

## Abstract

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During the late 16<sup>th</sup> and the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, vast areas of the Scandinavian conifer belt were colonised by Finnish slash-and-burn cultivators, mainly originating from Savolax in eastern Finland. Referred to as Forest Finns, they settled from Tiveden in southern Sweden to Lapland in the north, from Gästrikland on the east coast to Norwegian Telemark in the west. Although this colonisation mainly occurred in a relatively short, intensive period, settlement became more concentrated during the following century.

This thesis deals with the Forest Finn colonisation in Norrland and the adjoining areas of Dalarna.

The aim of the thesis is to investigate this colonisation from a broad and comprehensive perspective. The investigation studies Forest Finn migration, colonisation, sources of livelihood, landscape and culture from a historical-geographical perspective. The aim is also to illustrate the perspectives of men and women, children and elderly.

The thesis addresses the following questions:

- 1 What aspects of Forest Finn history require further investigation, thematically and geographically, against the background of earlier and current research?
- 2 How is the concept of Forest Finns as well as related concepts to be defined? What are the characteristics of the Forest Finn colonisation and culture?
- 3 How do the Forest Finn activities manifest themselves both from a top-down perspective as well as from a perspective regarding the Forest Finns as actors and subjects? Here the main concept of the thesis, strategies, is introduced.
- 4 How can the Forest Finn strategies be illustrated and investigated from a landscape perspective?

The main concept in the thesis is strategy, but the concepts cluster and ethnic signs are also used as tools.

Keywords: Forest Finns, colonisation, migration, settlements, sources of livelihood, cultural landscape, swidden or slash-and-burn cultivation, strategies, cluster, ethnic signs, Norrland, Dalarna, Gästrikland, Hälsingland, Medelpad, Ångermanland, Jämtland, Västerbotten, Lappland, Finland