

# Contemporary Finnish Emigrants: Finnish Expatriate Families in North America<sup>i</sup>

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## Abstract

*Finnish emigration was and still is typically labor-based. Temporariness and higher education are two characteristics of contemporary Finnish emigration. Modern Finnish emigrants can be called expatriates. This study focuses on the resources and adjustment problems of Finnish expatriate families. Research data were gathered by an online survey questionnaire completed by parents (N = 202) who had repatriated to a large city in Finland. One fourth of the families (n = 44) had lived in North America. The main finding concerning family resources was that social support within the family itself was the most substantial resource in expatriation. Finnish expatriate families had few problems in North America. Clearly, the number of problems in North America was significantly lower in terms of local culture, climate, language proficiency, and transportation. North America emerges as an excellent host continent for Finnish expatriate families.*

## **Introduction**

Conventionally, migration has been defined as moving from one country to another, a move that is permanent in nature. Finland has a long history of emigration. A mainstream of leaving Finland has been emigration to North America. In the past, Finnish emigration could be described as labor migration, and the educational level of Finnish emigrants has been low (Korkiasaari 2003a, 2003b; Korkiasaari and Söderling 2003; Söderling 2003). However, in the 1980s, Finland transformed from a country of emigration to a country receiving people and thus defined by immigration. For the most part, Finnish emigration has been low in recent years. Primarily attracting highly educated individuals, emigration is frequently temporary (Habti and Koikkalainen 2014). It can be said that the temporariness and the higher education level of the migrants are two characteristics of contemporary Finnish emigration (Korkiasaari 2003a, 2003b; Korkiasaari and Söderling 2003). As was the case with the “old” emigration, contemporary emigration is also labor-based.

The number of mobile business people has increased worldwide, as well as in the Finnish economy. Along with their families, these “new” emigrants, who are temporary, highly educated, and labor-based, form the target group for this article, where they are called “expatriates.” Typically, expatriates have been defined in the context of a global work assignment. However, in this article, expatriates are seen widely, not just as business expatriates, but also as researchers, missionary professionals, diplomats, etc. (see also Habti and Koikkalainen 2014). An expatriate is defined as an employee working temporarily abroad, who can be either an assigned expatriate or a self-initiated expatriate (see e.g., Bonache, Brewster, and Suutari 2001).

Understanding migration from a broad perspective, expatriates can be regarded as migrants (see Warinowski 2011a, 154) who experience dual transitions: expatriation (moving abroad) and repatriation (moving back). Finnish expatriates can be considered migrants in two ways: they are emigrants in an expatriation context (moving abroad), but they are also immigrants in a repatriation context (moving back to Finland). Members of the expatriate family represent both labor migration and family migration. Although the expatriate him/herself is connected to labor migration, the spouse and children of the expatriate family can be considered as belonging to family migration. In this article, an expatriate family is defined as a family with children, which has moved abroad because of a parent’s work.

Expatriates are typically connected with highly skilled migration (see Habti and Koikkalainen 2014). Scott (2006) argues that skilled migration has become a “normal” middle-class activity and international mobility, of which international migration is a part, is becoming a central component in the reproduction of middle-class identity. Skilled migrants accumulate different kinds of “mobility” capital in the process (see also Habti and Koikkalainen 2014). Nonetheless, migration is not the best conceivable concept to describe expatriates, for example, because of the temporal nature of the move abroad (Habti and Koikkalainen 2014). Expatriates have three characteristics that separate them from other labor immigrants: the dual-nature of their moves, the temporary nature of their living abroad, and the high socioeconomic status of their families. In the 1990s, the concept of migration took on supplementary concepts. One of these concepts is mobility, which refers to a shorter stay abroad and a free self-initiated move (Habti and Koikkalainen 2014, 7). Specifically, expatriate families are especially globally mobile.

Expatriate research has been conducted primarily in the field of business economics and international human resource management (IHRM). The executive sojourn literature has been concerned with identifying the determinants of successful expatriate performance (Ward et al. 2001, 190), primarily selection issues and adjustment challenges (Riusala and Suutari 2000, 81). Typically, the expatriate employee is male and he takes his entire family abroad (e.g., Ward, Bochner, and

Furnham 2001). Recently, expatriate research has been broadening its perspective to include issues dealing with female expatriates, dual-career families, and self-initiated foreign assignments (Bonache et al. 2001, 8; Ward et al. 2001, 22; see also Habti and Koikkalainen 2014). Nevertheless, for the most part, the expatriate family has been ignored in expatriate research.

Living temporarily abroad can cause more long-lasting and severe consequences for the children of expatriate families than for the adults. For instance, as a long-term consequence, children can have difficulties in identity construction (e.g., Nette and Hayden 2007). Despite expatriate research evidence, the significance of family concerns is commonly underestimated; moreover, at best, the preparation for the expatriate family before overseas relocation is haphazard (Ward et al. 2001, 22). “Trailing spouse” is the term that refers to a (female) spouse, who is typically at home while living abroad. Oksanen (2006) studied Finnish female expatriate spouses living in Singapore. One of her main findings was that, because of the absence in the tradition of housewives in the Finnish culture, being a Finnish female spouse abroad without a job of her own can be especially difficult. In this research, the expatriate is not the only actor in expatriation; instead, it includes all of the members of the family equally and the family as a unit.

This study uses a twofold research approach. The article attempts to answer the question: “What kinds of family resource and adjustment problems do Finnish expatriate families have while living in North America?” The structure of the article is as follows: first, the theoretical framework of the study is explained, then the methodological information is presented, followed by the main findings regarding family resource and adjustment problems. Finally, the findings are discussed.

## **Twofold Perspective on Expatriate Families**

This article focuses on the resources and adjustment problems that Finnish expatriate families experience while living in North America. The study has a twofold research approach. The first approach is based on positive concepts (family resources), and the other rests on more negative concepts (adjustment problems). Broader perspectives on expatriate families can be obtained by combining the “old” problem-focused perspective with the “new” resource-oriented perspective.

### **Expatriate Family Resources**

Throughout history, migration has always been a challenge to human resiliency and resourcefulness (Marsella and Ring 2003, 9). With that consideration, family research, and more spe-

cifically a family systems approach, is used in this study to analyze resources that expatriate families utilize in expatriation. In family systems theory, the family is seen as both a unit and as a system. A family system consists of subsystems, dyads; these dyad subsystems include the parent-child, the marital, and the sibling subsystems (e.g., Parke 2004). Family cohesion is a common concept used in family system research literature. Cohesion addresses how systems balance separateness versus togetherness. Family cohesion is the emotional bonding that a couple and members of a family have toward one another (Olson and Gorall 2003, 516). Family cohesion in an expatriate family could also be conveyed by the concept of a “family bubble” (see Schaetti and Ramsey 1999). According to the systems approach, a family is interdependent, interactive, and reactive to change. The family system is connected to other systems, such as work, and changes outside the family, such as cultural transitions, reverberate on the family itself. Therefore, expatriation has an influence on family dynamics (e.g., Hyvönen 2009).

From the perspective of the family system approach, McCubbin, Thompson, and McCubbin (2001) define “resiliency” as the positive behavioral patterns and functional competence individuals and the family unit demonstrate under stressful or adverse circumstances, such as expatriation and repatriation. Resiliency is linked to the concepts of family strength and strong families. According to McCubbin and others, a “resiliency resource” is a characteristic, trait, or competency of the individual, family, or community that facilitates adaptation. The Resiliency Model of Family Stress, Adjustment, and Adaptation (McCubbin et al. 2001) provides the main resiliency framework of this study. According to this model, there are three levels in resiliency resources: individual family members, the family working as a unit, and the community. Respectively, there are also three potential sources of resources: personal resources, family system resources, and social support (McCubbin et al. 2001). Family resources are interpreted in this study as family system resources and external social support. This article focuses on family system resources as they concern family life from a temporal perspective.

### **Adjustment Problems of Expatriate Families**

Migration is frequently discussed in concepts such as acculturation, stress, coping, and adjustment, which represent central issues in cross-cultural psychology (Schmitz 2003, 24). The concept of adjustment, which refers to the stress and coping framework, is used in this article (e.g., Ward et al. 2001). The use of the problem-oriented approach is prevalent in migration studies (e.g., Schmitz 2003, 28); this study also uses a “traditional” problem-focused perspective on adjustment.

Migration is connected to stress; this stress begins with the decision to migrate and it continues into the later phases of the migration (Marsella and Ring 2003, 9). The stress and coping approach is a contemporary theoretical approach that conceptualizes cross-cultural transition as a series of stress-provoking life changes that utilize adjustive resources (Ward et al. 2001, 36–37). The factors influencing cross-cultural adjustment are much the same as the factors involved in adapting to other transitional experiences (Ward et al. 2001, 71–73). “Sojourner adjustment” is defined as consisting of two fundamental types of adjustment: psychological adjustment and sociocultural adaptation. Psychological adjustment is associated with psychological well-being and emotional satisfaction. Sociocultural adaptation is related to the ability to “fit in” and negotiate aspects of the host environment (Ward and Kennedy 1993, 132; Ward, Okura, Kennedy, and Kojima 1998, 279). A strong relationship between the two domains of adjustment is expected if the person is well-integrated into the host culture. Therefore, in the case of a sojourner residing primarily in an “expatriate bubble,” there should be little relationship between psychological and socio-cultural adjustment (Ward and Kennedy 1993, 143).

Central concepts in cross-cultural psychology are important in understanding different kinds of migrant groups, including refugees and businesspersons (Schmitz 2003, 29). Combining these two migrant groups can be regarded as justifiable because of the similarities in their transitional processes. Nicassio and Pate (1984) studied the adjustment problems of 1600 Vietnamese, Cambodian, and Laotian refugees. Issues regarding the separation of family members and painful memories of war appeared to be the most widely reported problems. Issues of language ability, homesickness, and financial worries were also high on the ranking list. Nicassio and Pate used factor analysis to identify adjustment domains. Their analysis revealed six factors, which were related to (1) finances and job, (2) family stress, (3) separation and emigration, (4) nutrition and medical care, (5) social interaction and sensitivity, and (6) language and cultural issues.

## **Research Methodology and Data**

Investigating the resources and problems of Finnish expatriate families was a part of my dissertation study (see Warinowski 2012). The target group of this study was Finnish expatriate families with children, who had returned to a large city in Finland after a period abroad. In this context, a child means a person who is attending a school of basic education (grades 1–9, age 7–16) at the data-gathering stage. The study was an ex-post-facto investigation.

The data for this research were gathered in 2008 using an online questionnaire completed by parents who had repatriated to various large cities in Finland. These Finnish cities included Espoo, Tampere, Vantaa, Turku, Oulu, Lahti, Kuopio, and Jyväskylä. The contact information for the parents was obtained through 399 school units in eight cities. The response rate of the schools was 78 percent. The response rate of the returned Internet questionnaires was 73 percent.

The survey questionnaire was designed to cover different kinds of family resources with the parents. The questions about family resources, which are used in this article, were written specifically for this study. For the temporal emphasis in the family, a four-point Likert scale was used; for the utility of social support, a five-point Likert scale was compiled; and for the adjustment problems, the “Scale for refugee families’ adjustment problems” (Nicassio and Pate 1984) was used. Nicassio and Pate’s scale is a five-point Likert scale. The data were analyzed statistically using the SPSS data analysis package. The main statistical characteristics were frequencies and percentage values, means, standard deviation, and especially a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). This study used a comparative approach to obtain a more illustrative picture of expatriate families living in North America, as compared with “other continents” (see also Warinowski 2011a).

The online survey questionnaire data includes the answers of 202 families. In most families, the mother of the family answered the questionnaire (73%,  $n = 145$ ). The father completed the questionnaire in 15 percent of the families ( $n = 29$ ). In 13 percent of the families ( $n = 25$ ), the two parents answered the online survey together. In most of the families, the father was the expatriate of the family (81%,  $n = 162$ ) and he was on an international assignment (69%,  $n = 139$ ). Expatriate families were primarily nuclear families (90%,  $n = 181$ ).

One fourth of the families ( $n = 44$ ) had lived in North America. The United States of America was the top-rated single country with 42 families. Although residence in North America was characteristically temporary, 55 percent of the families had lived for more than two years in North America (Table 1).

Table 1. Residential time of Finnish expatriate families in North America

Residential time	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Less than 1 year	4	9.1	9.1
1–2 years	16	36.4	45.5
2–3 years	11	25.0	70.5
More than 3 years	13	29.5	100.0
Total	44	100.0	

In North America, 52 percent (n = 23) of the expatriate families had lived in a small town, while the rest (48%, n=21) had lived in a metropolis. For the families in North America, the major occupational group was business expatriates (n = 36, 82%).

## **Finnish Expatriate Families in North America**

First, the results concerning expatriate family resources are described. Family resources are divided into family system resources and social support. Then the findings about the adjustment problems of expatriate families are provided to supplement the perspective.

### **Expatriate Family Resources**

The temporal emphasis on the family life was charted as it pertains to family system resources. The results concerning the temporal emphasis in the expatriate families living in North America can be seen in Table 2. Temporal findings for the complete set of data for the Finnish expatriate families have been previously presented elsewhere (see Warinowski 2011a). For the most part, the temporal emphasis of the families living in North America was parallel to that of the complete set of data for the expatriate families.

In expatriate families living in North America, the most common time-related emphasis was mother and child having time together (Table 2). However, in addition to the mothers spending time with their children, it was also quite common for the fathers to spend time with their children in the expatriation context (Table 2). At the same time, the expatriate’s work—meaning mostly the father’s work—played a significant role in the life of expatriate families living in North America. Work was the second most common time-related issue abroad (Table 2). Again, work did not characterize the entire life of expatriate families. Vacation and travel were also significant in expatriate families while living in North America (Table 2).

Table 2. Temporal emphasis in the expatriate families living in North America

<b>Temporal emphasis in the family</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>n</b>
Mother and child being together	3.59	0.73	1	4	44
Expatriate’s work	2.93	0.79	1	4	44
Travel/vacation	2.89	0.81	1	4	44

Child's school	2.76	0.82	1	4	42
Father and child being together	2.64	0.81	1	4	44
Hobbies	2.48	0.93	1	4	44
Housework	2.26	0.85	1	4	43
Parents being together	2.02	0.89	1	4	43
Child being alone	1.24	0.66	1	4	42

Divided by continents, the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to compare the means of four continental categories (Asia, Europe, North America, and other continents) in temporal emphasis in expatriate families. For two-group comparisons, a post hoc test (Bonferroni) was used. The continent in which expatriate families lived abroad had significant differences concerning the following items:

- hobbies ( $F = 5.328$ ,  $df = 3$ ,  $p = 0.002$ )
- housework ( $F = 4.228$ ,  $df = 3$ ,  $p = 0.006$ )
- father and child being together ( $F = 3.952$ ,  $df = 3$ ,  $p = 0.009$ )

North America was in the second place in all three of these items. With (1) hobbies, the category with the highest mean was Asia (2.58). The second was North America (2.48), the third “other continents” (2.28) and the last was Europe (2.03). In (2) housework, Europe had the highest mean (2.34), while the mean of North America was 2.26. “Other continents” (1.89) and Asia (1.79) were left behind. The “other continents” category had the highest mean (2.78) in (3) father and child being together, while North America had a mean of 2.64. Europe was next (2.42) and Asia was left behind (2.05).

The main finding concerning family resources was that social support within the family itself was the most substantial resource in expatriation (Figure 1). Friends were the most important source of social support outside the family (Figure 1). The social support offered by other expatriates, especially Finnish expatriates, was particularly important to expatriate families. In the expatriation context, the expatriates' work and the child's school were both regarded as important supportive institutions (Figure 1).



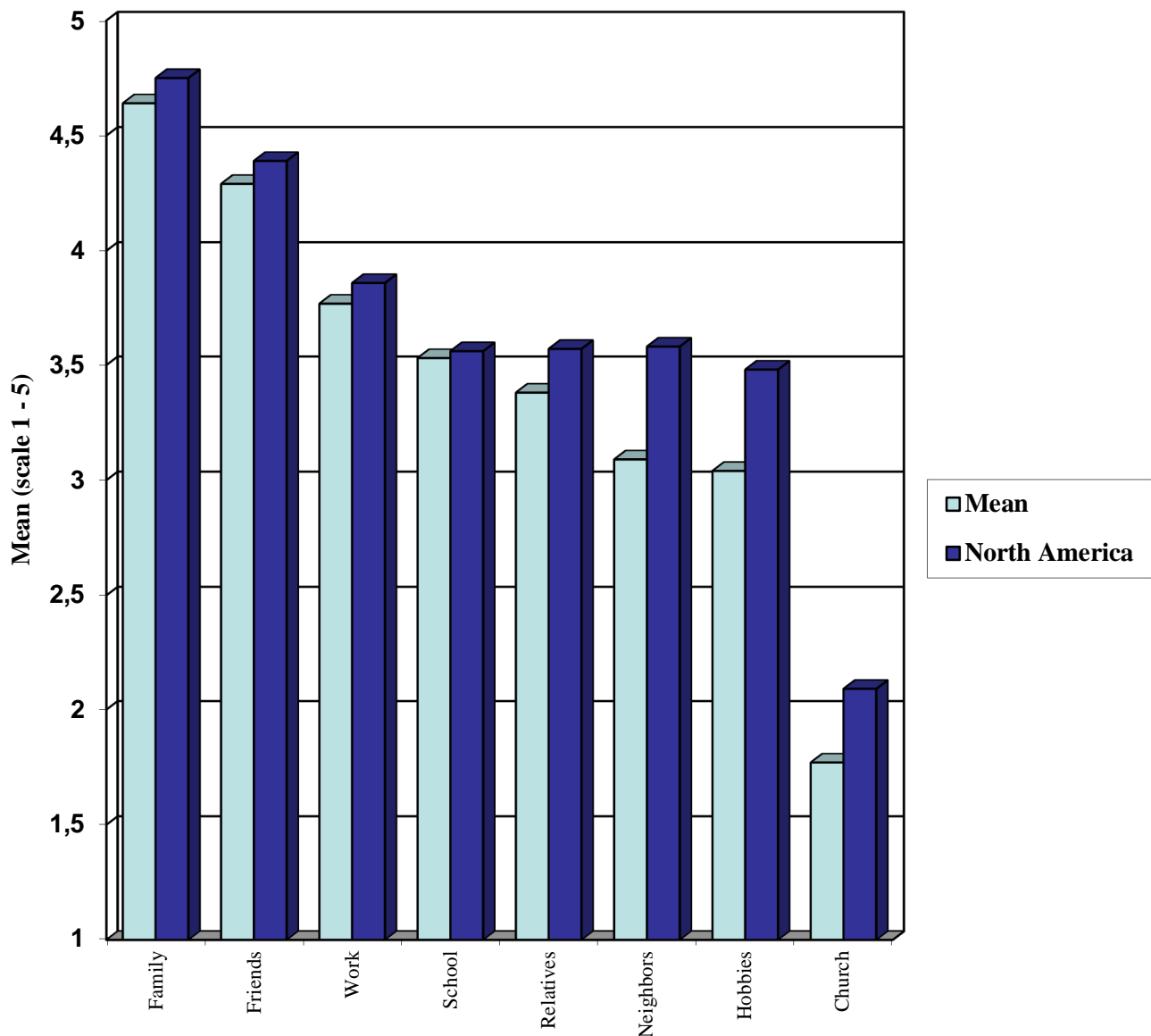


Figure 1. The utility of social support according to the parents

Viewing the continents in four categories (Asia, Europe, North America, and other continents), the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) with the post hoc test (Bonferroni) were used to compare means. The continent had a significant difference in the following items:

- hobbies ( $F = 7.531$ ,  $df = 3$ ,  $p = 0.000$ )
- friends ( $F = 5.231$ ,  $df = 3$ ,  $p = 0.002$ )
- neighbors ( $F = 3.917$ ,  $df = 3$ ,  $p = 0.010$ )
- church ( $F = 3.630$ ,  $df = 3$ ,  $p = 0.014$ )

- family ( $F = 2.851$ ,  $df = 3$ ,  $p = 0.039$ )

In these five items, North America had the highest mean in two items (neighbors and church) and the second highest mean in the remaining three items (hobbies, friends, and family). Concerning (1) hobbies, the continental category with the highest mean was Asia (3.59). Families in North America had a mean of 3.48. Europe and “other continents” both had means of 2.67. In the item concerning (2) friends, Asia also had the highest mean (4.69). Other means were 4.39 for North America, 4.11 for “other continents,” and 4.10 for Europe. In North America, the utility of social support from (3) neighbors had the highest mean of 3.58. North America was followed by Asia (3.18), Europe (2.96), and “other continents” (2.39). In addition, North America scored highest (2.09) in the item concerning social support provided by the (4) church. Other means were 1.84 (Europe), 1.53 (Asia), and 1.17 (other continents). Overall, the means concerning church were low. The social support of (5) family members was experienced as the most useful in Asia (4.85). Means in this item were quite high in all other categories as well: 4.75 (North America), 4.67 (other continents), 4.51 (Europe).

### **Adjustment Problems of Families in Expatriation**

Figure 2 presents an overall perspective of the adjustment problems of Finnish expatriate families who have lived in North America; it also presents the adjustment problems, on average, in the entire data set. The overall perspective of the adjustment problems in the entire data set was that expatriate families had some problems, but not so many (mean 1.92 on Likert scale from 1 = “no problems” to 5 = “large problems”). The main problem, on average, was language proficiency, and the second was homesickness (Figure 2).

For the families that lived in North America, the situation was slightly different. The results concerning nearly all of the items have the same tendency: families living in North America tended to have fewer problems than families living in other parts of the world (see Figure 2). Altogether, in 12 out of 18 items, families that lived in North America had the smallest number of problems. The one exception to this result was that Finnish expatriate families had more problems with childcare in North America than elsewhere. The mean of the problems, as a whole, was 1.71 for expatriate families who lived in North America. For these families, the main adjustment problem was homesickness (Figure 2).

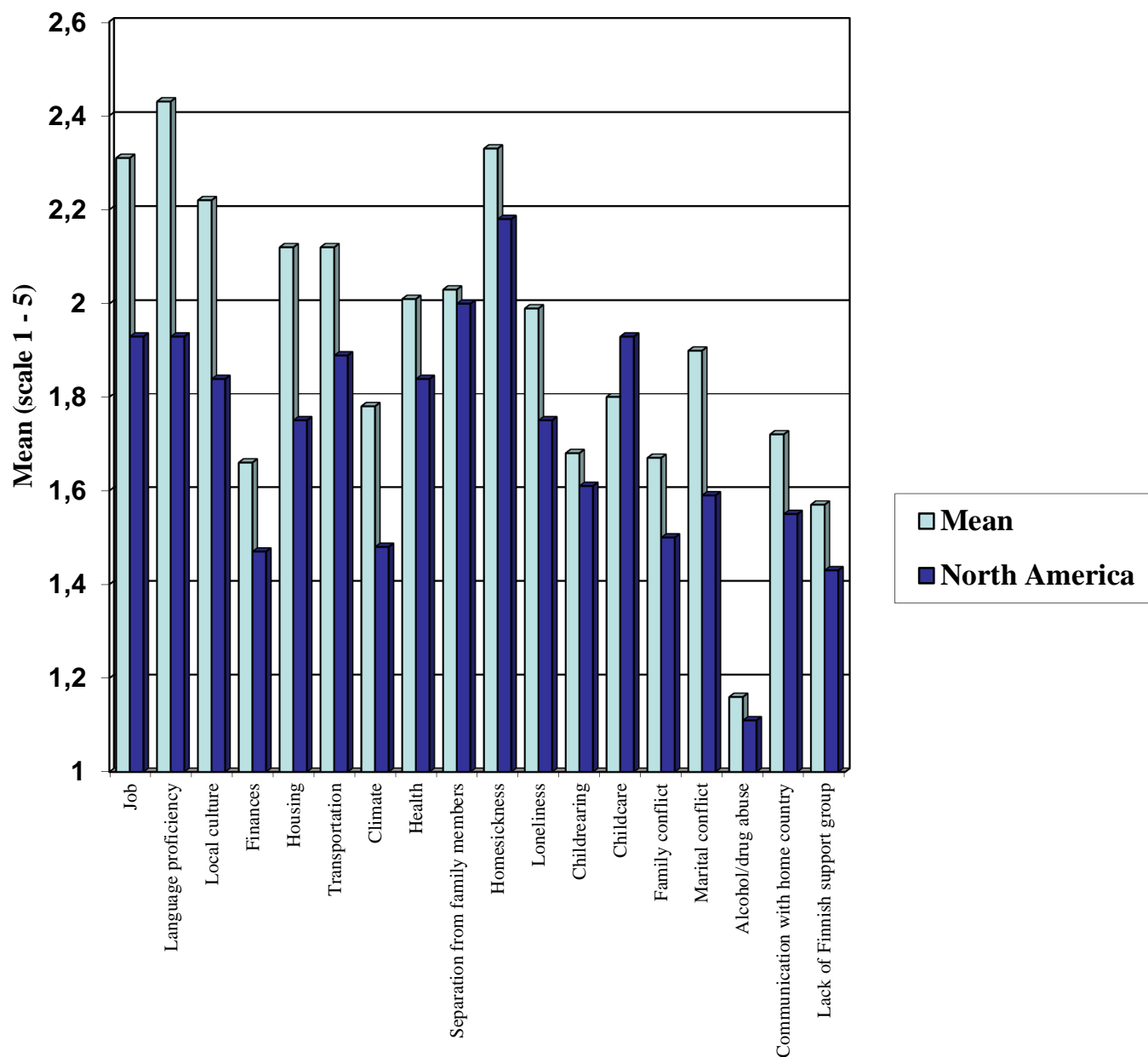


Figure 2. Adjustment problems of expatriate families living in North America

When divided up by continent, the families living in Africa, Asia, and South America had the most problems, while the families living in North America and Australia had the fewest. Viewing the continents in four categories (Asia, Europe, North America, and other continents), the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to compare the means of these four categories. The continent in which the expatriate families lived abroad had a significant difference concerning the following items:

- climate ( $F = 13.190$ ,  $df = 3$ ,  $p = 0.000$ )
- local culture ( $F = 5.462$ ,  $df = 3$ ,  $p = 0.001$ )
- language proficiency ( $F = 4.752$ ,  $df = 3$ ,  $p = 0.003$ )
- transportation ( $F = 4.696$ ,  $df = 3$ ,  $p = 0.003$ )

In all of these four items, North America had the lowest mean. For two-group comparisons, a post hoc test (Bonferroni) was used.

With (1) climate, North America had a mean 1.48 for problems, the overall mean being 1.78. Europe (1.56) had the second and “other continents” (1.94) had the third lowest mean. The category with the highest mean was Asia (2.56). Families in North America had a mean of 1.84 in problems considering (2) local culture (overall mean 2.22). “Other continents” had the highest mean (2.56), followed by Asia (2.54), and Europe (2.21). In (3) language proficiency, North America had a mean of 1.93 (overall mean 2.43). Europe had a mean of 2.55 and “other continents” had a mean of 2.61. The highest mean (2.64) was in Asia. Problems with (4) transportation had a mean of 1.89 in North America (overall mean 2.12). The category with the highest mean was “other continents” (2.61), followed by Asia (2.54), and Europe (1.97).

## **Conclusions and Discussion**

In this article, the focus was on the family resources and adjustment problems that Finnish expatriate families have while living in North America. By using a twofold perspective, broader overviews of expatriate families were secured. The expatriate family resources on which this study focused included family system resources, especially temporal emphasis in the family, and external social support. For a supplemental perspective, adjustment problems were also determined.

Family system resources were the focal resources for Finnish expatriate families in expatriation. The family was the only permanent system in expatriation. Finnish expatriate families in North America had resiliency resources on the family level. Families had ample resources, which could also be called family strengths. Family system resources were so central in the expatriate family system that expatriate families living in North America can be described as living in a “family bubble” (see Schaetti and Ramsey 1999).

Concerning family system resources, the most common time-related issue abroad was the mother and child having time together, which was typically connected with mothers being at home instead of working in the expatriation context. This finding concurs with previous research findings (e.g., Nathanson and Marcenko 1995; Duque 2009). For the children, this result could predict a positive attitude to living abroad. In the expatriation context, it has been demonstrated that the chil-

dren's attitude toward living abroad is connected with the amount of time spent with their mother (Nathanson and Marcenko 1995). In general, the time that a parent and child spend together is seen as significant for the favorable development of the child (e.g., Monna and Gauthier 2008). Therefore, the result of the fathers spending time with the children was also a positive finding. This finding concurs with Kurotani's (2007) research.

The role of the expatriate's work was essential in these families—not only relating to time consumption, but in a larger context as well. Work is the driving force behind the decision to migrate. Work-relatedness is even at the definitional level: expatriate families are defined through the “expatriate” person in the family and that is through his/her work. Moreover, internal family resources with external social support elicited this work-relatedness nature of the expatriate family. Theoretically, it is the system theory approach that connects family with work.

Nonetheless, it is not only the expatriate's work that defines expatriate families living abroad: according to this study, travel and vacation are also part of the family life. Some researchers (e.g., Kurotani 2007) have seen the temporary sojourn as a “long vacation.” In a previous study (Nathanson and Marcenko 1995), the number of family trips was found to predict the emotional well-being of the children. Therefore, this finding is also favorable to the children's well-being.

In the results of the temporal emphasis on the family, there was one interesting result of an untypical time use. This was “children being alone at home,” which is conspicuous by its absence. Being alone is connected with the children's independence as an educational goal. There can be a cultural emphases on the weight of these goals. In Finland, for instance, it is more accepted than in many countries for children to become independent at a young age (see e.g., Strandell and Forsberg 2005). In comparison, in North America, leaving children home alone at the age of 12 can be considered a crime, while in Finland it is considered more permissible. It appears that Finnish families living in North America adapt to a more “American” approach on this issue. Alternatively, it could simply be that the typical expatriate situation where the mother stays at home while living abroad could be more behind this result than “adaptation.” Therefore, the number of children being left alone is naturally reduced in the expatriation context.

Concerning the results on social support, outside the family, friends were the most important source of social support for the Finnish expatriate families. In the expatriation context, the role of peer expatriates was especially significant. In this respect, the results were congruent with those of Oksanen (2006) and Hyvönen (2009). These expatriate networks are informal types of social support. This informal social support, an “expatriate bubble,” is a well-known issue in expatriate research. Some traces of this phenomenon were also discovered in this study. An “expatriate bubble” particularly describes the situation of the members of a large expatriate community (see Brewster

and Pickard 1994). However, since Finnish expatriate communities are commonly small, the “expatriate bubble” concept does not completely illustrate the situation of Finnish expatriate families living in North America (see more Warinowski 2011b).

Conjoining a “family bubble” with an “expatriate bubble,” I previously (Warinowski 2011a, 2011b) introduced the concept of a “double bubble” to describe the importance of the family and peer expatriate network to expatriate families in general. According to some of the evidence in this study, it could be argued that Finnish expatriate families were living in a “double bubble” in the expatriation context. Nevertheless, rather than seeing Finnish expatriate families as living in a “double bubble,” I see them as living in a “family bubble” (see Warinowski 2011a, 2011b). The expatriate family itself is the predominant space for the members of the family. This finding appears to be specific to the Finnish expatriate family experience. After repatriation, the social support provided by the relatives increases (Warinowski 2012), simultaneously weakening the surface of the “family bubble.” In future research, it would be beneficial to investigate whether Finnish expatriate families differ from other Finnish families living in Finland in this “family bubble” or any other aspect.

In addition to family resources, getting the “big picture” was possible only by placing an additional focus on adjustment problems. In comparing the results of adjustment problems with the results of Nicassio and Pate (1984), two issues found in this study, language proficiency and homesickness, were also common problems in the refugee study. However, there were two main differences between these two studies: in Nicassio and Pate’s study, financial problems and communication problems with the home country were common, but they were not in this study. Concerning financial problems, there was a major difference between the socioeconomic situations of the refugee and expatriate immigrant groups. Regarding communication problems, the world in 2008 (data gathering), with the Internet and mobile phones, is very different from what it was in the beginning of the 1980s. In North America, families had problems with childcare. There can be different explanations for this result. It is possible that many dual-career expatriate families lived in North America and thus they needed more childcare than other families. When families did not have domestic help living abroad, which was probably the case in North America, separate childcare arrangements were needed. Furthermore, Finnish families are accustomed to the availability of municipal childcare in Finland, where a family has the right to childcare. In comparison, in North America, the task of finding childcare for their children can be very different from that of their previous experiences in Finland. In North America, the family itself is responsible for childcare arrangements, which can be problematic for the Finnish expatriates.

Comparing the results of expatriate family resources and problems, there were several issues that led to similar views in both perspectives of this study. For example, neither the financial situation (problem view) nor the external resources (resource view) of the family were problematic. Furthermore, there was no lack of a Finnish support group (problem view), which coincides with the social support of Finnish expatriates (resource view). Both views provided some additional information. The problem view showed that the concept of homesickness was an essential problem in expatriation, while the resource view, for example, showed the importance of the family system itself. I argue that both views, resource- and problem-centered, are needed to obtain a general view of the Finnish expatriate family situation in expatriation.

In this study, an applied comparative approach was used to compare the results of four continental groups. Concerning the adjustment problems of expatriate families, the expatriate families, as a group, who had lived in North America, had fewer problems than those who lived in any of the other four continental groups. *Expatriate families living in North America had substantial family resources and at the same time had few adjustment problems.* According to this study, North America appears to be an excellent host continent for Finnish expatriate families. The practical implications of this study suggests that, from the perspective of an expatriate family, when considering expatriation, North America seems to be a recommended choice as a temporary residence.

To obtain a more illustrative picture of the Finnish expatriate families in North America, in this discussion, North America is likened to Asia. According to the results of the one-way analyses of variance (ANOVA), in spite of their differences in cultural context, some similarities between North America and Asia were discovered. In particular, the sources of useful social support were quite similar in North America and Asia. In both continents, the support of hobbies, friends, neighbors, and family members were relatively important. This informal social support can be linked with the “expatriate bubble” phenomenon. In Europe, as well as in “other continents,” families can have more contacts with the local people. Especially in Asia, but probably also in North America, links with the local people are limited. In addition to the “expatriate bubble,” the “family bubble” also seems to be thicker in North America and Asia. These results may suggest that Finnish expatriate families face the “double bubble” situation, especially in North America and Asia. This issue needs to be investigated more thoroughly in the future. Only the support of the church was clearly more important in North America than in Asia. Because of the different religious cultural contexts in North America and Asia, the meaning of Christianity and the activities in Christian churches in North America are more general than in Asia.

The differences between North America and Asia were especially noteworthy in the adjustment problems of the families. These differences can come from the cultural differences that Finn-

ish expatriate families face in Asia, while the cultural situation is more familiar in North America (see problems with local culture). Climate problems were an issue in Asia, but not in North America. Language proficiency was also an interesting issue in the adjustment problems of the expatriate families. The interpretation behind the result concerning the number of problems in language proficiency can be simple: Finnish expatriates and their spouses are typically proficient in English. Moreover, Finnish expatriate families are not frequently proficient in languages other than English (and Swedish, which, in addition to Finnish, is the other official language in Finland) and in Asia, English proficiency is not enough. Transportation issues were also included in the list of adjustment problems. These problems were infrequent in expatriate families living in North America. This result could be related to the good road network and the tradition of private motoring in North America, as well as the Finnish expatriates' familiarization with private motoring. In Asia, traffic can be more "chaotic" and thus private motoring can be difficult.

In general, problems with local culture could seem somewhat surprising from a European perspective. Although Finland is a part of Europe, Finnish expatriate families had more problems living abroad in Europe than in North America. There are several issues relating to this result. In spite of the European Union, Europe is neither an entity nor a region with only one, "European" culture. For the general public in Finland, American culture can be more familiar than, for example, "French" or "Spanish" culture. The substantial amount of American entertainment in the Finnish media can also have an influence on this. As a region, Asia is poorly known in Finland. Moreover, the result can interface with the context of North America, not just the Finnish families. The United States and Canada have an extensive history of immigration, which can additionally facilitate the immigrant's adjustment.

In addition to adjustment problems, the results on family resources showed some additional differences between North America and Asia. Housework took more time in North America. This result can arise from the situation in Asia where many of the families have domestic help at home (see e.g., Oksanen 2006). Furthermore, the father and child had more time together in families that lived in North America, as compared with families who lived in Asia. The explanation behind this result can be found either from the working hours or from the cultural norms of fatherhood in North America and Asia. The working hours in Asia can be longer than in North America. On the other hand, it could be culturally more accepted for a father to spend time with their children in North America than in Asia. Kurotani's (2007) result may confirm this latter explanation: Japanese expatriate fathers spent temporally more time with their children when living abroad than when living in Japan. Without question, further research is needed on these differences both to confirm and to find the explanations behind them.



As a practical implication of this study, instead of focusing exclusively on the expatriate, the sending companies and the expatriate research alike should consider the entire expatriate family. Because of the spillover effect that work can have on the family, the work-place, for example, should also be responsible for the issues concerning the family. Expatriate families need to be researched more thoroughly to get an all-around picture of the family processes that are elicited by the expatriation process. Further research is needed to compare Finnish expatriate families living in different parts of the world. It would also be important to study American and Finnish expatriate families and make comparisons between them. Moreover, it would be valuable to have research results about the actual effects of the support measures as well. In addition, comparing Finnish expatriate families with Finnish families would be beneficial.

Expatriate families as well as other middle-class and temporary migrants should be included in the investigative focus of migration research. Similarities in/and differences between these “new” and “old” migrant groups could be illuminated. In the traditional immigrant continent of North America, the diversity of migrants should be noticed. What makes expatriates as a research group particularly interesting in terms of migration research is that, in this context, both types of migration (emigration and immigration) can be examined. This combination of both sides of migration can bring new perspectives to migration research. Theoretically, more permanent and temporary moves, migration and mobility approaches, could be brought out simultaneously. It would also be interesting to discover the similarities in/and differences between domestic transitions compared with international transitions.

Finally, I want to put forward some of the limitations of this research. This study was conducted retrospectively after repatriation, which can have some negative effects that influence the accuracy of the expatriates’ memory. In addition, it could also create a more static view of expatriation processes than other research methods may have done. Concerning the results of adjustment problems, Nicassio and Pate’s adjustment scale in the questionnaire was rather out-of-date and it focused on refugees instead of expatriates. The major limitation of this study is the lack of the child’s voice in it. This limitation is being rectified by my other research data, which consists of interviews with children of Finnish expatriate families (see Warinowski 2012).

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