



Intergenerational Transmission of Ethnic Identity in Mixed Native Couples in Finland

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Abstract: The aim of this study is to analyze the factors determining the ethnic affiliation of children born to interethnic native couples in Finland, i.e., couples with one Finnish-speaking and one Swedish-speaking partner, between 1988 and 2014. Apart from individual characteristics of each partner and contextual factors, we also consider the role of couple characteristics. We look at the affiliation of the first child, as well as the combined affiliation of the first two children in order to analyze how often children from the same parents are affiliated to different ethnicities. We show that around 60 percent of first- and second-born children of intermarriages born between 1988 and 2014 were members of the Swedish-speaking minority. The affiliation of the second child seldom differs from that of the first. In line with our expectations based on ethnic awareness, preference for cultural plurality and parental aspirations, the multivariate analysis shows a strong positive association between parental education level and the likelihood of the first child being Swedish speaking. The analysis also indicates that parents in mixed native couples do not seem to bargain over the ethnic identity of their children.

Keywords: Intergenerational transmission, mixed marriage, ethnic, Finland, Swedish

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Introduction

In increasingly diverse Western societies, the determinants and fluidity of ethnic and other identities have attracted a considerable interest among social scientists in recent decades. Studies on the ethnic formation in mixed families constitute an important part of this literature, as their focus is on the individuals for whom the interaction of different cultures or languages takes place at the micro level – within their families. The goal of this paper is to analyze the factors determining the ethnic affiliation of children born to interethnic native couples in Finland between 1988 and 2014. Although the foreign-born population in Finland is clearly smaller than in Sweden, Denmark or Norway, it can be argued that Finland is a country with the longest tradition of interethnic contact among the Nordic countries. The Finnish-speaking majority and Swedish-speaking minority have lived together for centuries along Finland's western and southern coast. At the national level, the two ethnic groups are clearly unbalanced in size – only some 5.5 percent Finland's residents belong to the Swedish-speaking minority¹. In spite of the clear numerical imbalance, both Finnish and Swedish are official national languages, making the country bilingual. Although the two groups have long coexisted in the same regions, the degree of social separation has been fairly high, whereas intermarriage rates have been fairly low throughout the history. This has changed in the recent decades, though, and it is estimated that nowadays around 40 percent of Swedish speakers form a union with a Finnish-speaking partner (Finnäs, 2015). This paper contributes to the previous Finnish literature on ethnic identity (e.g. Finnäs and O'Leary, 2003) in at least five ways. First, this is the first study based on population registers covering the entire population of Finland. Second, we are able to control for a wider range of socio-demographic determinants of ethnic identity than is done in previous studies. Third, apart from individual characteristics of each partner and contextual factors, we also look at couple characteristics. Fourth, we look at not only the affiliation of the first child, but also the combined affiliation of the first and second children in order to analyze how often children from the same parents are affiliated to different ethnic groups. In other words, we are able to explore how much “mixedness” there is in mixed families with respect to children's ethnic affiliation. Fifth, we also provide brief evidence of the fluidity of ethnic affiliation among children of mixed

¹ Since the language is the principal distinctive feature of the Swedish-speaking community group in Finland, they are also often referred to as an ethno-linguistic group. Since the simultaneous use of the terms “ethnic group” and “ethno-linguistic group” may be a source of confusion among readers less familiar with the social context of the research, we will mostly use the shorter and simpler term throughout the paper.

couples in Finland.

Social context - ethnic coexistence in Finland then and now

Finland's multiethnic character is a result of the country being an integral part of the Kingdom of Sweden for around six centuries. Swedish rule ended in 1809, when the territory of today's Finland was ceded to the Russian Empire. One of the principal consequences of the long Swedish presence in Finland is that political, economic and cultural elites in the country were mostly Swedish-speaking until well into the 19th century. Although outnumbered by Finnish-speakers at the country level, the Swedish-speaking community had a very strong presence in Finland's principal cities, such as the capital at the time, Turku, or today's capital, Helsinki. Swedish speakers also constituted a majority or a sizeable minority in many rural areas along the Finnish western and southern coast. In contrast, although it was responsible for substantial socio-political changes in Finland, the establishment of the Grand Duchy of Finland as an autonomous province of the Russian Empire had only a marginal and temporary impact on the ethnic composition of the country.

In 1863, the Finnish language was officially declared equal with Swedish (Coleman, 2009). Towards the end of the 19th century, in the period which to different degrees coincided with processes of national awakening in other parts of Europe, two major ideologies dominated the public debate on what the concept of "Finnishness" should entail. The Fennoman movement sought to empower the Finnish language and raise it to the level of the principal national language. Interestingly, many prominent leaders of this movement stemmed from affluent Swedish-speaking families - Liebkind et al. (2007) even consider this a historical anomaly. On the other hand, the supporters of the Svecoman movement believed that the Swedish language should continue to play a prominent role in Finnish society (Lindgren et al., 2011). It was not until this period that the language became a social bond between the Swedish-speaking rural population and Swedish-speaking upper classes (Liebkind et al., 2007). The country's declaration of independence followed in 1917, and it can be argued that the decision to establish both Finnish and Swedish as official languages of the young nation satisfied the desires of both ethnic communities. In the context of full independence, and with only around 11 percent of the total population being Swedish-speaking in 1917 (Tandefelt and Finnäs, 2007), it was clear the Finnish language would play an even more prominent role in society than it had before. At the same time, the equal official status of Swedish, along with the preservation of the considerable Swedish-speaking educational and cultural

infrastructure, protected the Swedish-speaking community from marginalization.

In today's Finland, the Swedish language is present in most social domains. It is used in public service and education, and even one brigade of the Finnish Army is Swedish-speaking. The Swedish-speaking mass media landscape is also rich and diverse, contributing to the vitality of the language (Moring and Husband, 2007). With the exception of those living in the autonomous region of Åland, almost all Swedish-speaking Finns born after the Second World War are bilingual. In contrast, this is the case only with some Finnish-speaking Finns in bilingual areas and with very few of those who reside in Finnish monolingual areas. The social distance between the two groups is low and the social discrimination of one or the other group is generally absent. Yet, a number of factors suggest that membership in an ethnic group is a salient dimension of social affiliation in Finland. In particular, a sizeable body of literature shows that the two groups differ along a wide array of socio-demographic outcomes, most of which are somewhat more favorable for the Swedish-speaking community: health (Saarela and Finnäs, 2002; Nyqvist et al., 2008), mortality (Koskinen and Martelin, 2003), wealth (Saarela, 2006), wages (Saarela and Finnäs, 2004), unemployment (Saarela and Finnäs, 2003), social capital (Hyypä and Mäki, 2001), and divorce (Finnäs, 1997). Voting behavior among Swedish-speaking Finns also corroborates the view of the salience of ethnicity in contemporary Finland. In particular, around two-thirds of Swedish speakers in contemporary Finland vote for the Swedish People's Party, a primarily ethnic party whose political *raison d'être* is the protection of the Swedish-speaking community's interests (Westinen, 2015).

Although equipped with a full repertoire of social, political and cultural infrastructure, the relative size of the Swedish-speaking community has been gradually diminishing for most of the period since 1917. Several factors are usually held responsible for this trend. First of all, language switching has usually implied switching from Swedish to Finnish more often than the other way round. Also, Swedish-speaking Finns, most of whom were in reproductive age, were overrepresented in the large-scale emigration to Sweden after the Second World War. Finally, ethnic intermarriage has also contributed to the decrease in the relative size of the Swedish-speaking community, given that, until some decades ago, most children of intermarriage were affiliated to the Finnish-speaking community.

Language choice in mixed couples

Along with a number of socio-economic and demographic characteristics, Finnish population registers also contain information on the mother tongue of each resident of Finland. This information is the principal indicator of the affiliation to an ethno-linguistic group. For all Finnish-born individuals, mother tongue is registered at birth, reported by the parents. Although until the 1980s most mixed couples opted for Finnish affiliation for the children, this trend changed; already in 1990 most children of mixed couples were registered as members of the Swedish-speaking community (Tandefelt and Finnäs, 2007; Finnäs and O’Leary, 2003). It is important to emphasize that parents’ choice of mother tongue for their child has very few binding consequences. For example, parents can choose to send their child to a Finnish-speaking kindergarten or school, even if the child is registered as a Swedish-speaker. However, in a large majority of cases the chosen mother tongue coincides with the language of education and can (and usually does) substantially influence the socio-cultural environment in which the children of intermarriage grow up.

Theoretical background

Most of the literature on identity in mixed families stems from the US and the UK (among others, Stephan and Stephan, 1989; Xie and Goyette, 1997; Song, 2010; Aspinall and Song, 2013). While many of the theoretical considerations presented in these studies are also relevant when looking at interethnic unions in Finland, the social context of this study is characterized by a number of particularities that need to be taken into account in designing the research as well as interpreting the main results. First, whereas most studies on ethnic identity look at self-declared identity, our paper analyzes the choice parents make for their children. Second, as already discussed, the Swedish minority is not exposed to social discrimination in contemporary Finland. Third, unlike in some other social contexts, in everyday situations it is difficult to distinguish between the two ethnic communities, especially by appearance. Moreover, a person with a Swedish surname can belong to the Finnish ethnic community, and vice versa. Fourth, it is important to understand that both groups are considered autochthonous in Finland and that the members of the Swedish-speaking community are not expected to “integrate” or “assimilate” into the Finnish-speaking majority. Despite this, the lifestyle of many Swedish-speaking individuals can be described as a Finnish variant of the multidimensional model of acculturation (Porter and Washington, 1993). It is namely fairly common for Swedish speakers to use different languages in

different social domains. For instance, a Swedish-speaking person may usually speak Swedish at home and with childhood friends, but Finnish with colleagues or neighbors. This is particularly common in Helsinki, Turku and other predominantly Finnish-speaking urban centers. In summary, given the historical background and numerous differences with respect to countries where most of the related literature comes from, it can be argued that processes that determine ethnic identity in Finland take place in a fairly unique social context (although there are some similarities with the Protestant minority in Ireland, see Finnäs and O’Leary, 2003). Yet, like elsewhere, there are good reasons to believe that the ethnic identity of children of intermarriage in Finland is a result of a complex interplay of multiple mechanisms. These mechanisms can work in the same or opposite directions, and are usually mutually non-exclusive.

The importance of the concept of ethnicity may vary across groups in the same geographical context, or within the same group across different locations. For example, the prevailing view in the literature is that ethnic minorities tend to have a higher ethnic awareness than members of the dominant group. This holds for both recently arrived groups and long-established minority groups (Phinney, 1989; Berry, 1993, Xie and Goyette, 1997; Sanders, 2002; Flanagan et al., 2009). The unequal size of the two ethnic groups in Finland may also lead to differences in the importance of ethnic identity, whereby the ethnic awareness is expected to be higher among Swedish speakers. The already mentioned evidence that, as opposed to Finnish speakers, most Swedish-speaking Finns vote for an ethnic party may be a strong indication of higher ethnic awareness in the Swedish-speaking community. Further, Xie and Goyette (1997) suggest that ethnic awareness is higher among highly educated members of minority groups. The underlying argument is that highly educated individuals from minority groups are exposed to more competition and conflict in the mainstream society, which in turn enhances their ethnic awareness. Following these arguments, we expect the likelihood of Swedish affiliation to increase with the educational level of the Swedish-speaking parent.

Although the two languages have the same official status, Finnish clearly prevails in the social environment of most mixed couples. A majority of mixed couples live in places where a majority of inhabitants are Finnish-speaking, with the Finnish language being far more present in public spaces. In such a setting, exposure to Finnish is secured (or, one can even argue, unavoidable), regardless of parents’ decision about their child’s affiliation. On the other hand, it is opting for the Swedish language as the child’s principal language that can

contribute to cultural plurality in the child's environment and is more likely to lead to the child becoming perfectly bilingual. Previous literature suggests that the appreciation of cultural pluralism has taken firmest hold in the institutions of higher education, and that support for multiculturalism is strongest among highly educated individuals (Breugelmans and Van de Vijver, 2004; Schalk-Soekar et al., 2004; Ward and Masgoret, 2008; Dandy and Pe-Pua, 2010; Kesler and Schwartzman, 2015). Seen from this perspective, we expect the likelihood of the minority (Swedish) affiliation to increase with parental educational level, and particularly the educational level of the Finnish-speaking parent.

The choice of language can also be affected by parental educational aspirations and cultural consumption in the family, especially in light of the evidence that the two groups may differ somewhat in terms of educational opportunities. To illustrate, relative to the size of two language groups, the number of available places at Swedish-speaking universities is larger than at Finnish-speaking universities (Saarela and Finnäs, 2003). Therefore, opting for the Swedish-speaking community, and knowing that this decision in a large majority of cases also entails enrollment in Swedish-speaking kindergartens and schools, may increase a child's chances of high education attainment. Apart from the higher education institutions, other major Swedish-speaking cultural institutions are also mainly located in predominantly Finnish-speaking urban areas. This may suggest that the benefits of being perfectly bilingual are most pronounced in urban areas. This should be especially valued by highly educated parents, as they are characterized by higher aspirations for their children's educational attainment and by a higher level of cultural consumption (Teachman and Paasch, 1998; Spera et al., 2009).

The considerations presented above set the stage for the following hypotheses:

H1 - There will be a positive association between parental education level and the minority (Swedish) affiliation of children of mixed couples. The likelihood of Swedish affiliation will be lowest for children whose both parents have less than secondary education, and highest for children whose both parents have some tertiary education.

H2a - Children of mixed couples from urban areas are ceteris paribus more likely to be affiliated to the Swedish-speaking community than children of mixed couples from non-urban areas.

H2b - *The positive association between parental education and the child's Swedish affiliation will be more pronounced in urban areas.*

A somewhat different perspective is motivated by the concepts of the classical exchange theory (Blood and Wolfe, 1960). A sizeable body of literature has analyzed whether partners use their resources to negotiate about common decisions and activities. This may include bargaining about the division of housework, migration decisions, or fertility (Bittman et al., 2003; Gupta, 2006; Evertsson and Neramo, 2007; Abraham et al., 2010; Hener, 2010; Saarela and Finnäs, 2013). However, it is also reasonable to assume that having a child of the same ethnicity can increase the utility of each parent in a mixed couple. If so, this may imply that exogamous couples bargain over the ethnic identity of their child. Bargaining may be an especially prominent strategy in the mixed couples in which one partner contributes more to the social or economic status of the family. In particular, as discussed in Qian (2004), it is possible that a higher-educated partner has more say in choosing the child's ethnic or linguistic affiliation. Similar reasoning can be applied to couples in which one partner is economically dominant. Based on the considerations related to the bargaining process between partners in mixed couples, the *bargaining hypothesis* states that:

H3 - *Children of intermarriage are ceteris paribus more likely to be members of the same community as the more educated or economically dominant parent.*

Data and methodology

Data are drawn from a compilation of Finnish register data, which cover the entire population residing in Finland. The data are of longitudinal nature and cover the period from 1988 to 2014. When the first child is looked at, the multivariate analysis is based on logistic regression, with the dependent variable taking the value 1 if the newborn child is registered as a member of the minority (Swedish-speaking) community. This analysis includes all mixed couples, regardless of marital status, who had their first child between 1988 and 2014. When the combined affiliation of the first two children is analyzed, the multivariate analysis is based on a multinomial logit model with four outcomes: 1) both children Finnish-speaking (2F, base outcome), 2) first child Finnish-speaking, second child Swedish-speaking (FS), 3) first child Swedish-speaking, second child Finnish-speaking (SF), and 4) both children

Swedish-speaking (2S)². This analysis includes couples whose first two children were born between 1988 and 2014. In both analyses, independent variables refer to their values in the year of the first childbirth, except for income-related variables which refer to the year before the first childbirth³.

A number of individual- and couple-level characteristics are controlled for in our multivariate models. We include mother's age at birth as a categorical variable: 1) 18-22 (reference category); 2) 23-27; 3) 28-32, and 4) 33 or older. The model also contains a dummy variable that takes the value 1 if the mixed couple is a Swedish mother/Finnish father combination⁴. Education level is a categorical variable constructed in such a way as to capture both the absolute and relative educational level of the parents. This variable is categorized as follows: 1) both parents less than secondary education (reference category); 2) Swedish parent less than secondary, Finnish parent better educated; 3) Finnish parent less than secondary, Swedish parent better educated; 4) both parents secondary; 5) Swedish parent secondary, Finnish parent better educated; 6) Finnish parent secondary, Swedish parent better educated, and 7) both parents at least some tertiary education. The income level of the family is captured by two variables. First, we control for the total taxable income of the couples, adjusted by the yearly index of wage and salary earnings provided by Statistics Finland. Another variable accounts for the relative income within household, which can be considered an income-based measure of the intra-household power. This variable has the following categories: 1) no parent earns more than 60 percent of the total taxable income of the couple (reference category); 2) Swedish-speaking parent earns more than 60 percent; and 3) Finnish-speaking parent earns more than 60 percent. Also included is an indicator variable for married couples. The intensity and nature of gender norms may also imply that parental preferences for group affiliation may also depend on the sex of the child. When analyzing the affiliation of the first child, we introduce an indicator variable that takes value 1 if the child is a girl. In the multinomial logistic model, which looks at the combinations of affiliation of the

² For the sake of stylistic variety, but also brevity, the terms "Finnish-speaking" and "Finnish", just like the terms "Swedish-speaking" and "Swedish", will be used interchangeably in the remainder of the paper. It is important to note that "Swedish" does not refer to individuals from Sweden but to members of the Swedish-speaking community in Finland. Also, "Finnish" refers to individuals whose first language is Finnish, not to Finnish nationals in general.

³ The main reason for including a lagged value of income-related variables is the possibility that both total income and the distribution of income within the family may be substantially affected by parental leave.

⁴ For the sake of brevity, these families will also be referred to as "families with a Swedish (-speaking) mother". The families with a Swedish father and a Finnish mother will also, for the same reason, be referred to as "families with a Finnish (-speaking) mother".

first and second children, we use the following categorical variable: 1) two boys (reference category); 2) two girls; 3) first child boy, second child girl; and 4) first child girl, second child boy.

The model also contains several contextual variables. The exposure to the minority group is measured by the percentage of Swedish-speaking population in the area of residence, which is defined by the postal code. Taking into account the possibility that the presence of the Swedish-speaking community affects the two ethnicity-gender combinations in a different way, the presence of the minority group is also interacted with the dummy variable denoting the families with a Swedish mother. Further, we control for the population density of the settlement in which the couple resides in the year of the first childbirth: 1) inner urban area (reference category); 2) outer urban area; 3) peri-urban area; and 4) rural area. Historical, geographical and societal circumstances also suggest that preferences for children's ethnic affiliation may vary across Finnish regions. Therefore, the model also controls for possible differences across regions with a categorical variable defined as follows: 1) Helsinki region; 2) Southwest Finland; 3) Ostrobothnia, Central Ostrobothnia and Åland; and 4) other regions. The borders of the regions correspond to the regional classification of Statistics Finland⁵. As previous literature suggests, time period also matters in this context, as the general propensity in mixed couples for the minority affiliation of their children gradually increased in the decades before the 1990s. In order to account for time period, we include a variable with the following categories: 1) 1988 – 1990 (reference category); 2) 1991 – 1995; 3) 1996 – 2000; 4) 2001 – 2005; 5) 2006 – 2010; and 6) 2011 – 2014.

Descriptive analysis

The analysis shows that a majority of children of mixed couples are affiliated to the minority group; that is, to the Swedish-speaking community. More precisely, some 58.5 percent of the first-born children of intermarriage are registered as Swedish speakers. Table 1 shows that the ethnicity-gender combination matters for the group affiliation of the first child. Some 44 percent of first-born children in Swedish father/Finnish mother families (which is also a somewhat more common ethnicity-gender combination) are affiliated to the Swedish-speaking community. In contrast, Swedish affiliation is clearly more dominant in Finnish

⁵ For a detailed regional classification, see the website of Statistics Finland: http://tilastokeskus.fi/meta/luokitukset/maakunta/001-2017/index_en.html

father/Swedish mother families – more than three quarters of these children are affiliated to the Swedish-language community.

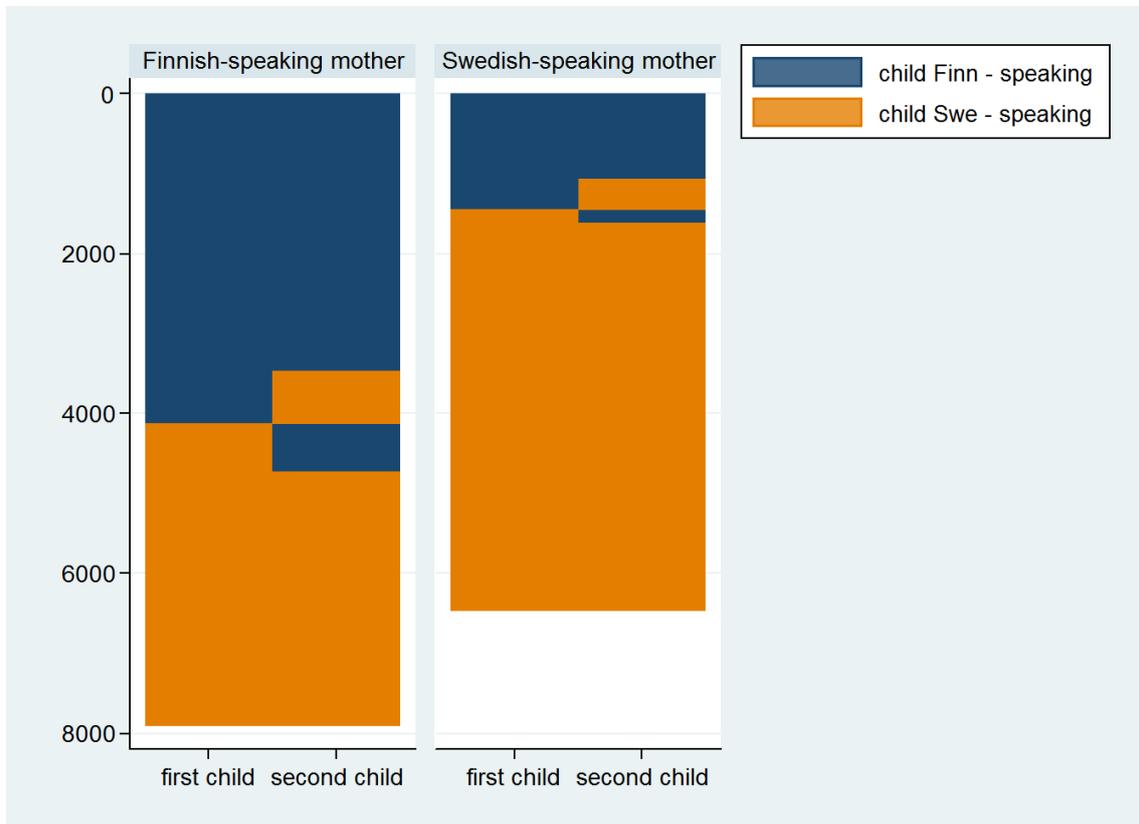
Table 1: The ethnic affiliation of the first child in the sample, by type of intermarriage (children born between 1988 and 2014)

	first child Swedish	first child Finnish	% first child Swedish
Finnish man / Swedish woman	8,076	2,469	76.59
Swedish man / Finnish woman	5,730	7,333	43.86
All mixed couples	13,806	9,802	58.48

Source: Finnish register data, own calculations

How much mixedness in terms of children’s ethnic affiliation is there in mixed families? Figure 1, which includes only the mixed couples with at least two common children, reveals that mixed families are rarely “supermixed”, meaning that the affiliation of the second child seldom differs from that of the first. When looking at all mixed couples, the first two children will have a mixed affiliation in somewhat more than 12 percent of cases. Yet, there are substantial differences with respect to the gender-ethnicity combination of the couple. In families with a Finnish mother, the parents will make a different choice the next time around in approximately 16 percent of cases, regardless of the affiliation of the first child. Looking at families with a Swedish mother, we find some substantial differences with respect to the affiliation of the first child. It is namely very rare to make a different choice the second time around in families if the first child is Swedish-speaking – this happens in only slightly over 3 percent of cases. In contrast, if the first child is Finnish-speaking, almost 27 percent of couples with a Swedish mother will make a different choice the next time around, opting for Swedish affiliation for the second child. These patterns also imply that the dominance of the Swedish language among children of intermarriage is even somewhat more pronounced among second-born children.

Figure 1: Distribution of different combinations of ethnic affiliation of the first and second child in mixed couples (by mother's ethnicity)



Change of affiliation

The official affiliation to one of the two language groups can be also changed at any point. Until children come of age, the ethnic switching is a parental decision; once they turn 18, they can decide on their own whether they want to stay in the same group or change the affiliation. For this reason, in our brief descriptive analysis of the change of affiliation, we only take into account children born to mixed couples in 1994 or before, i.e. children who were at least 20 years of age in 2014, the latest year we have information for. Table 2 shows that the prevalence of ethnic switching among children of intermarriage is neither negligible nor very high. Starting from the change from the minority group to the majority group, around 7 percent of initially Swedish-speaking children with a Swedish mother and almost 10 percent of initially Swedish-speaking children with a Swedish father had changed their affiliation by 2014. Among the originally Finnish-speaking children, the rates of change are 10.3 percent and 9.4 percent for children with a Swedish-speaking mother and a Swedish-

speaking father, respectively. The most notable difference, however, is the age at which the change of affiliation takes place. Some 72 percent of changes from Finnish to Swedish affiliation take place before the age of 18. In contrast, around 61 percent of changes from Swedish to Finnish affiliation take place at the age of 18 or later. This suggests that the change to the Swedish-language group is most often a parental decision, whereas switching to the majority language group is most often a decision made by the children of intermarriage themselves.

Table 2: Rates of change of ethnic affiliation for children of mixed couples born between 1988 and 1994

	Finnish father/ Swedish mother	Swedish father /Finnish mother	% changes taking place before age 18
Swedish -> Finnish	7.02	9.53	38.81
Finnish -> Swedish	10.32	9.41	72.38

Source: Finnish register data, own calculations

Multivariate analysis

First child

Table 3 displays the results of the logistic regression analyzing the likelihood of Swedish affiliation among the first-born children of mixed couples in Finland. The first column shows the results of the analysis that includes all mixed couples in Finland who had their first child between 1988 and 2014. Starting with demographic traits of the family, the likelihood of Swedish affiliation increases at mother's age of 23 and then decreases somewhat after age 32. The results also suggest that the gender combination of the mixed couples matters greatly – children born to a Swedish-speaking mother are more than four times more likely to be Swedish-speaking as compared to children of intermarriage born to a Finnish-speaking mother. Children born to married couples are 33 percent more likely to be registered as Swedish speakers. When looking at all mixed couples, irrespective of the gender-ethnicity combination, the likelihood of Swedish affiliation is not associated with the sex of the child. The chances of the child being Swedish-speaking are the most pronounced in highest-educated families, and the least pronounced in families in which both partners have less than secondary education. The effect of education is fairly strong – the former are more than four times as likely to opt for Swedish affiliation as the latter. Whereas the total income of the

couple is positively associated with the likelihood of minority affiliation, the intra-household income distribution matters fairly little. Concerning the contextual factors, the likelihood of opting for Swedish affiliation is the highest in inner urban areas and the lowest in rural areas. Regions also matter, and children born to couples living in the regions around Helsinki and Turku (Southwest Finland) are the most likely to be affiliated to the minority group. Also, the share of Swedish speakers in the area of residence (operationalized as the postal code area) increases the likelihood of the child being Swedish-speaking – for one percentage point increase in the share of Swedish speakers in the area of residence, the likelihood of opting for the Swedish language increases by 2 percent. As the coefficient of the interaction variable indicates, this association is even stronger in families with a Swedish mother. Finally, the period coefficients indicate that the propensity to choose Swedish affiliation for children of mixed couples has further increased since the beginning of the 21st century.

When looking separately at the two combinations of ethnicity and gender, some considerable differences emerge. The association between mother's age and child's affiliation is weaker and not statistically significant in families with a Swedish mother. The coefficients of income distribution within the household indicate that some bargaining may take place in families with a Swedish mother. More specifically, as compared to the scenario in which no partner earns more than 60 percent of the total gross income, the likelihood of Swedish affiliation is lower by 12 percent if the Finnish father earns more than 60 percent of the total taxable income, and is higher by 14 percent if the Swedish mother earns more than 60 percent. In contrast, the likelihood of the minority affiliation in families with a Finnish mother is the lowest in couples in which no partner earns more than 60 percent of the total income. However, the magnitude of these associations is arguably modest in both types of mixed couples. Marital status is not associated with the child's ethnic affiliation in families with a Swedish mother, but being married considerably increases the likelihood of Swedish affiliation in families with a Finnish mother. Separate estimations for two types of mixed couples also reveal that the sex of the child actually does play a certain role in deciding the child's ethnic affiliation. In families with a Swedish mother, girls are around 20 percent more likely than boys to be Swedish-speaking. On the other hand, in families with a Finnish mother, girls are 11 percent less likely than boys to be Swedish-speaking. In other words, the likelihood of affiliation to either of two communities increases if the child is of the same sex as the parent who belongs to that community. The positive association between population density and Swedish affiliation is clearly pronounced in families with a Swedish mother. On

the other hand, if the mother is Finnish-speaking, it is only living in inner urban areas that somewhat increases the likelihood of Swedish affiliation. The coefficients of other variables - region of residence, share of Swedish-speakers in the local community, education and period - have the same sign in the two types of mixed families. However, there are considerable differences in the magnitude of association between two combinations of gender and ethnicity.

As discussed, the urban-rural divide was fairly pronounced in the Swedish-speaking community for centuries. One can therefore not rule out that the nature of interethnic contact differs in the two contexts, also in a way that it would affect the choice of mother tongue for children of intermarriage. Also, the preferences for a child's ethnic affiliation may also be driven by the parental cultural consumption and aspirations with regard to their child's education. Table A1 in the Appendix shows the results of separate estimations for urban (inner urban and outer urban) and other (peri-urban and rural) areas. For the sake of space, we will provide only a limited discussion of results. As predicted by Hypothesis 3, the positive association between education and the choice of the Swedish language for the first child is more pronounced in urban areas, irrespective of the combination of gender and ethnicity. The positive association is especially strong for urban families with a Finnish mother: all else equal, children born to highly educated parents are more than seven times as likely to be Swedish-speaking as those born to parents with lower than secondary education. It is also noteworthy that period effects were practically absent (with small and non-significant coefficients) in non-urban families with a Finnish mother. Also interestingly, urban families with a Finnish mother are the only group in which there is no significant link between the sex of the child and group affiliation.

Table 3: The odds of the first child in mixed couples being Swedish-speaking (by mother's ethnicity), logistic regression

	All mixed couples	Swedish mother/ Finnish father	Finnish mother/ Swedish father
Mother's age (ref.: 18 – 22)			
23 - 27	1.22***	1.10	1.25***
28 - 32	1.22***	1.13	1.21***
33 or older	1.03	0.93	1.02
Area (ref: Helsinki region)			
Southwest Finland	0.92*	0.90	0.93
Ostrobothnia, Central Osth and Åland	0.74***	0.67***	0.82***
Rest of Finland	0.38***	0.38***	0.37***
Share of Swe. speakers in municip.	1.02***	1.03***	1.01***
Population density (ref: rural area)			
Peri-urban area	1.15**	1.44***	0.97
Outer urban area	1.29***	1.64***	1.04
Inner urban area	1.72***	2.07***	1.43***
Swedish mother	4.76***		
Swedish mother*Share of Swe. speakers	1.01***		
Education: (ref.: both parents < secondary)			
Swedish parent < secondary, F>S	1.35***	1.02	1.77***
Finnish parent < secondary, S>F	1.79***	1.74***	1.93***
Both parents secondary	1.97***	1.70***	2.41***
Swedish parent secondary, F>S	2.80***	2.59***	3.44***
Finnish parent secondary, S>F	3.39***	2.90***	4.17***
Both parents some tertiary	4.23***	3.48***	5.30***
Couple's total taxable income in 000s (adj.)	1.01**	1.01***	1.01*
Income share (ref: no parent more than 60%)			
Swedish parent more than 60%	1.07*	1.14*	1.13**
Finnish parent more than 60%	1.01	0.88**	1.08*
Period (ref: 1988 - 1990)			
1991-1995	1.12**	0.89	1.27***
1996-2000	1.25***	1.37***	1.14*
2001-2005	1.31***	1.73***	1.10
2006-2010	1.51***	2.22***	1.21***
2011-2014	1.67***	2.17***	1.43***
Married couple	1.33***	0.95	1.57***
First child girl	0.99	1.20***	0.89***
Constant	0.09***	0.39***	0.10***
Couples	23,608	10,545	13,063

Note: *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$; Source: Finnish register data, own calculations

First and second children

Table 4 shows the results of multinomial logistic regressions analyzing the combined ethnic affiliation of the first-born and second-born children of mixed couples. The base outcome in the regressions is both children being Finnish-speaking (2F). All independent variables refer to the same year as in the analysis of the first child. The population observed in this analysis is somewhat smaller than in the analysis of the first child, but the estimates of the likelihood of opting for a double Swedish (2S) rather than a double Finnish (2F) affiliation do not differ much from the results showing the likelihood of choosing Swedish over Finnish affiliation for the first child. The main exception is the absence of period effects for the 2S combination in families with a Finnish mother; however, we are primarily interested in the results for the FS (first child Finnish, second child Swedish) and SF (first child Swedish, second child Finnish) combinations. One of the main questions to consider here is whether the coefficients for SF and FS combinations are “between” those for 2F and 2S. In other words, are the couples who opt for a mixed affiliation an “average” of couples who opt for Finnish-only and Swedish-only affiliation of their children, or are these couples selected by more complex mechanisms?

We need to bear in mind, however, that the two mixed outcomes are considerably less frequent than 2S and 2F combinations. This is especially the case with the SF combination in families with a Swedish mother. Although we are working with a total population, it comes as no surprise that, due to a small prevalence of some outcomes, many associations are not easily interpretable. Some patterns do emerge though. Irrespective of the mother’s ethnicity, the share of Swedish speakers in the area of residence increases the likelihood of both mixed combinations, but less so than it increases the likelihood of both children being Swedish-speaking. It can thus be argued that, in terms of the effect of the exposure to the Swedish-speaking community, families who opt for a mixed affiliation of their children are indeed between families who opt for a double Swedish affiliation and those who choose a double Finnish affiliation. This is also the case regarding the impact of education and marital status on mixed affiliation of children, but only in families with a Finnish-speaking mother. In contrast, education level does not significantly affect the likelihood of either FS or SF combinations in families with a Swedish mother.

Table 4: Combinations of ethnic affiliation of the first and second child (by mother's ethnicity), multinomial logistic regression (base outcome: 2F - both children Finnish-speaking)

	Swedish-speaking mother			Finnish-speaking mother		
	2S	FS	SF	2S	FS	SF
Mother's age (ref.: 18 – 22)						
23 – 27	1.38***	1.42**	0.99	1.09	0.84	1.22
28 – 32	1.53***	1.43*	0.96	1.13	0.94	1.34
33 or older	1.33***	1.35*	0.57	0.92	0.56**	1.24
Area (ref: Helsinki region)						
Southwest Finland	0.79*	0.76	1.51	0.94	0.84	0.80
Ostrobothnia, Centr. Ostrob. & Åland	0.57***	0.75	1.04	0.81***	0.80*	0.91
Rest of Finland	0.31***	1.03	1.31	0.33***	0.62**	0.44***
Share of Swe. speakers in municip.	1.03***	1.01***	1.01***	1.02***	1.01***	1.01***
Population density (ref: rural area)						
Peri - urban area	1.77***	2.06***	1.87**	0.89	0.80	0.88
Outer urban area	1.92***	1.63***	1.52	1.07	0.79	0.94
Inner urban area	2.49***	1.69***	2.47***	1.65***	1.17	1.09
Education: (ref.: both parents < secondary)						
Swedish parent < secondary, F>S	1.20	0.94	0.89	1.81***	1.22	0.90
Finnish parent < secondary, S>F	2.09***	1.40	1.12	1.97***	2.09***	1.34
Both parents secondary	2.36***	1.45	1.48	2.72***	2.07***	1.25
Swedish parent secondary, F>S	3.95***	1.45	0.75	3.65***	2.19***	1.58*
Finnish parent secondary, S>F	3.42***	1.36	1.21	4.86***	3.39***	2.35***
Both parents some tertiary	4.61***	1.60	1.04	6.37***	4.00***	2.41***
Couple's total taxable income in 000s (adj.)	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.01***	1.01	
Income share (ref: no parent more than 60%)						
Swedish parent more than 60%	1.06	0.81	0.88	1.05	0.98	1.06
Finnish parent more than 60%	0.87*	0.99	0.96	1.24**	1.09	1.27***
Period (ref: up to 1990)						
1991-1995	1.02	1.60***	0.72	1.07	0.80	1.72***
1996-2000	1.65***	2.01***	1.65*	1.08	1.69***	2.09***
2001-2005	2.07***	1.93***	1.45	0.93	1.48***	2.16***
2006-2010	2.81***	2.21***	2.37***	1.07	1.60***	2.15***
2011-2014	2.20***	1.55	0.41	1.02	1.17	2.81***
Married couple	0.89	0.75**	0.77	1.58***	1.07	1.23**
Gender combination (ref.: two boys)						

Two girls	1.23**	0.96	0.99	0.86**	0.91	0.98
Boy first child, girl second child	1.13	1.17	1.00	0.94	1.05	1.28**
Girl first child, boy second child	1.13	0.94	1.19	0.93	1.11	1.02
Couples	6,455			7,881		

*Note: *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$; Source: Finnish register data, own calculations*

Finally, there is some evidence of the association between the sex of children and a mixed affiliation of the first two children. In line with the previously discussed finding that boys are more likely than girls to belong to the father's ethnicity, and vice versa, Table 4 also shows that the chances of a mixed affiliation among children of intermarriage increase if they are of different sexes, whereby birth order also matters. For instance, in families with a Finnish mother, the SF combination is 28 percent more likely if the first-born is a boy and the second-born is a girl than if both the first- and second-born are boys. Analogous associations are also found for the FS outcome as well as in families with a Swedish mother (for both mixed outcomes), but these associations are not statistically significant.

Discussion

The goal of our analysis was to contribute to previous literature on the determinants of the ethnic affiliation of children of intermarriage in Finland. Our analysis shows that intermarriage is not a threat to the minority language group in the contemporary Finnish society. Quite the contrary – our descriptive analyses show that around 60 percent of first- and second-born children of intermarriage born between 1988 and 2014 are members of the minority group. Moreover, this trend seems to be more pronounced after the turn of the century. Intermarriage should thus contribute not only to the preservation of, but possibly even to a modest increase in, the absolute size of the Swedish-speaking community. However, along with some Southern European countries, Finland has been experiencing migration transition. Once a country with substantial emigration rates, Finland has emerged as a new immigration destination over the last couple of decades (Valtonen, 2001; Sarvimäki, 2011). The country is assuming a multiethnic rather than bi-ethnic character, and it cannot be ruled out that the relative size of the Swedish-speaking community will decrease in the future.

The logistic regression analysis of the affiliation of the first child lends clear support to Hypothesis 1, as there is a positive association between parental education level and the

likelihood of the first child being Swedish speaking. This implies that children born to two parents with some tertiary education are most likely to be affiliated to the minority group. The effect of education is fairly strong – children with highly educated parents are, all else equal, up to more than five times more likely to be Swedish-speaking as compared to children born to parents with lower than secondary education. As discussed, there are several potential and mutually non-exclusive mechanisms underlying this result: 1) above-average ethnic awareness among highly educated members of minority groups; 2) above-average preferences for cultural plurality among the highly educated members of majority groups; and 3) higher level of aspirations in families with highly educated parents in combination with an easier access to the Swedish-speaking universities. It is likely that all these mechanisms are simultaneously at work, but it is difficult to rank them by relevance using register data only. Moreover, there may well be other factors at play that we do not address directly in the theoretical section. Whereas the affiliation to the Swedish-speaking community today entails much less social prestige than before (if at all), the socio-economic outcomes are still, to different degrees, more favorable for Swedish speakers. We cannot rule out that highly educated parents are more often aware of, or that they value this evidence more than other parents do. Our analyses also support Hypotheses 2a and 2b. The likelihood of Swedish affiliation is indeed the highest in inner urban areas, and the lowest in rural areas. Further, as expected, the positive association between parental education and Swedish affiliation is clearly more pronounced in inner urban and outer urban areas, especially in families with a Finnish mother. On the other hand, the support for the Hypothesis 3 (“the bargaining hypothesis”) is fairly weak. Whereas some coefficients referring to families in which the Swedish parent is better educated may indicate that some bargaining takes place, the coefficients for the families in which the Finnish parent is better educated show the opposite. To illustrate, the likelihood of Swedish affiliation for the first child is higher in families in which the Finnish parent has tertiary education and the Swedish parent does not than in families in which both parents have secondary education. This is also a strong indicator that coefficients for families in which the Swedish-speaking parent is better educated are most likely a result of the mechanisms supporting Hypothesis 1, rather than a result of bargaining over the children’s ethnic affiliation. The support for the bargaining hypothesis also remains weak when looking at the possible effect of within-family income distribution on the children’s ethnic affiliation. Even when we find traces of some income-based bargaining (which is the case for families with a Swedish mother, most notably those from urban areas), the magnitude of the association is small, and much smaller than the effect of education. We

should also point out that the collinearity between education level in the family and within-family income distribution is not a threat to our analysis, as the conclusions remain unchanged even when one or the other variable is omitted from the analysis.

Our results also show that “supermixed” families (i.e. those in which not only the partners but also their children belong to different ethnic communities) are relatively rare. We did not propose any hypotheses concerning these families, as our analysis was of a rather exploratory nature. In terms of some characteristics, such as the exposure to the Swedish language and, to some extent, education, these supermixed families are positioned “between” families with two Swedish-speaking children and those with two Finnish-speaking children. As for the other characteristics, the patterns are more complex and are not always readily interpretable.

The findings in this analysis clearly show the complexity of the processes shaping the ethnic identity in Finnish society. This paper, just like a number of papers focusing on the Swedish-speaking minority in Finland, is based on register data. Whereas the richness and size of our data make it possible to tackle some previously unaddressed topics, register data certainly have limits that prevent us from claiming the causality in our analysis. Moreover, we cannot estimate the relative importance of the factors that work in the same direction (for instance, all the possible factors producing a strong association between parental education and minority group affiliation). Despite a sizeable body of literature concerned with how ethnic affiliation in Finland affects socio-economic and demographic outcomes in the two language communities, we still have no answer to some important questions. To name just one, we still do not know why Swedish-speaking men in Finland enter intermarriage more often than their co-ethnic women do (Saarela and Finnäas, 2014). This trend may have to do with some unobservable factors, which, moreover, may also affect within-couple decision-making processes in general, and decision-making about the group affiliation of their children in particular. There is therefore an impression that the research on Swedish speakers in Finland is in need of more qualitative or mixed-method studies, as these will help us obtain a deeper understanding of the unobserved factors shaping the social interaction between the two ethnolinguistic communities in Finland. Future research should also take into account the ongoing transformation of the country from a bi-ethnic to a multiethnic society, arguably one of the most important societal changes since Finland’s independence. It is therefore likely that the patterns of interethnic contact in the country, but also the very concept of ethnicity, may become more complex than in the past.

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Appendix

Table A1: The odds of the first child in mixed couples being Swedish-speaking (by mother's ethnicity and population density), logistic regression

	Swedish-speaking mother		Finnish-speaking mother	
	urban	other	urban	other
Mother's age (ref.: 18-22)				
23-27	1.11	1.10	1.26***	1.18
28-32	1.18	1.06	1.29***	0.95
33 or older	1.01	0.81	1.00	0.94
Area (ref: Helsinki region)				
Southwest Finland	0.97	0.74**	1.07	0.73***
Ostrobothnia, Central Osth and Åland	0.75***	0.71***	0.61***	1.34***
Rest of Finland	0.35***	0.44***	0.34***	0.46***
Share of Swe. speakers in municip.	1.02***	1.03***	1.01***	1.01***
Type of urban area (ref.: outer urban area)				
Inner urban area	1.25***		1.30***	
Type of non-urban area (ref.: rural area)				
Peri-urban area		1.57***		1.09
Swedish mother				
Swedish mother*Share of Swe. speakers				
Education: (ref.: both parents < secondary)				
Swedish parent < secondary, F>S	1.13	0.84	2.16***	1.32*
Finnish parent < secondary, S>F	1.92***	1.43**	2.48***	1.44**
Both parents secondary	2.06***	1.17	3.03***	1.77***
Swedish parent secondary, F>S	2.92***	2.06***	4.70***	2.03***
Finnish parent secondary, S>F	3.48***	1.97***	5.51***	2.69***
Both parents some tertiary	3.95***	2.03***	7.12***	2.87***
Couple's total taxable income in 000s (adj.)	1.01***	1.01	1.00	1.01***
Income share (ref: no parent more than 60%)				
Swedish parent more than 60%	1.24**	0.91	1.14**	0.93
Finnish parent more than 60%	0.87**	0.93	1.09	1.27***
Period (ref: up to 1990)				
1991-1995	0.85*	0.96	1.31***	1.11
1996-2000	1.39***	1.30***	1.24	0.91
2001-2005	1.68***	1.80***	1.18	0.85
2006-2010	2.06***	2.58***	1.35***	0.86
2011-2014	2.07***	2.39***	1.61***	1.00
Married couple	0.98	0.88	1.58***	1.44***
First child girl	1.21***	1.19*	0.94	0.80***
Constant	0.60***	0.47***	0.08***	0.15***
Couples	7,216	3,329	8,937	4,126

Note: *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$; Source: Finnish register data, own calculation