Nation-brand like no other? Popular image of Finland and Finnishness in Saint Petersburg and Leningrad Oblast

Levada analytical centre, Moscow, Russia
The image of Finland

1.1 General attitude and perception

“What is your current attitude to Finland?” (sum of answers “very positive” + “positive” and “negatively” + “very negatively”)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National sample</th>
<th>Very positively</th>
<th>Very negatively</th>
<th>DA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>71</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“What is your current attitude to ... ?” (sum of answers “very positive” + “positive and “negative” + “very negatively”)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Very positively</th>
<th>Negative</th>
<th>DA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.2 Relationships between two countries

“How would you describe current relationship between Russia and Finland?”

Relationships between two countries are asserted very positively in both national and regional surveys. Yet, regional survey show more friendly trend.

Less people refusing to answer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>National sample</th>
<th>Saint Petersburg and the area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friendly</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good, neighborly</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calm, moderate</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indifferent, cold</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tense</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hostile</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficult to say</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

National sample
Saint Petersburg and the area
“In your opinion, Finland is a …. ?”

Essential factor of a positive attitude to Finland is its military neutralism.

This feature is important for Russian public.

Responses are similar in their answers between the samples.

There is no sufficient difference between socio-demographic groups by gender, age or consumer status.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National sample</th>
<th>Neutral country</th>
<th>Non-Aligned Country</th>
<th>Close NATO ally</th>
<th>Member of the NATO</th>
<th>DA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“What possible actions of Finland could negatively affect today's relations between Russia and Finland?”

Russians see the greatest threat to the existing relations between Russia and Finland in Finland's hypothetical entry into the NATO or rejection of its neutral status.

- Finland becoming the member of the NATO: 29
- Tightening of the EU sanctions on Russia: 23
- Refusal of Finland from the status of a non-aligned country: 9
- Military alliance between Sweden and Finland: 6
- Other: 1
- DA: 22

- National sample
- Saint Petersburg and the area
“Would the cancelation of the simplified application procedure for the Finnish visa, change your plans to visit the country and rates of your visits?”

Yes, we will visit Finland less, even by the visa we already have

Yes, we are planning to apply for the visa to other Shengen country

It will not affect our plans, we will apply for Finnish visa and visit...

DA

24

13

13

50
“If you had such opportunity, would you like to move to live in Finland?” (sum of answers “definitely yes”, “rather yes” and “rather no”, “definitely no”)

- National sample:
  - Yes: 15
  - No: 83
  - DA: 2

- Saint Petersburg and the...:
  - Yes: 33
  - No: 64
  - DA: 2
Associations

2.1 Basic stereotypes

“When thinking of Finland, what comes to your mind first of all?”
(answers with 4% and more mentions)
2.2 Interest in the country

“What things interests you in Finland most of all?”

Obtained answers form two major pillars of interest:

- Tourism;
- Goods consumption;

Young people are interested in educational opportunities (35%);
“What of the following features you consider to be the most valuable for Finland as a country?”

- Clean water and good ecology: 55%
- Social protection: 39%
- High quality of goods and services: 39%
- Comfortable urban environment: 32%
- Low level of corruption: 25%
- High quality education: 22%
- High quality medical care: 20%
- Freedom of speech: 8%
- Tolerance: 8%
- Gender equality: 5%

All: 18-24 y.o. □ 25-39 y.o. □

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2.3 Sources of information

«Where did you get information about Finland?»

Citizens of North-Western region the informal channels of getting information used more often. They have established some connections with Finland - acquaintances, relatives living there, they visit Finland themselves.

General Russian public rely more on official sources - TV, school curriculum.
“Information about which opportunities / products / services which are available in Finland, you would like to get more details”

- about culture events: 30
- educational opportunities for...: 20
- about medical treatment in...: 19
- about property acquire: 16
- about sport events: 16
- educational opportunities for...: 12
- about business opportunities: 11
- about residence permit when...: 11
- about goods and services: 3
- about tourism and recreation: 3
- about work in Finland: 1
- other: 1
- nothing: 4
- DA: 19
Goods and manufacturing

“Can you name a Finnish company or brand/product?”

Contrary to the national sample North-Western inhabitants have more detailed knowledge of Finnish goods.

This knowledge is based on real usage of goods, that are not available for general Russian population.

Nokia 63 70
Valio 23 65
Viola 26 49
Tikkurila 25 48
Nokian... 12 20
Fazer 8 41
Fortum 24
Reima 4 17
Stockmann 11 37
YIT 2 18
Myllyn Paras
Abloy
Atria
Honka 5 11
Prisma 50
Sokos 15
DA 25

National sample
Saint Petersburg and the area
“What are the main characteristics/features of Finnish goods?” (answers are sorted by the main survey)

The most important feature of Finnish products is high quality.

Yet, citizens of North-Western region also values environmental friendliness of the products, and it’s reliability.
Problems of the Russian-Finnish families

“Have you ever seen in the Russian media materials about family problems in Finland, in which one and several family members are Russian-speaking?” (%%, no DA’s)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National sample</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>25</th>
<th>63</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Saint Petersburg and...</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Did read or heard such information
- Read or heard something
- Never heard or seen anything like that

“There is an opinion that Russian-family members may be discriminated in Finland. Do you agree with such opinion?” (% of those who is familiar this question given earlier, N = 515)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>DA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“Have you heard about the work on restoration the names of died and buried in the Sandarmokh?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4</th>
<th>17</th>
<th>79</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
- Closely follow this work
- Heard or seen some information
- Hear about it for the first time

“With which of these statements about the Sandarmokh memorial, could you agree? Sandarmokh is the …”

(\%\%, of those who are aware of Sandarmokh, N = 212)

- The memory of Stalin’s repressions victims
- The memory of soviet soldiers killed by finnish army
- The memory of all fallen soldiers in all wars and victims of repressions
The echo of the WWII

“Do you know about Soviet-Finnish war in 1939-1940 (so-called "Winter-war" or "Finnish war")?”

National sample

- Yes, I know a lot: 13%
- Yes, I know basics: 37%
- No effect: 24%
- Negative effect: 26%

Saint Petersburg and the area sample

- Yes, I know a lot: 27%
- Yes, I know basics: 43%
- No effect: 17%
- Negative effect: 13%

“Does the common war past between Finland and Soviet Union affect your current perception of contemporary Finland”?

- Does not affect at all: 78%
- Negatively affects the image of Finland: 4%
- Causes a sense of shame, guilt over the "winter war": 3%
Complementary graphs

“What traits make Finnish society?”

- High living standards: 29%
- Environmental protection: 37%
- Social state: 18%
- Democracy: 36%
- Freedom: 18%
- Tolerance: 23%
- Modernity, innovations: 17%
- Equality, justice: 19%
- Openness to the world: 12%
- Pragmatism, rationality: 11%
- Self esteem: 12%
- Closeness: 10%
- Patriotism: 10%
- Public transparency: 4%
- Conservatism: 8%
- Solidarity: 8%
- Nationalism: 5%
- Provincialism: 5%
- Lack of principles / cynicism: 2%
- Permissiveness: 4%
- DA: 7%

National sample
Saint Petersburg and the area
The press

“For several years in row Finland is leading in the world rating of free press. Do you agree that Finland has free press?”

Agree Disagree DA

61 15 25