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IMMIGRANT ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN CONTEMPORARY
ITALIAN EMIGRATION TO FINLAND

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The purpose of this thesis is to investigate contemporary Italian emigration to Finland and its entrepreneurial features. The objectives of the study were to analyze immigrant entrepreneurship on its causes, benefits and limitations, to investigate the presence of Italian businesses in Finland and to assess the environment they operate in.

The theoretical part consists of a literature review of various publications regarding the phenomenon of migrant entrepreneurship. The main chapters provide a general background knowledge and description of the topics of Italian entrepreneurship in Finland and Finland's entrepreneurial environment.

The empirical part of this paper hinges on a small-scale survey. The study cases are represented by eight Italian entrepreneurs, who are running their own business in Finland. The respondents were submitted to a questionnaire of 15 questions, which aimed at investigating their personal profile, as well as the environment they operate in.

The research results suggest that Finland is a virtuous country, which attracts Italian immigrants but it is also able to hold them by meeting their expectations and by providing a suitable and favorable environment to establish and develop a business activity as well as to settle in.

This study has also served to discuss that immigrant entrepreneurship is increasingly becoming a great contribution to support the economies of industrialized countries. Thus, authorities should not exclude integration policies from their development plans.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Thesis

The inspiration to this thesis has come from my own living and working experiences. Italy and Finland represent one of the geographical extremes of the European Union and they are very interesting cases to examine. Personally, I have experienced and assimilated the values and norms of both cultures: the Italian culture being of my origin, the Finnish one having become my “foster” culture.

Since the central topic of this study is contemporary Italian emigration to Finland, the related research is current and very specific. It deals with an argument which is of great interest recently, although it is still rarely explored. Thus, the relation and significance this thesis has towards working life is the socio-economic impact of migrants in a country’s development, which I am aiming to prove to be significant.

Being an Italian immigrant in Finland myself, this study is particularly of interest to me. I am intrigued by the possibility of becoming an entrepreneur in the near future. Moreover, I feel the responsibility to pay attention to the experience of others who share a common cultural and linguistic background with me and whom I have met due to the same decision to settle abroad.

I believe that the efforts to create one’s own success in a foreign country and its positive outcome should be praised, due to the difficulties it encounters, both physical and abstract, as well as to the value given to the society. Most of Italian migration to Finland turns out into an entrepreneurial venture. I find it to be of interest to understand the dynamics behind this incidence.

The implementation of the research is based on the interview of Italian immigrants who have moved to Finland, where they have established their own business. I intend to collect some of their personal data and responses, in order to analyze the reasons behind their choice, their assessment on its outcome and to obtain a clear picture of this phenomenon.

1.2 Purpose and Objectives

The primary purpose of this thesis is to investigate contemporary Italian emigration to Finland under various aspects. I am interested in finding out the determinants of immigrant entrepreneurship and evaluating its benefits and limitations. I intend to investigate the origins and the current situation of Italian entrepreneurship in Finland, and to analyze advantages and disadvantages of Finland's entrepreneurial environment. Another interesting aspect of the study is the choice of Finland as the migrants' destinations.

The following is my main research question and other three more specific sub-questions:

- Why do Italian emigrants become entrepreneurs in Finland?
 - What are the factors of immigrant entrepreneurship?
 - What are the benefits and limitations of migrant entrepreneurship?
 - How attractive is Finland as a country for business?

1.3 Conceptual Framework

The general topic under which the theoretical report falls is entrepreneurship, in particular migrant entrepreneurship. This thesis focuses on Finland's entrepreneurial environment and the presence of immigrant entrepreneurs. However, the main interest and subject of the implementation of the research is the presence of Italian entrepreneurship in Finland. As shown in Figure 1, the topics are concentric and the deeper the study the more specific the interest area is.

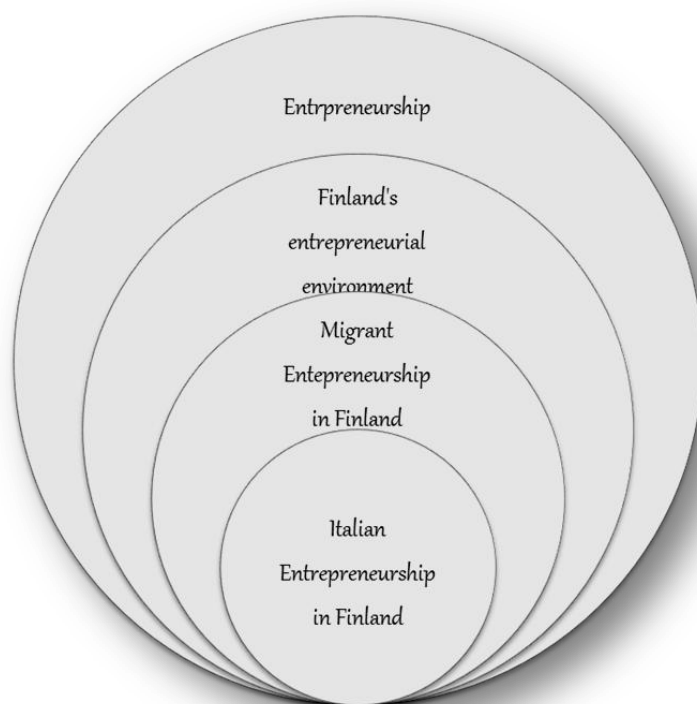


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

2 MIGRANT ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The focus of this chapter is on immigrant entrepreneurs or business owners, who could be defined as people who have immigrated to a new country and started there a business.

What is Entrepreneurship? Entrepreneurship is about identifying the risks related to a business activity and preparing for them, i.e. the skill to make a business operation profitable. (Website of Uusyrityskeskukset Suomi)

The entrepreneur is one of the main agents of economic development and innovation. An entrepreneur is responsible for his/her own business risk, relies on own resources to fund his/her business project independently. Nowadays, in most developed economies, as the presence of large enterprises increases, the number of entrepreneurs decreases. In Italy, the vocation and role of entrepreneurs remain strong. In 2011, the indicator representing the percentage of self-employed workers in Italy slightly exceeds 30%, almost three times the European average. (Website of Noi Italia 2014)

In many OECD countries, immigrants show higher rates of self-employment than natives. The scope, size, and nature of the business established by migrants depends on the migrant's skills and background such as education or social status. As regards lower-skilled migrants, the decision to start a business most probably derives from the lack of other employment alternatives. In this case, the business activity will be a small store, restaurant, day care or laundry, with a small number of employees, low income and growth potential. (OECD 2010, 5)

The relation between the environment and the potential entrepreneur is a determinant of successful entrepreneurship, such as a condition of social minority (i.e. ethnic, cultural, religious, political or sexual minority). Therefore, ethnic entrepreneurship constitutes a typical example of the relevance of the impact of the environment on the future entrepreneur. (Sori & Morettini, 2009, 1090-1091)

Immigrants represent an important pool of entrepreneurs in Europe. The European Commission and the Member States support and promote migrant entrepreneurs, helping these groups to overcome difficulties which might discourage or even pre-

vent them from starting and growing a business activity. According to the European Commission web page, statistics from several European countries indicate that more migrants or members of ethnic minorities than nationals start small businesses. (Website of the European Commission 2014)

2.1 Causes

In today's society, as the number of foreigners increases so is the number of self-employed immigrants. The idea behind this concept is that minorities most often convert their pursue of an identity, legalization and social integration into a surplus of economic initiative. In general, the phenomenon of ethnic entrepreneurship is strictly connected with the many cultural advantages of the ethnic group, based on the particular relations maintained by these migrants with their homeland. (Sori & Morettini, 2009, 1090-1093)

Previous experiences of entrepreneurship are quite common among immigrant entrepreneurs, who have probably previously owned a business in their country of origin, who could thus take advantage of an acquired technical competence in a specific field and capital. In fact, a foreign entrepreneur may establish a branch of its "home-business" in the host country. (Sori & Morettini, 2009, 1094)

Immigrant entrepreneurship derives from different factors:

- Social and cultural factors (e.g. social networks);
- Economic factors;
- Personal predisposition (e.g. attitude towards risks);
- Lack of other job options, alternative to unemployment (opportunity seeking);
- The attractiveness of the host country: immigration policy, existence of migrant communities, potential market, lack of entrepreneurial initiative in the local population;
- Access to capital;
- Success rates.

(OECD 2010, 7-10)

2.2 Benefits

Migrant entrepreneurship contributes not only to the host country's economic growth, but also to that of the country of origin, by provoking the expansion and enhancement of foreign trade with the creation of connections and links. This is related to the cultural promotion of the native country in the host country, and it leads to the improvement of their economic conditions as well. Immigrants also bring new skills and competences, provide new goods and services. (OECD 2010, 17-20)

Entrepreneurship also represents a source of employment for immigrants: it helps reducing labor shortages and the expenses of the national welfare by creating occupation for themselves and others (even if occasional or seasonal). In fact, to set up a business can be a smart way for an immigrant to find a job when there are few opportunities. These are the features of necessity entrepreneurship, as opposed to opportunity entrepreneurship, that “emerges at the nexus of individual aspirations with economic and social conditions perceived as favorable to create a new product or service, either in an existing market or a new one”. (Website of Financial Times Lexicon 2014)

Entrepreneurial activities of migrants facilitate their social integration process. In many cases, entrepreneurship is the most effective way for immigrants and their families to improve their living standards. There are about 6,500 businesses operating in Finland which have been established by immigrants. (Website of Official Statistics of Finland 2014)

2.3 Limitations

Encouraging entrepreneurship potential represented by migrant groups should be taken in serious account by community policies and initiatives. However, addressing these problems requires a range of different measures, at many different levels of government. In particular, the most common business barriers faced by migrant/ethnic entrepreneurs are the following.

- Access to credit and support services;

- Shortage of information;
- Lack of (or poor) language skills and cultural knowledge;
- Limited management and marketing skills;
- Distrust of locals, discrimination;
- Over-concentrated in low entry threshold activities where the scope for breakouts or diversification into mainstream markets may be limited.

(Website of the European Commission 2014)

One of the main obstacles for immigrant entrepreneurship is the lack of trust. In practice, trust between the immigrant business owner and the surrounding society increases sales. Therefore, trust determines profitability. Since there is a cultural distance between the immigrant and his/her host country, the building of trust is a long and challenging process. Trust and good reputation are important factors in obtaining financing as well. (Aaltonen & Akola 2012, 8-10)

The concept of time is crucial in relation to gaining trust among the local community and showing good results thanks to word-of-mouth marketing. Time is also needed to learn the culture and habits of the locals and create a bond with the customers. The level of institutional trust is regarded quite high in the Finnish society, a feature which makes it easier for an immigrant to start up a business; in societies where relationships are high in trust, people are more willing to engage in social exchange. (Aaltonen & Akola 2012, 8-10)

When moving to a new country an immigrant has to start to gain his/her social and intellectual capital from scratch. In contrast with local start-ups, those of immigrants have a disadvantage: the owners do not have the same networks or connection. This is normally regarded as an influential factor when starting up a business. Immigrants often experience the decline of their status in a new culture, compared to the one they had in their country of origin, which was based on their occupation, education or family status. Small scale ventures may facilitate the isolation of migrants, delaying their integration. (Aaltonen & Akola 2012, 5)

The largest amount of immigrant businesses are of small size and manager-owned, and they operate in an urban environment. In particular, the first generation of immigrant entrepreneurs operate in quite a competitive environment, where price is the

main parameter. This results in labor-intensive production, long working hours and low wages. In general, due to a general lack of integration into the society, knowledge and familiarity with the business culture and the administrative environment, these businesses rely less on formal providers of support, preferring informal networks for obtaining information and assistance, such as receiving financial support from family and friends rather than banks or other institutional sources of capital. (Jaegers 2008,281)

Beside the aspect of segregation, if establishing a business constitutes an employment opportunity for both non-natives and natives, the risk of unemployment deriving from closing a business is higher among immigrants. Figure 2 classifies immigrants by education: it is quite relevant to notice how the majority has a medium-low level of education (i.e. ISCED 0/1/2). Most frequently, immigrants operate in markets which are characterized by low barriers of entry in terms of required capital and educational qualifications, small-scale production, high labor-intensity and low added value (e.g. the lower end of retail and catering sectors). (Volery 2007, 31)

Country of residence	ISCED 0/1/2	ISCED 3/4	ISCED 5/6	Unknown education
Australia	37.2%	29.6%	23.2%	10.0%
Austria	49.4%	39.3%	11.3%	0.0%
Belgium	43.5%	19.4%	18.7%	18.4%
Canada	30.1%	31.9%	38.0%	0.0%
Czech Republic	38.2%	48.2%	12.6%	1.0%
Denmark	30.1%	31.9%	19.5%	18.5%
Finland	52.6%	28.5%	18.9%	0.0%
France	54.8%	27.2%	18.1%	0.0%
Greece	41.1%	39.9%	15.3%	3.7%
Hungary	41.1%	39.1%	19.8%	0.0%
Ireland	27.9%	27.6%	38.7%	5.8%
Italy	54.3%	33.5%	12.2%	0.0%
Japan	21.0%	35.9%	24.4%	18.7%
Luxembourg	31.2%	35.3%	18.4%	15.1%
Mexico	37.0%	24.9%	33.0%	5.1%
Netherlands	48.7%	31.3%	19.0%	0.9%
New Zealand	16.4%	44.3%	27.3%	12.0%
Norway	13.1%	36.6%	21.8%	28.5%
Poland	47.3%	39.8%	11.7%	1.2%
Portugal	54.7%	25.9%	19.3%	0.0%
Slovak Republic	29.1%	54.6%	15.5%	0.7%
Spain	56.0%	22.4%	21.0%	0.7%
Sweden	27.1%	42.5%	22.3%	8.1%
Switzerland	33.4%	27.9%	19.0%	19.7%
Turkey	50.5%	29.3%	14.3%	5.8%
United Kingdom	35.6%	21.5%	30.5%	12.4%
United States	39.2%	34.7%	26.1%	0.0%
OECD - Total	40.1%	32.1%	24.6%	3.1%

Source: OECD Data base on Immigrants in OECD countries (DIOC) 2000.

Figure 2. % of immigrants by level of education

3 ITALIAN ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN FINLAND

Due to its geographical position, Finland has never experienced great flows of labor migration and it has been quite a closed and homogeneous society until modern times, with a limited foreign population. Nowadays, the greater number of immigrants comes from other European countries. Despite the fact that the presence of Italians in Finland has long traditions, the Italian community in Finland is rather small compared to other larger Italian communities in the world. (Guerra 2012, 26)

3.1 Italian Emigration to Finland

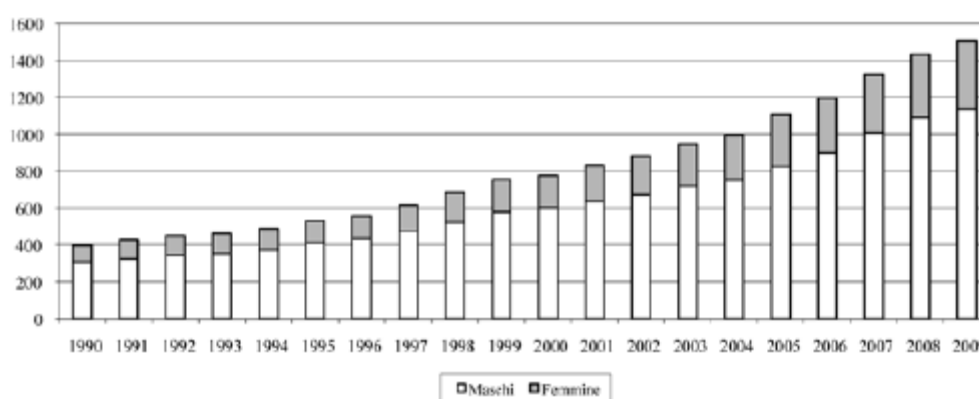
For centuries, the Italian emigration to Finland has typically been individualistic. Historically, the first Italians arrived in Finland towards the end of the period of the Swedish sovereignty (XIX century). The turning point is represented by the annexation of Finland to Russia, since 1809. Since the beginning of the twentieth century, the immigration has turned to a larger phenomenon. The very first immigrants were restaurateurs, merchants, then small shop owners or artisans. One of the earliest and most successful immigrant families are the Casagrande, as yet socially active and renowned in the city of Turku. (de Anna 2012)

According to Nicola Guerra's research on the "Motivations and expectations of Italians planning to move to Finland", the concept behind moving to Finland has recently changed in the minds of Italian immigrants. Thanks to the Europeanization process, Italians do not define moving to Finland as emigration anymore, but rather define it as European "relocation". Thus, moving to Finland is nowadays considered as part of the European integration process, not as "real" migration. (Guerra 2012, 31)

Finland does not appeal in the same way to all Italians. For the Northern-Italians, who are used to a high standard of social and economic wellbeing, the most attractive aspects of Finland are the lack of criminality and the beautiful nature. On the other hand, Southern-Italians consider Finland more as a place where to "escape" from a difficult everyday reality. This difference is to be attributed to the everlasting eco-

conomic gap between the North and the South of Italy, the latter being less rich and industrialized than the first. (Guerra 2012, 30)

The following graph (Figure 3) shows the gradual increase of the Italian emigration to Finland from 1990 until 2009. The amount of emigrants steadily grows year by year. The ratio between male and female population remains constant throughout the years. It can be argued that the more the economic conditions of Italy worsen, the more Italians escape to Finland. According to this assumption, the trend is foreseen to be positive.



Fonte: elaborazione dell'autore su dati Statistics Finland 2010.

Figure 3. The Italian emigration to Finland

In order to facilitate the movement of people, a convention between the governments of Finland and Italy has been promulgated, with the scope of avoiding double taxation and to prevent fiscal evasion. It has entered into force in 1983. The convention applies to persons who are residents of one or both countries. (Website of Big-haired 2014)

3.2 Commercial Relations between Italy and Finland

The commercial relationship and collaboration between Italy and Finland has a long tradition and the interchange index carries a positive sign. Being Italian (i.e. “l’italianità”) and selling the Italian character is progressively perceived as an extra value added to the traditional goods offered. In Finland, the brand “Italy” is deep-rooted; there is a consistent “Italianized” clientele which has a wide knowledge of Italy and a fondness for its products (e.g. cuisine, fashion). The trend is definitely positive. (Website of Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation 2014)

The commercial interchange between Italy and Finland has continued to grow, recording a significant increase of 6.3%. Specifically, the most remarkable growth has been observed in the value of the Italian export (+7.8%). The Italian exports to Finland amount to 1663 million euros. In 2012, mechanical machinery and devices is the main sector of Italian export to Finland. The second most successful group consists of food products, followed by wearing apparel (i.e. clothing), furnitures and automobiles. (Website of infoMercatiEsteri 2014)

Figure 4 shows the list of Italian Direct Investments in Finland (updated on April 2011). While the left-hand column shows the names of the Finnish companies, the corresponding Italian investors could be found on the right one.



Elenco Investimenti Diretti Italiani

Elenco imprese italiane presenti in Finlandia (Aggiornato ad aprile 2011)

Impresa finlandese	Tipo di attività	Investitore italiano
ARANCHO NORDIC OY	Traduzioni, interpretariato, servizi di comunicazioni multilingue	ARANCHO S.R.L.
AURAMO OY	Carrelli elevatori	BOLZONI S.p.A.
BREVINI FINLAND OY	Ingranaggi	BREVINI RIDUTTORI S.p.A.
DATALOGIC MOBILE FINLAND	Mobile computers	DATALOGIC S.p.A.
ETNOTEAM FINLAND	Software	VALUE PARTNERS GROUP
EUROTECH FINLAND	Hardware informatico	EUROTECH S.p.A.
FINNLINES	Compagnia navigazione	GRIMALDI
IGUZZINI FINLAND & BALTIC OY	Apparecchi di illuminazione	IGUZZINI ILLUMINAZIONE SPA
KARTELL	Complementi di arredo	KARTELL
LOCALEYES SUOMI OY	Traduzioni e servizi di localizzazione aziende	OPERA MULTIMEDIA S.p.A.
LUXOTTICA	Montature occhiali da vista e da sole	LUXOTTICA S.p.A.
MEIRA	Generi alimentari (caffè, spezie)	SEGAFREDO ZANETTI
METALWORK FINLAND OY	Componenti pneumatici	METAL WORK S.p.A.
METOS OY	Cucine per comunità	ALI GROUP
NAUTOR OY AB	Produzione di imbarcazioni	NAUTOR MED SRL
PRYSMIAN CABLES AND SYSTEMS OY	Cavi e sistemi	PRYSMIAN CAVI E SISTEMI, S.p.A.
PUKKILA OY	Ceramiche	GRUPPO CERAMICHE RICCHETTI, S.p.A.
RBM SKANDINAVIA OY	Parti per impianti termici	R.B.M. S.p.A.
RESCON MAPEI OY	Collanti per piastrelle	MAPEI S.p.A.
R.I.N.A. - Registro Italiano Navale Finland OY	Certificazioni e collaudi	R.I.N.A. S.p.A.
SAKO OY	Armi da caccia	BERETTA HOLDING S.p.A.
SORIN GROUP FINLAND OY	Prodotti biomedici	SORIN BIOMEDICA S.p.A.
SUOMEN KIVITEOLLISUUS OY	Blocchi di granito, produzione locale	R.E.D. GRANITI S.R.L.
TELEMAR FINLAND	Servizi radio-elettrici per la navigazione	COMPAGNIA GENERALE TELEMAR S.p.A.
TIE RACK FINLAND OY	Rivendita di calze da uomo e cravatte	FRANGI S.p.A.
VALBRUNA FINLAND OY	Industria siderurgica	ACCIAIERIE VALBRUNA SRL
WAM FINLAND OY	Commercio di equipaggiamenti per manipolazione di polveri	WAM S.p.A.

Figure 4. Italian Direct Investments in Finland.

4 FINLAND'S ENTREPRENEURIAL ENVIRONMENT

Why Finland?

- Stability (economic, political and social)
- High GDP per capita
- Geographical position

Finland has one of the most stable and competitive economies among Europe, and one of the most advanced and innovative in the world. It has an excellent welfare and it is one of the countries with the highest income per person, a strong social cohesion and an efficient public administration. The considerably low density of population (less than 16 inhabitants/km²) allows the Finnish central and local administrative authorities to provide many quality services to the population efficiently. Finland is also one of the most politically stable countries in the world. (Website of ItalChamber Finland 2014)

Due to the high income per person, the Finnish population has a strong buying power, 50% above the European average. Nevertheless, 4% of its GDP is spent in research and development (especially in high technology) and Finnish schools are a role model, being the Finnish education system considered to be at the very forefront. Finland's geographical position makes the country attractive to foreign investments, acting as a springboard for eventual investment in neighboring countries, such as the giant Russia or the richer Sweden. (Website of infoMercatiEsteri 2014)

According to the Global Entrepreneurship and Development Index (GEDI), attitudes towards entrepreneurship and the entrepreneurial environment in Finland are among the best worldwide: Finland ranks eighth among more than 120 countries. The GEDI value is based on the analysis of data from different countries through business formation, expansion, and growth, about the "3A's" of development: attitudes, aspirations, and activity.

According to this research, Finland's scores are significantly high in every criteria: opportunity perception, start-up skills, networking, cultural support, opportunity star-

tup, technology, product/process innovation. The research is carried out by the Imperial College Business School, George Mason University, London School of Economics and University of Pécs. (Website of Invest in Finland 2014)

Finnish businesses encounter little bureaucracy and Finland is among the world's least corrupt countries. Even though the amount of entrepreneurs is below the EU and OECD average, Finland provides broad opportunity for entrepreneurs. Finland is a very favorable place for entrepreneurs to get started, and many types of help are available. (Website of Expat Finland 2014)

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) constitute the cornerstone of Finland's economy. A small or medium-sized enterprise is normally defined as a firm with less than 250 employees and an annual turnover of maximum €50 million. Statistically, 99,8 % of Finnish enterprises are SMEs employing less than 250 people. 93,3 % of Finnish companies have fewer than 10 employees. SMEs are liable for over 13% of Finland's export revenue. (Website of The Federation of Finnish Enterprises 2014)

4.1 Facts and Figures

The latest report released by Statistics Finland indicates that foreign entrepreneurial activity in Finland is mainly European (76%, EUR 75 billion turnover), as shown in Figure 2. In 2012, foreign affiliates employed around 234,000 persons. European companies' share of the personnel was 80 %. (Website of Official Statistics of Finland 2014)

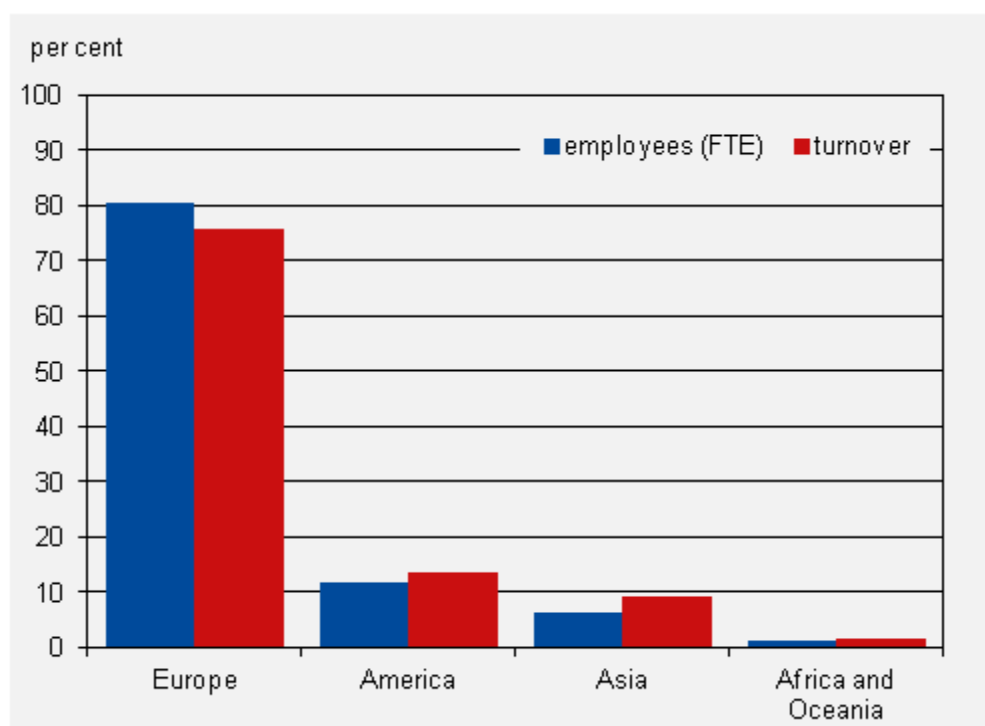


Figure 3. Share of foreign affiliates' personnel and turnover by continent

4.2 Legislation

Anyone with a permanent place of residence in a country within the European Economic Area (EEA) as well as citizens of EU or EEA member states can freely engage in trade or practice a profession in Finland, without the issue of a residence permit. The only obligation is to register at a police station (over three months stay). The right of residency will be registered in the register of aliens and the applicant receives a certificate of registration (in Finnish: EU-kansalaisen oleskeluoikeuden rekis-

teröintitodistus). When registering, one must present a reliable account of his/her engagement in an entrepreneurial activity. (Website of Infopankki 2014)

The “Future of Migration 2020 Strategy” is one of the most important projects of the Finnish Government and the Ministry of the Interior. It aims at estimating and anticipating the volume and quality of immigration, in order to evaluate its impact on the society and create a policy which supports an “unprejudiced, safe and pluralistic Finland”. The objectives are to manage the labor market, improving employment opportunities for immigrants, pursuing integration and ensuring equal rights against legal barriers and discrimination. The strategy would also result in an improvement in international competitiveness. (OECD 2010, 252)

4.3 Help and Support

Enterprise Finland is the central portal in support of Finnish enterprises and it offers various services to entrepreneurs, such as information about funding, contacts, advice on capital requirements, business development and internationalization. These services, illustrated in this paragraph, are managed by the Ministry of Employment and the Economy and its partners. As the national "Point of Single Contact" (PSC), it is part of the European EUGO network. (Website of Enterprise Finland 2014)

The Employment and Economic Development Office or TE Office (in Finnish: Työ- ja elinkeinoministeriö) provides services for new entrepreneurs, such as startup grants (in Finnish: starttiraha) in order to ensure the livelihood of a person who becomes an entrepreneur during the initial time (up to 18 months) of getting the business up and running full-time; the income amounts to EUR 32.66 per day. The TE Office also provides free training to new entrepreneurs in setting up their business. (Website of TE-Services 2014)

The Ely Centres (in Finnish: Elinkeino-, liikenne- ja ympäristökeskus) or Centres for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment support the establishment, growth and development of small and medium-sized enterprises by offering advisory, education and development services, and financing. In addition, the ELY Centres offer the internationalization of businesses, the improvement of business effi-

ciency and management skills, the development of technology and innovations, further education for personnel and training for new employees. (Website of ELY Centre 2014)

Another state-owned company, specialized in financing is Finnvera. Its mission is to provide financial services for SMEs, all sizes of enterprises and all business sectors (except basic agriculture), in all development stages of a business, ranging from loans and guarantees to export credit guarantees for large Finnish enterprises. (Website of Finnvera 2014)

5 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RESEARCH

5.1 Research Methodology

The methodology chosen is that of a qualitative research. Qualitative research is most suitable when investigating more complex issues; it has the advantage of generating descriptive information that is rich in details, in contrast with the numerical data of quantitative research. The disadvantages is that the categorical data are more raw and less organized and that the way the responses are processed is subject to the researcher. Qualitative research "tells the story" from the participant's point of view. (Website of Social Research Methods 2006)

My research has been conducted through the sample survey technique, in the form of a structured questionnaire (see Appendix 1). The sample of observation corresponds to the population of Italian entrepreneurs or small-business owners in Finland. By interviewing them, I expect to obtain the necessary information to achieve the objectives and to meet the primary purpose of this thesis: to investigate contemporary Italian emigration to Finland.

I have employed a free online survey software www.surveymethods.com. Survey Expression is the leading survey research software for online survey creation, frequently employed by academic institutions worldwide to conduct online surveys and for gathering data to support research projects in many fields. It is widely employed by researchers worldwide in order to send online surveys to a large range of participants, allowing them to increase sample sizes, improve the collection, organization, reporting and sharing the research data: it saves time and improves efficiency. (Website of Survey Expression 2013)

I created a web-based questionnaire. Few specific questions are in an open-end format, in order to gain the interviewees' personal experience and own assessment unrestrictedly; the rest of them are multiple-choice, in order to simplify the collection and analysis of data and to ease the completion of the questionnaire.

The questionnaire is composed of 15 questions, evenly divided into two parts: one dedicated to the collection of personal information, while the other concerns Fin-

land's entrepreneurial environment. The first 8 questions refer to the identity of the interviewee in order to outline an entrepreneurial profile (e.g. age, sex, education, type of business). The second block of questions aims at investigating the environment where the business owner has first decided to settle and now operates in.

Since the answers to the questionnaire could be submitted online, without face-to-face interaction, I believe that the respondents had the way and time to express their opinions in a free-flowing manner, and he/she was free to answer whatever felt right. In fact, my intention was to obtain true, insightful, and even unexpected responses.

On the other hand, the survey method applied in this study, has the disadvantage that the interviewees' supervision and control are difficult to maintain. Since it is not possible to establish a relationship with the interviewee, the interview needs to be relatively short, in order not to bore or discourage the respondent at first sight, and because the researcher cannot explain complicated or ambiguous questions.

5.2 Research Process

The addressees of my survey are successful Italian entrepreneurs running their own business activity in Finland. Six of them were contacted directly by e-mail (2) containing the link to the online questionnaire to be filled in (<http://www.surveyexpression.com/Survey.aspx?id=af70ca29-0065-49ce-9e27-42a2dff0da3f>), accompanied by a cover letter (see Appendix 2). Other 4 participants were contacted by a direct message on Facebook. The rest of the respondents (2) were reached by the public notice I posted on the Facebook page of Italians in Finland named "Circolo degli Italiani in Finlandia".

Since the method employed to obtain the responses is two-sided, the sample could be defined as hybrid between representative and random: only a couple of respondents were reached by the public post; the rest were contacted directly as being part of my network of friends and considered suitable in representing the characteristics of the population as closely as possible.

Finally, thanks to the online software, the survey results have been collected in a summary report form, in a way to easily read and compare them. At the end of the

research process, I need to its outcome by taking into account my objectives, which served as guidelines to the creation of the questions.



6 RESEARCH RESULTS

6.1 Analysis

The data consist of 8 interviews conducted among self-employed Italian immigrants in Finland, during January 2014. As the questionnaire is composed of two parts, also the analysis of its results is conducted separately: in both parts the answers are summarized and compared to each other.

6.2 Entrepreneurial Profile

Who are the respondents? The average age of the interviewees is quite young: 42 years (min. 27; max. 56). It is worth to notice the small presence of females: only 1/8. This is probably due to dominant role of male and high masculinity traits of Italian culture.




3. SESSO (SEX)		% OF RESPONDENTS	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS
M		87.50%	7
F		12.50%	1
Number of respondents			8
Number of respondents who skipped this question			0

Italian emigrants have always tried to employ themselves abroad in the most traditional jobs, in those old and long-lasting vocations appreciated by customers, without denying their humble origins which are the secret to authenticity. The entrepreneurial experience of Italian immigrants grounds on the principle of “the advantage of the underdevelopment”. (Sori & Morettini 2009, p. 1093).

The great majority of interviewees runs its businesses in the service sector. There are 3 restaurants/pizzeria, 1 café, 2 ice-cream shops, 1 retail shop owner, and the manager of a marble mining company. The enterprises of the interviewees are located most-

ly in the southern region of Varsinais-Suomi, in the area of the city of Turku. This area is highly popular also among Italian students, attracted by the university institutions which are connected to the Italian one, and the studies they offer. The study offer includes Italian language courses. Therefore, there is pool of potential young employees, who are either Italians willing to earn their living, or Finns who want to improve their Italian and practice it in a work place.



As regards the level of education, the interviewees have different educational backgrounds: 1 has a professional qualification, 5 have a high-school diploma, and two have a degree at university level. Interestingly, only 1 participants has a professional qualification, which could be considered more suitable and coherent to the activity that has been undertaken in Finland. This is explainable by considering entrepreneurship as a condition suggested to the subject especially by the environmental condition.

4. GRADO DI ISTRUZIONE (LEVEL OF EDUCATION)	% OF RESPONDENTS	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS
Scuola dell'obbligo (basic education)	0.00%	0
Diploma professionale (professional qualification) 	12.50%	1
Maturità (high-school diploma) 	62.50%	5
Laurea (degree) 	25.00%	2
Number of respondents		8
Number of respondents who skipped this question		0

Most significantly among the results, the first reason for moving to Finland belongs to the sentimental/affective/family category. It could be the typical stereotype of Italian men who are said to have a soft spot for blonde Nordic women. Nevertheless, as proven by the answers given to the next questions, the decision-making process seems to be influenced by other environmental factors as well.

According to Guerra (2012, 28-30), the main migration-typology is represented by the so-called love migration: love appears to be the most common reason for immigration to Finland, to the extent of becoming more important than self-realization.

Finland seems to have a strong appeal for Italians, even though it is not chosen spontaneously among others, but it becomes an option once other motives (e.g. personal relationships, study) have previously brought the person to get to know the country.

5. QUAL È STATA LA MOTIVAZIONE INIZIALE PRINCIPALE DEL SUO TRASFERIMENTO IN FINLANDIA? (WHAT WAS THE MAIN INITIAL REASON FOR YOUR MOVE TO FINLAND?)	% OF RESPONDENTS	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS
Studio (study)	0.00%	0
Lavoro (work) 	12.50%	1
Sentimentali/affettive/familiari (sentimental/affective/family) 	87.50%	7
Culturale (cultural)	0.00%	0
Altro (other)	0.00%	0
	Number of respondents	8
	Number of respondents who skipped this question	0



The time spent in Finland varies considerably, but the majority of respondents has lived in Finland for more than 10 years. Consequently, it would not move back to Italy, being rather skeptical about this eventuality, and considers his/her move to Finland to be permanent. On the contrary, others are more nostalgic and less categorical about this issue. However, consciously or not, the homeland becomes something of magic, geographically distant, but interiorly close and intimate for those who leave it behind to seek new opportunities or on the run from a difficult and precarious situation. (de Anna 2012, 163)

6.3 Finland's Entrepreneurial environment

The second set of questions aimed at investigating the aspect of Finland's entrepreneurial environment. The time needed to establish a business ranges between 4 to 15 months, which is a relatively short time. However, according to the interviewees' experience, most of them does not enjoy the possibility of a support funding: the so-called "starttiraha" has been interrupted for the restaurant industry, probably due to the overload of requests. Only one respondent claims to be receiving an entrepreneurial subsidy.

The great majority of respondents (7/8) defines the knowledge of Finnish language a necessary prerogative in order to startup a business in Finland. In fact, if an immigrant learns the language of the host country, the possibility of engaging in the society and becoming part of it highly increases.

Businesswise, the knowledge of the language results in the ability to attract and interact with customers, establishing durable customer relationships, and to deal autonomously with the authorities and the bureaucracy, without the assistance of a third-party. That is why, language is the most powerful means to integration: the key to the understanding of one's culture and social involvement.

11. CONSIDERA LA CONOSCENZA DELLA LINGUA FINLANDESE UNA PREROGATIVA INDISPENSABILE PER AVVIARE UN'ATTIVITÀ IMPRENDITORIALE IN FINLANDIA? (WOULD YOU DEFINE THE KNOWLEDGE OF FINNISH LANGUAGE A NECESSARY PREROGATIVE TO START UP A BUSINESS IN FINLAND?)	% OF RESPONDENTS	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS
Si (Yes) 	87.50%	7
No 	12.50%	1
	Number of respondents	8
	Number of respondents who skipped this question	0

Nevertheless, most of the respondents (7/8) considers its own market and customers in Finland to be open to foreign investment. It infers that Finland is an open and welcoming market, having a variety of customers segments with different needs and tastes, and growth possibilities. In fact, as there are only around 5,5 million inhabitants in Finland, it would be quite harsh for a business to be profitable by serving on-

ly specific ethnic groups or minorities and that is why cultural integration must be a priority.

12. CONSIDERA IL MERCATO E LA CLIENTELA PER CUI OPERA IN FINLANDIA APERTI AGLI INVESTIMENTI STRANIERI? (DO YOU CONSIDER THE MARKET AND THE CUSTOMERS YOU WORK FOR IN FINLAND TO BE OPEN TO FOREIGN INVESTMENTS?)		% OF RESPONDENTS	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS
Si (Yes)		87.50%	7
No		12.50%	1
Number of respondents			8
Number of respondents who skipped this question			0

The more common everyday obstacles and limitations to the flow of business activities are the knowledge of Finnish language together with cultural differences. Only 1 interviewee indicated bureaucracy, and 1 ticked the option “other”. Most importantly, nobody indicated mistrust and discrimination as obstacles in doing business.

13. QUALI SONO GLI OSTACOLI/LIMITI CHE HA INCONTRATO O AI QUALI FA FRONTE TUTTORA? (WHAT ARE THE EVERYDAY OBSTACLES/LIMITATIONS YOU HAVE MET OR STILL ENCOUNTER?)		% OF RESPONDENTS	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS
Lingua (language)		45.45%	5
Burocrazia (bureaucracy)		9.09%	1
Differenze culturali (cultural differences)		36.36%	4
Diffidenza e discriminazione a sfondo razziale (mistrust and racial discrimination)		0.00%	0
Altro (other)		9.09%	1
Number of respondents			8
Number of respondents who skipped this question			0

All respondents agree with the fact that being Italian constitutes an advantage to their entrepreneurial activity. This is primarily due to the nature of the products they offer that are traditionally Italian and appreciated as such (e.g. gelato, pizza, fashion firms); although the positive mentality, entrepreneurial spirit and passion, which are typical character traits of Italians, are also seen as an advantage in working life.

As regards the strengths of Finland's entrepreneurial environment in contrast with Italy's, the majority of answers pointed out the bureaucratic system, which is described as flexible, simple, functional, efficient, modern (digitized services) and transparent. The political stability, the lack of corruption, the trust and reliability in social relationships and everyday life have also been mentioned. In general, the Italians who took part in this research have a positive impression or opinion about Finland and its business environment, which is strongly appreciated especially for its honesty, reliability and stability.

6.4 Validity and Reliability

Unfortunately, the survey reached only 8 respondents. Perhaps, the main reason is that the interview answers were collected within a relatively short time (11.01.2014 – 28.01.2014). Moreover, the available means to advertise the study and attract more respondents were quite limited. That is why the survey has been conducted on a very small scale.

The results to the multiple choice questions might have been influenced or altered by the options I have arbitrarily decided to offer, according to my theoretical knowledge. However, the submitted questionnaires were not manipulated nor revealed.

When assessing the validity of the research, the small amount of interviewees, the limited amount of time dedicated to the investigation and data collection as well as the relatively small amount of questions submitted, are factors which must be taken into account. It definitely hampers the reliability and meaning of the study, even though it is still possible to trace a certain trend in the answers.

As regards the external validity, it can be stated that the results can be generalized to a larger population. Despite the low number of responses, the answers have already developed a certain trend towards specific issues and the variance is slight. This is due to the homogeneity of the sample and the similarity of the cases under analysis.

In terms of results, the research is reliable: the same measure will produce the same results on another occasion and similar observation will be reached by other observ-

ers. The research process is transparent, as the questions and answers have been handled only by the researcher, they have not been altered and there has not been any unauthorized input to the process.

7 EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study was successful in solving the research problems and objectives. The results of the research are quite consistent with the theoretical knowledge and supported by the related literature.

The method chosen to implement this study is definitely the most suitable: it is best for getting responses from specific, identified persons, but also from others which would be hardly reachable otherwise.

Given the indirect communication mean, the questionnaire is not subject to the interviewer bias and the respondents work independently at their own pace, without the embarrassment of a face-to-face interaction.

The honesty of the interviewees and the truthfulness of their answers is discretionary. However, all the respondents completed the questionnaire fully, providing an answer to each and every question, even to the ones which were not strictly required.

Furthermore, the open-end questions produced the sought result of more extensive and independent answers, which eased and supported my analysis work. For these reasons, it could be assumed that the attitude towards the treated issue is positive and the topic is quite of interest.

The ethical issues involved in this research process were the honesty of interviewees, the privacy on their data (i.e. discretion on findings and handling of confidential information) and the reliability of the research results.

The sources which have been consulted to carry out this study are financial studies from official institutions, official statistics and country reports, international and private researches (e.g. OECD, UN, EU), journal articles, study theses and many other official websites.

7.1 Suggestions for Development

I believe immigrant entrepreneurship has an increasingly important role in Finland's economy. Nevertheless, the studies of self-employed immigrants are quite scarce. More specifically, not enough attention is being paid to the newest wave of Italian emigration to Finland and the integration of these immigrants into the Finnish society as business owners.

It would be very interesting to see the results of a larger scale investigation on the reasons for Italian migration to Finland especially in relation to entrepreneurship. The need and the interest in more recent studies than the ones referred to in this research is strong, as the economic situation and societies of both countries are in constant development. A research as such would have both a sociological and political value, and a meaning to the new generation of migrants.

8 CONCLUSION

This study has served to prove that immigrant entrepreneurship is worth of strong appreciation. The participation of immigrants to the labor market is increasingly becoming a significant contribution to solve its structural imbalances and to fill its gaps. Immigration has been widely recognized to be a powerful economic force in many industrialized countries.

The next unavoidable step should definitely be the improvement and application of more valid integration policies (legally, socially, economically and culturally) even though the recent economic crisis has drifted European government towards protectionist measures. A more liberal approach would ensure equality in rights and opportunities, towards the elimination of both legal and social barriers, unquestionably stimulating economic growth.

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QUESTIONNAIRE:
CONTEMPORARY ITALIAN ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN FINLAND

Answers marked with a * are required.

1. Informazioni personali - Profilo imprenditoriale

Personal information - Entrepreneurial profile

1. Nome e descrizione dell'attività in breve
(Own name, company, please briefly describe your business) *

2. Et  (Age) *

3. Sesso (Sex) *

M F

4. Grado di istruzione (Level of education) *

- Scuola dell'obbligo (basic education)
 Diploma professionale (professional qualification)
 Maturit  (high-school diploma)
 Laurea (degree)

5. Qual   stata la motivazione iniziale principale del suo trasferimento in Finlandia?
(What was the main initial reason for your move to Finland?) *

- Studio (study)
 Lavoro (work)
 Sentimentali/affettive/familiari (sentimental/affective/family)
 Culturale (cultural)

Altro (other)

6. Da quanto tempo vive in Finlandia? (How long have you been living in Finland?) *

- 0-3 anni (years)
- 3-10
- più di 10 (more than 10)

7. Torneresti in Italia? Se no, perche? (Would you move back to Italy? If not, why?)

8. Ritiene di essersi trasferito stabilmente e definitivamente in Finlandia?

(Do you believe to have moved to Finland permanently?) *

- Sì (Yes) No Forse (Maybe)

2. L'ambiente imprenditoriale finlandese
Finland's entrepreneurial environment

9. Quanto tempo le è stato necessario per avviare la sua attività? (How long did it take you to establish your business?) *

10. Quale tipo di sostegno riceve per la sua attività in Finlandia (p.es.: starttiraha)?

(What kind of business support do you receive in Finland?) *

11. Considera la conoscenza della lingua finlandese una prerogativa indispensabile per avviare un'attività imprenditoriale in Finlandia?

(Would you define the knowledge of Finnish language a necessary

prerogative to start up a business in Finland?) *

- Si (Yes) No

12. Considera il mercato e la clientela per cui opera in Finlandia aperti agli investimenti stranieri? (Do you consider the market and the customers you work for in Finland to be open to foreign investments?) *

- Si (Yes) No

13. Quali sono gli ostacoli/limiti che ha incontrato o ai quali fa fronte tuttora? (What are the everyday obstacles/limitations you have met or still encounter?) *

- Lingua (language)
- Burocrazia (bureaucracy)
- Differenze culturali (cultural differences)
- Diffidenza e discriminazione a sfondo razziale (mistrust and racial discrimination)
- Altro (other)

14. Considera l'essere un imprenditore italiano un vantaggio per la sua attività? Perché? (Do you consider being an Italian entrepreneur to be an advantage for your business? Why?)

15. Se dovesse indicare un punto forte della Finlandia rispetto all'Italia, quale scegliereste? (If you would have to point out a strength of Finland in contrast with Italy, what would it be?) *

APPENDIX 2

QUESTIONNAIRE COVER LETTER

Oggetto: Compilazione questionario su imprenditoria italiana in Finlandia

Gentile Imprenditore,

Mi chiamo Maria De Carlo e sono una studentessa laureanda in *International Business* presso la Satakunnan Ammattikorkeakoulu, con sede a Rauma.

Data la mia provenienza, ho pensato di svolgere la mia tesi di laurea sugli imprenditori italiani in Finlandia, per analizzare le motivazioni e i risultati di una scelta coraggiosa e forte, come quella di lasciare il proprio Paese per investire energie e denaro in un'avventura imprenditoriale all'estero.

Chiedo scusa fin d'ora per il disturbo, ma La pregherei di dedicare un po' del suo tempo alla compilazione di un questionario in cui ho elaborato una serie di 15 domande mirate a 'fotografare' la sua esperienza imprenditoriale in Finlandia. Le sue risposte saranno preziose per completare la mia ricerca con l'analisi e la comparazione di dati di prima mano, impossibili da reperire in ricerche economiche e sociologiche anche recenti.

La ringrazio anticipatamente per la sua disponibilità e il suo aiuto, pregandola di compilare il prima possibile il questionario che può trovare al seguente indirizzo:

<http://www.surveyexpression.com/Survey.aspx?id=af70ca29-0065-49ce-9e27-42a2dff0da3f>

Con riconoscenza e sincera gratitudine,

Maria De Carlo