

Background information

The Finnish population consists of people who permanently live in Finland at a certain moment. In 2017, the population was 5,513,130. The population density of Finland was 18 persons/km². Most of the inhabitants of Finland live in the southern and south-western parts of the country and along the coast, so the population of Finland is geographically unevenly distributed. Measured by province, the population density is highest in Uusimaa, 178 persons/km². The population density is lowest in Lapland, 2 persons/km².

Source: Statistics Finland, UN: World Population Prospects. The 2017 Revision.



Mäkelä's household from Pihtipudas in 1915. Source: Photo archive of Keski-Suomen Museo

WILL FINNS DIE OF EXTINCTION?

Introduction

The research examined the change in the population of Finland in about 100 years. Research questions:

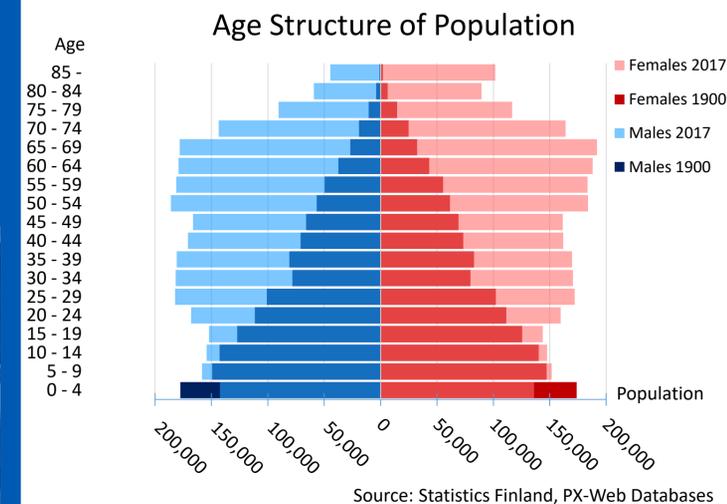
- How have the number and age structure of Finns changed in about a hundred years?
- What factors have affected the change?

Research methods

We searched for information on the internet. We analyzed the information we found and presented it in diagrams.



About 70 000 Finnish children went to Sweden in 1939-1945. Source: Yle



Source: Statistics Finland, PX-Web Databases

Hypotheses

We assume that the population of Finland has doubled in a hundred years, but over the years there has probably been periods of time, when the population has decreased. We expect that the wars in which Finland has been involved have had the greatest influence on the change of population.

We believe that the age structure of Finns is currently elderly-dominated when in the past there were clearly a lot more young people than elderly people.

Population	
Years	Average
1890-1904	2,563,633
1905-1919	2,989,033
1920-1934	3,372,347
1935-1949	3,747,930
1950-1964	4,320,447
1965-1979	4,667,695
1980-1994	4,944,535
1995-2009	5,218,457
2010-2014	5,425,248

Source: Statistics Finland, PX-Web Databases, Population structure



Finnish family in 2018. Source: Etelä-Saimaa news

Results

The population of Finland has grown by 130 % since 1890. The diagram shows that the population has increased almost continuously. Immediately after the wars, the diagram is the steepest, so the biggest change in the population dates back to 1945 to 1955.

The population has decreased in the 1920s when more people died than were born. This was caused by four wars: the Finnish Civil War, the Lapland War, the Winter War and the Continuation War. The next drop in the diagram is visible between 1945 and 1950 caused by World War II.

In the 1960s and 1970s the population decline was caused by migration to foreign countries, especially to Sweden, for better work. Then emigration almost doubled compared to the previous decade. Altogether over one million Finns have moved abroad during the last hundred years.

The birth rate has been decreasing in Finland since 1950. At this moment the birth rate is at its lowest in a hundred years. The mortality rate compared to the population is, in turn, at its highest since the wartime. Since 2015, more people have died than been born annually in Finland. This can't be seen in the graph of population development because immigration to Finland has been growing since the end of the 20th century first because of Ingrian remigrants and then asylum-seekers.

The age structure of Finns used to be child-dominated and there were less elderly people. Today older generations are bigger than young generations. The aging of the population observed in the age pyramid may be caused by the decreasing birth rate and prolonged life span. The baby boomers born in 1945 to the 1950s are seen in the diagram as a large number of people aged 60 to 75 thanks to developed social work and health care.

Conclusions

In the early 20th century the population of Finland was reduced by crop failures, migration and infectious diseases, such as pulmonary tuberculosis. The Great Depression in 1929 to 1934 probably reduced the growth of Finland's population. When families had trouble getting bread to the table, they gave up on the thought of having as many children as before. Because of the wars more people died than were born in 1918 and between 1939 and 1945. After the wars the men returned home from the battlefield. There was nearly no family planning, and therefore a lot of children were born.

In the 20th century the industrial structure changed rapidly. Industry, trade and various services generated new jobs. People dared to have children again. On the other hand, migration from rural areas to population centers decreased childbirth. Migration in the 1960s 1970s also decreased the population.

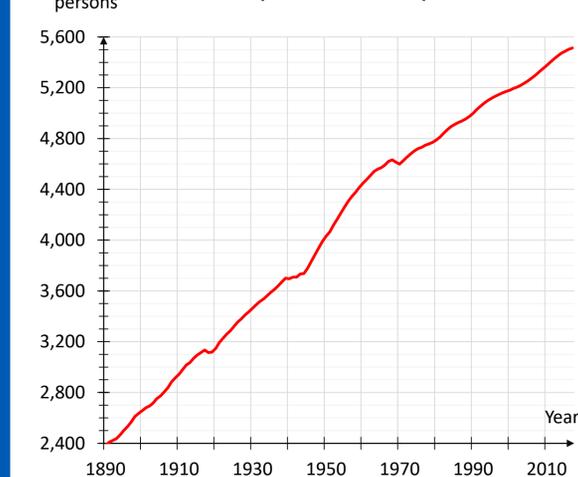
The contraceptive pill was introduced in Finland in the 1960s. We believe that this affected the decrease of the birth rate. This assumption is supported by the steepening negative slope of the diagram of live births. The reformed abortion law in the 1970s may also have affected childbirth. Other reasons for the low birth rate include changed age structure and family concept, prolonged studies, delayed transition to work and desire for comfort and convenience.

Thoughts

It was interesting to conduct a statistical survey. Suitable statistics were hard to find at first but we became better at searching data when our project proceeded.

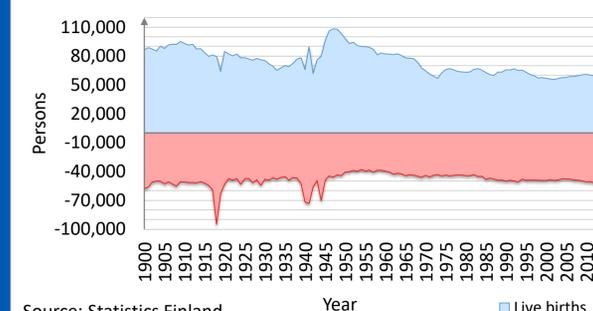
Our hypotheses were right. We were surprised that today less Finns are being born than dying. A question arises whether Finns will eventually die of extinction if the amount of immigrants decreases and the birth rate remains the same. In the future, for example the low birth rate of Finns could be investigated.

Development of Population



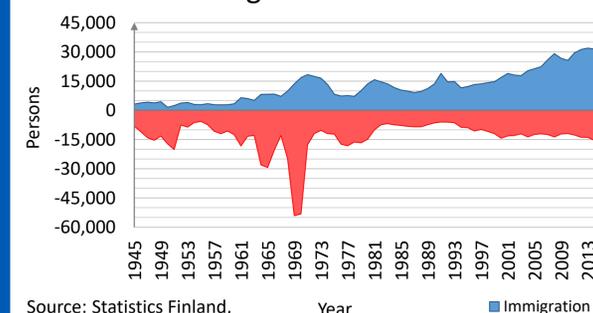
Source: Statistics Finland, PX-Web Databases

Live Births and Deaths



Source: Statistics Finland, PX-Web Databases

Migration in Finland



Source: Statistics Finland, PX-Web Databases

Birth Rate		
Years	Average	Proportion of Population Average
1890-1909	85,259	3.2 %
1910-1929	81,502	2.6 %
1930-1949	80,457	2.2 %
1950-1969	83,920	1.9 %
1970-1989	63,196	1.3 %
1990-2009	60,184	1.2 %
2010-2017	56,801	1.0 %

Source: Statistics Finland, PX-Web Databases, Births

Mortality Rate		
Years	Average	Proportion of Population Average
1890-1909	50,831	1.9 %
1910-1929	54,067	1.7 %
1930-1949	51,412	1.4 %
1950-1969	41,265	0.9 %
1970-1989	45,315	0.9 %
1990-2009	49,115	0.9 %
2010-2017	52,122	1.0 %

Source: Statistics Finland, PX-Web Databases, Deaths

Immigration	
Years	Average
1945-1954	3,440
1955-1964	4,427
1965-1974	12,973
1975-1984	10,995
1985-1994	12,399
1995-2004	16,015
2005-2014	27,549

Source: Statistics Finland, PX-Web Databases, Migration

Emigration	
Years	Average
1945-1954	12,171
1955-1964	13,166
1965-1974	24,698
1975-1984	12,734
1985-1994	7,390
1995-2004	11,828
2005-2014	13,052

Source: Statistics Finland, PX-Web Databases, Migration

Summary

The population of Finland has more than doubled in the past century. Wars, contagious diseases, emigration and the industrial development have affected the population.

There have been three clear changes in population development: in 1918 and 1939 to 1945 due to wars and in 1960 to 1970 due to migration.

In the past, the size of the younger population was larger than that of the elderly population. Nowadays it is vice versa.



Asylum-seeker doing voluntary work. Source: Motiivi-magazine

