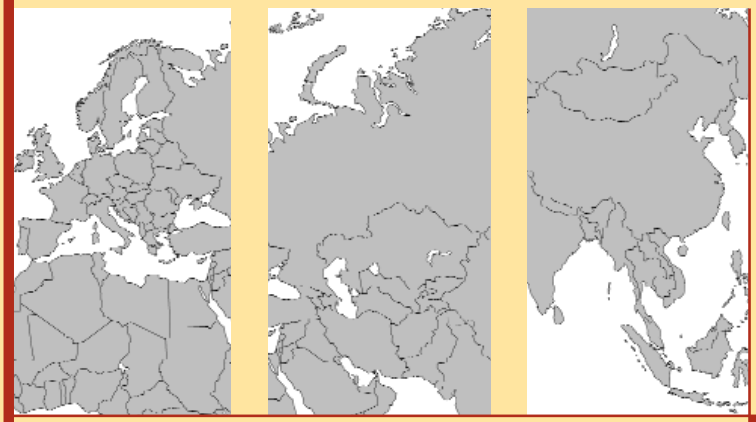

Current Immigration Debates in Europe: A Publication of the European Migration Dialogue

Jan Niessen, Yongmi Schibel and Cressida Thompson (eds.)

Finland

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for

CEREN,

Centre for research on ethnic relations and nationalism,

University of Helsinki

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The Migration Policy Group (MPG) is an independent organisation committed to policy development on migration and mobility, and diversity and anti-discrimination by facilitating the exchange between stakeholders from all sectors of society, with the aim of contributing to innovative and effective responses to the challenges posed by migration and diversity.

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Finland

Perttu Salmenhaara[1]

Introduction

Finnish migration history differs significantly from many other European countries. In post-war Europe, there have been two types of countries: Immigration countries – such as Germany, France and Great Britain, and emigration countries – notably the countries of southern Europe, Ireland and Finland.

In this period (1950-1970), there was a lot of work in reconstruction, which lead to large movements of construction and industry workers (Sassen, 1999). The immigration countries were generally more advanced (industrialised), and the emigration countries (less industrialised) supplied the labour.

The main destination countries for Finnish emigrants have been Sweden and North America.[2] Between 1960 and 1980, some 500,000 Finns emigrated to Sweden (from a population of less than five million). This movement is best explained by changing demographic realities. After the Second World War (WW II), the exceptionally large baby boom generations caused an over-supply of domestic labour (Valkonen 1998, 31-34; Karisto et al. 1998, 57-58). This generated a push factor, as many felt there were no opportunities to build a life in Finland. Emigration appeared to be the only option for many.

Immigration has only recently become an issue in Finland. The first influx of foreign citizens took place in the 1990s, a time of high unemployment. Most of these immigrants did not migrate for work (only about a third fall into this category). Some were seeking asylum or temporary protection, but the majority migrated for family. However, this has to be put into perspective - the percentage of foreign citizens in Finland is among the lowest in Europe, only some two per cent. The reasons for the low numbers include the low number of applicants (in the 1990s some 1,000 – 3,000 annually), and the strict government policies. In the 1990's, asylum was given to between ten and 30 people annually, and in 1997, there were only four (4) approved asylum applications (Ulkomaalaisvirasto 2005).

Numbers concerning labour migration are larger (see table 1), but still very small. The largest groups of labour immigrants come from the neighboring countries of Sweden, Russia and Estonia. The total number of immigrants has risen fast during the 1990's and afterwards, and for example Russians have out-numbered Swedes during this time.

Even though the immigration numbers are small, one must take into account that so is the total population of Finland. Despite this, the percentage of immigrants in the total population is still very low.

Table 1. Immigrants, largest groups and the total number 1991-2003.

	1991	***1993***	***1995***	***1997***	***1999***	***2001***	***2003***
Russia	0	5,828	9,720	14,316	18,575	22,724	24,998
Estonia	720	5,393	8,446	9,689	10,652	11,662	13,397

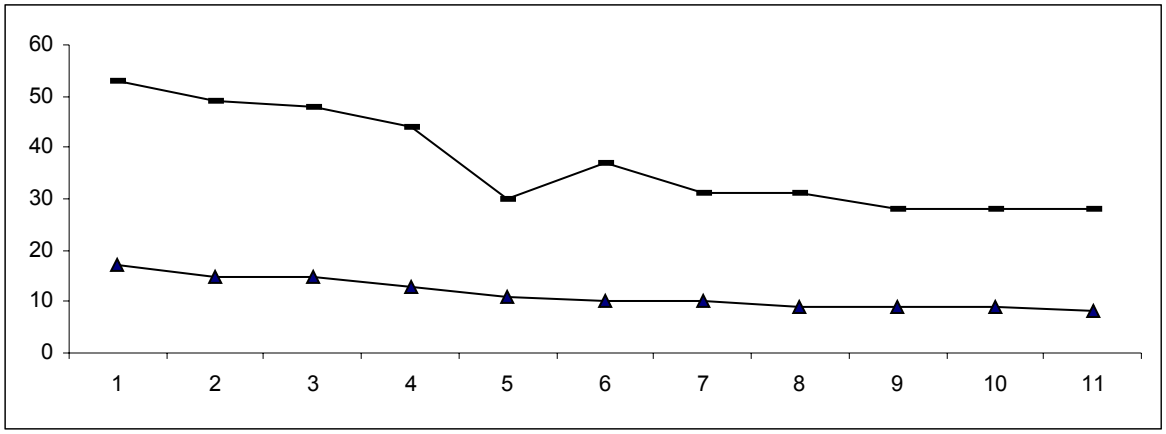
[1] This report is based on information up to 31 August 2005.

[2] Though emigrants have been migrating to North America since the beginning of the 20th Century – not only since the end of the war.

Sweden	6,277	6,528	7,014	7,507	7,809	7,999	8,124
Somalia	1,505	2,883	4,044	5,238	4,410	4,355	4,642
F.R. of Yugoslavia	161	7,072	2,407	2,755	3,392	4,240	4,243
Iraq	184	846	1,341	2,435	2,960	3,222	3,485
Britain	1,516	1,676	1,865	1,907	2,170	2,352	
Germany	1,602	1,576	1,478	1,961	2,162	2,327	2,565
Iran	571	919	1,275	1,681	1,868	2,166	2,531
China	633	1087	1,412	1,610	1,677	1,929	2,372
All foreign citizens	**37,579**	**46,250**	**68,566**	**80,600**	**87,680**	**98,577**	**107,003**

The labour administration, which was (and still is) responsible for immigration and integration issues of immigrants, was not prepared for the influx; and because of the nature of the migration (it was not for work), the Act on Integration (493/1999)[3] focused only on the social integration of immigrants. As a result, perhaps, the unemployment rate of foreign nationals (figure 1) is three times higher than the unemployment rate of the mainstream population. Interestingly, this proportion has remained relatively stable despite large variations in the number of immigrants.[4]

Figure 1. Unemployment rate (%) of foreign nationals and Finns, 1994-2004[5]



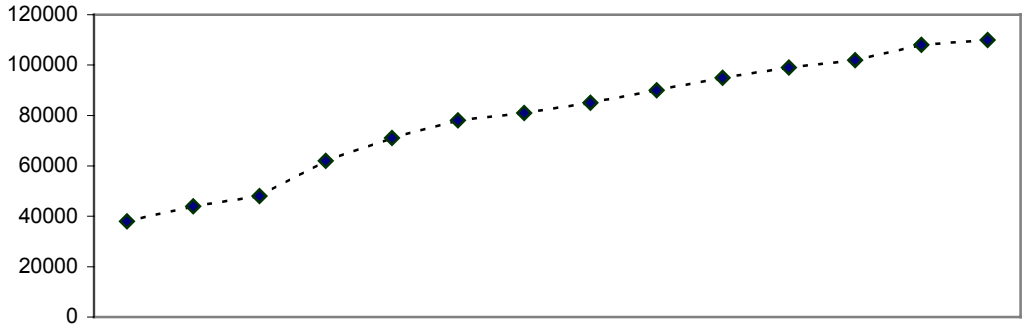
The fact that Finland is fairly new to immigration means: a) there is no 'chain migration' to Finland, which means the immigrant population is small (two per cent of the total) and diverse; and b) the unemployment rate of the immigrant population is characteristic for newly arrived immigrants, although this is the situation only in statistical terms and there is great inter-group variation.

[3] Laki maahanmuuttajien kotouttamisesta ja turvapaikanhakijoiden vastaanotosta.

[4] This stability might reflect the ups and downs of the economy. This is seen also in statistical empiria. Forsander, 2002.

[5] According to the Ministry of Labour; Statistics Finland sometimes ends up in slightly different rates since it uses the international statistical standard when measuring unemployment.

Figure 2. Number of foreign nationals, 1991-2004.



Before the 1990s the domestic supply of labour was stable / sufficient in Finland. If anything, it is said there was an over-supply (and hence no need for immigrants).

Finland joined the European Union (EU) at a time when discussions about a common migration policy were rife (1995). The Finnish government favours an open method of co-ordination (OMC) between the various Member States over the more binding 'Community Method', which involves a greater adherence to European regulations and policies. The OMC provides more opportunities to direct policies at the national level (for an overview of the different approaches, please see Apap 2004).

However, the government appears to be in a difficult position; on the one hand, it should initiate policies that are in line with the views of the European Commission; and on the other hand, the immigration policy must address the concerns of the government's constituents (Finnish voters). These two views are significantly different in the field of immigration.[6] The government is therefore engaged in an eternal balancing act, in an effort to please both the national electorate and of the Commission in an already complex policy area.

The national electorate is influenced by the media, which does not always present all of the facts. For example, the Commission (supported by research (Sarvimäki 2004)) maintains that labour immigration will not increase the domestic unemployment rate, but in Finland, the media has scared the public into believing that it does. In this environment the government finds it easier to develop its own policy (using the OMC), even though (taking into account a longer time-frame and sustainability of domestic employment) it would be better to follow the recommendations of the Commission.

Finland has traditionally been an anti-immigration country, and even though government policies are becoming more pro-immigration, the policy process is not always clear. In Finland policies might easily be divided into so-called large policy (the broad goals and objectives – often more theoretical) and small policy (the implementation process – more concrete strategies and programmes). The existence of large and small policies is not necessarily detrimental, but it is when they contradict one another, as is the case in immigration. The gap between goals and programmes is making this already complex policy area even more complex.[7]

[6] Some national stakeholders, such as trade unions, have understood this dilemma and used it for their own advantage; Sarvimäki 2004.

[7] Large and small policy are methodological concepts, first used in immigration studies by Seppo Paananen in 1999. Large policy refers to the official policies of the authorities, and small policy to the level of practice and implementation. In sociological terms, these concepts make a distinction between out-spoken norms and their practical implementation. Paananen argues, that there indeed is a

1.1 The immigration debate

Finland is only now starting to develop its immigration policies. This means it is in an excellent position to learn from the experiences of others, and to apply and adapt other policies to achieve the best possible outcomes.

The main arguments in the Finnish immigration debate revolve around economic and social concerns. There is a strong push to enhance Finland's economic position and make it more competitive.[8] The main proponents of this position are in favour of immigration and they are in favour of the Community Method, which would bind Finland to a more liberal immigration policy. Pro-immigrant arguments generally occur at the administrative (State) level, and they are endorsed by economic / business organisations. In this vein Florida (2005) argues that in (the coming) era of global competition for workers, national competitiveness (and by extension, the growth of the economy and employment) is becoming more dependent on increasing pull factors of immigration. Similarly, it is argued that the current high rate of unemployment in Finland is the result of structural reasons, and it cannot be reduced by stopping labour immigration.

Other organisations representing the mainstream public (or those who claim to do so, such as labour unions) have taken a different position, maintaining that immigration should only take place after the government has exhausted the supply of labour already available.[9] This argument is concerned with unemployment and the welfare of the pre-existing population. It is in favour of non-binding cooperation between the Member States of the EU.[10]

The argument to increase Finland's economic standing is strong[11] and in the national policy arena, it has almost over-run the arguments of the trade unions. However, the public and the labour unions are still not convinced.

It is interesting to note that there is a significant gap in the reasoning of the two groups. Both appear to advocate for increased employment opportunities, but they differ in their understanding of the means to achieve it.

Pro-immigrant groups argue that increased national competitiveness would increase both national and foreign investment, and labour immigration to Finland that suits the need of the labour market, thus creating rather than reducing employment opportunities. What is more, unemployment is often exacerbated by demographic factors. A remarkable share of unemployed people belong to older age groups, and they will soon reach retirement age, therefore leaving the domestic labour force

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difference between these two in Finnish immigration policies, and that small policy in this case affects the outcomes of large policy.

[8] Kettunen 2005; Akava 2004. In a globalised world, national economies such as Finland are competing with economic giants such as China (see Florida 2005; Saxenian 1994; Newsweek 2005; Fortune 2005) that have not traditionally been its rivals.

[9] In an environment of high unemployment, it is politically savvy for labour unions to suggest that labour immigration decreases the labour market position of the native workforce (such as SAK 1998), even though research shows that this has not been the case in other countries - Sarvimäki 2004.

[10] This cooperation can take place in the form of an open method of co-ordination, such as the employment and social inclusion strategies within the EU's Lisbon Agenda. This method will help the Finnish Government cope with the demands of EU membership while maintaining national support.

[11] Especially in the arguments of employer organisations. The divide between qualitative and quantitative lack of labour force should maybe still be made clear, qualitative being illustrated for example in the French newspaper L'Express (2005b) and the Finnish newspaper Helsingin sanomat (15 May, 2005), and quantitative, or the great meaning of innovations for economic development, for example in the Financial Times (2005).

altogether. In this environment, the domestic labour reserve will decrease remarkably, and it is possible that the employment rate will rise as a result (Labour market immigration would therefore help fill future shortages). It would not compete with the unemployed (Sarvimäki 2003; 2004).

However, the government must also take into account those who do not migrate for the purpose of employment. The integration of all immigrants is an important issue as it has a significant impact on the success of immigration policies. This poses a challenge to the management of labour immigration, and it is discussed in more detail below.

The two above mentioned Finnish arguments, namely the one held by the trade unions and the one by economists, have become more uncompromising in the last few years.

If we look at government policies, it appears that the economic argument is winning. However, this places the government in an extremely difficult position. The Finnish social democratic welfare state has a strong 'moderate left' tradition, and the economic arguments now being used are pro-immigration and pro-economy (views of the 'moderate right').

It is interesting to see the shift in the traditional left, who appear to be talking more like the traditional right, and vice versa, when it comes to immigration. An interesting question is: where is nationalism now in the Finnish situation, on the left or on the right or both? And in the field of immigration, what has happened to the positions of the 'left' and the 'right'?

In the Finnish case, it seems the traditional views of the left and the right have changed places in the immigration debate. The political left and some parts of the trade union movement oppose immigration (for example, SAK[12] 2000), while the political right and the economists have taken a pro-immigration approach (see for example Akava, 2004). However, these shifts have not extended to other policy areas.

National stakeholders on the left and right have explained the existence of the gap between their traditional viewpoints and their current viewpoints on immigration in a way that it would seem that there is actually no gap at all. Thus, giving the impression that the current view of the left on immigration follows logically from traditional policies of the left, and the same process happens on the right.

1.2 The integration debate

The integration debate focuses on the European Commission's *Lisbon Strategy* and how immigration issues should be administered at the national, the European or even global level (Kettunen 2005). In the Lisbon Strategy, there is a clear implication that the 'guest worker' policies that many European states implemented after WW II failed,[13] not because immigration was bad as such, but because the host societies were unprepared for the influx of immigrants and they lacked integration strategies to help ease the emergence of cultural diversity (Penninx & Roosblaad 2000; Sassen, 1999). The Lisbon Strategy also recommends that the nature of the immigration

[12] SAK is the Central organisation for Finnish trade unions.

[13] If one looks at the gap between the objectives and outcomes of the policies – and one might argue that they failed because of deficiencies in the policies themselves.

process be kept in mind: Immigration cuts through traditional administrative divisions. This is evident, for example, if one looks at the number of authorities an individual immigrant has to deal with when applying for a simple thing such as a KELA-card[14] - a sort of 'passport' to the Finnish welfare state and its services.

It can be said that when integration policies fail, immigration policies fail, or it is difficult for the immigration policies to reach their objectives. Therefore the nature of immigration should be taken into account before designing policies. The fact that Finland is a late immigration country (Parkkinen 1998), means that there is little national experience in the field of immigration. The whole debate, including the integration debate, is well behind many other countries. It is now going through the same arguments discussed in many other countries decades ago. The polarisation of 'unemployment' and 'economic growth' arguments means that the whole discussion on immigration seems to be polarised as well. This is also reflected in the integration debate.

First, however, one might look at the term integration more closely. Integration is a popular concept in policy circles, but one wonders, what does it actually mean? Integration to what? To the society? What is society? Anthony Giddens' introductory book on sociology (Giddens, 1995, p 585), provides a definition of society that is strongly linked with the Nation and the State. According to him, society is "*one of the most important of all sociological notions. A society is a group of people who live in a particular territory, are subject to a system of political authority, and are aware of having a distinct identity from other groups around them*."

Is integration then integration to the State, for example?[15] In the Finnish case, is it then the KELA-card that binds the society together? Are ethnic minorities included in society if they do not share a common identity with the mainstream population? Sociology has so far been unable to provide a clear and comprehensive definition of society, and this may be one reason why integration policies often fall short of their objectives.

These are important questions for Finland as integration issues are likely to become increasingly important in the future. In some European states that are experiencing problems due to the unsuccessful integration of foreign nationals, such as the Netherlands, social capital has been used as a sort of methodological glue to either resolve the current situation (which is perceived as problematic), or to find out what the problem actually is (Fennema et al. 2000). In the Swedish media, the discussion on social capital has already begun (Dagens nyheter, 28 April 2005), and as many new societal discussions enter Finland via Sweden, discussion on networks and social capital can be expected to take place also in Finland in the coming years as well.

It is generally accepted that immigrants who work (who are integrated into the official labour market) integrate into society more easily as well. Additional 'integration policies' are needed for those who don't work (such as family migrants and humanitarian entrants). Again, it is important to remember the challenges caused by the 'guest worker policies', which failed to recognise that not all people who came

[14] KELA card in Finland (see Forsander et al. 2004) is meant for each residing individual to have in Finland, and it is needed when dealing with public services, for instance. On a theoretical level, it is the key to welfare services in Finland

[15] On the Swedish discussion, see Graham 1999; on a Finnish philosophical approach, see Kangas 2001. In the Nordic corporatist context, integration usually means integration to the State and partaking in the welfare state and its services.

were guests, and they were not all workers either (see Sassen 1999). As a result, policies ignored the need to integrate the new immigrants and their families.

As mentioned above, immigration started in Finland in the early 1990's, during a time of high overall unemployment (some 19 per cent). This was unfortunate, as it has linked immigration to unemployment in the minds of many Finns. Further, unemployment rates were (and are) high for the first generation of many immigrant groups.[16]

Both arguments for and against immigration have become stronger over the past two years. These arguments are mostly concerned with labour immigration. Arguments on other forms of immigration have been quieter (if one does not take into account the anti-immigration and security-based arguments presented by authorities working under or in the Ministry of the Interior and even the Minister of the Interior of the Social Democratic Party, Mr. Kari Rajamäki himself).[17]

The Finnish authorities, including the police,[18] have been very strict on asylum seekers. This behaviour, which has not met the criteria of the European Committee against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) of the Council of Europe nor of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) of the United Nations, as well as the first version of the current Alien's Act, have prompted comments from the Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) of the Council of Europe (CoE).[19] The CoE has e.g. given a notification to Finland for detaining asylum seekers in an old prison facility, which did not comply with its criteria (Salmenhaara 2004). It is interesting to note that the proposal for the current Aliens´ Act includes parts that have been criticised by several international bodies, including the UN.[20]

In this case, there is little difference between large and small policy - both are excessively strict.

Large and small policies also exist also in integration policy. At the official level, integration policies are pro-active, but on the ground (small policy), this is lost. There are several problems, including:

1) There is no coordinating body to manage the cross-sectoral implementation of immigration and integration policies. Instead, there are more than ten ministries working in relative isolation.
2) There is a lack of experience in this field in the Finnish administration. This means policy officers are continuously searching for working methods, which has led to a high number of (somewhat disjointed) short-term projects – there are not to many longer-term programmes or systems of administration.
3) Immigration and integration, issues are dealt with sporadically - on both the administrative (many coordinating ministries) and the budgetary levels (difference between official policy and its implementation). National co-

[16] As outlined in the introduction, unemployment rates are three times higher for the immigrant population, than they are for the mainstream population. However, statistics can be misleading: the latest proof of this is the notion by a Swedish researcher, who has argued that unemployment rates should not be counted per year but in shorter terms, in order to get more reliable data.

[17] Hufvudstadsbladet October 28, 2003; Vasabladet 28 October 2003.

[18] Hufvudstadsbladet 28 October 2003; Vasabladet 27 October 2003; Helsingin sanomat 28 October 2003a; Helsingin sanomat 28 October 2003b.

[19] Hufvudstadsbladet 28 October 2003; Vasabladet 28 October 2003; Helsingin sanomat 27 October 2003; Helsingin sanomat 28 October 2003a; Helsingin sanomat 28 October 2003b.

[20] As above

ordination becomes an administrative mosaic which is difficult for the Government to control.

It is also important to note that while integration is often described as a two way process, the Finns have not shown a lot of adaptation. For example in a 1999 survey, a remarkable percentage of Finns expressed clearly racist attitudes.[21]

Still, one might argue that in Finland, the integration debate hasn't even begun. Instead, the debate focuses on immigration and whether or not to increase labour market immigration for the future. The integration debate has only really focused on the current Integration Act, and it is fed by NGOs and people who work directly on immigration matters, for example, in municipalities.

At this point, in the public discussion there are some arguments focusing on integration prospects of different immigrant groups However, these arguments are not based on statistical analyses. Instead they are based on conclusions drawn on the basis of (labour market) integration situation of immigrants who currently reside in the country. Since the composition of this population is likely to change as more immigration occurs, conclusions that base on the current situation are invalid because statistical evidence (for example Forsander 2004) shows that the labour market integration of immigrants improves as the time of residence in the country of immigration increases. Also, the whole idea of immigrants as a commodity whose integration rate is equal to their employment or participation rate, is questionable. This is the level of Finnish public debate on integration at the moment.

The National Action Plan on Social Inclusion (Sosiaali- ja terveysministeriö 2003) covers the years 2003-2005. It is based on the current national Government programme, (Valtioneuvoston kanslia 2003) strategic action plans of different administrative bodies, and decisions made in the Nice European Council of 2000, according to which, these kinds of action plans should be made. The coordinating body responsible for national implementation is the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.

The basic idea espoused in the National Action Plan (NAP) is to preserve the existing structures of a strong welfare state, and prevent social exclusion. The NAP makes a distinction between social and economic exclusion and seeks to challenge both.

The strong, universal welfare state has managed and still does in most cases, to prevent the existence of absolute poverty, which means a basic standard is guaranteed (Sosiaali- ja terveysministeriö 2003; Takala et al. 1998). It refers to "minimum standards of physiological survival of people" (Raunio 1995; own translation). The criteria is based on the minimum level of human survival in a given society. However, relative poverty, referring to an income that is lower than the medium income in the society, does take place (Raunio 1998).

In 2005, STAKES, the research division of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health reported in its study that a large number,[22] a number of people in Finland live in some level of poverty. Previous studies show that some three per cent of the working-aged population have starved due to their economic situation (Karisto et al. 1998). It should be noted that poverty takes place in a country that is linked number one or at the top in several international competitiveness statistics, ahead of for example most EU15 countries, USA, and Japan. During the 1990's, also the variation

[21] Jaakkola 1999; racism experiences of immigrants are presented in Jasinskaja-Lahti et al. 2002.

[22] Considering the context of an advanced welfare state.

in income in Finland grew to more unequal than it had ever been in the last 30 years (Karisto et al. 1998), although still being moderate when compared internationally and not having grown exceptionally during the economic depression in the early 1990's. The incresed differences in mainstream economic income mean that people who lack resources which have demand on the labour market, such as immigrants, run a higher risk of exclusive factors than if the income range in the labour market was smaller (Reitz 1998). In Finland, there are not many groups that would be excluded from the social security system and thus the existence of 'new poverty' is quite limited (Karisto et al. 1998; Alcock 1993) The problem of Finnish social security is not its range, but its relatively low economic level (Karisto et al. 1998).

The NAP lists 11 groups in need of strategies to prevent social exclusion. These include, immigrants and the traditional Roma population.[23] As mentioned in the introduction, the current unemployment rate of immigrants is more than three times higher than for nationals. The NAP argues that the greatest obstacle to immigrants' social inclusion are linguistic barriers, skills recognition, a lack of secondary or supplementary education, a lack of education in the first place,[24] and the 'attitudes' or values of the mainstream population.

Another obstacle derives from the fact that immigrant children have a higher rate of drop-outs in the school system. However, one might argue that there is a problem in the system itself: in this case it seems to reproduce deprivation (Bourdieu & Passeron 1990).

1.3 The brain drain debate

The 'brain drain' debate uses the same arguments as the 'brain gain' debate - on national competitiveness. At the moment, economists are pushing for 'brain gain' to enhance the national economy and Finland's standing in the global market. Discussions focus on how to attract the most desirable immigrants. This attitude is very inward focused and there is little indication that the argument will move to a more global humanitarian / development angle in the future. Indeed, it appears to be too early to move to the brain drain debate, and one should not expect that this will ever necessarily happen in Finland in the future either on a large scale.

It is interesting to note, though perhaps predictable, that debates on making Finland more competitive focus on making Finnish companies more attractive for (foreign) investment. However, while the need has been recognised, it has not evolved into official policy, at least not in the public service. However, the private sector is starting to address this need in practical terms – recruiting workers from abroad, training their employees in Finland, and so forth (see for example Forsander et al. 2004).

In order to compete, Finnish authorities should start to discuss creating favourable surroundings for companies, such as 'blue oceans'[25] or new 'Silicon Valleys'.[26] The

[23] In addition to the Roma and immigrants, the list includes the repeatedly and long-term unemployed, the handicapped, children living in unstable circumstances, people with at least one long-term illness, people who are dependent on (illegal) drugs, women suffering from violence and/or involved in prostitution, people who have excessive debts they can't handle, homeless people, and people who run a great risk of social exclusion because of criminal activity.

[24] Meaning there is a difference between supply and demand – the skills are not compatible with the jobs available.

[25] Kim & Mauborgne 2005; the idea is to create for companies as ideal functioning environments as possible; this includes also adding their ability to continuously adjust to changes in their functioning environment: see also Saxenian 1994; Florida 2005.

public debate on this issue might be described as vulgar, and it is echoed in some actions of the State, especially the Ministry of the Interior.

There is a need to challenge the current ways of making policy, and this is probably why the realisation of the Lisbon Strategy and Community Method would be important. This is also most likely the reason why the German sociologist Jurgen Habermas (Tiede & Edistys 2/2003) states that Europe definitely does need a constitution. Sadly enough, there is a problem in this regard. Even though a constitution and the use of the Community Method in the harmonisation process would make the EU a stronger player in the global economy and would allow it to, for example, practice more open immigration policy in order to meet the economic challenges of the future, it would also widen the gap between national voters and the EU.

As mentioned above, the current arguments in the Finnish immigration debate focus on the employment rate of native Finns and economic competition.

The debate on brain drain seems to be slightly elitist, and it hardly represents the interest of the wider audience, even though, for example, SAK claims that it does. At the grass-roots level no one appears concerned about the (expected) brain drain. The grass-root level seems to resist the whole process of globalisation all together – in fact, it seems to be a 'think locally, act locally' process. The process of globalisation is happening from top to bottom - the actions of companies and ministries affect people and not vice versa. This, again, may become a threat to political legitimacy.

[26] Saxenian 1994; on Finnish research projects on the matter, Forsander et al 2004; Ruckenstein 2004.

2. Basing policies on evidence and consultation

The trade union movement appears to have chosen its side of the debate, leaving the State in a difficult position - trying to find a balance between wanting more knowledge, knowing what should be done, and still trying to maintain its public support, and democratic legitimacy. It appears that providing information on the benefits of immigration is not enough. The public sector is being paralysed because of its dependence on public support. This dependence is, however more relevant to the directing level of the labour unions, not so much for some lower levels. This is why the contradiction is passed on to take place inside the labour unions: the top level acts more negative towards immigration, and some lower levels more positively.

The government seems to feel it is unable to use information produced by researchers such as demographers in policy development, and as a result immigration policies are unlikely to achieve their goals (Prime Minister's Office, 2004). It feels that if it develops pro-immigration policies, based on current research, it will loose the support of the public and therefore loose power and a mandate to act.

The main problem is that current research is inconclusive. If the research indicated a clear need, arguments for more labour immigration would be much easier to make. This is not a problem of the existence of this need since statistical data shows it quite clearly, but of proving it on the level of research.

It is clear, however, that researchers view the effects of immigration differently from the general public. First, as outlined in chapter 1, the public is concerned that labour immigration will increase the unemployment level of the native workforce, or at the very least, immigrants will make employment opportunities more competitive. According to most research, the negative affects of immigration would be marginal – far smaller than the positive affects (Sarvimäki 2004).

Second, it is claimed that asylum seekers are 'asylum shoppers' who try to benefit from the social security system in the country of immigration. Finnish research carried out in the Al-Tash refugee camp in Iraq, contradicts with this argument: it showed that the reason to flee was mainly a push factor, not a pull factor, as this argument suggests. In the Finnish context the whole issue of abusing the asylum system is irrelevant. This is because the number of asylum seekers is consistently low, so low in fact that it makes no economic difference whether there are grounds for seeking asylum or not.

At the moment, most asylum seekers coming to Finland are so-called Dublin cases, who on the basis of the Dublin convention of the EU may search for asylum freely in EU countries, even though their application had been rejected in some of these countries. Since the asylum criteria in many EU states is quite strict, the situation drives many asylum seekers from one EU Member State to another. The Finnish Minister of the Interior Mr. Kari Rajamäki has used the term 'asylum shoppers' of these people, which generated harsh criticism from Finnish NGOs. The former sees the activity as abusing the asylum system, while the latter sees the situation as a human strategy. In August 2005, two NGOs criticised the statement of the Minister of the Interior for being stigmitising, populistic and one-eyed (Suomen pakolaisapu & Suomen pakolaisneuvonta 2005).

Third, it is common in the public to make generalisations concerning the whole immigrant population and their future generations on the basis of the current situation of the current immigrant population. In scientific terms, these kinds of generalisations concerning any population are false.

Fourth, at worst it is claimed in public that all asylum seekers are categorically cheaters and that internationally accepted human rights are not based on logic. This was shown in 2003, when for example the Council of Europe's European Committee against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) and Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) condemned Finland for breaking their norms when deporting a family of asylum seekers (viitteet). A number of authorities reacted by saying that they would not obey judicial norms formed outside of the Finnish system of authority (Salmenhaara 2004). One police officer even stated in a Letter to the Editor published in Finland's largest newspaper (with a circulation of approximately 500,000 copies during week-days): "*Do we still have to fawn upon foreigners?*" (Salmenhaara 2004).

The Finnish social psychologist Karmela Liebkind has said that Finns still have a defensive 'minority' national identity and that they experience all things foreign as a threat to themselves (Liebkind 1996). Maybe this is linked to the common fear that "foreigners come here to take our jobs". One might argue that some parts of the Finnish trade union movement are using this fear for their own advantage.[27]

2.1 Making use of knowledge

When comparing the arguments and actions of the Finnish government and authorities to the guest worker schemes practiced in many European countries around 1950-1970 (Sassen 1999; Penninx & Roosblad 2000), one must conclude that the cross-sectoral and longitudinal goals, the comprehensive approach set in, for example, the European Commission's Lisbon Strategy (Kok 2004), do not necessarily become reality in Finnish national policy. Indeed, the current Finnish policies (both big and small) can be compared with the guest worker system that existed in a number of European countries. To this end, one can see that the European Commission's Lisbon Strategy has not been adopted. However, this can be considered to be more or less typical to most EU Member States (Kettunen 2005). The main reason for is the unwillingness of European Member States to give up their national sovereignty.

However, not taking historical lessons into account will lead to unfavourable outcomes not only for the state but also for the individuals involved. It seems that in the Finnish case, the authorities are currently more concerned about maintaining their own positions, than taking a risk. Immigration is a very difficult phenomenon to understand, and if wrongly understood, policies could be ineffective. The current policy might not be branded a failure by all, but some individual immigrants might suffer (Wilson 1996). There is a real danger, for example, that immigrant will be blamed for the current high levels of unemployment, when in reality the problem is structural (Reitz 1998, Wilson 1996 & Geddes 2003).

A number of countries that benefited from guest workers after the Second World War are now experiencing the down-side of unmanaged cultural diversity. The problem is not the newcomers, individuals or even cultural diversity, which often is blamed for all sorts of societal problems (Allport 1979), but the lack of programmes and policies of integration. The integration needs of 'guest workers' families were not seriously addressed by the policy-makers of the time, even though these needs were understood (Allport 1979). A similar situation appears to be playing out again in

[27] Such as SAK 2000; who uses this type of rhetoric and interprets statistical information in a somewhat selective manner - as described, for example in Sarvimäki 2004.

Finland where the (perceived) interest of the general public and the actual economic needs of the state and the society, on the one hand, collide with the idea of immigration posing for the security and employment in the society.

On the demographic challenge, Finland appears to face the same situation as other western countries, however, an understanding of this situation is only now starting to emerge.

It is also important to note that Finland does not have colonial ties or other similar factors that could trigger the kind of 'chain migration' pattern argued by Saskia Sassen (1999). Therefore, the public fear and fear of some authorities that without strict legislation and border control, all foreign nationals would simply rush to Finland, seems to be exaggerated. In fact, the Finnish economy shows a need for more labour, both high and low skilled, and it is forecast that there will be problems in attracting labour to move to Finland (Forsander et al. 2004; Ruckenstein 2004). Indeed, the arguments, particularly those that blame foreigners for societal problems, don't really reflect the reality of the situation (Allport 1979). The current challenge is reminiscent of the classical sociological divide between individual and structural factors behind societal issues, such as unemployment (Salmenhaara & Vuori-Karvia 2005).

There is a lack of debate on the issues of immigration, integration and brain drain in Finland. In fact, if there is any argument on brain drain, it is about how to avoid it from happening in the future in Finland. The State and business groups (actors representing the economy) are worried about possible brain drain, and are developing brain gain strategies to counter the problem (Forsander et al. 2004). They are also searching for answers as to why Finns move abroad (Ruckenstein 2004). Do they see it as a global field of choices? The Finnish researcher Mika Raunio argues they do, as do several others (Raunio 2003; Florida 2005).

Brain gain is seen as problematic, for example, for employment, as unemployment remains a major problem in the western world, including Finland. This argument is in sharp contrast to, for example, the way in which some State authorities handle immigration issues. They do not seem to be worried about brain drain. Instead, they are more concerned about stopping foreigners from migrating to Finland.[28]

2.2 Including stakeholders

The stakeholders in the debate are mostly divided into two camps (as is the whole discussion). It would be inaccurate to speak about "Left" and "Right," as proponents of both the left and right appear to be using the traditional arguments of their opponents in the immigration debate. The traditional right is for immigration, and the traditional left against it (see section 1.1). In this sense, the immigration debate has gone "beyond Left and Right" (Giddens 1994).

Traditionally, the trade union movement and its organisations such as the SAK, has been on the left, but it is now taking a new position when it comes to immigration. This is logical because when the supply of labour increases, the position of the labour union movement is weakened and vice versa: when supply of labour decreases, the position of labour unions is strengthened. Labour unions therefore believe it is in their interest to oppose immigration (E.g. Penninx & Roosblaad 2000).

[28] Hufvudstadsbladet 28 October 2003; Vasabladet 28 October 2003; Helsingin sanomat 27 October 2003; Helsingin sanomat 28 October 2003a; Helsingin sanomat 28 October 2003b.

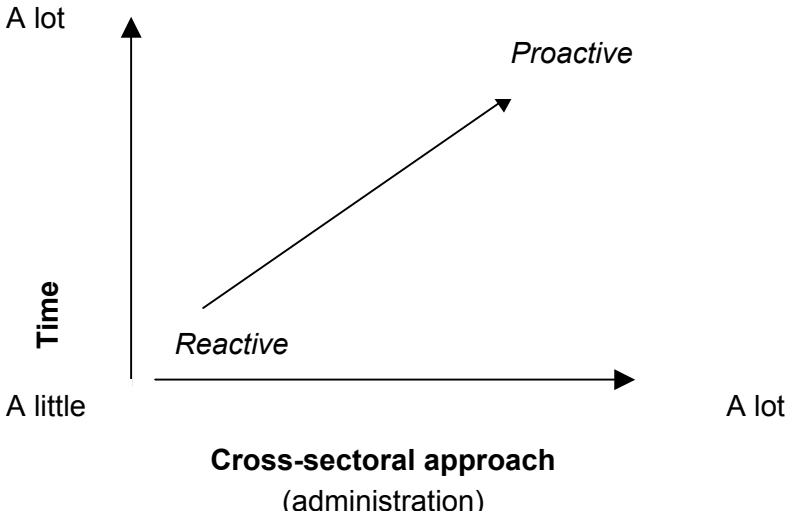
Stakeholders on the traditional right, such as right leaning political parties, business lobby groups, organisations representing business etc, such as the EK and others, are now in favour of immigration.

As these two poles switch places, it seems that nationalism is being adopted by different sides as well. Stakeholders on the traditional right have embraced nationalist doctrines from time to time, however, they now seem to be clearly convinced of the benefits of immigration. Stakeholders on the traditional left, on the other hand, are assuming quite a nationalistic stance in the immigration debate, thus adopting the traditional position of the right (such as SAK 2000). The public arguments of the left focus on protecting Finnish jobs for Finns by rejecting a foreign labour force. In a time of high overall unemployment, this seems to be an effective argument even if it does push them towards the traditional right. Their argument appears to be logical, but the motives might be a little less than altruistic. Indeed, one wonders if the left is simply trying to win more public support. The situation is somewhat reminiscent of the steering method of the EU: when choosing between community preference and open methods of co-ordination, the Member States seem to choose the OMC in order to better maintain national sovereignty and thus their own power and positions in society.

This point was clearly put by Joanna Apap (2004). She argued that the current need for common EU immigration policy is based on two matters: firstly, irregular (im)migration to the EU area, and secondly, the need for labour immigration in the EU countries in some sectors. Current research, including Apap's, presents a clear case for a common policy using the Community Method in order to make policy that achieves its goals.

The table below highlights the reactive and proactive policy of the EU. The OMC and Community Method are two different means for making the shift from the current reactive (immigration) policies of Member States towards a proactive approach. Thus, as seen as a process of harmonisation of different kinds of immigration policies in different Member States, the OMC gives more room for maneuvre for the member states in the harmonisation process but may be a weaker method in terms of harmonisation, whereas the Community method is another possible method, a stronger one in terms of the harmonisation but as it often over-runs parts of national legislation, it may not be as efficient as it could be because of political issues such as legitimacy of political power in the Member States, and national sovereignty.

Figure 3. The nature of reactive and proactive immigration policies and the possible shift from OMC to Community Method in EU immigration policy.



Summary

The Finnish migration history differs from many other European countries. After WW II, many of them were countries of immigration, while Finland was a country of emigration. Finnish people moved mostly to Sweden.

Finland only started to experience immigration from the beginning of the 1990s. The number and percentage of foreign nationals is the smallest in EU15.

The current unemployment rate of foreign nationals is almost three times higher than that of the native population. Despite of the high unemployment rate, however, the State and business groups are planning to substantially increase immigration to Finland. This is because the Finnish labour market is forecasted to suffer from labour shortages in the very near future, for demographic reasons and because domestic supply is not meeting labour market demands.

Finland is a typical EU Member State in the sense that it is in favour of an open method of co-ordination and against of the more binding Community method. The rationale behind this approach relates to concerns about maintaining national sovereignty.

The traditional positions of the left and right appear to have switched in the field of immigration. This is significant especially in the context of a traditionally social democratic welfare state.

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