



Immigrants' Right to Employment in Finland's Private Security Sector

Nadia Hashemi

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ABSTRACT

Tampere University of Applied Sciences
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NADIA HASHEMI:

Immigrants' Right to Employment as Security Guards in Finland's Private Security Sector

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This qualitative thesis examines the barriers faced by immigrants and people with a foreign background during their security guard studies, job search and working life in Finland's private security sector. The objective of the thesis is to offer useful information for the actors in the sector in support of measures that ensure the legal rights and equal employment opportunities of students and security guards with a foreign background.

The data were collected through interviews with the police licensing authorities, students studying for the vocational qualification, human resources managers of major private security companies, security guards with a foreign background, and the trade union representing the employees in the security sector. The responses were examined in the context of theoretical models on labor market barriers and recent research on race and ethnicity in Finland's labor market.

According to the students and companies, the most significant barrier at the vocational studies and job interview stage was the issue of language proficiency. The interviews with employers highlighted their aim for a fair recruitment process and appreciation of the motivation and readiness of the employees with a foreign background to perform different tasks, compared to more selective native Finnish employees. The interviews with the security guards revealed that they have frequently experienced hostility from some native Finnish work colleagues at the workplace but have not reported these cases. The union reported an increasing number of members with an immigrant background but was not aware of the frequency of cases involving deliberate workplace discrimination.

Conclusions are drawn from these findings. Firstly, it is not possible to estimate or measure statistical discrimination in the security guard licensing process because collecting these statistics is seen as illegal ethnic profiling. Secondly, a program by City of Helsinki and a security company combining intensive language learning and vocational training offers an employment model for students with insufficient Finnish language skills. Thirdly, the major security companies seem to be recruiting more security guards with a foreign background than ever, but weak leadership, workplace culture, and fear of the consequences in making a complaint allow racism and discrimination to continue in some workplaces. Fourthly, there is a need for company management and all supervisors to provide support and offer safe grievance channels to minority employees and to take consistent action against those who discriminate. The trade union could potentially also play a more active role in a process that strengthens the rights of its members and improves the performance of the companies on diversity and inclusion issues.

Key words: security sector, security guard, immigrant labor, barriers, diversity

TIIVISTELMÄ

Tampereen ammattikorkeakoulu
Tradenomi
Oikeudellinen asiantuntijuus

NADIA HASHEMI

Maahanmuuttajien oikeus työllistyä vartijoina yksityisellä turvallisuusalalla Suomessa

Opinnäytetyö 60 sivua
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Opinnäytetyössä tarkastellaan esteitä, joita maahanmuutto- ja ulkomaalaistaustaiset henkilöt kohtaavat turvallisuusalan opinnoissa ja työnhaussa sekä vartijan työssä yksityisellä turvallisuusalalla Suomessa. Tavoitteena on tarjota hyödyllistä tietoa kaikille alan toimijoille ja tukea toimenpiteitä, jotka varmistavat ulkomaalaistaustaisten opiskelijoiden ja vartijoiden oikeudet ja yhtäläiset mahdollisuudet työllistyä alalla.

Laadullisen tutkimuksen tieto kerättiin haastattelemalla poliisin lupaviranomaisia, ammattitutkintoa opiskelevia opiskelijoita, turvallisuusyritysten henkilöstöpäälliköitä, ulkomaalaistaustaisia vartijoita sekä turvallisuusalan ammattiliittoa. Dataa tarkasteltiin työmarkkinoiden esteitä käsittelevien teoreettisten mallien sekä Suomen työmarkkinoihin, rotuun ja etniseen taustaan liittyvän viimeaikaisen tutkimuksen puitteissa.

Opiskelijoiden ja yritysten mukaan merkittävin este ammatillisten opintojen aikana ja työhaastatteluvaiheessa on puutteellinen suomen kielen taito. Työnantajien haastatteluissa nousi esiin pyrkimys tasa-arvoiseen rekrytointiin, ulkomaalaistaustaisten työntekijöiden vahva motivaatio ja valmius suorittaa erilaisia tehtäviä verrattuna valikoivempiin kantasuomalaisiin työntekijöihin. Vartijoiden haastatteluissa ilmeni, että monet ovat kohdanneet työpaikalla vihamielisyyttä joidenkin kantasuomalaisten työkollegojen taholta, mutta eivät ole raportoineet tapauksista. Ammattiliitto kertoi kasvavasta maahanmuuttajataustaisten jäsenten määrästä, mutta ei näyttänyt olevan tietoinen työpaikoilla tapahtuvan tahallisen syrjinnän yleisyydestä.

Tuloksista tehtiin johtopäätöksiä. Ensiksi, tilastollista syrjintää ei voi arvioida tai mitata vartijoiden lupamenettelyssä, koska näiden tilastojen kerääminen nähdään laittomana etnisenä profilointina. Toiseksi, Helsingin kaupungin ja turvallisuusyrityksen pilotoima intensiivinen yhdistelmä suomen kielen opetusta ja turvallisuuskoulutusta tarjoaa työllistymismallin opiskelijoille, joilla on puutteellinen suomen kielen taito. Kolmanneksi, isot turvallisuusyritykset näyttävät rekrytoivan enemmän ulkomaalaistaustaisia vartijoita kuin koskaan, mutta heikko johtaminen, työpaikkakulttuuri ja pelko valituksen seurauksista ja sallii rasmin ja syrjinnän joillakin työpaikoilla. Neljänneksi, yritysjohton ja jokaisen esimiehen tulee tarjota tukea ja turvallisia valituskanavia ulkomaalaistaustaisille työntekijöille sekä toimia johdonmukaisesti syrjiviä henkilöitä kohtaan. Myös ammattiliitolla voisi olla aktiivinen rooli prosessissa, joka vahvistaa sen jäsenten yhdenvertaisuutta ja parantaa yritysten suorituskykyä monimuotoisuus- ja osallisuuskysymyksissä.

Avainsanat: turvallisuusala, vartija, maahanmuuttajat, työllistymisen esteet, diversiteetti

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TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

EU European Union

1 INTRODUCTION

The active participation of immigrants in working life is a crucial factor for their wellbeing and meaningful integration into Finnish society. Enabling a higher level of employment among immigrants can also significantly contribute to the Finnish economy, where many sectors are suffering from labor shortages, and also boost state tax revenues that are increasingly affected by Finland's widening dependency ratio. However, the unemployment rate among immigrants is currently double the rate for native Finns. Finland's private security sector offers good potential for employing more immigrants. The sector has been growing for many years, and the major security companies have visibly diversified their workforces during the past decade.

Any jobseeker can face problems and obstacles when searching for employment and settling into a new job. However, for immigrants and people with a foreign background, overcoming the challenges of finding work often does not only depend on their motivation, abilities, qualifications, and experience. Finding a job can require overcoming additional, often hidden, barriers at every stage of the process – starting from language issues, finding the advert or contact person for a suitable job, being called for an interview, and the dynamics of the interaction with the company's HR staff. Depending on the company's internal culture, minority employees can also face challenges in being accepted by their coworkers and supervisors and in advancing their careers. This thesis examines the extent of these barriers in the private security sector through interviews with vocational teachers and students, police licensing authorities, private security company HR staff, and employees.

The choice of topic is influenced by my personal experiences both as an immigrant and a security guard. I moved from Afghanistan to Finland in 2004, received my security guard permit in 2018, and have worked in various private security guard roles during the past three years. The thesis is commissioned by Stadin AO (Helsinki Vocational College and Adult Institute), where I have worked as a security sector legal advisor and assistant for teachers and students. To our knowledge, this topic has not been previously addressed in a thesis in Finland.

2 TOPIC AND AIMS OF THE RESEARCH

The thesis examines the barriers to the employment of immigrants and people with a foreign background as guards in the private security sector. The qualitative research data includes interviews with the police licensing authorities, teachers and students in the educational institutions that offer the vocational qualification for security guards, and HR managers and employees from two large security companies. The aim is to provide useful information for all the actors in the private security sector and to support measures towards ensuring equal opportunities for immigrants and people with a foreign background to work as security guards.

2.1 Research question and sub-questions

The research question is "What kind of barriers do immigrants who have studied to become security guards or are now working in Finland's private security industry face during their study and work path?"

The thesis also addresses these sub-questions:

- What is the experience of Finnish education institutions and employers in the private security sector regarding immigrant candidates?
- How aware are they of the issues concerning barriers and discrimination, and what policies have they developed in this regard?
- To what extent is the immigrants' legal right to be employed as security guards in this sector realized, and what are the best practices to remove possible barriers to their employment?

2.2 Methodology

The qualitative data produced for the thesis – interviews related to the vocational studies, licensing and recruitment processes, experiences of working life, and company diversity policies and practices – is examined in the context of theoretical models on labor market barriers and recent research on race and ethnicity in Finland's labor market.

The data has been collected through the following methods:

- Semi-structured thematic interviews with seven students, two private security company HR managers and seven security guards who have worked or are currently working for one of the major companies in the sector. The interviews were conducted face to face or online. One security company did not respond to the interview request.
- Email questions and responses from two regional police licensing authorities and the trade union representing private security sector employees.
- Email requests for quantitative data from the police authorities (re. statistics on private security guard license applications and granted licenses) and companies (re. statistics on job applications and hired employees).

The privacy of the students and employees interviewed for the research is protected by not revealing their names, education establishments or employers, and by omitting any details from which they could be recognized. Despite these assurances, some security guards with a foreign background declined to be interviewed because they feared that talking about their experiences of discrimination at work could lead to more problems with work colleagues and have negative consequences on their careers. The interviews were recorded with a phone or an audio recording device, transcribed and translated.

Conclusions are drawn on the extent of the barriers to employment facing people with a foreign background who have studied the vocational qualification and/or worked as guards in the private security sector, and suggestions are made for measures that address these barriers and strengthen diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

2.3 Terms, definitions and statistical context

At the end of 2020, about 8% of Finland's total population of 5.53 million had a foreign background, which Statistics Finland defines as persons whose both parents or the only known parent were born abroad. Of the 444,031 persons with a foreign background living permanently in Finland, 76,614 have been born here. The size of the foreign workforce in Finland (aged 15-74) is 136,783 persons (Statistics Finland, data compiled in TEK, 2021). This demographic group is very heterogenous in terms of languages and education.

In the Nordic context, the population with a foreign background is much smaller in Finland compared to Sweden, Norway and Denmark. Among the European Union

countries, only Luxembourg, Slovenia, Latvia, Slovakia, Estonia, Cyprus, Bulgaria, Lithuania and Malta have a smaller population with a foreign background (Statista, 2021).

The labor market situation facing the workforce with a foreign background in Finland has been challenging for decades. According to OECD (2020, 55, when the migrant population is calculated to include only those arriving from outside the European Union, employment rates among Finland's migrants are the lowest in the OECD. In June 2021, the number of unemployed jobseekers with a foreign background was 37,650, which means that the unemployment rate among foreign residents was 27.5% – almost four times higher than the overall 7.1% unemployment rate recorded in Finland for July 2021 (Statistics Finland, data compiled in TEK, 2021).

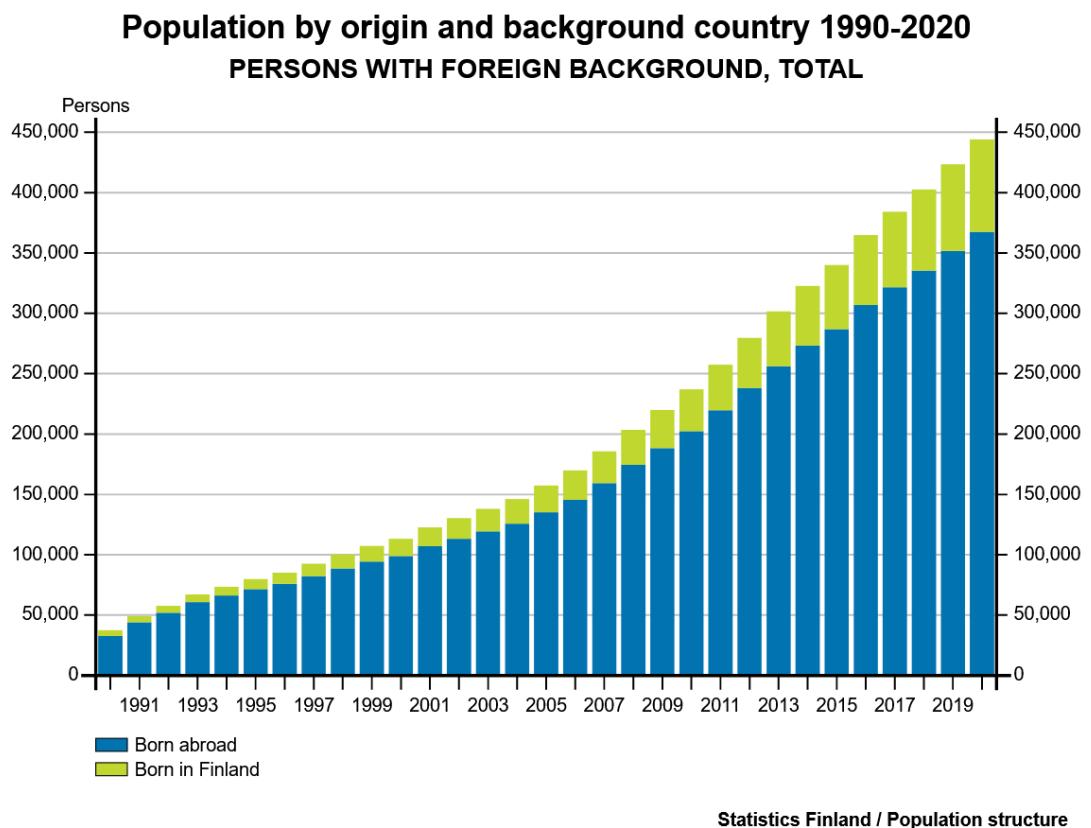


Figure 1: Persons with a foreign background 1990-2020

Source: [Statistics Finland](#)

2.4 Overview of the private security sector

As a whole, Finland's security sector employs more than 50,000 people, and the private security companies employ over 15,000 people. According to the security sector trade union TURVA, about 17,000 people have been granted a guard license in Finland, and about 55,000 people are registered as security stewards. The private security companies have a joint trade organization called Suomen Vartioliikkeitten liitto, covering more than 90% of the sector's turnover and employees. According to the organization's website, most of the sector's employees work as security guards, cash-in-transit (CIT) drivers, security inspectors, security stewards, safety officers, and in various positions in cash centers. Security guards can have diverse roles, but usually their main task involves protecting property and people, and they often also undertake various service tasks for the customer.

The website of the Ministry of the Interior states that private security services have been growing strongly in Finland since the 1980s, with guards and security stewards now performing tasks previously handled by the authorities. This growth and demand for more labor provide more opportunities for people with a foreign background to work as security guards in the private security sector.

Table 1. Selected private security companies in Finland

Data compiled from Asiakastieto.fi in October 2021

	Turnover in 2020, M€	Employees	
Securitas Oy	173.7	2018	all employees
Avarn security Oy	125.5	3162	all employees
Palmia Oy	101.1	400	security employees
Reila Palvelut Oy	29.4	345	
Stanley Security Oy	31	226	
Loomis Suomi Oy	24.5	319	
Etelävarvointi Oy	5,5	112	
KV-Turva Oy	4.9	147	
KMV-Turvapalvelut Oy	1.9	30	

3 THE POLICE AUTHORITIES AND THE GUARD LICENCING PROCESS

According to the Private Security Services Act (1085-2015), private security companies must have a license granted by the License Administration Unit of the National Police Board to offer their private guarding services, security steward services, security system installation services, and security check services. A guard is defined as "a person who carries out guard duties in the service of a security sector business." These duties can include protecting property, securing the personal integrity of individuals, and exposing crime that is targeting protected premises or a client. Before starting work in any of these duties, the guard must apply for a personal guarding services permit granted by the police board. This application can be made online in Finnish, Swedish or English on the website of the Police of Finland or by filling in a written form.

The police website states that all the applicants for a guard license must fulfill the same requirements, as laid out in section 10 (1) of the Act on Private Security Services (1085/2015). The applicant must fulfill the following criteria:

- Have reached the age of 18 years but not 68 years
- Have completed a security sector qualification or equivalent qualification in accordance with the Vocational Training Act (531/2017) that meets the requirements laid down by the decree of the Ministry of the Interior, including training that at least includes the topics concerning the security sector, the security business, the rights and duties of a guard, and the work tasks of a guard (basic security guard training)
- Be known as an honest and dependable person whose personal characteristics make them suitable for the job

Pursuant to section 91 (2) of the Private Security Services Act, a police department may revoke the admission as a guard altogether or for a specified period if:

- the guard no longer meets the conditions in section 10 (1) (3).
- the guard has been convicted of a criminal offense that shows they are unfit for duty, or has intentionally acted incorrectly as a guard.
- the guard has fundamentally violated the key conditions or restrictions related to their acceptance as a guard

The law also determines the powers that guards can exercise in carrying out their assignments. For example, according to the Ministry of the Interior, a guard has the right to remove a person from the guarded location, apprehend an offender and perform a security search to ensure that apprehended persons do not have items or substances that pose a danger to themselves or others. Under certain conditions, guards may use force when exercising their powers.

The screenshot shows the Finnish Police website's English language page for guard license applications. The page features a dark blue header with the 'POLIISI' logo and navigation links for 'SUOMI', 'SVENSKA', 'ENGLISH', 'SEARCH', and 'ONLINE SERVICES'. Below the header is a navigation menu with categories like 'Frontpage', 'Passports, identity cards and permits', 'Offences', 'About the police', 'Other services', 'News', and 'Contact information'. The main content area has a breadcrumb trail: 'Police > Passports, identity cards and permits > Permit forms for the private security sector > Card applications'. The main heading is 'Card applications', followed by a sub-heading 'Guard, temporary guard, security officer, security steward'. The text explains that users can apply for duplicate copies of all licences required in the private security industry in the police e-service portal or in a licence service point of their choice. It lists four steps for applying: 1. Have your photograph taken at a studio that will send your photograph to the police electronically. 2. Fill in the application online. 3. Attach to your application the photograph retrieval code you received from the photographer. 4. Pay the application fee online. Below the steps, it notes that an electronic photograph supplied by a photographer directly to the police can be used for both electronic applications and those made at a police licence service point. It also mentions that the e-service allows users to apply for licences electronically and provides a link to a list of studios that will send photographs to the police electronically (in Finnish). A sidebar on the right contains definitions for 'Guard, temporary guard, security officer, security steward'. The sidebar defines a 'Guard' as a person who carries out guard duties in the service of a security sector business. It defines a 'Temporary guard' as a person carrying out guard duties in the service of a holder of a security sector business licence for a period of no more than four (4) months. It defines a 'Security officer' as a person carrying out security tasks requiring certification. A security officer is always in the service of a holder of a security sector business licence or a security protection supplier. It defines a 'Security steward' as a person who performs security stewarding assignments. A security steward can work in service of a holder of a security sector business licence or on self-employed basis.

Figure 2. The English language web page for the guard license application

According to the police authorities' website, the guard permit applicant needs to attach, among other documents, proof (copy of the certificate) of the satisfactory completion of basic guard training (a minimum of 120 lessons - the temporary guard training comprising a minimum of 40 lessons forms a component of guard training)

- temporary guard training and guard training completed after 1 October 2002 and before 1 January 2017 and confirmed by the Ministry of the Interior are deemed equivalent to the training courses specified above. The training courses deemed equivalent include:

- basic guard training (a minimum of 100 lessons which may comprise a separately completed temporary guard training course with a minimum of 40 lessons and a basic guard training course with a minimum of 60 lessons) or
- a further vocational qualification for guards (VAT), which includes basic guard training (a minimum of 100 lessons) or
- an initial vocational qualification in safety and security (security officer), which includes basic guard training (a minimum of 100 lessons)

Validity of guard licence

The guard licence remains in effect for five years or until the holder turns 68.

The police department may place terms and limitations on the guard licence for reasons of:

- training
- personal qualities
- other such circumstances

Any such terms and limitations will be time-specific and regional or guarding-duty specific. If there are any changes in the above reasons, the police department may also amend the terms and limitations of licensing.

If the applicant fulfils the criteria, the police department will issue a guard licence to the applicant and, upon request, a certificate indicating that the applicant has been granted a guard licence. The certificate serves as a guard licence until the actual guard licence has been delivered to the applicant.

Figure 3. Information for applicants on the police web page for the guard license application

3.1 Interviews with Licence Administration Units of the National Police Board

As part of the research, interviews were requested with two of the regional police units responsible for processing the guard permit applications. The questions were sent in Finnish by email, and the responses were given by email by the Helsinki Police Department and the Central Finland Police Department. The translated answers are included below in full.

QUESTION 1.

What factors are taken into account when processing an application for a security permit when the applicant is an immigrant?

Helsinki Police Department

"All the applicants are checked for certificates and police records. From the immigrants who do not have Finnish citizenship yet, we check the validity of the residence permit: permanent or temporary residence permit and the right to work. From EU citizens, we check the EU registration.

Central Finland Police Department

"The police do not differentiate or categorize the applicants on any grounds, the process of issuing and revoking permits is uniform for all applicants/permit holders, and persons with an immigrant background, for example, cannot be identified from the security permit information system."

QUESTION 2.

Does the police have statistics or estimates for how many guard permit applications immigrants make annually and how many are granted?

Helsinki Police Department

"The police force does not have ethnic profiling."

Central Finland Police Department

"The police do not differentiate or categorize the applicants on any grounds, the process of issuing and revoking permits is uniform for all applicants/permit holders, and, for

example, persons with an immigrant background cannot be identified from the security permit information system."

QUESTION 3.

Have there been changes in the number of applicants?

Helsinki Police Department

"The impression is that the number of applications has increased from all applicants."

Central Finland Police Department

"As a general statistical point, during the corona pandemic, the overall number of permit applications from the private security sector fell from 19,722 in 2019 to 14,336 in 2020."

QUESTION 4.

What are the most common reasons for not issuing the guard permit?

Helsinki Police Department

"Crimes under pre-trial investigation and criminal convictions."

QUESTION 5.

How many permits issued to foreigners are revoked annually, and for what reasons?

Helsinki Police Department

"Statistics are not compiled."

QUESTION 6.

How many permits are revoked annually, if the figure also includes all the Finnish actors in the sector, and for what reasons?

Helsinki Police Department

"The number varies annually. So far, during the current year (2021), 10 guard permits and 22 security officers' permits have been revoked. National statistics are provided by the National Police Board's security sector monitoring unit (TAVY)."

"Lifestyle, attitudes and health issues can be considered central to the assessment of personal characteristics. Lifestyle, attitudes and behavioral issues include alcohol, drug or other substance abuse, as well as violent or dangerous behavior."

QUESTION 7.

From the perspective of the police force, are there any other factors that should be taken into consideration regarding immigrants' guard permits or employment in the security sector?

Helsinki Police Department:

"In some cases, insufficient knowledge of the Finnish or Swedish language for taking the basic guard or security officer training and the related the examinations (Ministry of the Interior decree on the training of security guards and security officers and use of weapons as well as the general care nurse training for the holder of a security business license)."

"The applicant's background is not known because the person may have been in Finland only for a short time, in which case those who have lived in this country since birth are not on an equal footing because their criminal record is available from birth."

"It is not even good for the person to first start integrating into the society in the profession of a security guard or security officer, which requires familiarity with the society and the ability to apply the Finnish law equally using adequate Finnish or Swedish language so that the object of the guard's actions can properly understand why they are subjected to actions or their fundamental rights are interfered with in the domain of a guard or a security officer."

3.2 Analysis of the police responses

The comments from the Helsinki Police Department show that immigrant applicants face a permit process with more hurdles to clear compared to Finnish nationals because the police authorities need to take account of the length of their residence permits, the availability of records from the applicants' countries of origin, and their level of Finnish/Swedish language skills. From the police perspective, this additional level of scrutiny is necessary to put all guard permit applicants on an "equal footing" and ensure that all the guard permit holders fulfill the training and operational requirements for the job.

The police justify this added level of scrutiny in terms of maintaining standards in the security sector and also from the national security perspective. This means that immigrants who only have short-term residence permits in Finland or cannot access records from their countries of origin face structural barriers to employment beyond their control, irrespective of their suitability for working as security guards.

According to the police, there is no ethnic profiling or statistics collected concerning applicants with an immigrant background. Therefore, it is not possible to evaluate if the applicants with a foreign background face any discriminatory bias within the permit-issuing process. This would require a comparative analysis of the number of guard permit applications from Finnish and foreign applicants, including the number of rejected applications and revoked permits, the reasons behind the decisions. It would also be useful to find out if there are statistically significant differences in the decisions made by the different regional police authorities.

4 LABOR MARKET BARRIERS: THEORIES AND REALITIES

The experience of many jobseekers with a foreign background is that finding work does not only depend on their personal motivation, abilities, qualifications, and previous work history. Research in Finland and other countries shows that the labor market does not provide equal opportunity and access to employment. The additional barriers faced by jobseekers with a foreign background are often related to language and cultural issues and employers' attitudes, skills, and resources regarding their recruitment practices and workplace culture. Some labor market and workplace barriers can involve hidden or deliberate discrimination and bias.

This unequal playing field and the goal of equal opportunities on the labor market are recognized in the *European Pillar of Social Rights* proclaimed by the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission in 2017. According to the European Commission, "Discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation is illegal throughout the Union. However, certain groups, such as third country nationals and ethnic minorities, face difficulties in accessing the world of work. Supporting their labour market participation is

fundamental for ensuring equality of opportunities, and becomes an economic imperative in a context of an aging workforce (European Commission website, 2021)."

4.1 Identifying barriers to employment

The candidates with a foreign background can face additional barriers at every stage in the process of securing permanent employment, starting from the issue of language proficiency, access to education and training, getting qualifications and being licensed, networking and finding the job advert or contact person to apply for a job, being called for the interview, the dynamics of the interview itself, integrating into a company's work practices and internal culture, and progressing in their career.

A report by Finland's Ministry of the Interior, *Maahanmuuttajien työllistymisen esteet*, analyses the employment barriers faced by immigrants in terms of factors that apply to the jobseeker and factors that apply to the employer (Sisäasiainministeriö, 2011,17). In summary, the report identifies the following barriers that reduce the employment opportunities of immigrants:

- Language skills – insufficient Finnish/Swedish language skills, often linked with inadequate knowledge of Finnish culture
- Lack of social networks – for example, a lack of contacts to Finnish people and other immigrants, the lower level of participation by women, and the cultural differences related to the position of women
- Problems related to the recognition of qualifications and work experience
- Insufficient work experience and knowledge of working life in Finland, for example, differences in work culture, job roles, job titles, and technologies

According to the report, the barriers affecting the willingness and ability of an employer to hire immigrants include the following:

- Employer's attitudes and perceptions
- Limitations in the employer's knowledge, know-how, recruitment, and induction skills
- Employer's lack of knowledge about different cultures, poor language skills (including English)

- Employer's lack of knowledge about the available forms of employment support
- Employer's fear that hiring an immigrant worker will bring additional costs

The report also notes that employers often view any work experience gained in Finland as more valuable than even long-term experience gained in other countries because "it shows that the person understands working life in Finland and is able to perform adequately" (Sisäasiainministeriö, 2011, 20) The employers' recruitment decisions are also influenced by the prevailing attitudes and assumptions concerning immigrants in Finnish society. For example, an "employer may not want to hire an immigrant for a customer service position due to a fear that customer attitudes will not make this possible (Sisäasiainministeriö, 2011, 21)."

4.2 Theories on the role of race and ethnicity in the labor market

The barriers faced by jobseekers with a foreign background can also be examined in the context of theories that examine the role of race and ethnicity in the labor market. These theories identify labor market barriers that can be caused by individual behaviors, organizational and institutional practices or statistical profiling, ranging from subtle, unintentional or hidden bias to deliberate, discriminatory attitudes and practices embedded within an organizational culture (e.g. Hall et al. 2017, NRC 2004, Lee 2005).

Race and ethnicity are often important markers for people's self-identities and how others view and treat them. Whether consciously or unconsciously, people are constantly categorizing each other into distinct groups based on perceived attributes such as age, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, disability, race and ethnicity (Hall et al., 247). Race is defined by National Research Council (2004, 26) as "a grouping of humans based on shared physical or social qualities into categories generally viewed as distinct within a given society." Characteristics like skin color, hair texture and distinctive features can trigger particular social perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors toward each group, depending on the society.

The term ethnicity is used to refer to cultural factors such as language, religion and nationality, defining groups of people who share a common cultural heritage. Other characteristics such as a person's name, way of dressing, and diet may also contribute to these ethnic categorizations (Nagel 1994, cited in NRC 2004).

People can form strong first impressions and judgments about others based on racial and ethnic attributes (Olcaýsoy Okten, 2018). These split-second judgments may be loaded with preconceptions shaped by previous personal experiences or lack of interaction with different population groups. These impressions are also shaped by the surrounding social and media discourse. Categorizations based on race and ethnicity are not value-neutral because they always depend on who defines who and in what context, shaped by the history and social circumstances of the particular society. The racial and ethnic categorizations that exist in society elicit differing social perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors toward each group (NRC, 2004). Those groups that face negative interpretive or symbolic connotations, stereotypes or prejudice are particularly susceptible to discrimination because racial discrimination historically has been and continues today to be a phenomenon of social attitudes and behaviors stemming from people's perceptions (NRC 2004, Finland's Ministry of Justice 2021).

Citing the example of the United States, where the ways in which different populations think about their own and others' racial status has changed, NRC (2004) notes that these classifications "will likely continue to change over time with changing sociopolitical norms, economic patterns, and waves of immigration (e.g., the assimilation of some European immigrant groups from 'nonwhite' to 'white' status in the first half of the twen-tieth century and the growing acknowledgment of mixed-race origins in the twenty-first century)."

In the model of employment barriers by Hall et al. (2017, 247), gender, race and disability are identified as the immutable attributes of each job candidate, and the mutable attributes are the job candidate's criminal record, socio-economic status, transportation, childcare, mental health, education and communication skills. In this model, the barriers to employment result from the stigma and stereotypes that recruiters attach to these attributes (and their combinations) and also from employers' organizational practices. Here stigma is defined as "undesired

differentness" from what society deems as "normal" or "expected" (Bagenstos, 2003, cited in Hall et al., 2017, 248).

Table 2. Source: National Research Council (2004, 67)

Source Points for Discrimination	Labor Markets
Access to institutions or procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hiring • Interviewing • Unemployment
While functioning within a domain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wages • Evaluation • Work environment
Movement through a domain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotions • Layoffs • Rehiring
Key actors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employers • Customers • Coworkers

According to NRC (2004, 4), discrimination in the context of a job interview occurs when a prejudiced interviewer "adopts behaviors such as interrupting, asking fewer questions or using a hectoring tone, that result in poorer communication and performance by immi-grant applicants compared with other applicants." The interviewer's bias can also be more subtle and unconscious, such as "non-verbal hostility in posture or tone of voice that communicate immediate dislike and undermine the performance of otherwise equivalent interviewees." Bias at the interview stage also occurs when an employer "uses a test in selecting job applicants that is not a good predictor of performance on the job and results in proportionately fewer job offers being extended to members of disadvantaged racial groups."

After being hired by a company, the workplace integration and promotion prospects of a minority employee depend to a large degree on the company's internal culture, including

the example set by managers and supervisors, and the attitudes of the majority employees regarding increasing diversity in the workplace. In a worst-case scenario, new recruits have to prove themselves in a suspicious, negative or even openly hostile work environment, deal with individual racist coworkers or supervisors, and possibly discriminatory organizational practices concerning wages, evaluation, promotion, layoffs, and rehiring (NRC, 2004). In a best-case scenario, the employer successfully manages an ongoing process aimed at creating an inclusive company culture where diversity is valued, and minority employees are treated as equal coworkers and have equal, merit-based promotion opportunities.

Most workplaces reflect, at least to some degree, the discriminatory attitudes of the wider society. In any large company, some employees are likely to be biased, either unconsciously or deliberately, against other employees outside of their own social group. Discrimination at the workplace can include verbal antagonism or abuse such as "casual racial slurs and disparaging racial comments, either in or out of the target's presence" (NRC, 2004, 56). Developing a more inclusive company culture requires awareness-raising and sensitive intervention to discriminatory language. Otherwise racist jokes, name-calling and so-called normal workplace banter can become a frequent discriminatory reminder to the minority employees that they are not part of the ingroup. Some minority employees are able to respond in kind and negotiate such micro-aggressions through disarming humor or patience and defend their identity without feeling marginalized, but not everyone has the verbal skills and confidence to do this.

The more subtle types of emotional and cognitive bias in the workplace can be "unconscious and automatic, as ingroup members unconsciously categorize outgroup members on the basis of race, gender, and age" (Fiske, 1998, cited in NRC, 2004). These nonverbal expressions of antagonism can lead to issues of avoidance and segregation, with some employees strongly preferring the company of their own ingroup rather than interacting with co-workers from a different background. An ethnographic study by Nuriyar Safarov (2018) describes the canteen of a logistics company where the employees from Finnish and foreign backgrounds usually prefer to sit at different tables, and the boundary between them is maintained and reinforced by both the actors involved. As a result, "immigrant employees, experiencing communication difficulties with Finnish nationals within their department

and with other departments, have a detached and segregated position in the Corporation (Safarov, 2018, 74)."

In the long term, nonverbal rejection, not participating, or being excluded from the informal conversations and networks within a workplace can leave minority employees isolated and become a barrier to their professional development and hinder opportunities for promotion. According to NRC (2004, 57), "avoiding another person because of race can be just as damaging as more active and direct abuse."

Measuring labor market barriers and discrimination is not a simple task. Each employer has its own system for recruiting, sorting and assessing the value of job candidates. Although empirical evidence shows that these decisions can result in significant disparities and differential outcomes between racial and ethnic groups, it is often difficult to obtain direct evidence of barriers and show to what extent discrimination may be a contributing factor in the companies' decision-making process. According to NRC (2004, 16), "differential outcomes by race and ethnicity may or may not indicate discrimination ... racial disparities are often substantial and widely observed, but only rarely do researchers directly observe discriminatory behavior".

In countries like Finland and the United States that have a strong legal system, the labor market barriers and discrimination faced by people with a foreign background do not usually involve direct hostile behavior because overt racial and other types of discrimination are forbidden by law. It is in the employers' interests to avoid legal challenges and the associated negative publicity. NRC (2004, 60) argues that discrimination is now more likely to take more subtle and complex forms, occurring spontaneously and ambiguously and going undetected, particularly at the institutional level: "All manifestations of subtle prejudice – indirect, automatic, ambiguous, and ambivalent – constitute barriers to full equality of treatment."

The theoretical models and insights provided by NRC and Hall et al. provide the context for analyzing the qualitative data compiled for this thesis from the interviews with Finnish S2 vocational teachers, students, the police licensing authorities, private security companies' HR managers, and employees.

4.4 Discourse and research on race and ethnicity in Finland's labor market

For a long time after the Second World War, Finland was almost unaffected by global or European migrations compared to the other Nordic countries and frequently experienced annual net emigration until the early 1980s (Korkiasaari & Söderling, 2003). It was not until the 2000s that Immigration to Finland started to grow significantly. According to Statistics Finland, the share of people with a foreign background in Finland's population has increased from 0.8% in 1990 to 5.9% in 2014 and 8% in 2020. Therefore, the emergence of a more multicultural workforce and society through immigration is a relatively new development in what is still a predominantly homogenous society outside the Helsinki metropolitan region.

Finland has established a reputation for supporting human rights and gender equality, and is often placed among the leaders in a wide range of international rankings. For example, the United Nations World Happiness Report has named Finland the happiest country in the world every year in the period 2018–2021. Finland is also ranked second in the EU 2020 Migration Integration Policy Index, which measures policies to integrate migrants in all EU Member States, Australia, Canada, Iceland, Japan, South Korea, New Zealand, Norway, Switzerland, Turkey, and the United States. In this index, Finland scored well in labor market mobility, education, political participation, permanent residence, and access to nationality. However, official policies and the frequently stated commitment to equality and integration do not necessarily reflect the histories and current labor market realities facing minorities in Finland.

For example, the current socio-economic position of Finland's domestic minorities, the indigenous Sámi people and the Roma who came to Finland in the 1600s is shaped by the historical trauma of racism, discrimination, and long-term marginalization. In October 2021, following many years of campaigning, the Finnish government announced the establishment of a truth and reconciliation process with the task "to identify and assess historical and current discrimination, including state assimilation policy, and violations of rights, to find out how these injustices affect the Sámi people and their communities today" (Valtioneuvosto, 2021). Both the Sámi and Roma populations number about 10,000 people. They are now numerically smaller minorities than many immigrant populations living in Finland, including the Russians, Iraqis, Somalis, Afghans, Chinese and Vietnamese.

There is now a considerable body of research showing that Finnish government policies have not reached the goal of effectively integrating the immigrant populations into the labor market. The recent report by the engineering union TEK concludes that "foreigners in Finland's labor market face prejudice, unnecessary language requirements, discrimination, lack of recognition of their qualifications and lower pay than their Finnish counterparts" (YLE, 2021). Research by OECD also shows that Finland has experienced long-term challenges in integrating its immigrant populations into the labor market. A labor market study published by OECD in 2017, *Finding the way: A discussion of the Finnish migrant integration system*, included the following findings:

- Large disparities observed between the native-born children of the foreign-born and those of their peers with native-born parents point to deeply-ingrained integration challenges in Finland.
- The proportion of 15-34 year olds with a migration background who are neither in employment nor in education and training (NEET) is among the highest in the OECD.
- Among those youth who were born in Finland with parents born overseas NEET rates reach 36% and 34% among men and women, respectively – placing Finland as the worst performer in the OECD in this regard.
- Finland performs particularly poorly when it comes to integrating some of those migrants who face the most significant barriers to labor market entry.
- In the last round of census in OECD countries, the employment rates among migrants arriving in Finland from Somalia and Iraq were the lowest of all countries covered in the Database on Immigrants from OECD Countries.

Source: OECD (2017, 6-7)

Published in 2019, the Second European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey (EU-MIDIS II), *Being Black in the EU*, surveyed 5,803 persons of African descent in Austria, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Portugal, Sweden, and United Kingdom. The respondents were immigrants (first-generation) and descendants of immigrants (second-generation, born in the survey country). In this survey, the respondents from Finland reported the highest rate of racist violence (14%) and racist harassment (63%) experienced in the previous five years, and the second-

highest perceived rates of discrimination (45%) over the previous 12-month period. On the positive side, the respondents from Finland expressed the most trust in the police force and were the most active in reporting cases of discrimination. Several other studies in recent years, including *The Stopped: Racial Profiling in Finland (2018)* and the report of the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman on discrimination experienced by people of African descent (2020), have also shown that ethnic profiling persists in Finland even though it is illegal.

During the past decade, there has been intensive political debate, media interest and social media argument on immigration, multiculturalism, racism, and integration in Finland. The media and social media discourse have often been influenced by the anti-immigration agenda and provocative statements of the Finns Party, which made an electoral breakthrough in 2011. Several of the party's members of parliament have been found guilty in a court of "agitating against an ethnic group". The arrival of a record 32,478 asylum-seekers (mainly from Iraq) in 2015 has further polarised public opinion on issues concerning refugees and immigration.

Alongside the ongoing culture war between the conservative ethnic nationalists and the liberal supporters of a more multicultural Finland, there has been growing government and public awareness that Finland requires more immigrant labor to maintain its economy and current level of state tax revenues. The rapid aging of Finland's population will result in reduced tax revenues and a widening dependency ratio between the employed and retired population. This has prompted increasing interest from the government, municipalities, and some private sector companies in finding measures to improve the employment rate of residents with a foreign background and to increase work-based immigration to Finland. Doubling labor migration before the end of this decade is one of the government's main employment goals.

In November 2021, the Confederation of Finnish Industries, the leading organization representing the interests of private sector companies, called for a "state of emergency" to tackle the shortage of labor and skills experienced in many sectors of the economy (EK, 2021). According to the confederation, Finland's population will start to decline in 2034. There will be 300,000 fewer people of working age in the 2050s and 2060s, so the country's survival depends on attracting large numbers of skilled employees from other countries. The influential confederation demands rapid

policy measures to make recruiting foreign employees to Finland easier.

Published in 2019, the SIRIUS WP3 national report, *Finnish Integration Policies as Barriers and Enablers to Migrant Labour Market Integration*, co-funded by the Horizon 2020 program of the European Union, provides an overview of this ongoing discussion with a discourse analysis of more than 250 texts on the way that the different actors central to integration issues frame the labor market integration of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers. The actors involved are government ministries, political parties, official national institutions, NGOs, faith-based organizations, labor unions, and employer organizations. The labor market barriers discussed in these texts include, for example, the immigrants' language skills, lack of recognition for foreign qualifications, cultural differences, discrimination, lack of networks, and ineffective integration procedures (SIRIUS WP3, 2019). According to the report, the discourse regarding labor market integration in Finland is "commonly framed in a positive and opportunistic overtone" and is mainly concerned with strengthening the economy and the competitiveness of Finnish companies by providing labor force, new skills, new contacts, and new information" and "the potential that migrants have for internationalizing companies, opening new markets abroad, providing new networks and contacts and yielding new innovations." The authors of the report note that "Noticeably, multiculturalism and diversity are rarely framed as having value of their own, but rather as a means to an end (SIRIUS WP3, 2019, 4)."

4.4.1 Barriers at the recruitment stage

Recent labor market research shows that immigrants and other job seekers with a foreign background, including second-generation immigrants born and educated in Finland, can face barriers at the recruitment stage due to employers' attitudes. For example, the Fundamental Rights Barometer research project (2021), carried out by Finland's Ministry of Justice in conjunction with the Human Rights Centre, found that 36% of Arabic speakers and 31% of Russian speakers had experienced discrimination when looking for work during the past 12 months. According to the EU-Midis II study, 16% of respondents who came to Finland from sub-Saharan Africa had experienced discrimination in their job search during the previous 12 months, and 28% during the past five years.

In 2020, Finnish market research company Taloustutkimus Oy published the report *Kotona Suomessa (At home in Finland)* on the recruitment of immigrant employees, based on questionnaire responses from 1009 Finnish companies. The findings of this extensive survey include the following:

- About a third of the companies believe that immigrants have difficulty adapting to Finnish working life practices, regardless of whether the company has any experience in employing immigrants.
- Half of the companies believe that an immigrant's country of origin has an impact on how well they perform at work.
- Companies prefer to hire workers from inside the EU, especially Estonia and the Nordic countries, which are associated with perceptions of diligence, language skills, and similarity of culture.
- The recruiters would least like to hire immigrants from the Middle East and Africa (29% of the companies mention these regions).
- Culture is the most frequently mentioned factor for not wanting to recruit people from certain countries.

The 'suitability' of the candidate to fit into a company's work community is a key term used by the companies. In their analysis of the questionnaire results, the report's authors argue that the requirement for suitability can be used to discriminate against immigrants from undesirable countries/backgrounds and is also based on the assumption that there is no need for flexibility in the workplace culture. Instead, "the job seeker must be, or at least become, very similar to the work community (Taloustutkimus, 2020)." Presenting culture as a barrier to recruitment is also seen to be problematic because "it bundles a group of individuals into a single group that is assumed to carry negative cultural traits" and "represents an essentializing way of speaking in which people are thought to have cultural qualities that are assumed to be innate, permanent, and unchanging ... In this regard, it can be said that there may be discriminatory and even racist attitudes that affect the recruitment of employees."

Akhlaq Ahmad, a researcher in the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Helsinki, has conducted a large-scale field experiment using the correspondence method to provide empirical data on "whether and to what extent discriminatory practices against job seekers of immigrant origin vary with respect to different ethnic groups" (Ahmad, 2020). The experiment involved sending 5000 fake CVs to 1000 publicly advertised

vacancies from applicants with equivalent credentials in terms of demographic and human-capital characteristics, differing only in name and ethnicity. The candidates with immigrant backgrounds were clearly identifiable as second-generation immigrants, who were educated in Finland, spoke fluent Finnish, and obtained their professional qualifications and work experience in Finland. The job vacancies tested were in restaurant and catering, retail trade, cleaning, clerical, and customer services. The jobs varied from unskilled to medium-skilled and skilled jobs and included, amongst others, positions of cook, waiter, head waiter, kitchen worker, café worker, shop assistant, shop cashier, office assistant, office secretary, receptionist, accountant, and cleaner (Ahmad, 2020).

The results of this experiment, the first of its kind in Finland, were unambiguous. "The callback rates from companies showed that employers significantly prefer Finnish applicants over ethnic candidates, and within ethnic applicants they prefer candidates with a European name over a non-European name ... They further show that locally acquired human capital provides a better pay-off only when the job candidate belongs to a group that is placed higher on the ethnic preference ladder (Ahmad, 2020)."

Table 3. Callback rates for job candidates in Ahmad's field experiment
Source: Ahmad (2020, 9)

Finnish name	39.0%
English name	26.9%
Russian name	22.8%
Iraqi name	13.4%
Somali name	9.9%

The existence of an unofficial 'immigrant hierarchy' formed from Finnish society's perceptions of different types of immigrants is also described by Kaisu Koskela (2013). This hierarchy places value on immigrants in Finland based on their ethnicity, socio-economic status, and various other interlinking factors, dividing them into differently valued categories. At the top of this hierarchy is the category of "wanted,"

highly skilled preferably Western, migrants while at the bottom end of the hierarchy are "unwanted" humanitarian migrants from less familiar cultures (Koskela, 2013).

A study published by the Finnish Centre for Pensions (ETK) in 2016 followed the working lives of 58,000 foreign nationals aged 18–64, who came to Finland in 1995, 1996, 2000, 2001, 2005 and 2006 until 2013 or (if earlier) the time of their emigration. The results of this long-term research showed that "the immigrants from Estonia and Western and Southern Europe had the best employment situation. Moreover, their working lives lasted the longest, and their earnings increased during their stay in the country. Worst off in the labour market were the immigrants from the Middle East and Somalia (ETK, 2016, 2)."

Media and social media discourse, including an eagerness to report on crimes by immigrants and so-called welfare migrants coming to Finland also play a significant role in how different types of migrants and their children are placed on the migrant hierarchy (Koskela, 2013). For example, the children born in Finland to the immigrants who came from Somalia to Finland in the 1980s are still very likely to experience the negative stereotypes attached to their parents. They have to prove that they do not conform to these preconceptions at every stage of the job search process.

Prejudice and labor market barriers remain entrenched against Finland's Romani population, which has lived in Finland for 500 years. The name-based labor market discrimination against job applicants from this ethnic minority was revealed by the *Fake Romani Experiment* organized by Diaconia University of Applied Sciences in 2018. In this experiment, a business guru, television personality, top chef, and leading columnist applied for jobs in their field using their own impressive CVs but replacing their well-known Finnish name with a typical Romani name. None of them were called for an interview. The subsequent media campaign generated a lot of publicity and resulted in the cities of Helsinki, Espoo, Vantaa and Vaasa, and two major retailers announcing that they would switch to anonymous recruiting (DIAK, 2020).

Research by Ahmad and others demonstrates the strong preference many Finnish employers have for Finnish candidates and a deep mistrust towards ethnic minority job-seekers, who are often not even called for an interview despite having

the same qualifications and language skills as Finnish candidates. None of the research described above has focused on Finland's private security sector, but it would be unrealistic to expect that this sector is immune to similar barriers or cases of discrimination.

4.4.2 Research on barriers and discrimination in Finnish workplaces

Being called for an interview and getting the job offer are the crucial first hurdles to clear for a candidate with a foreign background. However, it is the new employee's daily experiences at the workplace that determine if they feel accepted as part of the work community, function effectively in the job, stay motivated, and have opportunities to progress in their career. These factors determine whether a minority employee remains committed to staying in a company in the long term.

Barriers or discrimination can occur at different levels of the company. For example, managers may assign minority employees to tasks, sites or shifts that Finnish employees prefer to avoid or deny them opportunities for promotion. Examples of barriers to workplace integration include harassment or other inappropriate behavior from work colleagues such as staring, avoiding contact, making jokes or other microaggressions aimed to undermine minority employees.

The number of minority employees and the overall diversity of a workplace can also influence how a new employee with a foreign background is treated in a workplace. According to Lee, 2005, (cited in Hall et al., 2017, 248), stereotyping is more likely to occur in fluid, less hierarchical, and more team-oriented workplaces and against a person with near-solo status, in other words, when the employee is the only or one of the few members of a marginalized category within a particular group who is perceived to lack fit with his or her occupation and the criteria used to evaluate him or her is ambiguous.

Very few employees who face problems at work initiate contact with a shop steward, health and safety official or the trade union because they fear that making a formal complaint will have negative repercussions in the workplace and for their future career prospects (Aaltonen et al., 2013). This reluctance to confront inappropriate or discriminatory behavior from work colleagues was also evident when requesting interviews from minority employees for this thesis.

Cases of workplace discrimination are not limited to companies led by native Finns. The media has highlighted several workplace discrimination cases by ethnic minority employers towards employees recruited from the same ethnic group or the wider immigrant workforce. Many of these cases have involved restaurants that break the law by paying their staff very low wages, demand exceptionally long working hours or force employees to work in poor or dangerous conditions.

4.4 The issue of language skills

A lack of Finnish, Swedish or English language competence is often presented as the most significant barrier preventing immigrants from finding jobs that match their qualifications and experience and integrating meaningfully into Finnish society. According to the Ministry of Interior (2011), the level of immigrants' language skills is based on three factors: high-quality and sufficiently intensive language training, the active use of language, and the linking of language learning to vocational studies.

The language issue has been actively discussed in recent years by the Finnish government ministries, business organizations, and the media. According to the SIRIUS WP3 report (2020), there has been a shift in the discourse, which now emphasizes the role that companies should play in the integration process. "Instead of migrants first integrating and learning the language ... learning the language and integrating in society is now seen as something that should happen while already employed."

A survey commissioned by the *Kotona Suomessa* -project shows that almost half of the companies suffering from labor shortages want employees with a foreign background to speak near native-level Finnish (YLE, 2021). The survey authors note that although language skills are seen as a neutral and justified demand by employers, the language issue can also provide a cover for not hiring someone for other reasons. At the same time, the survey results also show a readiness for tackling language-related recruitment difficulties, especially among the bigger companies. More than two out of three companies express the view that language training conducted at the workplace is a feasible option. These companies are also willing to contribute to the training costs or even pay them in full (YLE, 2021).

The recent report published by the trade union of Academic Engineers and Architects in Finland argues that "many of the disadvantages that immigrants face in the labor market derive directly from discrimination and prejudice in recruitment practices and hiring on the part of employers" (TEK, 2021), and that this is often also the case regarding the recruiters' language requirements. According to Patricia Virsinger, co-author of the report, "It often feels like 'fluent Finnish' is just an excuse not to employ internationals." Among the recommendations of the report is that "Employers should re-evaluate 'fluent' Finnish requirements for positions by getting more familiar with the levels and contents of the Finnish National Certificate of Language Proficiency YKI (1-6) and the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (A1-C2), to properly determine the required language skills for a particular job while the public sector should remove Finnish language requirements where not required by law (TEK, 2021).

In September 2021, YLE's English language website published an article headlined "Finnish employers often require native-like fluency from immigrants, restricting job prospects." The story features a highly educated white American immigrant who is fluent in English, Spanish and French but has struggled to meet employers' Finnish language requirements. According to her, appropriate Finnish language courses are difficult to locate, and even when an immigrant gains proficiency from a course seen as adequate by the employment office, this is often still insufficient for employers. In the same article, Anna Bruun, a ministerial advisor on migration and integration policies at the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, states that some employers may have conscious or unconscious bias behind the high language competency requirements due to their own uncertainty and a fear that an immigrant employee might change the work community.

According to Bruun, "changing employers' attitudes is a slow process ... but many things have improved, and employers are being offered more support and information about hiring immigrants (YLE, 2021)." Suggestions in the article include that language training should be more flexible and available, language learning opportunities for employed individuals should be enhanced, and more advanced courses should be offered. These points support the observation by the Ministry of Interior (2011) that "language learning takes place in a variety of interaction situations, so the opportunity for a language learner to practice their language skills all the time is essential – not just in language training."

For an employee with a foreign background, language skills are essential for managing their work tasks, being accepted in the workplace community, and for creating social relationships that impact their long-term job motivation and effectiveness.

Research on the role of language in the workplace shows that a minority employee's skills in engaging in small talk and their sense of humor and politeness can also affect how they accomplish workplace goals, adapt and contribute to the workplace culture (Friedman & Kuipers, 2013). According to Kuipers (2009), humor can create social cohesion and solidarity in the work team, but inside jokes and sarcasm can also exclude ethnic minorities, especially when they are ironic and ambiguous. The use of particular words when describing people of different ethnicities can be loaded, deliberately or not, with negative connotations, which reinforces boundaries between social groups and creates a *them* and an *us* situation within a work community (Hyland & Paltridge, 2013).

Language competence is an important factor in private sector security guard work because the tasks often involve interacting with different types of customers and members of the public. Helsinki Police Department emphasizes this point in its response to the questions posed by this thesis. An innovative pilot project initiated in 2018 by Helsinki Skills Centre and Securitas has tackled the language issue in the security sector context. This project combined intensive language learning and security sector studies for students with a foreign background whose initial language skills were not up to the required standard. The project is described in chapter 5.3 of the thesis.

4.5 Research on workplace diversity and inclusion

The previous discussion of research into the labor market barriers and discrimination faced by jobseekers with foreign backgrounds has approached the issue from the angle of rights. The research into the effects of increasing the diversity of a company's workforce offers a different approach to the topic. A substantial body of academic research, HR industry reports and media articles published in recent years suggest that companies can benefit in many different ways by attracting a more diverse workforce. For example, at the recruitment stage, companies with an active pro-diversity hiring policy can tap into a wider talent pool and find more high-quality candidates because they are open to hiring people irrespective of their gender, race, ethnicity, age, class,

physical ability, sexual orientation, and spiritual practice. In terms of business performance and internal culture, frequently mentioned benefits of a more diverse workforce include better employee engagement and retention, higher productivity, more innovation, improved team problem-solving skills, greater workplace attractiveness, and enhanced company reputation (e.g., McKinsey, 2020).

These possible benefits do not occur automatically, however. Without a clear strategy and careful HR management, increasing demographic, cultural, and language diversity in a company may result in more communication problems, mistrust, and conflicts. According to Zippel (2020), "inclusive work cultures do not organically occur; they take effort, encouragement, and investment." Developing an inclusive company culture that values differences and open communication is, therefore, the key to accessing the full benefits of diversity. In an inclusive workplace culture, all the employees are treated with respect and dignity, and they have equal opportunities to contribute and succeed. When minority employees feel valued, trusted, accepted as themselves, and are provided opportunities to advance as their experience grows, they are much more likely to remain in the company's service in the long term.

Managing a diverse workforce requires a positive vision and actively creating trust, tools and systems for sensitive and fair resolution methods for internal conflicts. Companies need to develop, implement, and maintain ongoing training and awareness creation (Zippel, 2020). The first step to fostering an inclusive culture is to increase the personal awareness of both employers and employees concerning their prejudices. Unlearning bias can be a slow process, so a one-day training session is unlikely to change people's minds and behaviors. There is often some resistance from some team members to any training aiming to deal with cultural or other differences. Depending on how the process is managed, it may even provoke rejection among some employees and managers, leading to more non-inclusive or discriminatory behavior towards new employees from minority backgrounds. Minority employees are also individuals with their personalities prejudices who do not necessarily get on well with each other or immediately function well as part of a team. According to Holmes & Riddiford (2010), minority employees also need to be aware that "they do not inadvertently cause offense, irritation, or transgress workplace norms."

Zippel (2020) suggests that rather than creating a separate diversity program, it is usually better to integrate diversity into all organizational processes to create an inclusive environment. The role of supervisors and managers is crucial in this process because their behavior directly links to an employee's experience of inclusion. Conflict resolution and team coaching skills can help managers react appropriately to offensive comments and conversations about minority employees that damage workplace relationships. "Inclusive managers can focus on proactively creating an environment in which problematic conversations are less likely to happen (Zippel, 2020)."

Table 4. Pekka Mattila, Professor of Practice, Aalto University, Marketing Faculty.
Source: Mandatum LifeMagazine, 16.10.2020

Examples of inclusive management practices:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are different role models in the company leadership • Performance management is fair and follows the same rules for everyone • Career development is based on merits • Everyone has access to the top management

5 EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Many educational establishments in Finland teach the vocational qualification in Safety and Security. Some also offer the possibility to study for this qualification through the S2-curriculum (Finnish as a second language), which is specifically designed for students with an immigrant background. The S2-curriculum has a more concise Finnish syllabus and focuses more on the development of practical language skills.

5.1 Students' and security guards' views on education and job prospects

These comments are compiled from interviews with current and former students. Some comments have been edited for brevity and clarity.

"A good friend who was working in the security sector told me that there are jobs available if I get the security steward and security guard permits."

"I think that there is high demand for security workers, so the job prospects look good."

"TE-palvelut (public employment services) encouraged me to apply for the course, and it was easy to get a place. I've heard that the employment opportunities are good, but the basic pay is not."

"I only had an interview and no entrance test, so it was quite easy to get on the course. But I know that there were many applicants."

"I have not faced any racism and discrimination during the course."

"Some Iraqi men told me that 'this is not your profession, it's a men's job.' They told me to my face that I would not cope. I told the teachers, and they talked to the men and sorted it out."

"During the training, one teacher used the N-word when telling a story about a dark-skinned guard. The guard was chasing a thief who was shouting the N-word. Everyone was laughing about it, and I felt a bit uncomfortable."

"The training was not difficult because I speak good Finnish."

"When I try to translate Finnish to my language or Arabic, I don't always know what the words mean. Some words cannot be translated. Luckily the teachers have helped so much. They show pictures and explain."

"I had problems understanding the legal terms and the other official Finnish language. It made me feel like giving up the course."

"During the studies, I thought that maybe I will not get a job because of my Finnish language level because I would have to be constantly in contact with customers and officials."

"A teacher from the college helped me when I was looking for a job."

"I was lucky because there was a trainer in my school who knew someone at a security company. So I immediately got a chance to do work training and soon got a job."

"I got a job immediately after getting the security steward card."

5.2 Analysis of the interviews with students and security guards

The vast majority of the currently studying students reported that they had not faced any racism or discrimination problems during their course. A few interviewees recalled negative incidents, including one case where a teacher used the racist N-word. In another case, male students with an immigrant background made sexist comments about the unsuitability of the women to work as security guards.

The biggest challenge concerning education that emerged from the interviews was the language issue, especially for those students who had only lived in Finland for a few years. Several students praised the teachers for their patience and good work. One interviewee felt like dropping out from the course because of language problems but he was persuaded to continue and was later able to get a job as a security guard. Another teacher was credited with helping an interviewee to get his first job after completing his studies. Almost all the interviewees felt optimistic about their employment prospects. Several interviewees were hired as soon as they had completed their studies and received the security guard license.

5.3 Lessons from a pioneering security guard training project

Stadin AO (Helsinki Vocational College and Adult Institute) and Securitas Oy organized a four-month sub-degree security guard training course for 11 students with immigrant backgrounds in August - December 2017. This pioneering public-private cooperation project combined vocational training with intensive language learning focused on the terminology required in the security sector. The course was specifically designed to address the language issue that can hold back the employment

opportunities of otherwise suitable candidates with a foreign background. The project description below is based on an edited translation of the final report by Sirpa Lehtimäki and Katariina Kilpi (Loppuraportti, Vartiointityön osatutkinto, 21.8-22.12.2017). The authors have granted permission to use the report material for this thesis.

The course aimed to bring appropriately qualified people with an immigrant background to the labor market and enable the students to be employed by Securitas or a similar company or get an apprenticeship job or a postgraduate job in the security sector. The course content fulfilled the legal requirements for security guard education and included on-the-job training at Securitas' sales unit and additional Finnish language teaching. The selected students came from different educational and cultural backgrounds. They were required to have good learning skills, an impeccable background, a good customer service attitude, and be willing to work shifts. Their level of Finnish language proficiency (as reported by the students themselves in the application phase) ranged from A 2.1 and B 2.1.

Supervising teacher Sirpa Lehtimäki and S2 Finnish language teacher Katariina Kilpi prepared tailored study plans for the students, taking each student's study skills and techniques into account. The plans were updated during the course. According to Lehtimäki, "It is necessary to understand the student's cultural background and experience, respect their personal history, and allow the inclusion of their previously learned operating model. Only in this way can you get an idea of the student's relationship with Finnish legislation and culture."

The teachers used a co-teaching method during the lessons and worked together to determine the personal support and guidance required by each student. The students' learning was measured daily.

The results of the project were very encouraging. According to the final report of the project, 73% of the students were employed in positions corresponding to their education by the end of the training. Palmia hired one student, and eight students were employed by Securitas, six of whom continued to work at Securitas while completing their Undergraduate degree at Stadin AO. From the three other students, one found work in another sector, one chose a different field of study, and one decided

to focus on their family. Four years later, 54.5% of the students who started the training course in Autumn 2017 are still employed as security guards (three by Securitas, two by Reila, and one by Avarn).

Lessons learned from the course:

- Adequate time must be allocated for this type of education. The number of lessons taught in the course was at least double the amount required by the Police regulations.
- It is crucial that the teaching combines the Finnish language learning and vocational education every day.
- Students require comprehensive guidance, real-time support measures (for example, through the WhatsApp app), and multi-channel learning.
- It is essential to measure continuously what has been learned.
- This teaching approach requires extra resources and commitment beyond the norm in terms of working hours and professional flexibility.
- "Treat the student as an individual, invest in personal guidance and the development of a confidential relationship. Be present!"

The concept developed by Stadin AO and Securitas offers a valuable cooperation model for the public education sector and the private security sector, covering the recruitment, training, and workplace induction of security guards with a foreign background.

6 SECURITY COMPANIES AND SECURITY GUARDS

Interviews were requested with human resources managers from three major private security sector companies. Palmia and Securitas responded to the request. Some of the companies' responses have been lightly edited for brevity and clarity.

Question 1.

Does your company have statistics or an estimate regarding the number of job applications received from immigrants, how many candidates have been interviewed, and how many have been offered a job?

PALMIA

"We don't have any specific statistical data on the number of job applications from immigrants, how many have been interviewed, and how many got a job. But my rough estimate is that 20–25% of the applicants have an immigrant background."

SECURITAS

"Securitas does not compile direct statistics about immigrants. They are in the same application portal with the others, not in their own category. We aim for equal opportunity so that they are on the same starting line with the native Finns. We could start going through the processes based on surnames and first names, and see how many there have been, but it would be difficult to get any long-term statistics. More likely, it would be easier to find out how many are working at the moment, but even this is based on estimates because we don't compile any statistics about it."

Question 2.

What kind of experiences does your company have regarding the recruitment of immigrants?

PALMIA

"Good experiences in the sense that they are highly motivated to get a job, they want to learn, and are ready to do all kinds of work in all types of environments."

SECURITAS

"Like the native Finns, some are well prepared and have already thought about what to answer during the interview. Perhaps the significant cultural difference that becomes evident is that people with an immigrant background may have more confidence in that situation. The question 'what are your weaknesses' is seldom answered well by immigrants. They see it as a situation for praising themselves, that they need to promote themselves. But they should also be analytical and honest with themselves about what those development areas are. This question is challenging for all candidates. Very few people can answer it well and turn that weakness in some way into a development issue or even a strength. Otherwise, immigrants do not significantly differ from the native Finns in the recruitment process. Depending on their age, they are at about the same level."

Question 3.

What kind of factors do you particularly take into consideration when interviewing candidates with an immigrant background?

PALMIA

"We especially pay attention to language skills. We have a Finnish language requirement, and our customers also demand fluent Finnish. If we are still unsure about the candidate's language ability based on the job application, interview or telephone call, they have to do a reading comprehension test. Any work permit and residence permit issues are forwarded to our HR department."

SECURITAS

"I interview many people who have an immigrant background, and probably the first issue that comes to mind is language skills. It's the first thing that we aim to test. So if it seems from the job application that there might be some shortcomings in language skills, then I usually call the applicant and talk a little on the phone to get an idea of their language level. Sometimes I deliberately speak quite fast and even use difficult language to determine how well the candidate understands the spoken language. This way, we get some idea whether they can cope in a customer service situation or a difficult situation in an actual work task.

The country of origin does not have particular significance, but we try to see what kind of circumstances the person comes from and whether they are in full possession of their senses. So if they come from a war zone, for example, are they prepared for the conflicts that occur in the security sector, do they have the readiness to take action in situations involving violence, or has the war or other difficult situation in their past left some scars? But very rarely do these issues have an impact. Regarding traumas, it is fairly easy to read from the interviewees if they have some background related to this.

We also need to consider how the work is performed, that they can comply with the rules if they come from another culture that has different rules regarding work performance. This needs to be considered if someone has a long history of working abroad. It may be a positive or a negative factor in coping with the work. On the whole, those who have a long work history abroad have adapted well to this work and the related laws in Finland."

Question 4.

What experiences does your company have regarding how employees from immigrant backgrounds cope with different kinds of work tasks?

PALMIA

"Positive experiences in that they have a strong motivation towards the jobs and are very open-minded. They want to get the job, want to learn, and are ready to do all kinds of work in all types of environments. They are open-minded and motivated, willing to take on extra duties, want to become part of the work community, and learn new things during the work tasks."

SECURITAS

"Some manage well, some manage poorly, depending on the given work task. On the whole, everyone selected for Securitas copes well with the job. This is probably largely due to our reasonably demanding recruitment process and careful scrutiny that those coming into the industry really want to be here and know the work tasks and understand the rules. People from immigrant backgrounds adapt quite quickly and easily to how we work. So they manage at the normal level in that respect."

On the positive side, I have noticed in my long history in the company that employees from immigrant backgrounds can be more motivated about the work. They are less picky in what they do and understand the value of the work in all the possible work tasks, whereas native Finns differentiate between the work tasks. Some jobs are considered inferior to others, and they want to choose their favorite sites. This significantly increases the value of the employees from immigrant backgrounds because, as a company, we consider all the tasks to be important. For many employees from an immigrant background, it is self-evident that when the employer sets a work task, then it gets done and is therefore important."

Question 5.

Any cultural issues that have emerged during their work?

PALMIA

"One of our employees wanted to wear a headscarf. This was a completely new issue that we came across some time ago. It wasn't a problem as such, this person has been

working well, but it was a new issue that we needed to talk about and to think a little about how we deal with these kinds of issues.

Sometimes there can be issues related to questions of authority. Some supervisors have had to explain why a supervisor can correct a person in the field. But similar issues also have to be dealt with when it comes to native Finns."

SECURITAS

"Apart from the language issues – which are quite evident if the message is not going through simply because we don't understand each other – we have not had any unsurmountable problems with immigrant employees. Of course, there are some challenges, and here I refer to a candidate's work history and the ways of working in other countries. For example, in southern Europe, people take a siesta, and there are other such special characteristics in some places they may have a longer working day, but the work is a little slower and lazier, performed calmly at your own pace. These issues can bring challenges."

Question 6.

Are there benefits or disadvantages related to the employees' background in some tasks?

PALMIA

"A language skill can be useful if the guard needs to intervene in a situation. It means that they can communicate at the same level with the persons involved. On the other hand, if a guard looks different or has a different way of speaking, then people latch on to that more easily when the guard intervenes in a situation."

Cultural understanding can be an asset when working in embassies and such places. But there have also been cases where we have sent a person who we think is suitable but has not been ok for the customer for some reason. There may be political or other background factors involved. So then we have sent someone else who has a different appearance. We have to listen to the customers' opinions."

SECURITAS

"An immigrant background is helpful when interacting with someone with the same background. It helps to find the appropriate customer service attitude when you can understand the culture, interact with the other person, and even use your own language.

Language skills are an advantage in particular work tasks. We would like most of the guards to be able to speak English. It is not essential in all the work tasks, but English is especially valuable because the environment is becoming more international. Helsinki metropolitan region has many people with immigrant backgrounds, many people are speaking different languages, and there are also many tourists. So we hope that as many guards as possible can also provide customer service in this language.

Depending on the work task, having different languages can be an advantage. Obviously, we have noticed that speaking your own language can make work tasks easier among other people with immigrant backgrounds. There is a lot of talk about gangs and such things in Helsinki. Many young people are still looking for their place and have come from difficult circumstances. If someone can speak the same language as them, it makes the work in these kinds of situations considerably easier. So it is a factor to take into consideration, depending on what the work task is and whether there is a possibility that the candidate can work in an environment that involves meeting many people from immigrant backgrounds.

Prejudice from the customers is one factor that works against the guards from immigrant backgrounds compared to native Finns. We make it clear already at the recruitment stage that they may be discriminated against based on their background or appearance. Dealing with a racist situation can be a challenge – can they stay calm and reasonable and perform the task instead of letting emotions take over?

These days religious issues and background issues stir up a lot of emotion. Criminals and bad people try to use them to undermine the guard. These deliberate insults aim to get the guard off balance. A guard with an immigrant background must have very thick skin to take the insults and to understand that it is only an attack against the uniform, not against them as a person."

Question 7.

Does the company have policies, practices or objectives related to the diversity of its work community?

PALMIA

"Everyone has to go through the same recruitment process. A person is judged based on their achievements and motivation, and the factors that apply to everyone. The selection is made, and the people are hired irrespective of skin color, cultural background, or other such factors.

We are working on something like a policy but have not publicized it yet. We have realized that it may be good to sharpen how we act. At the same time, I feel that we have already followed these principles quite well. For example, when you observe the people working for us, it is a broad spectrum of all kinds of people, which is a positive thing, of course."

SECURITAS

"We have very strong and comprehensive policies on diversity set by the company headquarters and the Helsinki office that diversity should be supported and constantly increased. It is visible in all our activities, and we strive for it, for example, in marketing and everything visual. A good example of this practice is the continuing support for the S2 group project, which aims to provide opportunities to people with immigrant backgrounds. If language is the candidate's main weakness when looking for and landing a job, we can improve it through projects like this. Securitas handed on the 'equality baton' a few years ago. We were very satisfied and proud of the recognition that equality has been implemented in the company and that it applies to every employee."

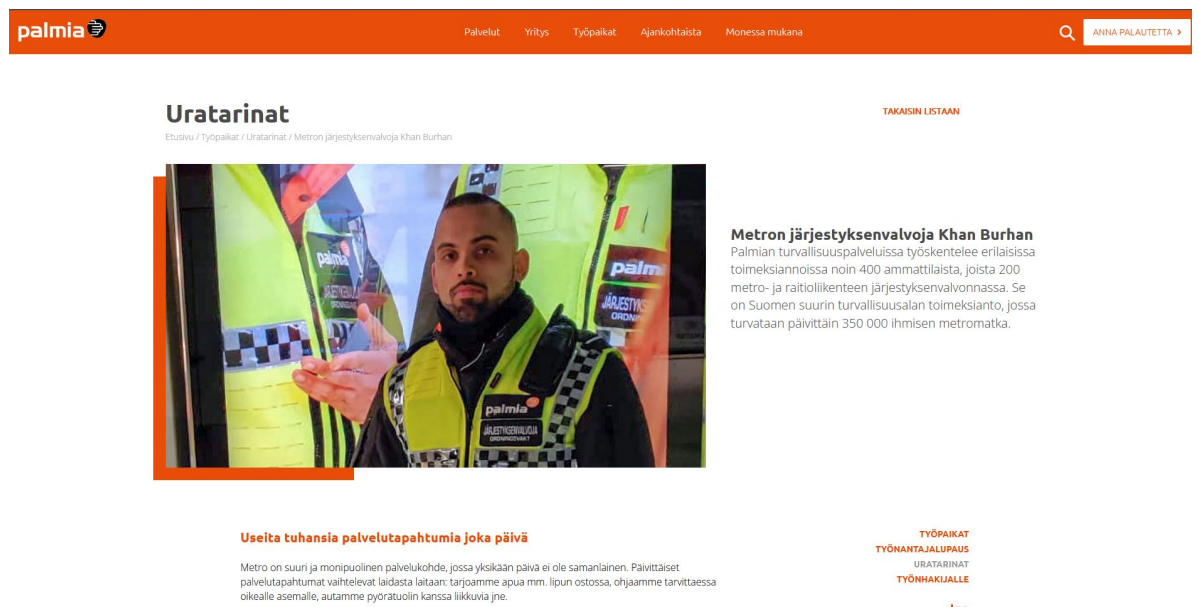
6.1 Analysis of the security companies' responses

Both companies express a very positive view regarding the motivation of interview candidates and hired security guards with a foreign background, including their readiness to perform all kinds of work tasks. Securitas explicitly contrasts their attitude with the more picky native Finnish employees.

Finnish language proficiency is the first factor that the companies consider when interviewing candidates with a foreign background. Knowledge of other languages is acknowledged as a useful asset, particularly when security guards interact with people from the same ethnic minority. Securitas strongly prefers English as the second language for customer service.

Both companies are aware of the issues concerning ethnic profiling, barriers and discrimination related to employees from minority population groups. Palmia is working on a diversity policy, and Securitas already has an established diversity policy. Securitas also plans to continue the S2 training project that started four years ago in cooperation with Stadin AO, which combines security guard vocational training with intensive Finnish language studies for students with a foreign background.

Both companies feature ethnic minority employees on their websites. These role models signal the companies' commitment to diversity and encourage job applications from minority population groups.



The screenshot shows the Palmia website's career page. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the Palmia logo and links for 'Palvelut', 'Yritys', 'Työpaikat', 'Ajankohtaista', and 'Monessa mukana'. A search bar on the right contains the text 'ANNA PALAUTETTA >'. The main content area is titled 'Uratarinat' (Career Stories) and includes a sub-header 'Etusivu / Työpaikat / Uratarinat / Metron järjestyksenvalvoja Khan Burhan'. A 'TAKAISIN LISTAAN' (Back to List) link is visible. The central focus is a video thumbnail of Khan Burhan, a security steward, wearing a high-visibility vest with 'palmia' and 'JÄRJESTYKSENVALVOJA' (Security Steward) labels. To the right of the video, the text reads: 'Metron järjestyksenvalvoja Khan Burhan' followed by a paragraph: 'Palmian turvallisuuspalveluissa työskentelee erilaisissa toimeksiannoissa noin 400 ammattilaista, joista 200 metro- ja raitioliikenteen järjestyksenvalvonnessa. Se on Suomen suurin turvallisuusalan toimeksianto, jossa turvataan päivittäin 350 000 ihmisen metromatka.' Below the video, there is a section titled 'Useita tuhansia palvelutapahtumia joka päivä' (Thousands of service events every day) with a short description: 'Metro on suuri ja monipuolinen palvelukohde, jossa yksikään päivä ei ole samanlainen. Päivittäiset palvelutapahtumat vaihtelevat laidasta laitaan: tarjoamme apua min. lipun ostossa, ohjaamme tarvittaessa oikealle asemalle, autamme pyörätuolin kanssa liikkuvia jne.' On the right side, there is a vertical list of navigation links: 'TYÖPAIKAT', 'TYÖNANTAJALUPAUS', 'URATARINAT', and 'TYÖNHAKIJALLE'. A small '1..3' indicator is at the bottom right of this list.

Figure 4. Palmia's website features the career story of security steward Khan Burhan.

6.3 Security guards' views on workplace experiences

These comments are compiled from interviews with security guards with a foreign background who have worked for the major private security companies in Finland. Some comments have been lightly edited for brevity and clarity.

Starting work as a security guard

"In the beginning, it was a bit difficult because I didn't know my work colleagues and what needed to be in the company. Some situations came as a surprise because they were not covered during the course. But after a while, things were ok."

"In the beginning, I was assigned to a very big site, and it was very difficult to remember all the places and passwords. But I had very good colleagues, and the site supervisor also spent one day showing all the places to me. After that, the work went very well."

"On my first shift, many work colleagues approached me and told me that 'This work is very different to what you did before. You should know that this is very tough work. Many people from your old company came here and could not manage it and left.' "

"The first 3-4 months were quite tough. It was the summer season, and many drunk people were at the site. There were many situations where I had to remove or apprehend drunk customers. They always shouted racist abuse. I was working alone and didn't get any support from my supervisor. I was 21 years old then and in a new job. It felt like I was left to manage it on my own."

Language issues at work

"During the training, they spent a lot of time talking about Finnish law and regulations, which was very difficult. But this changed as soon as I got a job. I learned the language every day at work."

"In the beginning, sometimes I didn't understand what the customer, employer or work colleague wanted or needed. But as soon as I got some experience, then I managed really well at work."

"Some work colleagues talk very fast using colloquial language. I can't understand what they mean."

"If I don't understand a colleague, I ask them to speak slowly and clearly. They know that Finnish is a difficult language for someone who has only lived here for 5–6 years."

"Sometimes the staff at a site don't like it if I speak Arabic or another language with a customer. They think that everyone should only speak Finnish."

Workplace experiences

"My supervisors, site supervisor and shift manager have treated me so well that I could stay with the company even my whole life."

"We have many immigrants in the company, including a manager. Most of the shift managers are Iraqi or Somali."

"At some sites, they like me and request that I come back to work there because I'm a friendly person and work well according to their instructions. They have been very good to me. I'm also friendly towards the customers and try to solve any issues between them and the staff before they become real problem situations."

"In my work role, I'm constantly sent to different sites. Some of them are difficult to find, and at some sites there are no instructions, no telephone or anything. Nobody tells you what you should do there. You just have to work according to your own ideas and experience."

"Yes, I have faced some racism and discrimination... not so much, but it does happen sometimes."

"Nobody ever came and said 'Hey, you did really good work' or 'Don't worry if you need help, you can always ask.' There was never any support."

"I think that the supervisors are always working in the office, so they don't care very much about how the workers are doing."

"When I'm working alone, sometimes there are difficult situations with some immigrants because they can see that I'm also a foreigner, so they start swearing at me in their mother tongue. Once I had to tackle one of these aggressive people to the ground."

"I worked as a store guard on a site that had a lot of shoplifting cases. There were racist insults every time I had to apprehend someone. The supervisors didn't talk about these cases, which was a bit strange."

"I don't remember that there being was any discussion in the workplace that our customers might be people of immigrant origins or from sexual minorities. Or even that there can be different kinds of people, and that it is important to be culturally sensitive and gender-sensitive, so that you treat people as humans."

"I have two Afghan friends who were fired by a security company. They said that the company does not like foreign employees and the supervisors only believe what the Finnish employees say."

"You can become a site supervisor if you have enough experience, but it doesn't make much difference to the salary."

"I wanted to move to another profession because the opportunities to progress from the entry-level job to the management level are quite limited in the security sector."

Experiences with work colleagues

"If my colleague is a good person, then we talk, but if they are bad, it is difficult."

"Some Finnish employees don't like working with immigrants. I think that there should be equality. I want them to get on well and to work together."

"Sometimes I'm disappointed with my work colleagues. They don't want to talk with you. They don't respond, they don't want anything to do with you. This happens a lot, but I have never told anyone."

"I prefer working alone to working with a colleague. Twelve hours is a long time to work with someone who doesn't want to talk to you."

"Some colleagues are good, but it has also happened many times that a colleague does not talk to me all day. When there is a difficult situation, they say that I should go and sort it out by myself so I can learn more. I have heard from friends that they have faced the same situation."

"In my previous company, they always gave good support, even if you sometimes did something wrong or there was an accident. There was never a situation where someone got angry and said, 'Why did you do that?' But in the new company, the work colleagues did not accept me."

"One time, I argued with a colleague because she told me to go by myself to sort out a situation with a group of people who were on drugs. I said that she should come too. She started shouting at me, so I called the supervisor and said that my colleague doesn't want to help me. I told my supervisor that I didn't want to work at this site if I had to work with a person like this. After that, they didn't give me any more work shifts at that site. Later, I heard that the same Finnish woman had done the same thing to other guards with an immigrant background."

"The work with the customers went very well, but unfortunately there was always some problem with my work colleagues. I think that they were somehow trying to bully me all the time."

"Over the past ten years, I have experienced unpleasant situations where colleagues make discriminatory comments. Not necessarily directed at me but saying things like immigrants are criminals and making generalizations."

"The reality is that if you are a guard and your only contact is with immigrants who are doing something bad, then it is easy to condemn everyone or to see the whole group as bad. But I belong to that community, so it's hard to imagine that everyone is a criminal."

"Sometimes when there is a problem with some foreigners, some work colleagues, both foreign and Finnish, say racist things about these people. I usually don't listen to them, but sometimes I tell them that if one immigrant does something wrong, it does not mean that all immigrants are bad."

"It's partly true that the security sector attracts a lot of people who just want to get into a position where they can use their power in a bad way. If the customer is from a different background, there can easily be misunderstandings."

"The security sector attracts some people who just want to escalate situations and to humiliate people and to get into a physical confrontation. My approach has always been that getting into a wrestling match is the last resort when nothing else works."

"I had a disagreement with two colleagues at work. They went to the supervisor and told him things about me that I didn't think were correct. My supervisor called me on the phone and listened to my side of the story, but still trusted them more. I lost my job."

Changes in the security sector

"About ten years ago, it was unprecedented – like a wow experience – to see a dark-skinned security guard or security steward at a public place."

"Only in the last 3-5 years, I have noticed that I have a supervisor or a site security manager who has an immigrant background."

"The first time I had a security supervisor with an immigrant background was about five years ago. Nowadays, it has become normal."

"When I started working as a guard in 2011, there were hardly any dark-skinned guards. These days it's great to see so many different faces in the security industry."

"Many immigrants like the security industry. Even women want to work here, but their partners or families don't accept it. For example, my own family did not accept it. But my partner said, 'It's your life; you decide what you want to do.' "

6.4 Analysis of the security guards' responses

None of the interviewees reported inappropriate or hostile behavior from the security companies' human resources personnel during the interview process for a job. Their experiences of starting work as a security guard reveal a wide range

of experiences ranging from being given excellent support from a supervisor to being left alone in a very challenging site without any support. Such divergent experiences are also the case in terms of the overall job satisfaction expressed by the respondents. A few security guards feel very satisfied with most of their colleagues and a workplace culture where they can rely on getting support from their supervisors and colleagues when needed. This has helped them to learn on the job quickly and to perform effectively. In these workplaces any problems are dealt with in a constructive way. As a result, the security guards express a strong feeling of loyalty to the company.

Other security guards have often felt isolated and unsupported. The interviews provide many examples of the challenges that they experience at work. Having to face frequent racist insults from drunken or drugged-out members of the public is seen as an unpleasant but normal part of the job. Some security guards also report hostility from customers or members of the public who have a foreign background.

All of the interviewees describe negative experiences related to some of their work colleagues. The lack of cooperation, lack of communication, and even hostility from some work colleagues is mentioned more frequently and discussed in more depth than any challenges related to aggressive customers or difficult work tasks. Therefore, the conclusion drawn from this small sample of security guard interviews is that the most urgent problem they face is working long shifts with some hostile native Finnish colleagues. Some native Finnish security guards have even actively exposed ethnic minority colleagues to dangerous situations, while keeping themselves safe. There is nothing subtle or ambiguous about this kind of discrimination. Spending a 12-hour shift with a hostile or uncooperative colleague has a very negative impact on the work motivation of the minority employee. Some respondents express a complete lack of trust in their supervisors, who always take the side of the native Finnish guards. Most choose to remain silent about the discriminatory behavior instead of demanding support and corrective measures from the management.

After challenging situations at work, all security guards should have opportunities to talk about their thoughts and feelings. Processing such experiences with a sympathetic supervisor can enable guards to come to terms with difficult or traumatic emotions, and help to maintain motivation for the work. Keeping these emotions inside is likely to

cause adverse psychological effects like stress, confusion and anger in the long term. Ideally, the company should provide an open, frank and supportive environment where the security guards can share, process and learn from their experiences in an ongoing dialogue with colleagues, supervisors and managers. A good supervisor is easy to approach, sympathetic to the employee's concerns, and motivated to improve the employee's skills in a constructive way. Only a few of the interviewees are satisfied with the level of support that they have received in this respect.

The bigger picture that emerges from the interviews is that the rights and needs of security guards with a foreign background are not satisfactorily addressed, suggesting that some companies and workplaces have still have work to do if they want to establish meaningful diversity and inclusion practices. This would mean taking measures to tackle bias and racist attitudes, and establishing grievance procedures that the employees with a foreign background can trust when faced with difficult situations or conflicts in the workplace. Increasing diversity at the recruitment stage should be accompanied by policies and practical measures that ensure the workplace inclusion for the minority employees after they are hired. If a company is genuinely committed to the wellbeing and safety of its workforce and the quality of its customer service, it should have zero tolerance for discriminatory behavior and take consistent measures to root it out.

7 LEGAL AND TRADE UNION PERSPECTIVES

According to Finland's Non-Discrimination Act (1325/2014), no one should be discriminated based on their age, origin, nationality, language, religion, belief, opinion, political activity, trade union activity, family relationships, state of health, disability, sexual orientation, or other personal characteristics. There are no hard statistics available that would enable an analysis of the extent that the right of security guards with a foreign background to work in Finland's security sector is realized. The police licensing authorities state that they cannot provide data on the number of security guard licenses granted and rejected because collecting this kind of data constitutes ethnic profiling and is illegal. Neither is there any data on the number of job applications

and positive or negative outcomes for candidates with a foreign background who seek work as security guards in the private security sector. Nevertheless, there is clear visual evidence on the ground that the personnel of the major security companies is now significantly more diverse than it was a decade ago. The visibility of security guards with a foreign background in many public places and public transport facilities, especially in the Helsinki metropolitan area, is evidence of this transformation. Some of these security guards from different ethnic minorities have also advanced to supervisory and managerial roles in their companies. Viewed in this context, and supported by the qualitative data compiled in this thesis, the major security companies can be said to be among the Finnish employers that have shown the most openness to hiring candidates from different ethnic backgrounds. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that the legal right of immigrants and other people with a foreign background to access security guard jobs in the private security sector is realized to a considerable extent.

At the same time, the interviews with the security guards with a foreign background show that challenges remain in managing the increasing diversity in some workplaces due to the hostile attitudes of some native Finnish employees and supervisors. Alongside its readiness to recruit an increasingly diverse workforce, the private security sector also needs to develop more robust policies and practices to address bias, barriers, discrimination, and racism in the workplace. Ensuring the legal rights and effective contribution of minority employees can also enable companies to benefit more from the long-term business benefits associated with a genuinely inclusive workplace culture. Based on the interviews for this thesis, some companies and workplaces are successfully putting diversity policies into practice whereas others still lag behind in terms of ensuring equal treatment, opportunities and rights for all their employees.

7.1 Trade union interview

As part of the research, an interview was requested with Turvallisuusalan ammattiliitto ry, the trade union representing employees in the security sector. The questions were sent in advance by email, and the trade union chose to respond by email. Below is the full unedited transcript of the interview, translated from Finnish.

Question 1.

Does the trade union have members with an immigrant background, and has their number changed in recent years?

"In our assessment, the trade union has a significant and growing number of members with an immigrant background. Unfortunately, we do not have exact figures."

Question 2.

Has there been discrimination or other problems in the sector regarding employees with an immigrant background, and has the trade union intervened in these cases?

"We have become aware of some isolated/rare situations of inappropriate behavior in the workplace. These have been handled by the companies concerned. If necessary, the trade union supports and advises its members, shop stewards, and occupational safety and health representatives who represent them in resolving problems."

Question 3.

How does the trade union view recruitment in the sector, and is the right of people with an immigrant background to be employed in the sector realized?

"People with an immigrant background have excellent opportunities to find employment in the private security sector, especially in the Helsinki metropolitan area. When the requirements for the industry are met, getting a job is almost certain."

Question 4.

What does the future of the sector look like in terms of diversity?

"The private security sector is a growing sector. The opportunities for employment in the sector will undoubtedly be excellent in the future, both for people with an immigrant background and native Finns."

7.2 Analysis of the trade union response

In its brief response, the trade union takes an extremely positive view of the employment prospects for security guards with a foreign background, stating that candidates who meet the entry requirements for the sector are almost certain to be hired. The union does not mention any barriers that could affect their chances of getting a job.

On the question of possible discrimination cases in the security sector companies, the union's view is that there have been "some isolated/rare situations of inappropriate behavior in the workplace." The wording of this assessment conveys a message that such problems hardly ever occur in Finland's security sector. The union has not been involved in addressing or resolving any of these cases.

The union's assessment of the realities facing security guards with a foreign background contrasts sharply with the workplace descriptions provided by the security guards interviewed for this thesis. The interviews reveal that ethnic minority employees are not reporting the incidents of hostile and discriminatory behavior by some native Finnish work colleagues to the trade union. The reason for this could be that they either fear the consequences of making a complaint or they don't have confidence that the union will take supportive action on their behalf. At the same time, the union states that it has a growing number of members with an immigrant background, which makes this a particularly surprising finding.

The union's response raises a question mark about its level of awareness concerning the experiences and needs of its ethnic minority members, as well as the apparent passivity of these members to report their workplace problems to the union. If the union recognizes that there are problems related to discrimination in some workplaces, potentially even among its own membership, it could play an important role in improving the situation. For example, the union could research and monitor the extent of these problems, provide a communication channel and expertise for conflict resolution, offer support and training for the parties involved, as well as taking other measures and initiatives that can help to make the increasingly diverse security sector workplaces more inclusive.

Practical steps to address the issue could include, for example:

- A survey of minority employees' workplace experiences
- Offering a safe space/channel for ethnic minority union members to discuss their workplace concerns with a sympathetic trade union expert
- Monitoring the career paths of minority employees in terms of promotion and pay, and the implementation of the companies' diversity policies
- Providing mentoring, advice and support to members who challenge racism and discrimination in the workplace
- Offering training to native Finnish employees who feel threatened by the increasingly multicultural work environment
- Organising campaigns and events that improve the union members' awareness of the issues related to diversity and inclusion

8 CONCLUSIONS

Finland's security sector workforce has unquestionably become more diverse during the past five years. Ethnic minority security guards and security stewards are now visible in numerous sites and diverse duties across the Helsinki metropolitan region, including shopping centers, public transport, cultural and sporting events. One of the experienced security guards interviewed for this thesis noted that seeing a dark-skinned security guard in a public place was still a "wow" moment ten years ago, but today it is normal that the security guard and the site manager both have a foreign background.

The private security sector continues to grow, offering good employment prospects. Educational establishments around the country are offering courses for the vocational qualification required for the security guard license that is issued by the police. Statistics are not available on the number of students with a foreign background or the number security guard licenses they are granted, but there is a strong impression on the ground that the security sector is currently attracting more students and job applicants with a foreign background than ever. The major private security companies operating in Finland have increasingly recognized the value of this pool of highly motivated pool of labor during the past decade. They seem to be recruiting more ethnic minority candidates

than ever before. An experienced human resources manager from one company openly states that the employees with a foreign background learn fast and readily perform the given tasks at any site, in contrast to many native Finnish employees who want to pick and choose the most convenient tasks and sites.

The conclusion of this research is that the most frequent barrier facing students with an immigrant background is their level of Finnish language skills. The security guard qualification and licence require an understanding of the legal terms and regulations related to the sector. This type of specialist language is very different from colloquial spoken Finnish and is especially challenging for students who have lived in Finland for just a few years. The training concept developed by Stadin AO and Securitas for motivated students with limited Finnish language skills offers a valuable public-private cooperation model for the education, training, recruitment, and workplace induction of security guards with a foreign background. The intensive combination of individually tailored language support and vocational training requires highly skilled and motivated teachers and more resources than the usual path. Nevertheless, the encouraging results of the pilot project show its excellent potential for creating a win-win path to employment for committed students and their sponsor companies.

The most obstructive barrier on the work and career path of security guards with a foreign background is the hostility they face from some of their native Finnish work colleagues and supervisors. The interviews for this thesis reveal what seems to be a widespread problem that requires urgent attention in some companies and workplaces, where some native Finnish security guards or supervisors routinely discriminate against colleagues with a foreign background. Viewed in the context of the theories on labor market barriers described earlier, the individual attitudes and behavior of some native Finnish employees towards their ethnic minority colleagues can be described as intentionally discriminatory and harmful. These cases are likely to continue until senior management become aware of the scale of the problem and the impact it has on their staff motivation and company's quality of service.

The research finding that many ethnic minority security guards choose not to complain about this situation is a loud signal that the companies' existing grievance mechanisms are not working properly. The security sector trade union's statement that they are only aware of a few isolated cases of inappropriate behavior or discrimination is also a cause for concern because the problem seems to be much more widespread.

The current situation is unacceptable and unsustainable in terms of the employees' well-being, rights and safety. Workplace tension, lack of communication and conflicts between guards are also certain to have negative impact on site security and the company's reputation. A non-inclusive work environment also leads to higher personnel turnover, which means extra work and recruitment costs for the security companies.

The security companies' management should ensure that all supervisors listen to the concerns of the guards with a foreign background and provide support when requested. There is also a need for other safe channels where employees can discuss issues of concern without fear of facing negative repercussions in the workplace community. All security guards irrespective of their background should have opportunities to process emotionally demanding experiences in the field. The trade union could potentially play an active role in this process by providing a communication and grievance channel that effectively supports its members and helps the companies improve their performance on diversity and inclusion issues.

Cases involving possible discrimination should be fully investigated and appropriate corrective action taken. The native Finnish employees who refuse to cooperate with the employees from a foreign background should undergo training and perform their duties in line with the company's diversity policy or face disciplinary measures for consistently racist behavior. The lessons learned from these processes could be openly discussed in the workplace. Staying silent about these cases or treating them as isolated incidents does not help the companies establish an open, inclusive workplace culture. Every guard, supervisor and manager should be aware of their rights and responsibilities, and feel safe and confident that their concerns are taken seriously.

Greater diversity in the security sector has a broader social and cultural impact as customers and the wider public are exposed to more visible minorities in uniforms and positions of authority. A private security sector job can also provide a

stepping stone for security guards with a foreign background to apply to join the police force. Many of the officers currently working in Finland's police force have previously been employed in the private security sector. It will be interesting to observe how soon the increasingly diverse workforce of this sector paves the way for more diversity in Finland's 7000-strong police force, where officers from ethnic minority backgrounds are still rare.

A follow-up research to the thesis could be a survey on the occupational health of security guards with a foreign background. Further research could also focus on the experiences of security guards with a foreign background who have made a formal complaint about racism or discrimination, and examine the mechanisms and outcomes of these processes. Another interesting topic would be to follow the implementation of a new or existing diversity policy in a private security company and examine its effects from the different vantage points and experiences of the actors involved.

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