

# **Disabled Immigrants in Finland**

The Integration perspective of the Hilma Model

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## ABSTRACT

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The main objective of this research is to analysis the role of Hilma model supports the integration of disabled immigrants in Finland. The research was conducted in the spring of 2014. During this period I got the basic information on disabled immigrants in Finland and special attention was paid on the life experience of the disabled immigrants. The thesis was conducted using qualitative methods and data was collected by interviews with two directors of Hilma and two disabled immigrant and one immigrant with disabled daughters. The directors belong to Hilma which is the organization for disabled immigrants in Finland. The interviewees were selected using snowballing method.

The analysis of the research was done using content analysis, hence finding the themes from the interview data. Through the results we can see that the integration of disabled immigrants using the HILMA model is a favorable process. The disabled immigrants are happy their difficulties and challenges are taken into consideration by the necessary authorities. Though different obstacles that can deteriorate the integration processes. The research brought out the aspect of disability identity, social interactions, education and employment and political participation. And the role played by HILMA in the integration process.

Key Words: Disabled Immigrants, Disability, Identity and social interactions.

## CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION .....	4
1.1 Research Aims .....	4
1.2 Hilma .....	5
1.3 Immigrants in Finland .....	5
1.4 Meaning of disability .....	6
1.5 Disabled immigrants in Finland .....	7
1.6 IDENTITY .....	8
1.7 Social interactions.....	9
2 SOCIAL SERVICES AND INTEGRATION POLICIES .....	10
2.1 The Finnish Integration Policy .....	10
2.2 Social Services Policies for the Disabled.....	11
3 LITERATURES REVIEW aND Theoretical frame work.....	15
3.1 Social exclusion.....	15
3.2 Social rights and citizenship and welfare.....	16
4 Research Methodologies .....	19
4.1 Qualitative Research .....	19
4.2 Method of data collection.....	19
4.3 Selection on interviewees/Sampling techniques...snowballing .....	20
4.4 Ethics and Validity and Limitations of the research .....	21
4.5 Data Analysis .....	22
5. Research Findings .....	23
5.1 Identity.....	23
5.2 Social interaction .....	24
5.3 Education and Employment.....	26
5.4 Disability and Political Participation .....	27
6. CONCLUSINON.....	28
REFERENCES .....	29
APPENDICES.....	33

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The integration perspective of the Hilma model is the topic for my research, my discussion will find out how the integration perspective in Hilma model supports the integration of disabled immigrants in Finland.

In Finland every person is equal. Everyone in Finland has equal rights and opportunities to live and act in the Finnish society. Discrimination is forbidden. In Finland the ideologies of Finnish policy concerning people with disabilities are the rights to equality, participation in society and ensuring that all disabled persons in Finland have access to all the necessary services to support them in their day to day lives.

Globally the rights of persons with disabilities are promoted by the United Nations convention on the rights for persons with disabilities. Finland is a signatory of the convention and the convention states that all states parties must commit themselves to ensure all persons with disabilities fully enjoy all human rights recognized in the convention. Services for people with disabilities are regulated in Finland by different laws which specify how the services are to be organized and who is entitled for them.

The Act on Services and Assistance for the Disabled specifies what sort of services the municipal social administration must provide for residents. The important principle of the law is that the municipality must deliver services for people with disabilities according to need.

### 1.1 Research Aims

The main objective of this research is to analyse the role of Hilma model supports the integration of disabled immigrants in Finland. The aim of my research is to answer the research questions below.

- 1) What support services are there in Hilma to support the integration of disabled immigrants?
- 2) How do support groups assist in the integration process?
- 3) What services support disabled immigrants in Finland as a whole?

## 1.2 Hilma

Hilma is the organization for disabled immigrants in Finland. Hilma originated in 2002 as a project of the Finnish Association of people with physical disabilities. Since 2006 it has operated under the Finnish Disability forum which is an umbrella organization for 30 disability organizations in Finland, and it is funded by the Finnish slot machine association (RAY). The objectives of Hilma to promote integration and independent lives of immigrants with disability or long term illness in Finland, to advance the understanding of the rights and equal treatment of disabled immigrants NGOs, authorities and other services providers. They also increase awareness of minorities and multiple minorities and thus prevent discrimination. Hilma offers counselling and support in different languages for disabled immigrants.

## 1.3 Immigrants in Finland

Comparing Finland to most of its Scandinavian neighbors we can say that Finland has few immigrants. Finland's immigrant population has increased in recent decades. Between 1990 and 2009, the number of foreign citizens legally residing in Finland increased six-fold, from 26,300 to 155,700. Out of the total population of 5.3 million, approximately 300,000 people in Finland, or 5 percent,

claim a foreign background (having been foreign born, speaking a foreign language, or having foreign citizenship). While the proportion of foreigners to native Finns has increased steadily since 1990, it is still considerably less than in Germany, Sweden, or Switzerland, where the percentages of the foreign born are above 10 or even 20 percent. Finland receives between 2,000 and 6,000 applications for asylum annually. Other types of applications for legal residence have tended to relate more closely to current economic conditions and have fluctuated from 15,000 applications received annually in downturns to 25,000 in boom times. (Migration Policy Institute, 2015)

There are no registers on immigrants with disabilities and thus also no official statistics in Finland. However, rough estimates can be made. According to international estimates, 10% of a population can be expected to have at least mild form of a disability, whereas 1% would have a severe disability. Applied to the number people with a foreign origin in Finland (at the end of 2013) we arrive at an estimate of 3000 – 30 000 disabled immigrants, depending on the degree of the disability (3000 severely disabled, 30 000 at least a mild form of disability). This estimate includes also so called second generation immigrants, meaning a person who was born in Finland and has parents who were born abroad.

#### 1.4 Meaning of disability

It is important to give a clear definition of the terminology am using in my thesis. Many people associate the term 'disability' with a certain groups of people, people in wheelchairs, people who are deaf or people who are blind. However, the true nature of disability is a much more complex issue and one in which our understanding is influenced by a number of factors such as law, the culture we live in, educational policy, or individual experience. According to the World health organization disabilities (2011), define physical disability as any impairment which limit the function of limbs or fine or gross motor ability. (Counseling Psychology, 2013)

The Finnish act for services and assistance for disabled (1987) describes a disabled person as a person who, because of his disability or illness, has special long-term difficulties in managing the normal functions of everyday life. (Valtakunnallinen vammaisuusneuvosto riksomfattande handikappådet, No year)

Disability in context of health experience, a disability is any restriction or lack (resulting from an impairment) of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being. (David John-stone2001, 10)

### 1.5 Disabled immigrants in Finland

People with disability especially immigrant are a very heterogeneous group and most of them have moved to Finland for various reasons and they all come from different backgrounds they have special needs which if ignored can lead to discrimination and exclusion in society , over of the nineteenth century and much of the twentieth the century, the exclusion of immigrants and refugees based on physical or mental impairments was mandated by the federal law and upheld by the judicial branch of the U.S government. Immigration laws in 1882 and 1891 established the stated policy of excluding potential immigrants with certain disabilities by barring entry of anyone who would be a public ward. (Baynton2001). (Jaeger&Bowman2005, 51)

In Finland the purpose of the non-discrimination act (21/2004) is to foster and safeguard equality and enhance the protection provided by law to those who have been discriminated against in cases of discrimination. Section 5 of the act states that. Improving the access to employment and training of persons with disabilities In order to foster equality in the contexts referred to in section 2 (1), a person commissioning work or arranging training shall where necessary take any reasonable steps to help a person with disabilities to gain access to work or training, to cope at work and to advance in

their career. In assessing what constitutes reasonable, particular attention shall be devoted to the costs of the steps, the financial position of the person commissioning work or arranging training, and the possibility of support from public funds or elsewhere towards the costs involved. (Ministry of Employment and the Economy, 2010)

## 1.6 IDENTITY

The concept of "identity" has become both a contested and a fertile field of research and theory in recent years (Watson, 2002). Several assumptions have come into focus: that identity can be structured upon shared social experience. That there are fixed identities of persons with disabilities and that the self plays a significant role in the formation of identity. However, it is important to understand the rhetoric versus practical realities in order to assess what can free persons with disabilities from fixed identities that have been enforced overtime by regulatory regimes embodied in cultural and societal prejudices. (Disability Studies and Quarterly, 2009)

Watson (2002:519) argues that the self-identity of persons with disabilities can be achieved not through a sidelining of impairment but through a reconstruction of what is normalcy. In this context, a person with disability challenges the social construction of what is regarded as normal and a normal body and embraces the difference of a body with impairment as what is normal to him or her. Self-identity hence becomes a product of a conscious action that questions identity dominated by social ascription. (Disability Studies and Quarterly, 2009)



## 1.7 SOCIAL INTERACTIONS

Social interaction is the manner by which we act and react to those around us. By interacting with one another, people design rules, associations and systems within which they seek to live. Interaction at times takes different forms such as first encounters, shared experiences; working together on issues of main concern interaction can also take place between different groups. Integration is being part of a society. Social Interaction is a key feature of social inclusion. It is generally a crucial factor in determining whether a person with disabilities is able to take part in society. In terms of, employment studies, leisure activities and generally building a social life. Hilma main project is organizing peer support groups for disabled immigrants. Through this support groups disabled immigrants or parents with disabled children are able to interact and share ideas the peer support groups are arranged in their native languages, so it makes it easy for them to interact. Improving social interactions of disabled immigrants helps build their confidences and their social skills.

Social skills are not the same thing as behavior. Rather, they are components of behavior that help an individual understand and adapt across a variety of social settings. Walker (1983) defines social skills as “a set of competencies that a) allow an individual to initiate and maintain positive social relationships, b) contribute to peer acceptance and to a satisfactory school adjustment, and c) allow an individual to cope effectively with the larger social environment” (p. 27). ( Social Skills and Academic Achievement,2008)

Social integration of disabled immigrants starts with the establishment of contacts between the immigrant and the host. Through social interactions this limitations are removed and attitudes change and differences are ironed out.

## 2 SOCIAL SERVICES AND INTEGRATION POLICIES

Social services are selected to deliver important opportunities for social and economic growth of the underprivileged part of the population in order to develop them into industrious and self-sufficient citizens and promote social equity. Basic social services of the government include Self-employment Support and useful skills development Support, among others. Social policies are civic services that oversee the well-being of citizens, and they revolve around the five social problems of poverty, poor health, poor housing, lack of education and unemployment. Social sustainability involves a functioning social security system that helps citizens handle risks in life. In Finland everyone has the right to social wellbeing, participation and the best health possible. In Finland Integration means that immigrants adapt themselves to Finnish society and acquire new skills, competences and practices which help them actively participate in the life of their new home country. Some immigrants find it easy to integrate; others need more time and support services - integration measures - to adapt themselves. Some knowledge of Finnish or Swedish, and information about Finnish society are important requirements for integration. (Ministry of Interior, 2015)

### 2.1 The Finnish Integration Policy

Integration into a new society means settling into a new country and culture, and adopting new practices. It takes time to settle in. In Finland immigrants have to adapt themselves into the Finnish society by acquiring new skills and competences which allow them to adapt to the life of their new country. The Finnish integration policy is based on the Act on the Integration of Immigrants and Reception of Asylum Seekers. The Act came into force in 1999, and since then it has been amended several times. It regulates also the reception of asylum seekers, reception of beneficiaries of temporary protection as well as assistance for victims of trafficking.

The Finnish integration plan is a personalized plan drawn up for individual immigrants covering the measures and services to promote and support their opportunity to acquire a sufficient command of Finnish or Swedish and other knowledge and skills required in Finnish society and working life, and to promote and support their opportunity to participate in society. The integration plan also takes into account measures and services to promote and support the integration of an immigrant's family. An integration plan may involve basic education, vocational education, and upper secondary education, studies leading to a higher education degree, continuing education or further training. (Ministry of the Interior, Finland, 2009)

## 2.2 Social Services Policies for the Disabled

Services for people with disabilities are intended to help disabled people to live independently and to participate in society activities on an equal level with other people. In Finland the domicile is responsible for organizing services for people with disabilities. The domicile is the municipality in which the person resides permanently. The municipal disability service advises disabled people and their family members on matters relating to the services provided. Financial assistance for people with disabilities is available from Kela, the Social Insurance Institution. (Guide for Disabled Immigrants, 2011) The Social Welfare Act (1982) is a general act and it covers the social welfare needs of all citizens, including disabled. Most of the services for disabled can be provided under this Act. According to this act municipalities are responsible for organizing the following social services: social work; child guidance and family counselling; home-help services; housing services; institutional care; family care; and activities support the access to employment and specific work for people with disabilities.

The Services and Assistance for the Disabled Act from 1987 provide services for disabled when a disabled person does not receive sufficient and suitable services or benefits under any other Act. The purpose of the law is to improve the conditions of a disabled person so that he may live and act as a member of

the society equal with others, and to improve the potential of disabled persons for independent action and for influencing the planning and implementation of the services provided by the society. In September 2009 the Act was reformed and, for example those with serious disabilities now have extensive rights to define the services that they need, and a subjective right to personal assistance. Government Report on Disability Policy 2006 is based on the Government Programme of Prime Minister. The Finnish disability policy is based on three main principles: equality, inclusion and necessary services and supportive measures. The policy focuses on human rights and non-discrimination, access to employment, reasonable income, education, independent living as a part of the general housing policy, reform of disability legislation, information technology and collection of information.

The Finnish policy of persons with disabilities is based on the Nordic idea of a welfare society. The goal is to ensure all citizens the services they need, regardless of their social or financial status. These services are mainly provided by public institutions and funded with tax money. The government gives out certain amount of money to the municipalities to organize the healthcare and social services to all citizens. (Human Rights - Way to Democracy, no date)

The act on service assistance for the disabled stipulates that, the municipality must provide persons with severe disabilities. With Reasonable transport and the as-associated escort services, day activities, personal assistance and service housing, if a person due to disability or illness, may need services for coping with everyday life. The municipality does not have a specific obligation to service housing and personal assistance for; if a severely disabled person adequate care cannot be achieved in community care measures. (Guide for disabled immigrants, 2011)

The Act on the Status and Rights of Social Welfare Clients relates to the social services. It specifies that the social services customer must be well-treated and their needs and interests considered. If a customer is dissatisfied with the social services, they can contact the local authority officer for social affairs, who can

help them for example to draw up a reproach. A disabled person and the social administration of their municipality together draw up a service plan in which it is decided what services are necessary. The disabled person's relatives can also take part in drawing up the plan, and also other local authority officials if necessary. In the plan a 'person responsible' is named, whose task is to make sure that the plan is followed. To be accepted for rehabilitation a rehabilitation plan is necessary, specifying what sort of rehabilitation is required. This plan is drawn up by the disabled person and his or her cares.

An immigrant is entitled to an integration plan if,

- He or she is unemployed and seeking work
- He or she receives social assistance.
- The need for a plan is apparent in the initial review

The initial review is carried out at the beginning of immigration for unemployed job-seekers, those receiving social assistance and the immigrants who request it. The initial review and integration plan are not carried out for all immigrants. The purpose of the integration plan is to help the person integrate into the Finnish society. The plan may involve for example Finnish language courses, rehabilitation and vocational guidance. Some cities have an Ombudsman for People with Disabilities. His or her job is to protect the basic rights of people with disabilities and to advice on matters involving disabled people. An Ombudsman for People with Disabilities operates for example in Helsinki, Espoo and Tampere. There is also an Ombudsman for Minorities is an authority who promotes the equality of ethnic minorities and foreigners in Finland. The ombudsman can be contacted if one experiences racial discrimination. . (Guide for disabled immigrants, 2011)

### 2.3 KELA FINNISH SOCIAL INSURANCE INSTITUTION

The Social Insurance Institution (Kela) provides various forms of financial assistance for people residing in Finland. Typically Kela covers basic security in a situation where other income is low. Kela benefits are usually payable to people who are covered by the Finnish social security system. This usually includes all permanent residents. Kela is responsible for example for the rehabilitation of people with disabilities, for paying various benefits and for the basic security of the unemployed. Some Kela benefits have a residency period requirement. In other words, a person must be resident in Finland for a certain period before he or she can receive the benefit.

The Kela health insurance usually covers all permanent residents in Finland. Those who are covered by the Finnish health insurance system receive a Kela card. The card entitles the holder to a Kela reimbursement at pharmacies and private health clinics. The card holder only pays the excess. The Kela card is free of charge. (Guide for disabled immigrants, 2011)

### 3 LITERATURES REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAME WORK.

There is a quite a number of studies about disabled immigrants in Finland, but most of the previous research I found was mostly in Finnish. On disabled immigrants has focused on creating a guide for disabled immigrants. The project by Yodit Melaku (2006) the aim of the study was to compile a guide of services available to disabled immigrants. The findings revealed that it's important for disabled immigrants in Finland to have a guide that outlined what services were available to them. The guide is planned as a basis of help and information for people who may find it difficult to get information may be due to language barriers. My research is not related to the above mentioned study. Because they have focused on creating a guide book, while my focus was to analyse the role of Hilma model supports the integration of disabled immigrants in Finland.

Other previous research relevant to this study was Disability, human right and justice. The aim of this research was to demonstrate how the field of disability studies consolidated the concept of disability as social oppression. By reviewing the main ideas of the social model of disability, By Debora Diniz, Livia Barbosa and Wederson Rufino dos Santos (2009)

#### 3.1 Social exclusion

Exclusion involves of active, multi-dimensional processes driven by poor power relationships interrelating across four main scopes, economic, political, social and cultural and at different levels including individual, household, group, community, country and global levels.

Social exclusion can be processes that lead to the exclusion of particular groups of people from engaging fully in community and social life. It can also be multidimensional process, in which various forms of exclusion are combined participation in decision making and political processes, access to employment and material resources and integration into common cultural processes. When

combined they create acute forms of exclusion that find a spatial manifestation in particular communities. (Byrne2005, 2)

Persons with disabilities are undeniably among the most vulnerable at risk of social exclusion, Poverty and social exclusion are indivisibly linked, and a key cause of poverty is the lack of employment. For people with disabilities, the condition with respect to employment is far from idyllic. On average, the participation rate of severely disabled people in the workforce is less than half that of able-bodied workers. Fight against poverty and social exclusion constitutes one of the major objectives of the European Social Model. According to Article 137 of the Amsterdam Treaty, Member States are encouraged to develop initiatives aimed at improving knowledge, to exchange information, to promote new approaches, and evaluate good practices and to design new policies. Furthermore, Article 13 enables the Council to take appropriate actions to combat discrimination based on disability and invites the Community Institutions to take account “of the needs of persons with a disability when adopting measures” and implementing legislation. The European Commission recognizes that people with disabilities, confront multiple barriers in accessing the labour market, social services, education and face high risks of becoming poor and socially excluded.( Disability and Social Exclusion in the European Union Time for change, tools for change,2002)

People with disabilities are underrepresented in social events. They are little or less opportunities for them to use their legal capacity. There many problems and discrepancies in how their wishes and sentiments become heard.

### 3.2 Social rights and citizenship and welfare.

Social rights guarantee that every person be given conditions under which they are able to meet their needs. Social rights are based on the idea of equality and guaranteed access to vital social and economic goods, services, and opportunities.



Persons with disabilities are entitled to exercise their civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights on an equal basis with others under all the international treaties. The full participation of persons with disabilities benefits society as their individual contributions enrich all spheres of life and this is an integral part of individuals and society's well-being and progress for a society for all - with or without disabilities. (United Nations Enable, 2007)

Finland represents the social democratic Scandinavian model. The normative details of this welfare regime can be defined as follows universal social rights public sector responsibility for people's well-being endeavors to achieve equality between the sexes as well as between provinces and in terms of income distribution, aims of full employment and high labor market involvement. A modern version of social assistance (toimeentulotuki) established in 1984 guarantees last-resort minimum subsistence if the individual or household cannot subsist on earnings, primary social benefits or other means. According to the Social Assistance Act (1412/97), social assistance denotes last-resort financial support, whose purpose is to secure the subsistence of a person or family and help them to manage independently. In Finland eligibility for social assistance does not depend on the nationality condition. Anyone can claim assistance while resident in Finland. (Trends in social cohesion, 2002)

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### 3.3 Human Rights.

Human rights are the basic rights and freedoms to which all persons are considered to be entitled, often held to include the rights to life, freedom, equality, and a fair trial, freedom from oppression and cruelty, and freedom of thought and communication. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was adopted in 2006 and came into force in 2008. It establishes a comprehensive framework for the protection and promotion of rights for disabled people and includes 50 Articles, which require parties to adopt its general principles, to take specific actions in relation to specific Articles, and to put in

place arrangements for monitoring and reporting on their progress. (ANED, No date)

Finnish law says that a disabled person must not be discriminated against. A disabled person has the right to live a normal life, they have a right to study, work and start a family. Finland signed the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and its Optional Protocol on 30 March 2007. Government Disability Policy Programme, VAMPO – Finland's Disability Policy Programme (2010-2015), outlining the most important measures to be undertaken in the field of disability policy was published on 26 August 2010. (Vammaisfoorumi, 2014)

The goal of the Disability Policy Programme is to ensure the equal status, participation and non-discrimination of persons with disabilities in society. The government wants to ensure the equal status of persons with disabilities in society by tackling draw backs by concrete corrective and development measures. (A Strong Basis for Inclusion and Equality, 2012)

In the 1940s and 1950s the United Nations was active in promoting the well-being and rights of persons with physical disabilities through a variety of social welfare approaches. The concern of the United Nations for the well-being and rights of disabled persons is rooted in its founding principles, which are based on human rights, fundamental freedoms and equality of all human beings. As affirmed by the United Nations Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, International Covenants on Human Rights and related human rights instruments, persons with disabilities are entitled to exercise their civil, political, social and cultural rights on an equal basis with non-disabled persons. (United Nations Enable 2003-2004)

## 4 Research Methodologies

A researcher needs to be aware of the important nature of the process employed in the topic and a study approach that will help her deal with the study more objectively. My research was conducted using quantitative research method. Interviews were done with target group of disabled immigrants, and two directors HILMA.

### 4.1 Qualitative Research

Quantitative research is often concerned with the meanings questionnaires or surveys, quantitative research can be interested in behavior and also examines how people interact with one another in a particular setting. (Silverman 2011, 4)

Qualitative Research is also used to uncover trends in thought and opinions, and dive deeper into the problem. It is used to gain an understanding of underlying reasons, opinions, and motivations. It provides insights into the problem or helps to develop ideas or hypotheses for potential quantitative research. (Snap Surveys, No Date)

The researcher prepared interview questions line with subjects beforehand before interviewing all the target groups in this study. The interview was conducted using open-ended questions. This was done to avoid answers from lacking originality.

### 4.2 Method of data collection

I chose to use interview method for my data collection my interviews were for

A) Two directors of Hilma

b) Two disabled immigrants and one parent immigrant with two children affected with disability.

The language used in conducting the interviews was in English and Finnish and I had to use an interpreter because of the language barrier one interview was conducted in Kurdish. Interview using open ended questions Open-ended questions, also called open, unstructured, or qualitative questions, refer to those questions for which the response patterns or answer categories are provided by the respondent, not the interviewer. (SAGE, RESEARCH MEATHODS, 2013)

My interviews were done face to face the interview were done in a common place and at an agreed date and time only one interview was done at a later date. All the interviews were video recorded with permission from the interviewees although one gave consent to be interviewed she wished that she should not be shown in the video. The interview was conducted in a quite environment although there were some technical problems like the batteries in the camera run out and I had to go and buy new ones.

#### 4.3 Selection on interviewees/Sampling techniques...snowballing

The criteria of selecting the interviewees were such that the persons interviewed would have to be disabled or affected with disability. The director of Hilma helped me by contacting some of the clients of Hilma. My interviewees were two directors of Hilma and also two disabled immigrants' one who came to Finland as a child and another one who is disabled and came to Finland through marriage and another one who has two children who are disabled and came to Finland as an asylum seeker.

Snowballing or chain referral sampling is a method that has been widely used in qualitative sociological research. The method yields a study sample through referrals made among people who share or know of others who possess some

characteristics that are of research interest. The method is well suited for a number of research purposes and is particularly applicable when the focus of study is on a sensitive issue, possibly concerning a relatively private matter, and thus requires the knowledge of insiders to locate people for study. In a different context, Coleman (1958) has even argued that it is a method uniquely designed for sociological research because it allows for the sampling of natural interactional units. (Snowball Sampling Problems and Techniques of Chain Referral Sampling, 1981)

I chose to use snowballing sampling for my research because my interviewees were referred to me by the director of Hilma after I explained to her what my study was about she suggested to me that she had some clients of Hilma in mind and she would contact them on my behalf, This type of sampling technique works like chain referral. After observing the initial subject, the researcher asks for assistance from the subject to help identify people with a similar trait of interest. (Explorable Psychological Experiments, 2015)

#### 4.4 Ethics and Validity and Limitations of the research

In my research ethical issues were taken into consideration. The purpose of ethical consideration is to instrument, in the processing of personal data, the protection of private life and the other basic rights which protect the right to privacy, as well as to support the development of and compliance with good processing practice.

Firstly I would like to point out that the researcher sought the consent from the Director of Hilma. My interviewees were informed beforehand about my research and the contents of my research and my reasons behind the study were explained to them beforehand. My interviews were done face to face and also it was a video recorded interview because of this it was important to get a signed consent letter from each of the participants and because I was doing a video recording one of the interviewees wished not to be shown in the video. I also

informed them that the video would be shown at Diacoinia University of social sciences and also would be used by Hilma if the need be. Validity as any other theory in the social sciences is a disputed term it means different things to different researchers. Sarantakos (1994) has rightly asserted that validity is 'a methodological element not only of the quantitative but also of qualitative research' (Sarantakos, 1994: 76).

During the research I experienced some problems the first being that it was hard to find material supporting my study. Secondly language barrier was also a problem because the interviews were conducted in Finnish and Kurdish although I used interpreters I would have preferred to have had direct interaction with the interviewees to boost the process.

#### 4.5 Data Analysis

I used qualitative method for my data collection. My analysis was based from the data from my interview with the five interviewees, which was conducted using open ended questions. I used content analysis to analyze my data. Content analysis involves establishing categories and then counting the various aspects of the content. (Silverman2011, 64) This enables a more objective evaluation than comparing content based on the impressions of a listener.

Content analysis is the systematic examination of written or recorded communication in order to break down, identify, and analyze the presence or relations of words, word sense, characters, sentences, concepts, or common themes. The focus of the analysis should be a critical examination, rather than a mere description, of the content. This can either be written recorded or visual. (Instructional assessment resources, 2011) I decided to do content analysis after watching the video over and over again and going through the interviews one by one to find what was appropriate among the answers given during the interview. Through this I was able to come up with the themes for my research.

## 5. RESEARCH FINDINGS

In this research the concepts of the research were social exclusion, Social rights and citizenship and welfare and human rights. Although the concepts differ in descriptions, they all have a collective element which is relevant in this study about how Disabled immigrants are integrated into the Finnish society. The research findings were derived from the analysis of the interview conducted with all the respondents. My method of data collection was through interviews. The results are presented inform of themes. My research tried to find out the views and experience of the topic of research with some key components in consideration. Reflecting on the theories of the study, the following were the results from the studies. Identification, Social interaction, education and employment

### 5.1 Identity

Identity can be defined as the crucial feature of who we are. A sociological approach to self and identity begins with the assumption that there is a reciprocal relationship between the self and society (Stryker, 1980). (A Sociological Approach to Self and Identity, No date)

As seen in 1.6, our identities define us because they contain personality behaviors and highlight social roles, Disability is a particular identity perspective, one that marks individuals as part of a group and as members of a minority sometimes subjected to marginalization, prejudice or discrimination. Disability identity should guide people with disabilities in the direction of what to do, what to value and how to behave in circumstances where their disability stands out, as well as those where it is not significant.

“When we address our clients we look at them as individuals we try and make them feel that they are in a country where disability is not a taboo”

“I am able to go where I want and am accepted everywhere I go and I get all the support I want from all agencies that I go to for help”

Self-identity has real challenges that sometimes challenge persons with disabilities can have wide-ranging effects for personal development in terms of education, career, and community life. The consequences might lead to experiences of underachievement and inadequate self-actualization. This also raises other concerns about persons with disabilities like lack of self-actualization. This may lead to low self-esteem, poor self-image, and negative self-concept.

## 5.2 Social interaction

In 1.7 that social interaction is a social exchange between two or more individuals. The enactment of active anti-discrimination policies, anti-prejudice policies and activities that promote awareness so, us promote the positive aspects of a diverse society are important in this regard. Interaction between the disabled immigrants and the host community is important. In my research I wanted to find out how interactive Hilma was with its clients and surroundings, Through Hilma disabled immigrants are able to interact through their peer support group. They have one Kurdish speaking support group and people from the same ethnic background can come together and share their experiences and they get to socialize and network.

“Since joining the group I and my wife have been able to get the support we need in taking care of our daughters we get people who come over to help with babysitting, my wife is smiling more”

Hilma also organizes family fun days where immigrant parents with kids can come together and enjoy together. HILMA organizes workshops to create



awareness to various professions that deal or work directly with disabled immigrants.

“Since social workers in hospitals and teachers and other professionals have direct contact with immigrants affected with disability, we are able to inform them about the needs of disabled immigrants and thus it is easy to handle their needs and to consider that most immigrants are not comfortable to talk about disability”

### 5.3 EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT.

Education and Employment play an important role in the integration of immigrants in any society. Every person has a right to work and employment. In Finland many disabled people participate in working life. In Finland companies or employees who employ people with disability may receive financial assistance if they need to make adjustments at the work place in order to employ a person with disability.

Disability services are mainly the responsibility of municipalities in Finland. Undertakings to support employment are organized for people with disabilities, as well as rehabilitative work events to help maintain working capacity. The employment and economic development office assist immigrants in finding work, they also have skilled advisors who are experienced in employment of disabled persons. The employment office also organizes Finnish language courses for immigrants.

“Despite moving to Finland as a child and going through the Finnish education system and getting a degree I still cannot find a job, it is difficult to get employment”

In Finland the rate of unemployment among persons with disabilities is quite high with comparison to unemployment of non-disabled persons. Being excluded from the labor market takes away from the disabled person the feeling of independence and the feeling of improving their live and improving themselves.

“I come across jobs that am qualified in go for interviews but am always told sorry you were not qualified, sometimes I wonder if it's because of my disability”

Employment plans have not been effective enough in assisting persons with disabilities from rehabilitation work to the open labor market. At times the rehab-

itation work ends up being permanent employment. As recognized in the State report (para 35), the risk of women with disabilities being excluded from working life is even greater than that of men with disabilities. Those who do find employment are often in part-time work, their salary is not a living wage, and Participation in working life is significantly lower for both men and women with disabilities. The rate of unemployment among women with disabilities is higher than among men with disabilities. (Vammaisfoorumi, 2014)

#### 5.4 Disability and Political Participation

Participation in political and public life is a human right as well as a vital step in the process of enjoying other human rights. Disability studies literature that the disability movement has been a positive force, both in the collective ability to lever political change and in the benefits to individual participants (Driedger, 1998; Gilson et al...1997; Chartlon, 1998; Branfield, 1999) (Shakespeare2006, 68)

Through my research the interviewees said they hardly partake in political issues I think the reasons of not participating in politics is because of their culture or because of the lack of political connection in there former countries , however Hilma on the other hand the director told me that.

“Through Hilma we do advocacy’s work we are able to take action to help disabled immigrants by securing their rights and representing their interest in obtaining the services they need. Through our advocacy work we promote social inclusion, equality and social justice for disabled immigrants in Finland.”

## 6. CONCLUSION

There is need for more representation for disabled immigrants in Finland. . In order to tackle social exclusion in my opinion, there is need to carry more awareness about the rights of disabled immigrants. Especially in the immigrant community where their back ground. View disability as curse. Raise awareness throughout immigrant community regarding persons with disabilities, including at the family level, and foster respect for their rights and dignity.

Hilma continues to play an important role as a support center for disabled immigrants. This is reinforced by assessments of the different answers from the research. The government needs to play a better role or to partner with organizations doing advocacy work for disabled immigrants. This can be done through funding the organizations and also through the formation of policies that might affect disabled immigrants. By involving disabled immigrants by using a bottom-up approach because the disabled immigrants understand more what challenges they face and what solutions will work for them.

Through this research I have developed my skills in immigration and integration. Having an immigrant back ground and coming from a country. Where there policies and social assistance for the disabled are minimal in such that they are just on paper and they are not implemented. I have learned through my research that with proper government system management and social services the most vulnerable like the disabled can get social services that can make their lives easy.

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## APPENDICES

Questions asked to the directors of HILMA and the disabled immigrants.

1. What is the meaning of HILMA?
2. What do you do and how are immigrants able to access your services?
3. Do all disabled immigrants access disability services from the Finnish government?
4. What challenges do you face while dealing with disabled immigrants?
5. How does Hilma reach out to the immigrant communities?
6. What services are there for disabled immigrants in Finland?
7. What are the most difficult problems faced by disabled immigrants to adapt to their life in Finland?
8. How has HILMA helped in the integration to the Finnish society?
9. Can the disabled immigrants access education and employment?
10. What policies would the disabled immigrants like to see being improved and changed?
11. Do they experience discrimination because of their disability?