.

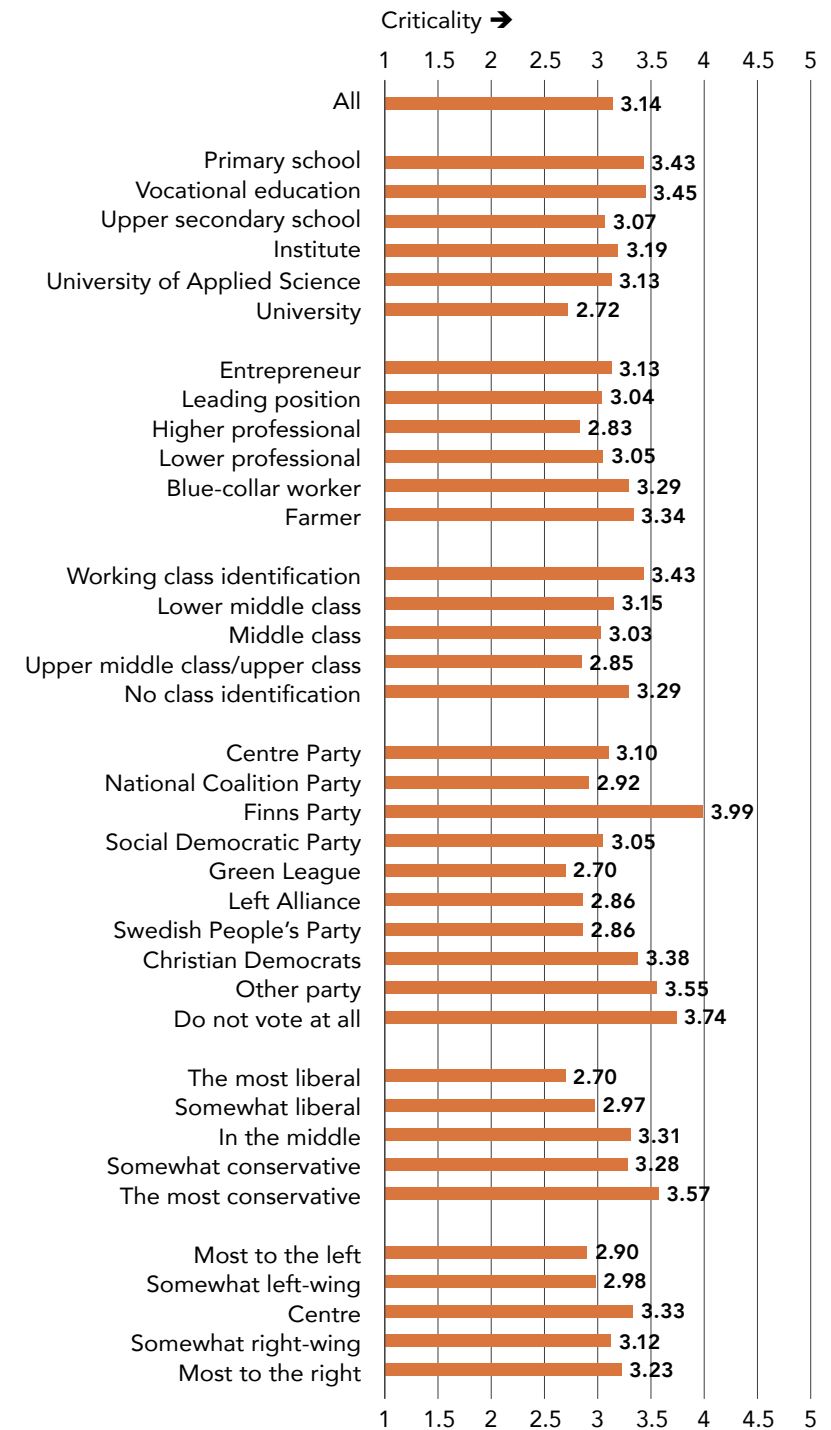


Figure 13: The position of different groups in regard to the criticism of elites dimension (mean on a scale of 1 to 5)



**PART 2:**

**Identities, values and attitudes  
among Russian-, Estonian-,  
English-, Somali-, and Arabic-  
speaking people in the Helsinki  
capital region**



### Russian-speaking people are by far the largest foreign language group

The second part of this report focuses on the five largest groups of people whose registered mother tongue is some other language than Finnish or Swedish. These groups are Russian speakers, Estonian speakers, English speakers, Somali speakers, and Arabic speakers. In contrast to the previous section, all respondents live in the cities of Helsinki, Vantaa and Espoo. The group of English speakers has been limited to people who originate from the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, the Republic of Ireland, Australia and New Zealand.

As **Figure 14** demonstrates, Russian speakers and Estonian speakers are clearly the main foreign language groups in Finland, followed by Arabic, Somali and English speakers. In 2018, members of these five language groups accounted for 52 per cent of all those with a foreign mother tongue in the Helsinki capital region, and 9 per cent of all inhabitants. People with a foreign background in Helsinki and the surrounding cities also constituted roughly one half of those in the whole of Finland. Of these five groups, only Somalis (Somali speakers) are clearly over-represented in the capital region: nearly 80 per cent of them live in Finland in Helsinki, Espoo, or Vantaa.

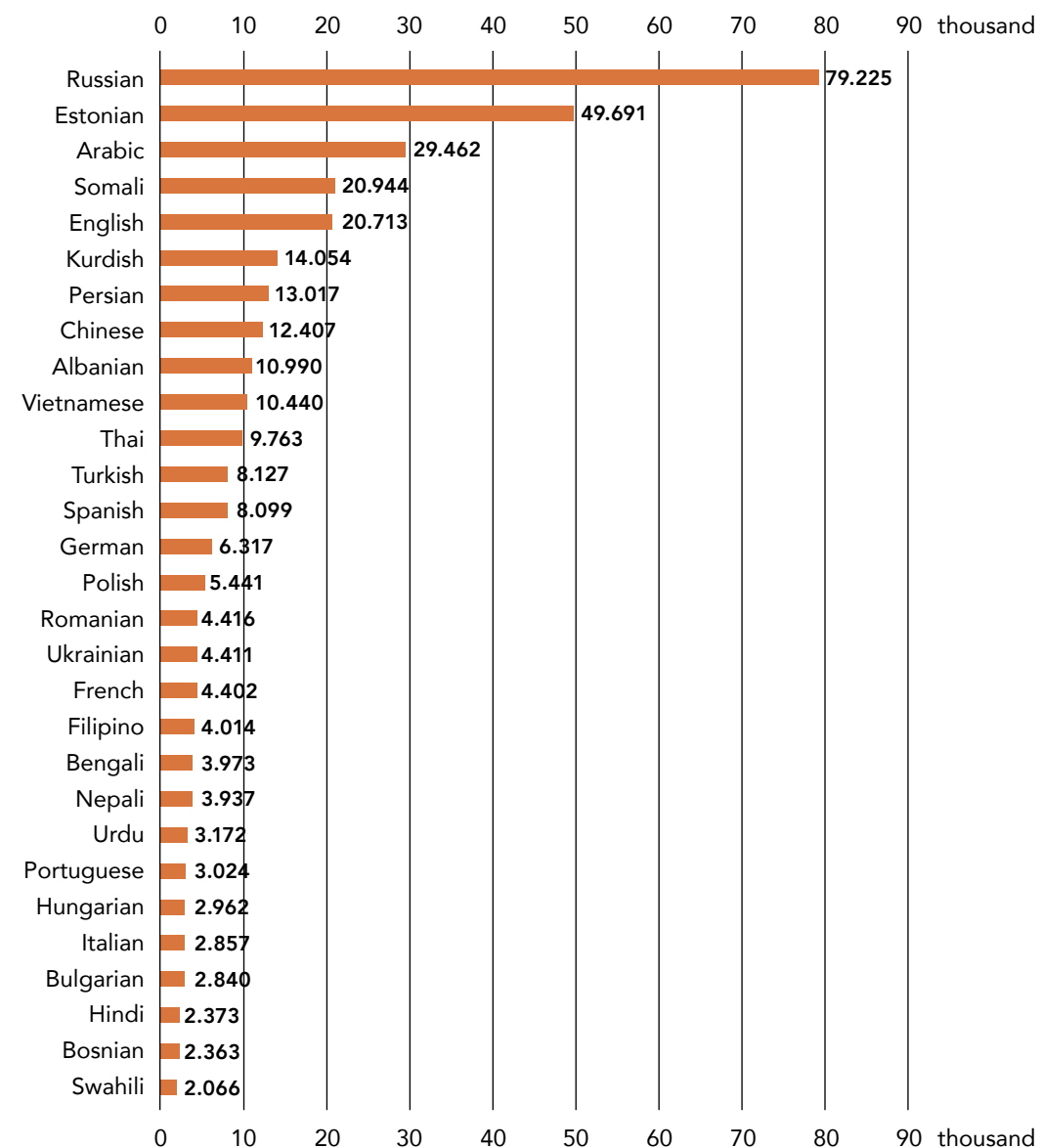


FIGURE 14: The main groups of foreign language speakers in Finland in 2018. Source: Statistics Finland (2019)

## Over half of the Arabic speakers have lived in Finland for less than five years

**Table 1** shows the background information on people with a foreign background who participated in this study. The gender distribution and age structure of the respondents are rather well in line with the register-based information that includes their actual demographics. For the English speakers and Arabic speakers, the number of men is clearly higher than the number of women, while for the Russian speakers, women are the majority.

As regards age structure, especially Somali speakers in the capital region are rather young. Nearly half of them are under 30 years old. In contrast, 40 per cent of the English speakers are over 50 years old.

There is some variation in the country of origin especially among the speakers of English, Arabic and Russian. English speakers come mainly from the United States (35%) or from the United Kingdom (42%). Two thirds of the Arabic speakers come from Iraq and 12 per cent from Syria. Approximately 80 per cent of Russian speakers were born either in Russia or in the former Soviet Union, and 9 per cent were born in Estonia. Almost all Estonian speakers were also born in Estonia. The Somali speakers are the only ones that included a fair percentage of second-generation immigrants (20%); the rest, however, were born in Somalia.

There is no register-based information available about the reasons for arrival to Finland, but there is a previous survey study about the topic. According to that study, the most common reasons for immigration have been family and work. One in ten have moved here as refugees or asylum seekers (Nieminen, Sutela & Hannula 2014). These results are well in line with the sample of this study and as **Table 1** shows, the reasons for arrival vary a lot between the language groups. The majority of the Somali speakers and Arabic speakers arrived here as refugees or asylum seekers, whereas the Russian speakers and English speakers have mainly come here for family reasons or marriage. The majority of Estonians have come to Finland to work.

One third of the Somali speakers, one fourth of the English speakers and one fifth of the Russian speakers have lived in Finland for more than 20 years. Two thirds of the Estonian speakers have lived here for less than ten years and most Arabic speakers for less than five years. These distributions are logical from the standpoint of Finnish immigration history. For example, the first generation of immigrants from Somalia came to Finland at the start of the 1990s as refugees, while there have been many recent asylum seekers from Iraq and Syria.

	RUS	EST	ENG	SOM	ARAB
<b>Gender</b>					
Male	40	47	72	55	67
Female	60	53	38	45	33
<b>Age</b>					
Under 30	22	23	10	46	28
30–39	27	33	23	24	39
40–49	22	23	28	17	16
50–64	22	21	32	12	14
65–	7	0	8	1	2
<b>Reason why moved to Finland</b>					
Work	13	57	17	1	2
Family reasons or marriage	51	36	62	16	18
Studying	12	1	8	3	4
Refugee status, seeking asylum	1	0	0	62	72
Remigration	17	0	0	0	0
Born in Finland	1	2	1	18	0
Don't know	5	4	12	1	4
<b>Years lived in Finland</b>					
1–4 years	26	21	9	18	56
5–10 years	31	45	32	23	29
11–20 years	24	28	35	27	10
More than 20 years	19	6	24	32	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>(N)</b>	<b>(301)</b>	<b>(310)</b>	<b>(314)</b>	<b>(302)</b>	<b>(300)</b>

**TABLE 1: Respondents' background information according to language group (%) (Continues on the next page)**

	RUS	EST	ENG	SOM	ARAB
<b>Years in school</b>					
0–6	0	0	1	37	16
7–9	8	5	1	9	15
10–12	45	48	5	29	20
13–15	15	32	17	17	16
16 years or more	32	15	75	8	33
<b>Finnish skills</b>					
Beginner / do not speak	25	28	41	15	52
Intermediate level	47	45	36	43	36
Advanced level	22	16	18	13	9
Mother tongue	6	11	4	29	3
<b>Do you think you are over-educated in your current job?</b>					
Yes	45	32	29	34	53
No	44	48	69	46	28
Don't know	10	20	2	20	19
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>(N)</b>	<b>(301)</b>	<b>(310)</b>	<b>(314)</b>	<b>(302)</b>	<b>(300)</b>

**TABLE 1 (continued): Respondents' background information according to language group (%)**

### English speakers are the most highly educated

Education level was measured by years in school, because education systems in different countries vary a lot and it would have been difficult to form categories that are suitable for all. Sixteen years or more in school is equivalent to a higher degree in university or similar place of study. The most educated people are the English speakers, which is in line with their placement in the labour market. A majority of them are in leading positions, or are professionals or entrepreneurs. Only 15 per cent of them are manual workers.

One third of the Russian speakers have gone to school more than 16 years, but as with the Estonian speakers, nearly half of them have gone to school from 10 to 12 years, which is equivalent to vocational school or a high school education. Despite these similarities, their placement in the labour market is different. A majority of Estonians are manual workers (56%), whereas the Russian speakers are more evenly divided into different occupation levels: 39 per cent of them are in leading positions or are higher-level professionals. Only 14 per cent are manual workers.

Like the Russian speakers, one third of the Arabic speakers have gone to school more than 16 years, but overall there is a lot of variation within the language group. Almost half of the Somali speakers have completed only primary school or less and only 8 per cent have gone to school more than 16 years. Of the Somali-speaking respondents, 59 per cent did not have a profession: they are unemployed, students, retired or taking care of the family at home. Of the Arabic speakers, the corresponding level was 81 per cent: many of them were unemployed or taking some courses.

There are also significant differences in Finnish skills. The percentage of Somali speakers who have lived in Finland for decades or who were born in Finland is higher than in the other language groups, so it is understandable that they have the best language skills. For the Somali speakers, 29 per cent have Finnish as their mother tongue and only 15 per cent of them are at the beginner level or do not speak Finnish at all.

In the other language groups, most of the respondents can manage with the Finnish language, but there is also a large proportion of them who are beginners or who do not speak Finnish at all. As many as 41 per cent of the English speakers belong to this category even though over 90 per cent of them have lived in Finland for more than five years. This can be explained by the fact that Finns, especially in the capital area, speak English rather well, so there is perhaps no need for English speakers to learn Finnish.

Finally, the respondents were asked to evaluate their education in relation to their current job if they had one. The proportion of those who feel that they are over-educated for their current job is rather high in all language groups, but these sentiments were especially common among the Arabic speakers. This can be perhaps explained by their education levels. One third of them had studied 16 years or more and yet the most common occupation status among the Arabic speakers was manual worker and most of them had no jobs at all.

### People with immigrant backgrounds feel they are a part of Finnish society but do not often self-identify as Finns

The feeling of being a part of society is important for those who have settled in a new country. Exclusion from the society leads to a weaker quality of life. **Figure 15** shows that at least three quarters of the respondents in each language group have the feeling that they are included in Finnish society. About one in two Somali speakers feel that they are completely a part of Finnish society, while in the other language groups, less than 30 per cent feel that they are fully included in society. Unsurprisingly, years spent in Finland and Finnish language skills increase the feeling of being a part of society. This effect is clearest in the case of Estonian speakers and Russian speakers. However, in the case of Somali speakers, this effect does not exist. Even those Somalis who are at a beginner level in Finnish skills or who have recently moved to Finland often feel themselves to be a part of Finnish society.

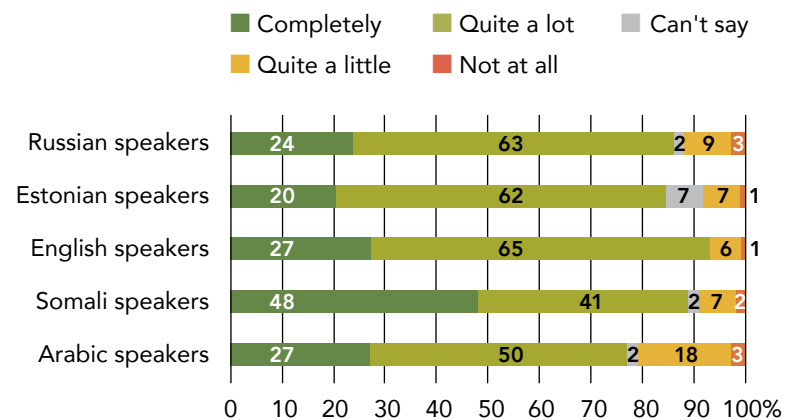


FIGURE 15: Do you feel yourself as being part of Finnish society? (%)

Being included in Finnish society is not, however, the same as having a Finnish identity. The respondents were asked whether they feel themselves to be Finnish and whether they identify themselves, for example, as Russians, Iraqis or Americans, according to their country of origin. **Table 2** places the members of the language groups into different identity orientations or strategies (Larja 2017).

For the integration orientation, people identify with both Finnishness and their country of origin. For the assimilation orientation, people identify with Finnishness, but do not feel a closeness to their country of origin. For the separation orientation, immigrants do not feel that they are Finnish, but instead their identity is tied to their country of origin. Finally, for the marginalisation orientation, immigrants do not identify with either Finnishness or their country of origin.

Somali speakers and Estonian speakers are the most distinctive groups. Almost all Somali speakers self-identify with Somalia and feel that they are Somalis. However, almost half of them also self-identify as Finnish, alongside the Somali identity. The orientations of assimilation and marginalisation are practically non-existent for them. Estonian speakers, in turn, overwhelmingly self-identify with Estonia only. For them, only one in ten feels that he or she is Finnish.

Among Russian speakers, separation is also the most common orientation. However, it is noteworthy that 15 per cent of them feel that they are neither Finns nor Russians (or Estonian or Ukrainian). Eleven percent of Russian speakers self-identify as Finnish, but not as Russian. These findings can be partly explained by the fact that the group of Russian-speaking respondents included Ingrian remigrants who have had the right to move to Finland as co-nationals (quite similarly to *Aussiedler* in Germany). Ingrians constitute 16 per cent of the Russian-speaking respondents.

The profiles of Arabic speakers and English speakers are quite similar, even though the groups otherwise do not have much in common. One in four respondents in these two language groups self-identify both as Finnish and as, for example, American, British, Iraqis, or Syrian. About 60 per cent of respondents from both language groups do not feel that they are Finns, and one in six has an assimilation orientation to Finland, their country of destination.

RUSSIAN	Feel themselves as Russians etc.	Don't feel themselves as Russians etc.
Feel themselves as Finnish	12	11
Don't feel themselves as Finnish	62	15

ESTONIAN	Feel themselves as Estonians	Don't feel themselves as Estonians
Feel themselves as Finnish	5	5
Don't feel themselves as Finnish	83	6

ENGLISH	Feel themselves as Brits, Americans etc.	Don't feel themselves as Brits, Americans etc.
Feel themselves as Finnish	26	16
Don't feel themselves as Finnish	44	14

SOMALI	Feel themselves as Somalis	Don't feel themselves as Somalis
Feel themselves as Finnish	43	1
Don't feel themselves as Finnish	56	0

ARABIC	Feel themselves as Iraqis, Syrians etc.	Don't feel themselves as Iraqis, Syrians etc.
Feel themselves as Finnish	24	16
Don't feel themselves as Finnish	46	14

■ Integration ■ Assimilation ■ Separation ■ Marginalisation

TABLE 2: Orientations of identity in different language groups (%)

### Almost one half of Somali speakers do not have any Finnish friends or acquaintances

Figure 16 illustrates the number of (native-born) Finnish friends or acquaintances that the respondents have. As the figure shows, social relations with Finns are the most common among the English speakers. Practically all of them have more than two friends and about 90 per cent have more than five friends belonging to the native-born Finnish population. The situation is quite similar for the Russian speakers and Estonian speakers, although it is rarer for them to have more than five friends or acquaintances among the native-born population.

Respondents who have Somali or Arabic as their mother tongue, in turn, live more isolated from the native-born Finnish population. Almost one half (45%) of the Somali speakers and one in three (32%) of the Arabic speakers say that they do not have Finnish friends or acquaintances at all.

The time of residence in Finland is associated with having social relations with native-born Finns. The longer people have lived in Finland, the more likely it is that they have Finnish friends. Education and position in the labour market also enhance social contacts with native-born Finns. People with a higher education more often have a job and the workplace usually offers good opportunities to broaden social networks.

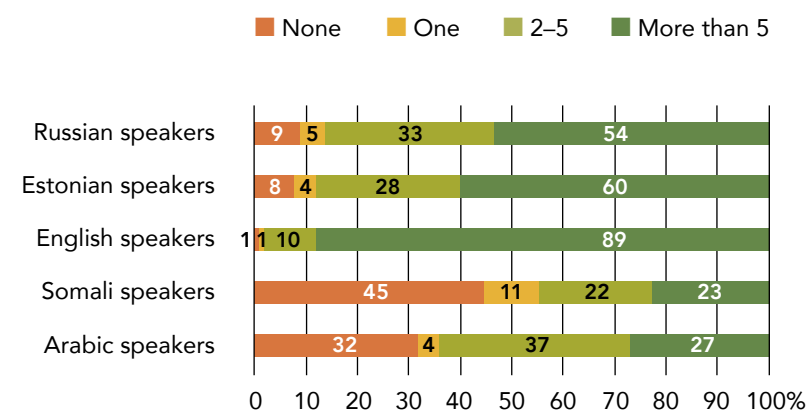


FIGURE 16: "Do you have Finnish friends or acquaintances?" (%)

Most English speakers in the group of respondents have been in Finland for more than five years. They also are the most educated language group and many of them have integrated into the Finnish labour market. A majority of them are working in fields and positions that enhance social contacts and networks. Moreover, Finns, in general, speak English rather well, so it is perhaps easier for native English speakers to meet and make friends with Finns while still speaking their own native language, since many of them have poor language skills in Finnish.

Most Arabic speakers have been in Finland for less than five years and most of them arrived as refugees or asylum seekers. The unemployment rate among Arabic speakers is quite high. Many Somali speakers also have difficulties in finding a job even though the majority in this language group already have lived in Finland for a long time. Furthermore, the level of education of Somali speakers is often low. All this leads to barriers in establishing contact with native-born Finns and in building sustainable relationships. Even the fact that the majority of Somali speakers have rather good skills in Finnish does not help them network in Finnish society.

### Arabic speakers are the most likely to stay in Finland

The respondents in this study like living in Finland. Over 90 per cent of them enjoy life in Finland. English speakers and Somali speakers are the most satisfied: about two thirds in both language groups enjoy life in Finland very much. With the exception of Estonian speakers, a majority of respondents from each language group indicated that they would absolutely or that they would quite possibly want to live the rest of their lives in Finland (Figure 17).

The respondents who speak Arabic are the most certain that they are willing to stay in Finland: 63 per cent of them would absolutely want to stay in Finland. This is understandable. Since about 70 per cent of them have come to Finland as refugees or asylum seekers, returning to their country of origin is, at least at the moment, more unlikely for them than for those who arrived in Finland because of a job or as students. The Somali speakers and Russian speakers were the second most convinced of their willingness to stay.

The Estonian speakers are a slightly different group. Half of them would quite possibly want to stay in Finland for good but the number of those who would absolutely want to stay is only a little above 10 per cent. Almost a third of them are more sceptic, and 15 per cent of Estonians absolutely want to leave Finland at some point. Undoubtedly, geographical closeness

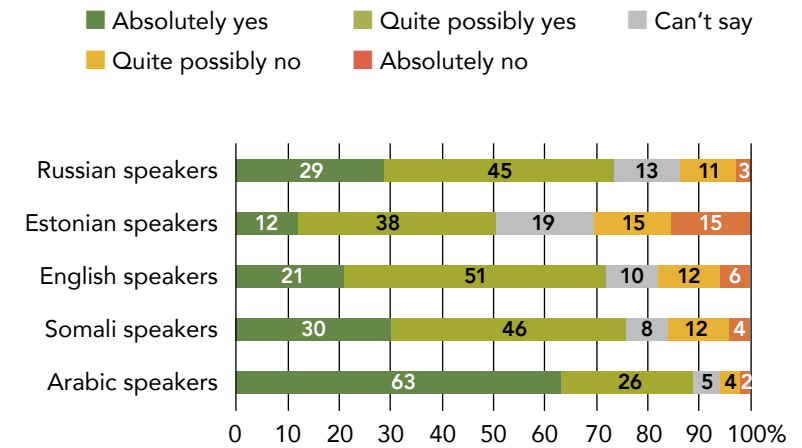


Figure 17: "Do you want to live the rest of your life in Finland?" (%)

plays a role here: many Estonian speakers in Finland have come only to work for a certain period. Many of them have their families and much of their social life back home in Estonia.

Nevertheless, for Estonian speakers and Russian speakers, the rule of thumb is that the longer they have lived in Finland, the more likely they also want to stay here for good. However, in the case of Somali speakers, the certainty that they want to stay lessens along with years spent in Finland. Those who have recently moved to Finland possibly have high expectations regarding life in Finland, while the ones who have been in Finland for a long time may have experienced disappointments with opportunities in Finland. The issue of discrimination will be discussed later.

When the respondents were asked why they want or do not want to stay in Finland, their reasons varied a lot. Many Somali speakers feel that Finland is already their home, and they emphasise the importance of their family and other social bonds in Finland. The Arabic speakers, in turn, emphasise safety in Finland in comparison to their countries of origin. They also appreciate the value of dignity and individual freedom. The English speakers want to stay in Finland because of a well-functioning society and a pleasant way of life. Additionally, people from North America and the United

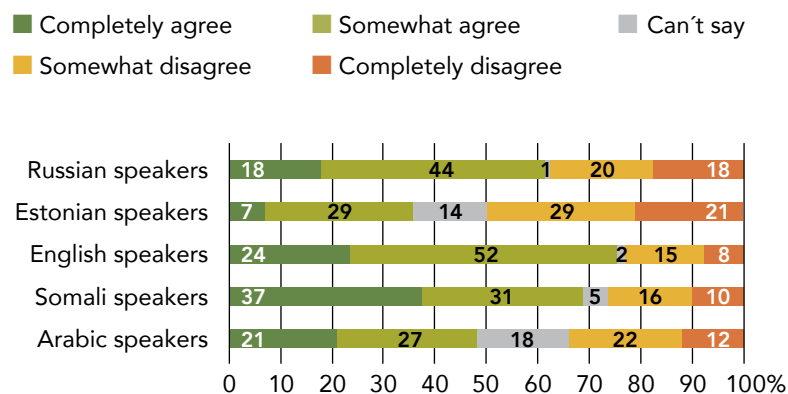


Kingdom appreciate more in general such features as the Finnish healthcare system, the education system, the labour market and the welfare society.

### Estonians are the least active in following social and political issues in Finland

A further indication of feeling a part of the host society is the extent to which people with immigrant backgrounds follow social and political issues in the media in their country of destination. **Figure 18** illustrates that the Somali speakers and English speakers are the most active in following social and political issues in Finland. Only one fourth of them said that they do not follow these issues to any extent. As mentioned above, many Somali speakers in the capital region have lived in Finland for a long time, and one in five was born in Finland. In turn, the English-speaking respondents often had a higher education background, which might explain their active use of Finnish media.

The Arabic speakers were quite evenly divided into different categories in their responses. On the one hand, the short time of stay in Finland probably makes it difficult for many of them to follow the Finnish media. On the other hand, the Finnish media have published a lot of material about Iraqi and Syrian asylum seekers, which might make some interested in following what happens in Finland. By far, the least active group is the Estonian speakers. Only one third follows events in Finland actively. Instead, they are strongly attached to Estonia, their neighbouring country



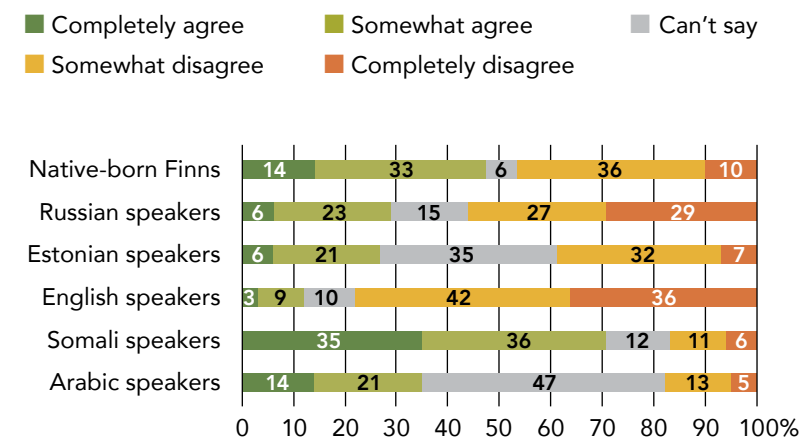
**FIGURE 18: "I actively follow social issues in Finland" (%)**

of origin. The level of education among many Estonian speakers in the Helsinki capital region is also quite low.

The people who are most active in following social and political issues in Finland are the elderly rather than young people, the more educated rather than those with little education, men rather than women, and those with advanced Finnish skills rather than those with lower Finnish-language skills.

There was quite a lot of variety among the respondents regarding satisfaction with Finnish politics. The Somali speakers were very critical. **Figure 19** shows that 71 per cent of them think that politics in Finland rarely achieves anything good. Among native-born Finns\*, the corresponding level is 47 per cent, which highlights the magnitude of criticism among the Somali speakers. One third of the Arabic speakers were disappointed with politics in Finland, whereas the proportion of dissatisfied speakers of Estonian and Russian was below 30 per cent.

In turn, the English speakers did not seem to have much to complain about. Of them, 78 per cent disagreed with the claim that politics in Finland rarely achieves anything good. Only 12 per cent were critical of the ability



**FIGURE 19: "Politics in Finland rarely achieves anything good" (%)**

\* In the second part of the report, the term native-born Finns refers de facto to the Finnish adult population. Hence it includes members of various language groups. However, almost all of the native-born Finns who are studied here are either Finnish- or Swedish-speaking. The data on native-born Finns included only a handful of foreign-speaking respondents.

of politics in Finland to deliver, and the percentage of those who completely agreed with that statement was minimal. Again, education seems to play a role: for all language groups, the respondents with a higher educational background were the least critical and the English speakers had the highest level of education in this survey.

The results also again illustrate how distanced the Estonian speakers are from Finnish political and societal issues, even though Estonia is a neighbouring country with many similarities. It would seem that having an opinion about politics in Finland could be easy for them because of the close geographical distance and because of the social and cultural similarities. However, in this survey, one third of them could not evaluate politics in Finland. The fact that almost a half of the Arabic-speaking respondents (47%) could not answer this question probably reflects their short time of residence in Finland and their lack of skills in the Finnish language.

### Almost all Somali speakers think that they are discriminated against in the labour market

Many immigrants face prejudices, negative stereotypes, direct or structural discrimination and even racism in their country of destination. These experiences reduce their opportunities to take their place in society and make the most of their lives. The labour market is obviously one of the most important social spheres where discrimination and other kinds of unjust treatment can be felt.

Figure 20 shows that there is much variation between language groups in this regard. The respondents evaluated the statement that people belonging to their language minority are being discriminated against in the labour market. An overwhelming percentage (89%) of the Somali speakers had experiences of discrimination against members of their language group. What is more striking is that 65 per cent of Somali speakers agree fully with the claim. Moreover, those Somali speakers who have lived in Finland over 20 years feel more strongly discriminated against than those who have been in the country for less than five years. This probably indicates frustration in their chances to become employed. A recent study credibly shows that if a job seeker has a foreign name, he or she is less likely to be invited to an interview in comparison to someone with a Finnish surname but with the same CV (Ahmad 2019). Male applicants with a Somali name were in the most disadvantaged position.

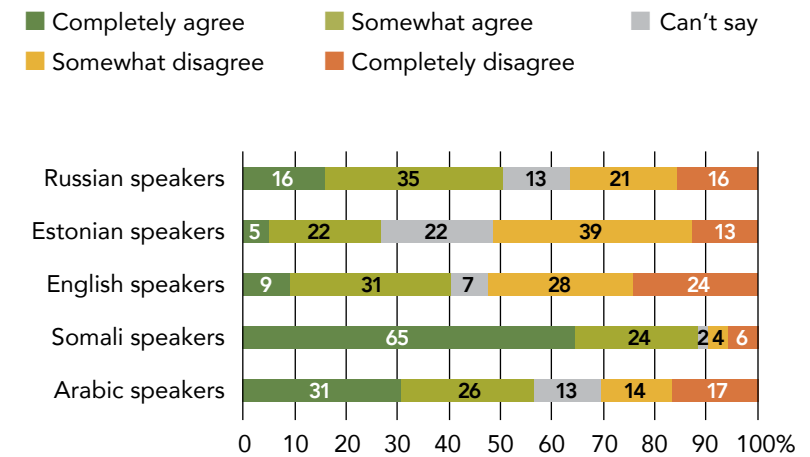
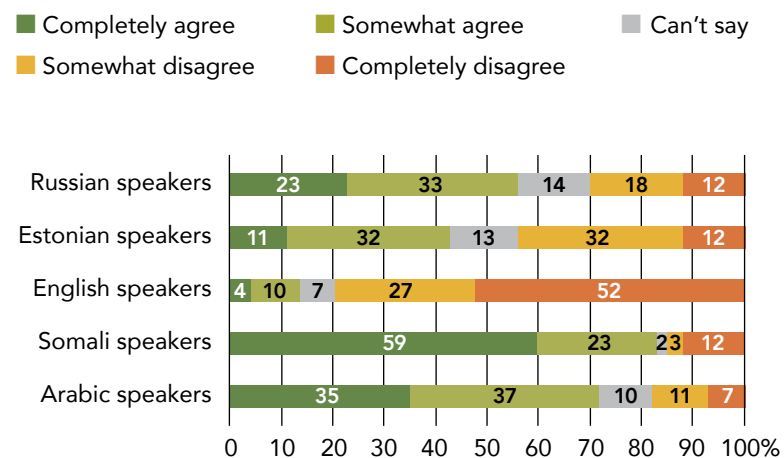


FIGURE 20: "People belonging to my language minority are being discriminated against in the labour market" (%)

As regards the English speakers, years spent in Finland had an opposite effect. Those who have lived in the country for a longer time also experienced discrimination less frequently. However, many respondents (40%) belonging to this group, which mainly consists of higher educated British, Irish and North Americans, also felt that those who have English as their native language are discriminated against in the Finnish labour market. The percentage of those with negative experiences was a bit higher among the Russian speakers (51%), and significantly higher among the Arabic speakers (57%). In contrast, only one fourth (27%) of the Estonian speakers felt that they are treated unequally. This difference in comparison to the other groups probably reflects the high level of employment among Estonian speakers.

### Somali speakers and Arabic speakers feel that the media gives a negative picture of them

Many respondents also have the idea that the picture that Finnish people have of their country of origin is too one-sided. Only 15 per cent of Somali speakers thought that Finns' views of Somalia are not too one-sided and only 24 per cent of Arabic speakers thought that the view of Iraq, Syria and other Arabic-speaking countries is not too one-sided. However, a half of the



**FIGURE 21: “The media paints too negative a picture of people of my language group” (%)**

respondents from the United Kingdom and United States also thought that Finns do not have an adequate picture of their countries.

Differences between language groups became clearer when the respondents were asked whether the Finnish media paints too negative a picture of people belonging to these language groups. **Figure 21** shows that more than four out of five Somali speakers thought that the media in Finland presents a skewed picture of Somalis. For Arabic speakers, the corresponding figure was 72 per cent. The media coverage of Somalis, Iraqis and Syrians in Finland often deals with issues such as unemployment, criminality and the abuse of the asylum system. A small majority of Russian speakers (56%) and less than one half of Estonian speakers (43%) think that the media gives a negative image of them.

### Estonian speakers trust Finnish political institutions the least

Cross-national comparisons of the levels of political trust in Europe show that differences between countries have been rather consistent over time. Trust levels are traditionally the highest in the Nordic countries and the lowest in southern Europe. Countries in western continental Europe fall somewhere in between (Marien 2011; Norris 2011).

**Figure 22** shows the levels of trust of these five language groups and of native-born Finns.\*\* The respondents to the survey were asked to evaluate their level of trust in political institutions on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means they do not trust the institution at all and 10 means they trust the institution completely.

In Finland, the President of the Republic generally enjoys higher levels of trust than other political institutions. The five language groups are not an exception. According to the Finnish Constitution, the foreign policy of Finland is directed by the President of the Republic in cooperation with the Government. In domestic policy, his or her political powers are relatively limited. Therefore, the President rarely participates in domestic political disputes and this gives him or her an opportunity to rise above everyday party politics. Consequently, this political institution has a somewhat neutral or apolitical status that perhaps also explains why both native-born Finns and immigrants trust this institution, and the incumbent president.

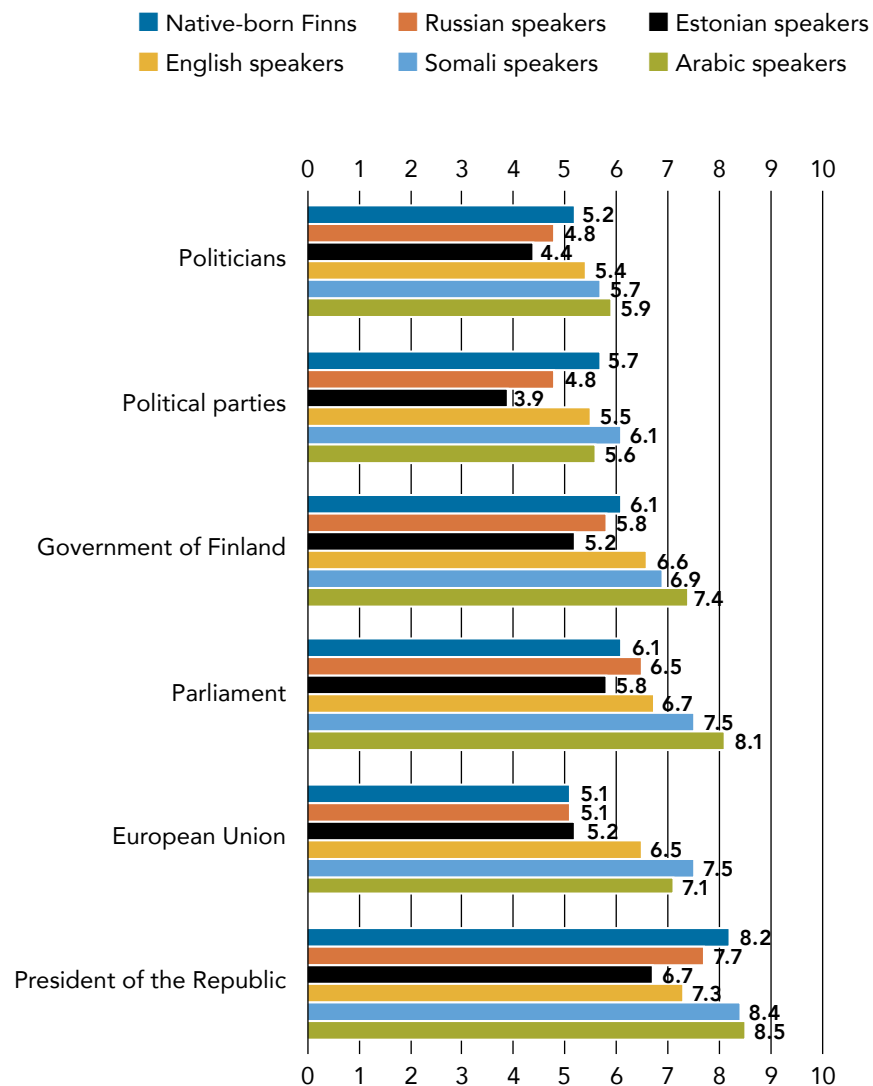
The Finnish Parliament and the Government are deemed more trustworthy than parties and politicians by all language groups. A suspicion view of political actors is a common feature in all European countries (Torcal 2017).

Among these five language groups, Estonian speakers have the least trust in Finnish political institutions. This is in line with the results that indicate their low level of integration into Finnish society in general. Estonian speakers mainly have moved to Finland to work, and they follow Finnish politics less than others do. Many of them plan to return to Estonia at some point in their lives.

Interestingly, the respondents who trust the European Union the most are the Somali speakers and Arabic speakers, two of the language groups whose background is outside Europe. Their levels of trust are even higher than that of native-born Finns, whose trust is higher than average when compared to the citizens of other EU countries. In this context, native-born Finns, Estonian speakers and Russian speakers have quite the same level of trust in the European Union.

The English speakers living in Finland trust the European Union more than the Russian speakers, Estonian speakers and native-born Finns. This is interesting because, according to the Eurobarometer, citizens of the United Kingdom trust the European Union less than citizens of other European

\*\* In regard to native-born Finns, the numbers are from the data of the Finnish National Election Study (2015).



**FIGURE 22: To what extent do you have trust in the following?**  
 Evaluate your trust in each institution on a scale of 0 to 10,  
 where 0 = I do not trust at all and 10 = I trust completely. Means.

countries (Standard Eurobarometer p. 91, 6/2019). One explanation for this might be that UK citizens living in Finland have benefitted from the free movement of citizens within the European Union, so their overall view of it is more positive than the view of citizens living in the home country.

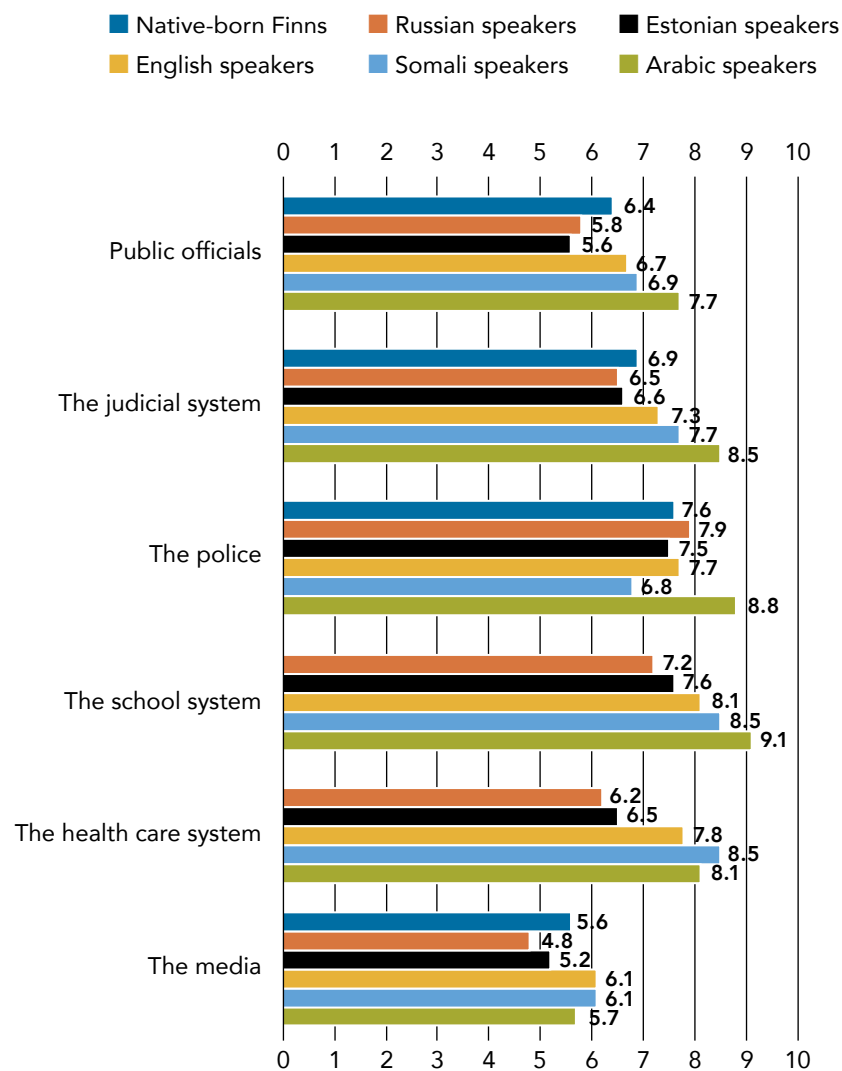
Women have higher levels of political trust than do men in all language groups, with the exception of the Somali speakers. The number of years spent in Finland tends to increase political trust, but also here the Somali speakers and Russian speakers deviate from the rule. In the case of these two groups, the levels of trust are a bit lower among those who have lived in Finland longer than among those who have arrived more recently. One explanation for this might be that when Finnish politics becomes more familiar, people also start noticing problems and shortcomings that are not easily visible to newcomers.

In conclusion, it seems that the high levels of political trust associated with Finland and the other Nordic countries can also be observed among people who have moved to Finland from countries that traditionally have lower levels of trust in political institutions.

### **Distrust in the media is common among the Russian speakers**

Trust in different social institutions, many of which are institutions producing public services, is shown in **Figure 23**. In this survey, we analysed trust in public officials, the judicial system, the police, the school system, the healthcare system and the media.

The figure shows that trust in public institutions is especially high among the Arabic speakers. The high rates probably have to do with their background. Since most of the respondents come from unstable circumstances and non-democratic societies, Finnish society seems reliable and well-functioning. The answers may also reflect gratitude towards the country that has granted asylum seekers the permission to stay. However, the need to exercise caution cannot be excluded either; it is possible that some respondents hesitate to criticise public authorities because it has not been safe to do so in their country of origin. There are also cultural issues to take into account as regards the results presented in **Figures 22** and **23**. Arab speakers may feel that for cultural reasons it is not polite to give a harsh critique of certain parties and institutions in a face-to-face interview.



**FIGURE 23: To what extent do you have trust in the following?**  
Evaluate your trust in each institution on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 = I do not trust at all and 10 = I trust completely. Means.

Trust levels are also generally high among the Somali speakers in the Helsinki capital region. The Finnish healthcare system especially enjoys their trust, whereas the Somali speakers have the least trust in the Finnish police among these five language groups. Furthermore, Somali-speaking women have less trust in the police than men and Somali speakers who have lived in Finland for over 20 years have lower levels of trust than those who have lived in Finland for a shorter period.

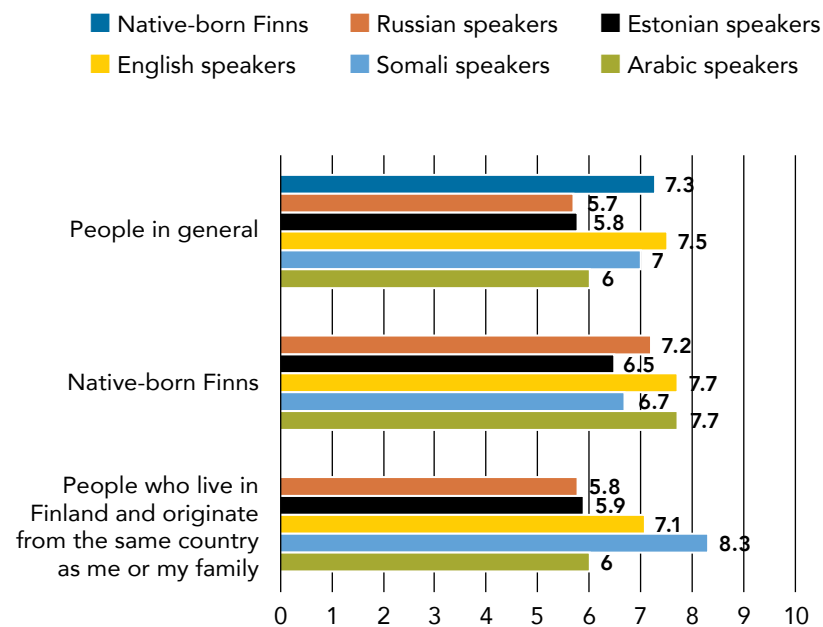
The Russian speakers and Estonian speakers have somewhat lower levels of trust than others do when it comes to public officials, the judicial system, the school system and the healthcare system. This is in line with the level of trust in political institutions. They tend to have somewhat less trust in institutions in general than do speakers of English, Arabic and Somali.

Interestingly, the trust of the Russian speakers in the media is the lowest. Especially those Russian speakers who completely agree with the statement that the media paints too negative a picture about them also have a low trust in the media in general (a mean of 3.6 on a scale from 0 to 10). For the other language groups, trust in the media is not connected in the same way to attitudes towards the media.

### Native-born Finns are more trusted than fellow compatriots from the country of origin

In trust research, the common approach to asking about trust in people is to ask the question “Can people be trusted or is it so that you can never be too careful about them?” In this case, the scale ranges from 0 to 10, in which zero indicates that you can never be too careful about people and ten indicates that most people can be trusted. In this study, in addition to trust in people in general, we also asked how much the respondents have trust in native-born Finns and in people who originate from the same country as the respondent does or as his or her family do (fellow compatriots). Zero here indicates no trust at all, whereas ten denotes complete trust.

**Figure 24** shows that trust in other people is the highest among the English speakers (7.5), the native-born Finns (7.3) and the Somali speakers (7.0). The Arabic speakers (6.0), Estonian speakers (5.8) and Russian speakers (5.7) trust people a bit less. In comparison to the results of the European Social Survey, British people living in the Helsinki capital region trust people in general more than do people living in the United Kingdom.



**FIGURE 24: To what extent do you have trust in the following? Evaluate your trust in each of the categories on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 = I do not trust at all and 10 = I trust completely. Means.**

Generally speaking, the respondents belonging to these five language groups trust native-born Finns. Interestingly, the level of trust is often higher than trust in their fellow compatriots.

**Figure 24** shows that especially the Arabic speakers have more trust in native-born Finns (7.7) than in their fellow compatriots in Finland (6.0). This can be partially explained by the internal divisions in the Iraqi and Syrian societies in terms of religion, ethnicity and politics. The Russian speakers also trust native-born Finns significantly more (7.2) than they do other Russians in Finland (5.8). Amongst the Estonian speakers, the differences are smaller, but even they trust native-born Finns more than they do other Estonians. The same results are seen for the English speakers. Again, the differences are smaller, but they trust native-born Finns more than they trust their fellow compatriots.

The Somali speakers are an exception. They trust other Somalis (8.3) more than they do native-born Finns (6.7). Furthermore, the trust in na-

tive-born Finns dropped the longer the Somali-speaking respondents have lived in Finland. This result probably is not that surprising if we take into account the preference of many Somali speakers to live in neighbourhoods with many other Somalis, and the importance of family and relatives to most of them, and their experiences of being discriminated against.

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