

**BARRIERS TO LABOR MARKET
INTEGRATION FOR SKILLED FOREIGN
WORKERS IN FINLAND**

Abstract

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Title of publication Barriers to Labor Market Integration for Skilled Foreign Workers in Finland		
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Abstract <p>The purpose of this study is to explore the barriers foreigners face when attempting to integrate into the Finnish labor market, in an attempt to answer the research question "What barriers prevent foreigners from successfully integrating into the Finnish labor market?", based on the idea of labor market integration. The study is based on the idea that the barriers to labor market integration prevent and hamper skilled foreign workers from successfully integrating into the Finnish labor market.</p> <p>Primary and secondary data was researched and analyzed using the primary research methodology of deductive reasoning. Several theories were utilized including Piore's dual labor market theory, economic integration theory, human capital theory, four types of discrimination theory, and Hofstede's cultural values and dimensions. Furthermore, information was gathered from literature related to the study.</p> <p>As for the empirical section of the study, primary data was collected by a survey that was sent out online from September 29, 2020 until October 2, 2020. The survey was comprised of thirteen multiple choice questions and a final open ended response form, or question fourteen. The survey had 212 participants in total.</p> <p>The study results show that significant barriers such as residence permits, discrimination, social welfare, the language barrier, networking, and cultural differences prevent the skilled foreign population from successfully integrating into the Finnish labor market. Development ideas are presented based on the findings of the study. Further study is needed to encompass the labor market integration in relativity to each demographic section, along with industry specific segments.</p>		
Keywords Labor, Market, Integration, Barriers		

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

Several factors affecting Finland in the future have made it evident the importance of foreign labor. In 2020 Finland's population is at 5.54 million persons. By 2031, there will be more deaths than births in Finland. In other words, the population will begin to decline. In January of 2020, Finland's population grew by 400 persons. (Statistics Finland & YLE 2019, 2020.)

While Finland does not have a long history of taking in international migrants, it has a compound annual growth rate of migrants of 7% over the past 25 years, which is among the fastest in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's list of countries (37 countries) (OECD 2018, 3). As of 2019, 25% of children in Helsinki under six come from a foreign background. Fifty-four percent of immigrants have moved to Finland for family reasons, 18% for work, 11% for refugee status, 10% for studying, and 8% for other reasons (Statistics Finland 2014). Meanwhile, over forty percent of foreign background persons living in Finland have a tertiary level degree or qualification (Helsinki City & Statistics Finland 2019). In 2016, there were over 21,000 international students in Finland completing a degree (Hudd, T 2018).

Despite the rise in migration to Finland, persons with a foreign background in Finland tend to also have a higher unemployment rate. For foreign background women who have lived in Finland for less than five years the rate of employment is forty percent, while after living in Finland for over ten years the rate became 67%. (Helsinki City & Statistics Finland 2019.)

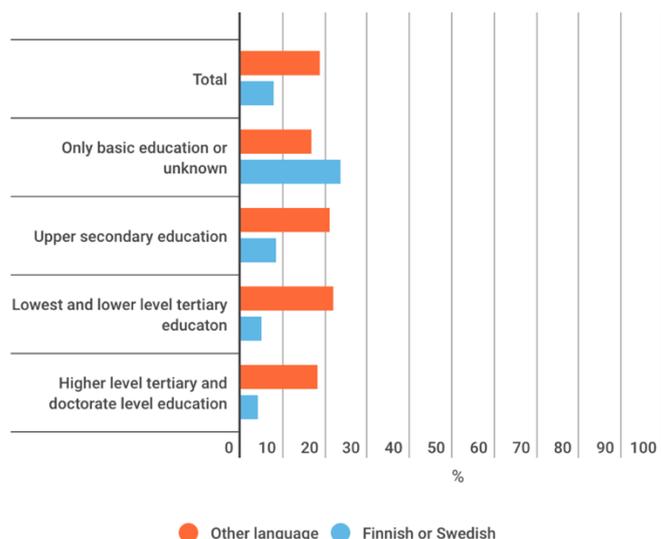


Figure 1 Unemployment rates by mother tongue and education level in Helsinki (Helsinki City & Statistics Finland 2019)

The unemployment levels were higher on all levels for the persons with a mother tongue other than Finnish or Swedish, except for persons with only basic education. (Statistics Finland 2019a.) At the end of 2018, persons with a foreign background had an unemployment rate of 18.6% and Finnish background residents had a rate of 7.4%. Meanwhile the employment rate of 20 to 64-year old's with a foreign background was 56.4% and for Finnish backgrounded residents as 78.4 %. (Helsinki City & Statistics Finland 2019.) The average age of persons living in Finland is 43.1, within the working age range (Statista 2020).

In order for Finland's economic situation to thrive in the future, especially in consideration of the age gap and population decline, integrating skilled foreign labor is essential. Especially this study aims to gain the insight of the skilled foreign laborers themselves, and what barriers prevent them from integrating into the Finnish labor market.

1.2 Research Objectives, Research Questions, and Limitations

Research Objectives

This thesis aims to delve deeper into the reasons the number of foreign persons in Finland have a higher unemployment rate than native Finns, and what can be causing this disconnect between the numbers. This study is a resource for both companies and institutions alike for a better understanding of the foreign workers in the Finnish labor market. This thesis will help Finnish businesses understand the reality foreign workers face when attempting to enter the Finnish labor market. Additionally, for Finnish institutions to understand the barriers foreign workers face when attempting to integrate into the labor market

which in turn affects their overall integration into society; therefore emphasizing the importance of mending, fixing, or resolving these barriers.

By completing research on these barriers, this thesis should help to understand the factors affecting labor integration for foreign workers. This thesis aims to inspire future solutions to the barriers. The thesis assists companies and institutions and governmental ministries to also understand the effects of the failure of labor market integration from the side of the foreign laborer themselves, rather than from an outsider's perspective.

This will in turn help companies and institutions and the ministries to better provide resources and solutions and allow for the foreign laborers to better integration into the labor market, and have a deeper understanding of the barriers that affects this.

Research Questions

In consideration with the intended purpose of this study the following research question is formed:

- What barriers prevent skilled foreigners from successfully integrating into the Finnish labor market?

To attain the answer to the main research question, the following sub-questions are formed:

- What types of barriers prevent labor market integration?
- Do skilled foreign laborers in Finland feel as though they can, or have been able to, integrate into the Finnish labor market with ease?
- How can these barriers be better solved or alleviated?

Thesis Limitations

This study has several limitations. The majority of the population of Finland resides in Helsinki, and the Uusimaa region. There are 631,000 persons living in Helsinki in 2019, and retrospectively 1.67 million people in the Uusimaa region. (Statistics Finland 2019b.) Additionally, almost one half of Finland's foreign population lives in Helsinki (Statistics Finland 2020). Therefore, the study focus will be limited to the Uusimaa region and Helsinki.

Therefore, while the research can encompass the whole of Finland the research is specific to Helsinki, and may not be transferable or relevant when discussing the same matters In another region in Finland.

Additionally, another limitation presented is that the research focuses on skilled labor (Bachelor's or Master's degree at minimum), i.e., more high skilled work force and does

not include reporting on occupations for less educated or blue-collar foreign workers. Therefore, the data does not encompass the labor force as a whole but primarily the skilled labor force entailing that the data is not transferable for the unskilled working force.

1.3 Theoretical Framework

Several theories are utilized within this thesis. Economic integration theory (labor market integration) justifies that economic integration is measured by the equality of native born and immigrant persons. The integration factor is determined by the level of performance of the immigrant population on a specific indicator compared with the native population on the exact same indicator (i.e. unemployment, ability to pay, stable proportionate income, or permanent stable work). (Lancee 2012, 57-61.) Dual labor market theory, created by Piore, devises that labor markets are segmented into two segments. The first segment is the primary, capital incentivized segment, and the second is a labor incentivized segment (Piore 1971; Kolding 2018, 15-16). Jobs in the primary sector require specific skills, while in the secondary sector they require less skills, are repetitive and menial. The secondary segment's jobs are unstable and are heavily influenced by demand. (Piore 1971; Kolding 2018, 16.) Immigrants primarily have been more integrated in the secondary segment with temporary work (Kolding 2018, 16-17). Human capital theory is the theory created by Schultz (1961) that expenditure on human capital is an investment rather than a consumption. Human capital theory dictates that persons with a higher education level, language skills, and experience in the current labor market of which they are in are often more employed. Thus, emphasizing that foreign labor is at a disadvantage and more unemployed, enabling those capitals to be considered barriers. (Yücel 2016, 10-13.) The specific barriers identified in this thesis are additionally comprised of several theories. Discrimination theory states that there are four types of discrimination: intentional-explicit discrimination, subtle-unconscious/automatic discrimination, statistical discrimination, and organizational discrimination, which all can present themselves as a labor market barrier. (Blank, Citro & Dabady 2004, 56-65). Geert Hofstede's cultural value dimensions states that there are different value dimensions to cultures such as: power distance, individualism, masculinity, uncertainty avoidance, and long-term orientation (Hofstede 2001, 29).

1.4 Research Methodology and Data Collection

Research Approach

A research approach can either be inductive or deductive. An inductive approach is where data is first collected and then a theory or hypothesis can be made. The deductive

approach is where a certain theory concerning a topic is created and the hypothesis is then tested. (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2019, 124-127.)

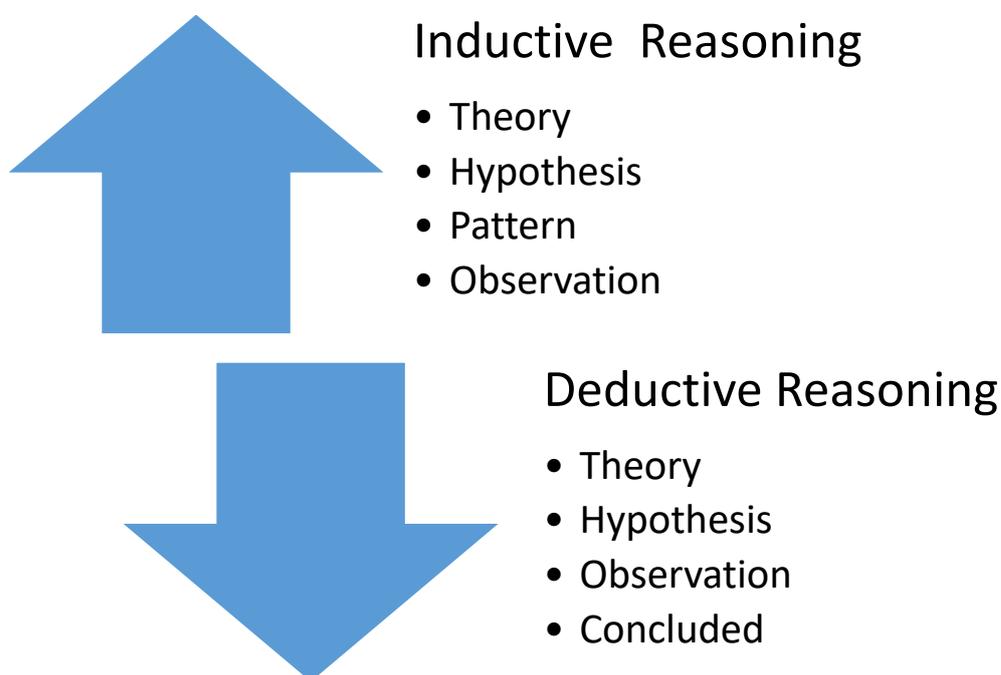


Figure 2 Deductive and Inductive Reasoning in Theory (Hyde 2000)

Deductive and inductive reasoning vary based on the collecting of data, versus testing a hypothesis. A basic understanding of the differences between inductive and deductive reasoning demonstrates that inductive reasoning is conducive to qualitative data while deductive reasoning aligns with quantitative methods. (Hyde 2000, 82-90.)

When research begins with theory developed from secondary sources that is then tested with primary data, the study is utilizing a deductive approach. When research begins by collecting explorative data to generate or build a theory, the approach is inductive. (Saunders et al. 2019, 145.)

This study emphasizes a deductive approach to research as first secondary data is collected, then conclusions are made, that were tested with primary data.

Research Methodology

Data can include both quantitative and qualitative data.

Qualitative data methods include more research that is mainly unmeasurable, such as interviews. Qualitative methods are more text based and unstructured. Quantitative methods can include surveys and other such interviews if they are cyphered into data are numerically analyzed. Quantitative methods are more numeric and therefore more objective

in nature. They can be less in depth on the subject matter leaving the researcher to draw the conclusions based on the data. Quantitative data can also be more reliable. (Saunders et al. 2019.)

In regard to this study, qualitative data primarily describes the interview portion of the survey, along with the unmeasurable aspects of the data evaluated. There is a mix of quantitative and qualitative data, such as in the case of the survey portion, the results were turned into numeric data in order to be more thoroughly analyzed.

Data Collection Methods

There are two types of data utilized in this thesis: primary data and secondary data. Primary data is data collected directly from a main source, while secondary data is primary data that has already been collected and made available for use. Primary data is collected via person to person interactions, or possibly internet based questionnaires. Secondary data includes raw and published data and summaries. (Saunders et al. 2019, 220-223, 310-31.)

The theoretical portion of this thesis consists of secondary data. The empirical research conducted online via survey is the primary data. The survey was taken from September 28 2020 until October 2 2020. The survey had 212 respondents and was completed electronically.

1.5 Thesis Structure

This thesis is divided into several sections. The first section digresses into the thesis background, research background, thesis objectives, limitations, and the research methodology. The second chapter covers the theoretical portion of the thesis introducing labor market integration and the barriers preventing foreign workers in Finland from labor market integration. The third chapter is comprised of the empirical research: data collection and data analysis. In this chapter the data collection process is presented. The third chapter is where the primary data is analyzed. The fourth chapter consists of a development plan based on ideas from the theoretical and empirical sections of the study. The fifth chapter concludes the research; answering the research questions, with sections for the validity and reliability of the study, along with suggestions on further research. The sixth chapter summarizes the study.

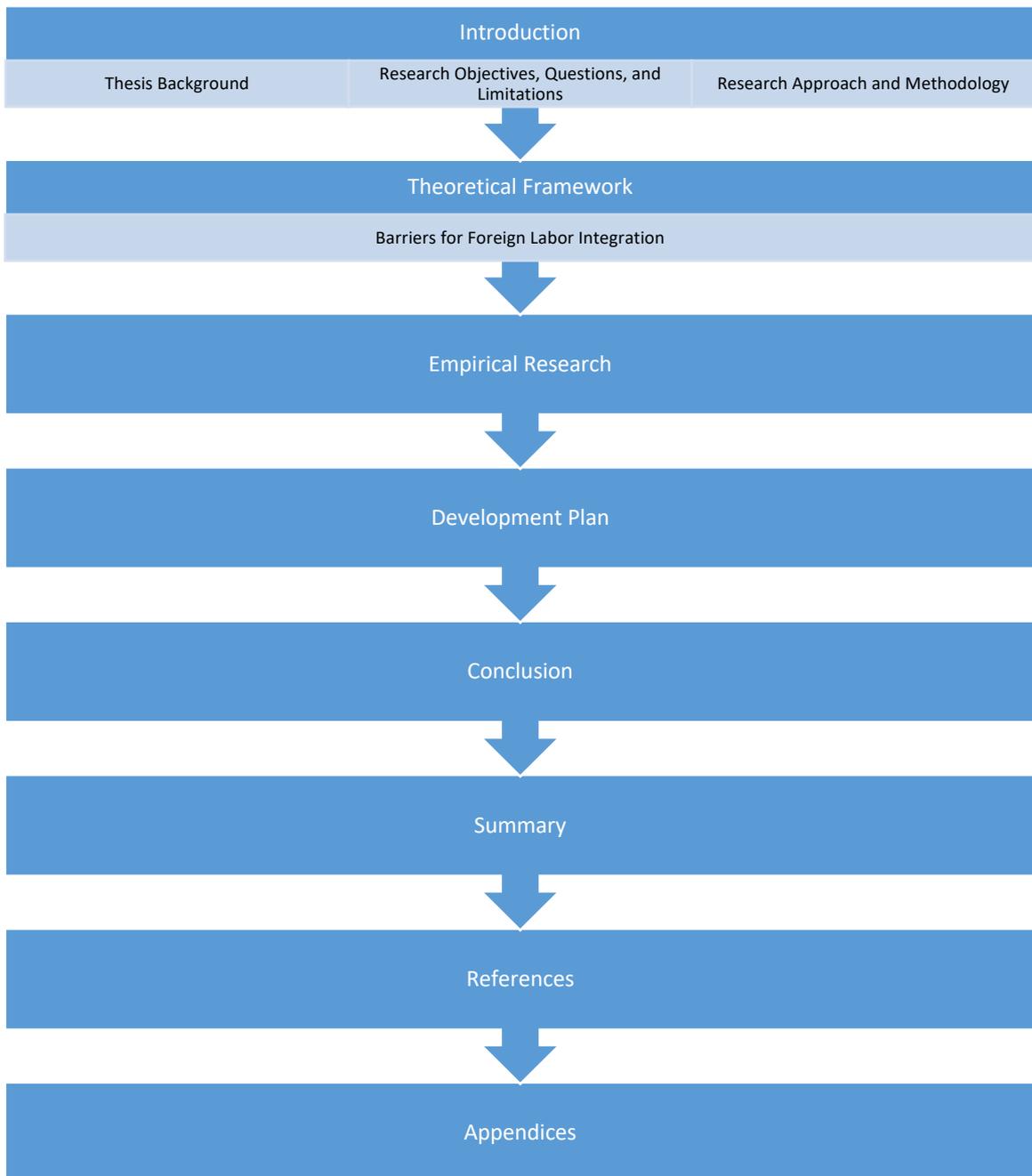


Figure 3 Thesis Structure

2 LABOR MARKET INTEGRATION

2.1 The Basis of Labor Market Integration

Currently around the globe over three billion people are employed while 205 million persons remain unemployed (International Labor Organization 2011). The number of international migrants reached over 272 million persons in 2019, which is 51 million more than in 2010 (UN 2019). Currently Europe has the largest number of immigrants with 82 million immigrants. North America follows with 59 million immigrants, and North and Western Asia have the third most immigrants with over 49 million migrants. Within the countries, more than half of all the immigrants are residing within just ten countries. (UN 2019.) It is estimated that 74% or roughly three out of every four immigrants are of working age at the ages between 20 and 64. Primarily, these immigrants are located in Europe, North America, Eastern, and South-Eastern Asia. (UN 2019.) Labor market integration is the inclusion of immigrants into a country or society's labor market. Thus, effectively ensuring that the immigrants are introduced into the labor market for a long term and successful overall integration into the society (European Commission 2020.) Labor market integration is essential for any country hosting immigrants, not only for the sake of the immigrant but for the sake of the host country and the host countries economic wellbeing (European Commission 2020).

Economic integration theory or the basis of labor market integration theory, theorizes that economic integration is measured by the justness or even handedness of native born and immigrants. The level of integration is set on the level of performance of the immigrant population in comparison to the native born population, on the same exact basis and indicator. This could be unemployment, stable proportionate income levels, permanent stable work levels, or the ability to pay. (Lancee 2012, 57-61.)

Labor market integration is a term that has often been used in several ways regarding what interaction is required for 'integration'. However, the general or all-inclusive basis is that the immigrant is a part of a formal employment relationship. (Kolding 2018, 18-24.) There are different degrees to labor market integration as seen in the figure below.

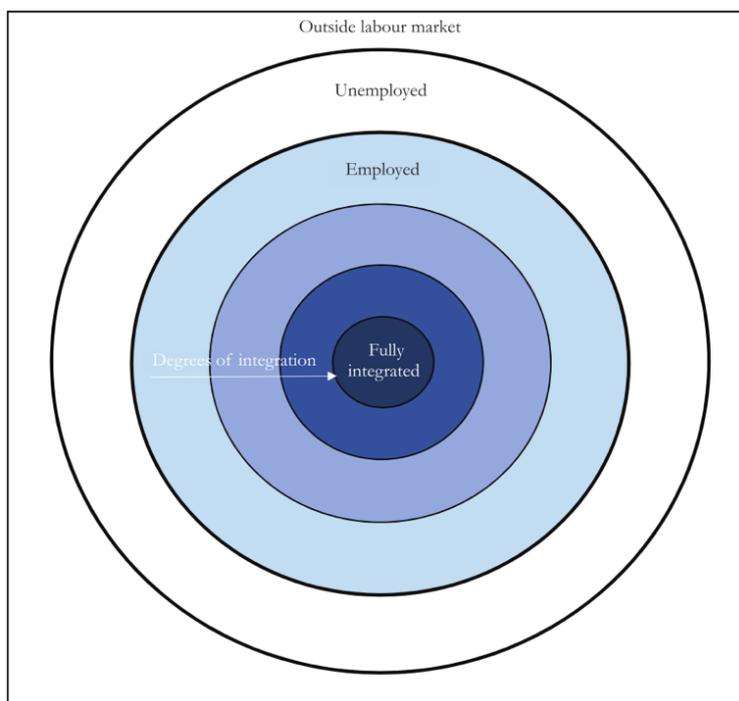


Figure 4 Degrees of Labor Market Integration (Kolding 2018)

Kolding's figure shows the levels of labor market integration, that there are several levels and degrees, and emphasizes that any employment does not equal total labor market integration.

This study focuses on some of the socio-economic dimensional barriers of labor market integration such as discrimination, language, culture, networking, social welfare, and residency.

Piore's Dual Labor Market's theory defines that labor markets are divided into two main sectors: a primary capital incentivized segment, and a secondary labor incentivized segment (Piore 1971). There are more divisions within each segment however the largest division is between the primary and secondary sectors. Labor in the two segments varies in a number of important ways. Jobs in the primary sector require a specific skills, training, and background, while jobs in the secondary sector typically are 'unskilled,' repetitive and perhaps menial. Additionally, jobs in the second sector are unstable and labor force frequently changes dependent upon labor market demand. On the other hand, jobs in the top of the primary sector typically have laborers with high responsibilities, allowing for promotions and rises in careers. While in the lower part of the primary sector, opportunities for career advancements are rare. In the primary sector, earnings are often linked with the level of productivity, while in the secondary segment earnings are directly related to the number of working hours. (Piore 1971; Kolding 2018 14-18.)

A flexibilization of labor markets in the western world has occurred over the last two to three decades, thus an increase in atypical or non-standard forms of work has happened. For example: temporary employment, agency work, self-employment, and part-time employment has increased. This has negatively impacted labor within the traditional secondary segmented and primary labor sector. (Kalleberg 2011; Kolding 2018 14-17.) This connects with in essence that temporary employment or short term contracted labor has often been popular among immigrant populations (Durand, Massey & Zenteno 2001, 120; Kolding 2018, 17).

Human Capital Theory, first created by Schultz (1961), elaborates that expenditures on human capital is always an investment rather than a consumption. Thus, persons with a higher education level, language skills, and experience of the current labor market which they are attempting to integrate into- are frequently more employed. (Yücel 2016, 10-13.)

Currently around the globe over three billion people are employed while 205 million persons remain unemployed (International Labor Organization 2011).

In Finland, there are currently 2.4 million persons employed (144,000 foreign backgrounded persons within the working age) and around 295,000 persons unemployed (29,000 of foreigner background) (Statistics Finland 2019b, 2020).

2.2 Barriers to Successful Labor Market Integration

The Institute for the Study of Labor identified that there are two primary types of barriers to labor market integration: institutional, and internal or personal barriers. (Zimmerman, K., Kahanec, M., Constant, A., DeVortez, D., Gataullina, L. & Zaiceva, A. 2008, 7.)

An institution refers to any organization, government, policy, or custom. while internal is intended as anything inside of a person, their own body or mind (Cambridge Dictionary 2020a). While the definition of a barrier is anything that prevents something from happening, or makes something more difficult (Cambridge Dictionary 2020b).

The Institute for the Study of Labor further summarized the internal and institutional barriers as barriers ranging from discrimination, unemployment rates, lack of education, lack of educational opportunities and restrictive policies. They identified the internal barriers as cultural attitudes, language, etc. (Zimmerman et al. 2008, 6-11.)

In the context of this thesis, institutional barrier refers to any barrier to labor market integration caused by any organization, government, policy, or custom, in this case: discrimination, welfare state, and residency. While internal barriers are understood as barriers created by the individuals own influence (language, culture, or network).

For the context of the reader, the barriers have been separated and categorized as shown in the following figure.

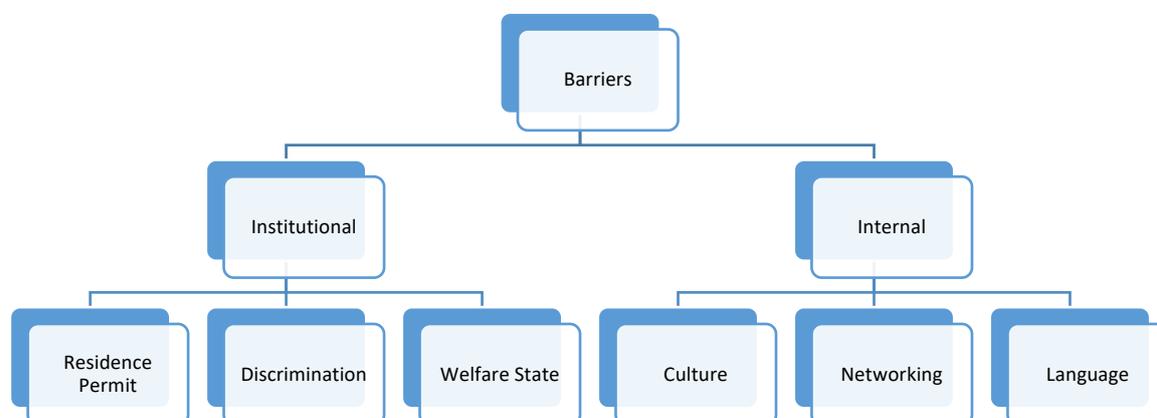


Figure 5 Barriers

The institutional barriers studied in this thesis are residency, discrimination, and the welfare state. The internal barriers studied in this thesis are language, networking and culture.

2.2.1 Residence Permit

A residence permit is an official document outlining the permissions you have and allowing you to live in a country outside of a person's native country (Cambridge Dictionary 2020c). A residence permit can be based on three bases, temporary, continuous, or permanent. Each permit requires an application and processing, and the first residence permit of any person is always on a temporary basis. (MIGRI 2020a.)

Foreigners from outside the European Union must have a residence permit in order to live and work in Finland. Persons from other countries within the European Union can still be required to apply for a permit and fulfill certain conditions in order to gain working rights and legal permission to reside in Finland. The residence permits must be applied through the Finnish Immigration Services or MIGRI (MIGRI 2020b).

Currently in Finland there are three main types of residence permits granted. Type: 'A', 'B', or 'P'. The first permit is a continuous permit in which the permit is continuous and only after four years of having a continuous permit can the person apply for a permanent

residence permit, or permit type 'P'. The second type is permit 'B' which is a temporary residence permit and comes with certain restrictions and must be renewed periodically. The second type of permit is the one granted most often for students, or temporary work contracts. Additionally, the first residence permit of any type is always granted on a temporary basis (must be renewed). There are also permit types 'P-EU', or 'P-EY' for third-country citizens who have a long term residence in the EU. (MIGRI 2020b.)

Additionally, any residence permit can have certain specific income requirements. Internships must be paid, meaning that a potential worker is not able to get a residence permit for an unpaid internship. Additionally, a student who has recently graduated is able to receive a residence permit based on looking for work after graduating in Finland. However, even this residence permit requires over twelve thousand euros to be present in their bank account which can present significant challenges. The cost of the application alone for a work residence permit can cost upwards of 520 to 650 euros. To be approved for the permit, the foreigner must present bank statements and legal documents proving their funds. (MIGRI 2020c.)

Table 1 Residence Permit Income Requirements in 2020 (MIGRI 2020c)

Residence Permit	Residence Permit Subtype	Amount (Euros)	Time Frame
Work	Full time gainful employment	1,236	Monthly
	Specialist and EU Blue card	3,000 / 4,852	Monthly
	Internship	Must be paid	Monthly
	Au Pair	280	Monthly
	Working Holiday	2,000	Tri-Monthly
Family members of a person who has a residence permit in Finland (Or	One Adult	12,000	Yearly
	Another Adult in Household	8,400	Yearly
	Family member under 18	6,000	Yearly
	Second family member under 18	4,800	Yearly
	Third family member under 18	3,600	Yearly

international protection)	Fourth family member under 18	2,400	Yearly
	Fifth family member under 18	1,200	Yearly
Student	1 year permit	6,720	Yearly
	2 year permit	13,440	Yearly
Other Grounds	Residence permit on other grounds	12,000	Yearly

In most cases, the applicant for a residence permit is required to prove their funds by showing a bank statement with the yearly total in their account. This can present a significant barrier for foreigners as they are required to show a large sum of money which may be hard to access. If a residence permit takes a longer length of time to process this can create significant issues and even cancel a foreign workers potential employment opportunity. Many companies do not want to wait for the duration of the permit process. (European Commission & European Migration Network 2013, 334).

Compared to other European countries, the waiting and processing time for residency permits is longer in Finland. As a comparison below is a table comparing the processing times for a work visa between several European countries in 2012.

Table 2Ad-Hoq Query on Processing Times and Service Standards for Visas (European Commission & European Migration Network 2013)

Country	Average Processing Times
Estonia	2 months or 60 days average
Bulgaria	7 – 15 days
Latvia	Less than 30 days
Poland	30 days
Finland	113 days or more
Sweden	Less than 90 days (63%)
UK	3 weeks to 80 working days

Norway	90 days or three months
---------------	-------------------------

The majority of other European countries are able to process the permits in less than 90 days, while Finland was at an average of 113 days minimum (European Commission & European Migration Network 2013).

In 2017, MIGRI published, the number of asylum applications received from 2000 through 2014, in specific countries and the number of positive decisions.

Table 3 MIGRI Applications on Asylum Applications and Positive Decisions by Country 2000-2014 (Sarvimäki 2017)

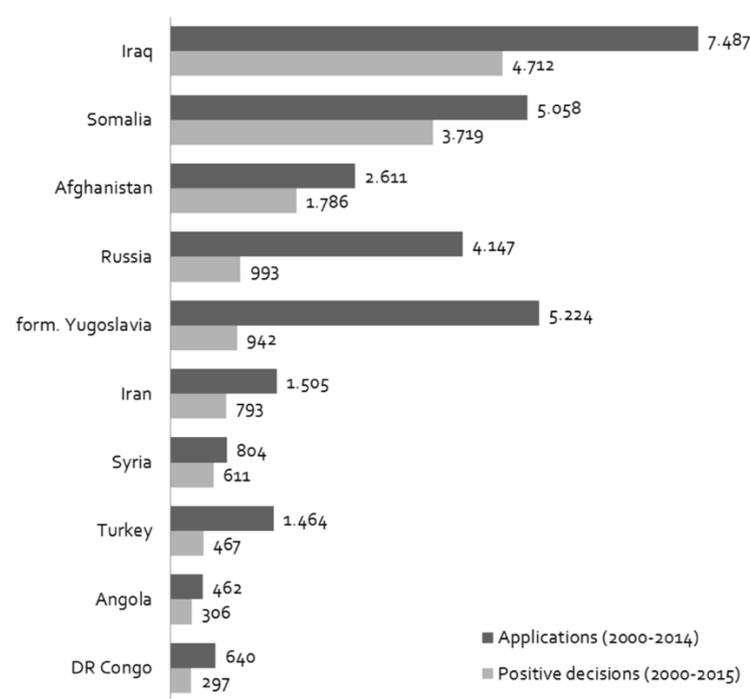


Table four shows the applications for asylum versus the positive decisions during 2000 through to 2015. Most applications came from Iraq, Somalia, and formerly Yugoslavia. (Sarvimäki 2017, 96.)

In fact, in 2019, the Deputy Chancellor of Justice, Mikko Puumalainen, criticized MIGRI for taking one year on making a decision for an application that they were required to complete legally before nine months. The Chancellor ruled in favor of the case created in this situation, and deemed that MIGRI must ensure that deadlines for processing are not delayed, and mistakes are avoided. This is not the first time the Chancellor has ruled in favor of the complaints against MIGRI. (Sopanen 2019.)

2.2.2 Discrimination

Discrimination theory elaborates that there exist four types of discrimination: intentional-explicit discrimination, subtle-unconscious/automatic discrimination, statistical discrimination, and organizational discrimination. Of which, all can present themselves as a labor market barrier. Additionally, discrimination can occur as a result of any institutional procedures, it is not limited to individuals behaviors. (Blank et al. 2004, 56-65.)

Discrimination can be referenced in many ways, not just race. However, for this research, the discrimination concerned is based upon either race, nationality, language, or religion, or any characteristic that sets the foreigner apart from a native Finnish person.

Intentional-explicit discrimination can be verbal, avoidance, segregating, physical or exterminating. Each step leads unto another, starting typically with verbal antagonism and avoidance. Verbal antagonism is not always considered enough to be unlawful, but certainly clearly forms a hostile environment (Blank et al. 2004, 56-57). Verbal abuse and non-verbal rejections are strong indicators of discrimination, being that they will create a disadvantage for the victim. They can be very overt disadvantages such as denial of employment or other harmful disadvantages. An example used by Bank et al. (2004, 56-59), is for instance in a job interview-the interviewers personal bias or prejudices (for example on the interviewees race) can be shown nonverbally in ways such as cutting off the responses, sitting very distantly away from the interviewee, or in other ways. Avoiding a person due to their race or other characteristics is not only damaging but can lead to segregation- which can lead to problems when social networks are important. For example in hiring and promotion, along with educational opportunities and even access to health care. Physical attacks and extermination are on the extreme ends of explicit discrimination. (Heath & McMahon, 1997.)

Subtle unconscious, or automatic discrimination is the result of prejudicial attitudes. While people's actual intentions may be good, their racial (or other) bias or prejudices can persist. This results in the modern form of discrimination which is not overtly present as to not conflict with modern anti-racist views. Most times subconscious beliefs and associations affect the attitudes and behaviors of the ingroup (native persons) towards the outgroups (non-native persons). (Blank et al. 2004, 58-60, Fiske 1998.) Subtle and unconscious discrimination seems to be explained as the ingroup (natives) being favored over the outgroup (non-natives), rather than the main intent being to disadvantage the non-native group. Essentially in this form of discrimination it is key to understand that the reactions and behaviors do not need to be completely negative in order to foster discrimination. (Blank et al. 2004, 59-62.)

Statistical discrimination is when discriminative actions or behaviors happen due to statistical generalizations or profiling of a group. In this schematic scenario a firm or an individual uses generalized beliefs to make decisions about the individual from said group. (Blank et al. 2004, 61-62; Coate & Lowry 1993.) A simpler example would be if an employer had beliefs about persons with a criminal record will be bad employees, and that persons of a certain group or race have more criminal records than those in the native group- the employer may then deem that a person from that race group would be an unsatisfactory choice, based on generalizations. This is the same as explicit discrimination when actions are taken based on this generalization. (Blank et al. 2004, 62.)

The final type of discrimination described is organization discrimination. Organization discrimination can stem from historical ideologies that have impacted the beliefs of the persons within the organizations. Additionally organizations tend to reflect the beliefs of the persons within them. When organizational rules come from past history (such as racist beliefs), they are not easily remade as they can seem quite neutral on the surface. (Blank et al. 2004, 63-64.) An example of organizational discrimination within the labor market would be when most promotions and hiring is done by 'word of mouth' recommendations from their current employees rather than hiring from outside of the organization. (Blank et al. 2004, 64-65; Waldinger & Lichter 2003.)

Discrimination is illegal according to Finnish law. The Non-Discrimination Act prohibits discrimination based on gender, age, origin, nationality, language, religion, belief, opinion, political activity, activity in trade unions, familial relationships, health status, disabilities, sexual orientation, or any other personal characteristics. (Ministry of Justice 2020.)

However, while discrimination is illegal, it still presents a significant problem now. While it is overtly illegal to discriminate, prejudice has subtle impacts. Discrimination and prejudices often manifests in subtle ways, to express a bias without explicitly violating any social norms. (Crandall & Eshleman 2003, 53; Blank et al. 2004, 60). Within the working place most often times subtle and interpersonal discrimination is overlooked and blamed on misunderstanding thus remains unpunished or remanded (Jones, Arena, Nittrouer, Alonso & Lindsey (2017, 52).

Seventy-two percent of Finnish respondents to an investigative survey from 2009 in the EU stated that they believed discrimination on the basis of ethnicity or background was widespread within Finland. A further 34% believed the discrimination was due to language differences. (Larja, Warius, Sundbäck, Liebkind, Kandolin & Jasinskaja-Lahti 2012, 51-53.)

Published in 2020, an investigative article titled *A Dirty Business*, showcased the exploitive cleaning business in Finland. Many companies such as SMC hire recently arrived refugees or foreign workers, and exploit them. As these persons are new to Finland, they are not aware of their rights, and often find themselves being pressured or even threatened. Afraid to get in trouble or refused residency, often, the cleaners will simply put up with the exploitation, sometimes unknowingly. Some companies use schemes such as hiring cleaners as 'entrepreneurs' taking the risk away from the company, and allowing the cleaners to have no breaks, and very long working hours with the constant threat of being replaced. These type of exploitation schemes are widespread. Many foreign workers face exploitation in the current labor market. This can be caused by a variety of reasons, the most common being the foreign worker is unaware of their actual rights, and that they are being exploited unfairly. (Teittinen & Helsinki Sanomat 2020.)

The figure below shows how foreign residents of different origins felt discrimination in the Finnish labor market, not just within the recruitment process, but also inside the workplace as well (Larja et al. 2012).

	All groups				Russians				Estonians				Ingrian Finns			
	1997		2001		1997		2001		1997		2001		1997		2001	
Context	%	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)
Recruitment	46	403	50	1350	45	88	51	193	40	68	35	205	34	44	46	259
Advancement	25	180	24	573	17	22	27	79	18	29	20	108	20	18	18	88
Termination	9	63	6	173	5	6	4	13	6	10	5	6	10	9	3	17
Bullying	33	239	31	800	26	33	30	106	22	34	27	159	33	31	29	155

	Somalis				Vietnamese				Arabs				Turks		Albanians	
	1997		2001		1997		2001		1997		2001		1997		2001	
Context	%	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)
Recruitment	44	30	81	155	41	36	49	180	66	73	64	221	56	63	48	137
Advancement	27	14	41	69	28	24	18	59	40	39	37	103	33	34	26	68
Termination	12	5	21	35	1	1	5	18	11	17	14	42	14	15	10	24
Bullying	23	11	43	78	28	26	27	95	48	48	44	129	53	56	31	76

Adapted from Jasinskaja-Lahti, Liebkind and Vesala (2002) and Jasinskaja-Lahti & Liebkind (1997).

Figure 6 Industry Discrimination in the Finnish Labor Market (Larja et al. 2012)

From the above figure the reader can see that in 2001, 50% of all groups of persons of foreign origin felt discriminated against even just in the recruitment process. The survey was conducted with over 3,500 respondents, which was then analyzed with the Ministry of Employment and the Economy and Larja et al. (2012).

Within just the recruitment process a foreigner many face discrimination. The same study conducted an experiment to see how many respondents would get offered an interview or a call back for a job position based on if they were foreign. This study was intended to understand if there was a measurable level of discrimination within the hiring process. It was revealed that on average, the applicant with a Russian name would need to apply to two times the amount of jobs as the Finnish candidates to receive a call back. (Larja et al. 2012.) To conduct this experiment, extreme measures were covered using different minorities, applying to a vast number of positions, using a large number of CV's in order to complete the whole picture. With such thorough experimentation the results are quite reliable in showing that foreigners especially those who do not speak fluent Finnish, will face a much more difficult time in even getting an interview. (Larja et al. 2012.)

Table 4 Discrimination in the Finnish Labor Market (Larja et al. 2012)

	Number of jobs	Neither invited	At least one invited	Both invited	Finn preferred	Russian preferred	Call-back rate for Finns	Call-back rate for Russians	RCR	NDR	χ^2 (Pearson's chi square test on the difference in call-back rates)
	a	b	c	d	e	f	(e+d)/a	(f+d)/a	(e+d+)/(f+d)	(e-f)/c* 100	
1 st stage without 1 minority male tester	582	87	495	421	55	19	82 %	76 %	1,08	7 %	$\chi^2(1)=1.424$, p=.239 (2-tailed test), p=.131 (1-tailed test) McNemar test p = .023
1 st stage, all testers	677	108	569	469	81	19	81 %	72 %	1,13*	11 %	$\chi^2(1)=5.708$, p=.018 (2-tailed test), p=.010 (1-tailed test) McNemar test p = .000
2 nd stage, all testers	845	603	242	85	133	24	26 %	13 %	2,00***	45 %	$\chi^2(1)=42.433$, p=.000 (2-tailed test), p=.000 (1-tailed test) McNemar test p = .000
RCR=Relative Call-back Rate; NDR=Net Discrimination Rate. These indicators are calculated based on sample in column c. The chi square test is calculated on the difference in call-back rates between Finnish- and Russian-named applicants. This test is based on the sample in column a. *** = $p < .001$ (2-tailed); * = $p < .05$ (2-tailed)											

The results of this experiment shown in table five clearly outline the numeric results. In the 2nd stage of the experiment the results show there was a net discrimination rate (NDR) of 45%. (Larja et al. 2012.)

Subtle discrimination and overt discrimination present significant barriers in the ability for a foreign worker to be hired, and to receive equal status in a position, and mostly presents as a barrier to successful labor market integration (Zimmerman et al. 2008, 57).

2.2.3 Social Welfare

Social welfare or 'security' is any services or monetary support provided by a government to its' citizens who are eligible/ in need. For example, elderly persons, disabled persons, unemployed persons, or impoverished persons. (Cambridge Dictionary 2020d.)

When unemployment benefits and social welfare is high, it can increase the time of unemployment, and the unemployed person can be more captious in attempting to find work. More comprehensive labor market policies providing training etc., can lead also to a reduction in job searching efforts. Especially when there is a high welfare security. (Eichhorst & Konle-Seidl 2005, 5-7.)

Finland has an extensive social welfare state. In Finland the idea of social welfare describes a comprehensive range of functions that all municipal authorities are required to provide for its citizens. This includes general social services, special services, and income security. The goals of this extensive network are to ensure that everyone has the right to "to indispensable subsistence and care consistent with the dignity of human life." (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2006, 4.)

The ministry can provide social assistance which occurs in the situation when the income and assets of a family or an individual is not enough to cover the costs of daily life (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2006, 11-13).

Minorities and foreigners in Finland are at risk of being in this category. Foreigners face a higher risk of poverty in Finland. Across the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development countries (29 of them), around 28% of the persons living in immigrant households had an income lower than the EU threshold of 60%. Meanwhile only 16% of native-born persons were living below this. This difference in poverty is very pronounced in countries such as Finland, where the migrants were over twice as likely to experience poverty. (OECD/EU 2015.)

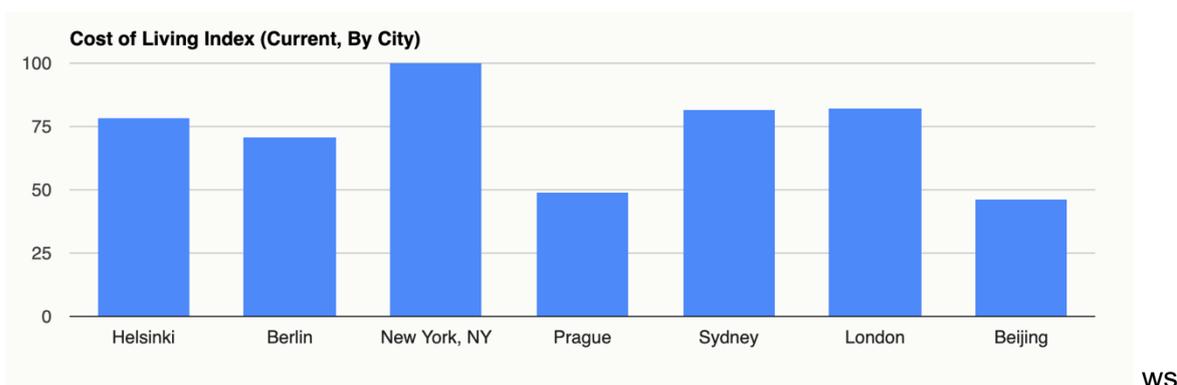


Figure 7 Cost of Living (Numbeo 2020)

The high cost of living in Finland can contribute to this factor. Currently Helsinki's cost of living ranks 57 out of 577 cities around the world and has a cost of living index of 78.06. (Numbeo 2020.)

The Social Insurance Institute of Finland, or Kela, handles the social assistance benefits given to residents in Finland. In 2019 Kela dispensed roughly 14.9 billion euros of social assistance. (Kela 2020.)

Table 5 Kela Social Assistance Benefits (2020) (in millions of euros)

Type of Benefit	2018	2019	2020*
Pension	2,361	2,372	2,571
Disability	557	551	567
Sickness	4,163	4,289	4,547
Rehabilitation	482	532	597
Unemployment	1,965	1,870	2,546
Families & Children	1,918	1,883	1,925
General Housing	1,489	1,491	1,665
Pensioner Housing	600	616	636
Students	519	544	587
Basic Social Assistance	716	698	869
Other Benefits	100	91	111

Total Benefits Paid	14,872	14,893	16,619
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The data released in 2020 shows the increase in Kela's social assistance given over the last three years.

Similarly, Denmark, which also has a comprehensive social welfare system, has found that a significant barrier to the ethnic minorities participation in labor market is their social welfare itself. Before 2002, all persons residing in Denmark were entitled to this social assistance income, attributing this to their very low participation rates in the labor market. (Zimmerman et al 2008, 21- 22).

A chart, figure 7, courtesy of Statistics Finland data utilized by the Nordic Economic Policy Review (2017) shows the trends in the employment rates compared with any earnings, annual earnings, and social assistance benefits.

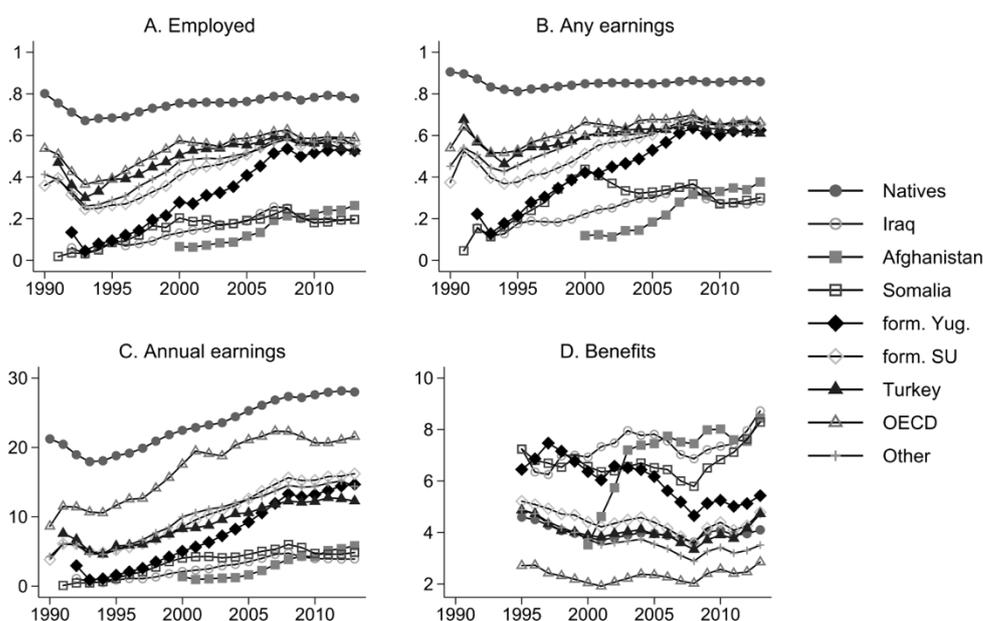


Figure 8 Employment Rates in Finland (Sarvimäki 2017, 104)

The above figure demonstrates that foreigners from Iraq, Somalia, and Afghanistan receive about twice as much social assistance benefits as native Finnish persons do on average. Meanwhile the employment rates of immigrants from these three countries remains at 20 – 26%. (Sarvimäki 2017.)

Ten years after arriving in Finland the average earnings of these foreign men remains at 22-38% of the native same aged men. For women, this percentage is even smaller.

Despite this the social benefits gap continued to rise with on average immigrants' receiving twice as much social assistance benefits. (Sarvimäki 2017, 92-101.)

2.2.4 Language

Language is defined as a comprehensible system of communication formed by speaking, writing, or making signs. Especially specific to a region, culture, or persons. (Cambridge Dictionary 2020e.) Fluency indicates the ability to speak, read, write, and understand a language with ease (Cambridge Dictionary 2020f). Language is the basic means of communication. Usually taking place within social context. Effective communication requires a basic understanding of the connections between the language and people using it. (Amberg & Vause, 2010, 4-5.)

After its launch in 2001, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages or (CEFR), developed a widely accepted scale (Figure 8) for measuring the proficiency of language fluency. Each level (Table 7) describes a specific ability of the language learner on multiple contexts for all languages. (CEFR 2020.)

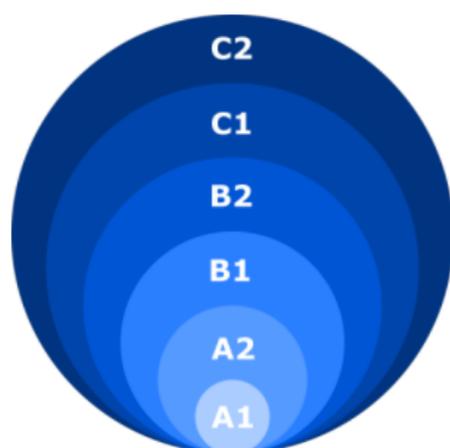


Figure 9 A1-C2 Scale (CEFR 2020)

Table 6 A1-C2 Scale (CEFR 2020)

PROFICIENT USER	C2	Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.
	C1	Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.
INDEPENDENT USER	B2	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.
	B1	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes & ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
BASIC USER	A2	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.
	A1	Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

Levels A1 & A2 indicate a speaker's basic understanding, the ability to understand and speak basic phrasing and simple sentences. Levels B1 & B2 indicate the person is an independent user of the language and can understand complex text, and produce their own text and ideas. The C1 & C2 levels indicate the person is a proficient user of the language, with C2 level indicating high fluency. (CEFR 2020.)

Even according to the CEFR themselves, being fluent in a second or third language is a very complex phenomenon. Little (9) states that achieving the highest language levels is very difficult and an ongoing process. He mentions that to manage achieving the highest levels requires extensive engagement. For instance, practicing the language in the real world often, not just taking classes. (Little 2006, 9.)

Additionally, the ability to perform listening tasks at for instance the B1 level, does not mean that there is the ability to perform all other tasks at the B1 level (Little 2006, 9).

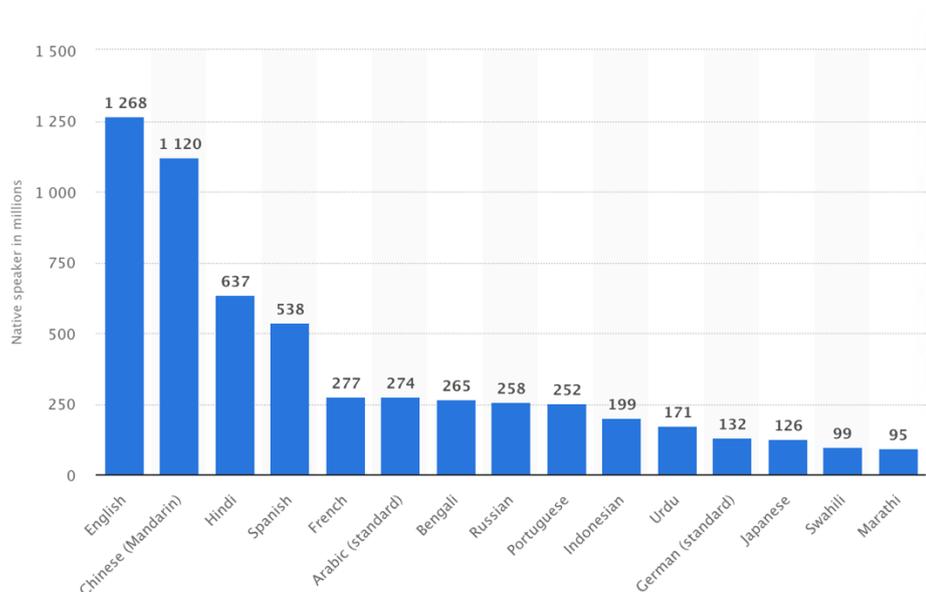


Figure 10 The Most Spoken Languages in the World Statista 2019

Figure 9 shows that English is the number one spoken language in the world (Statista 2019). While Mandarin Chinese is on the rise, English is notably easier to learn for non-native speakers (The Foreign Service Institute 2019).

According to Tsedal Neeley's article 'Global Business Speaks English,' in "On Managing Across Cultures," English is now the global business language. Whether or not companies are prepared, or desire this, it is happening. Any company that internationalizes will face issues-unless they are using a common language with their international partners. Tsedal makes an important point about the importance the common language and efficient communication can have. He points out that ineffective communication will always lead to a potential loss in sales, inefficiency, and more difficulties with globalization and international mergers. (Tsedal 2016, 104.)

Tsedal writes about the example of Hiroshi Mikatani the CEO of Rakuten. Realizing the global importance of using English, he decided in 2010 to change his employee's official language to English. During this period Rakuten had roughly 7.000 workers. As many of the workers were Japanese living in Japan – the CEO of Honda (Takanobu Ito) heavily criticized this decision wondering why they would need the ability to speak English if they are living in Japan. To quote Takanobu, "It's stupid for a Japanese company to only use English in Japan when the workforce is mainly Japanese." (Tsedal 2016, 104.)

However, in the end over half of the employees passed the language test, and improved their overall abilities nonetheless (Tsedal 2016, 104-105).

According to YLE, and EF (Education First), Finland ranks with English speaking as the number seven country of the world's best English speakers as non-natives. Päivi Koski of the Federation of Foreign Language Teachers in Finland or (SUKOL), states, the ability of Finns to speak English is quite good, mainly with younger generations. She also points out that the key to being able to speak foreign languages well, is learning them at a young age. (YLE & EF 2018.) In Finland, Finns begin their English language typically in the third Grade. However, beginning in the spring of 2020 children in Finland will begin foreign language lessons in the first grade. (Kurki-Suonio 2018.)

Language and communication are an essential factor in labor market integration. Language presents itself as an internal barrier. The four common language skills are: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Without language communication cannot occur. (Sadiku, 29 2015.) Language presents itself as the largest barrier to integration in the labor market. Refugees and immigrants face a substantial language barrier in Finland. Poor language skill leaves an immigrant isolated and unable to integrate. (OECD 2018 14-16.)

Finland has two official languages: Finnish and Swedish. Around 87% of the population or 4.9 million people speak Finnish as their native language. Swedish remains at 5.2% overall with 300,000 people speaking it as their native language. (The Institute for the Languages of Finland 2020.) Meanwhile, 7.5% of the population has a native language beyond Finnish, Swedish, or the Sami language (Statistics Finland 2019b). Statistics Finland presents data of the most common languages that are spoken in Finland besides Finnish and Swedish. (Figure 10).

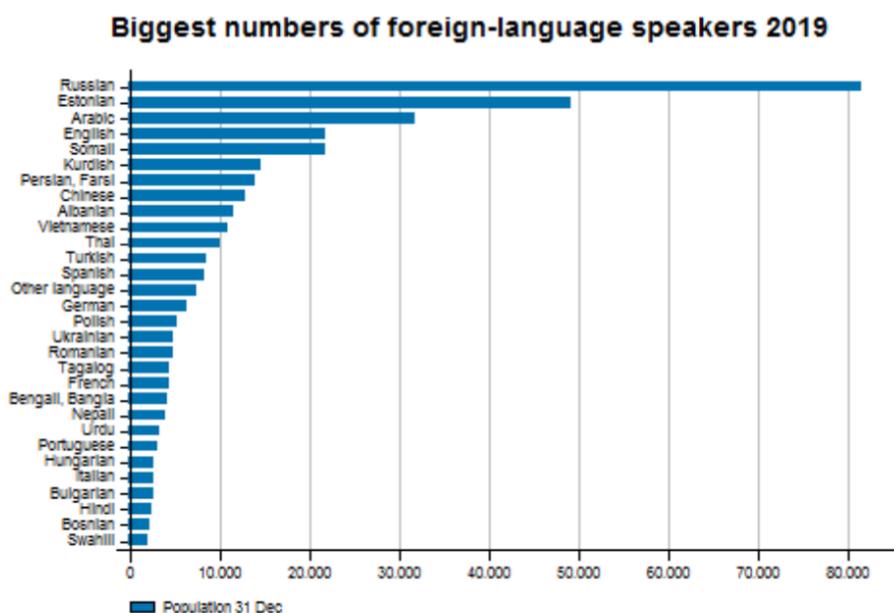


Figure 11 Population Structure of Languages (Statistics Finland 2019)

According to the data, the most common languages spoken outside of Finnish in Finland are Russian, Estonian, Arabic and English (Statistics Finland 2019a).

The Foreign Service Institute has created a list estimating the approximate time it would take to learn a language. The Finnish language, belonging to the Uralic language group, is a category four language, meaning that it would take approximately 44 weeks or 1,100 hours to learn Finnish at a reading and speaking level of 3. The third level indicates that there is general proficiency in both reading and speaking. (The Foreign Service Institute 2019.)

According to Statistics Finland, nearly 6% of employees have noticed discrimination in the work place based on insufficient skills in Finnish or Swedish (Statistics Finland 2014).

Since 1999 more integration policies have been made in Finland, and with them local employment offices have created language learning programs which account for around 75% of the integration program lengths. However, they remain a dead end for integration standards. In 2016, over four out of five persons in the language courses failed to test at the (B1) level enabling them to apply to vocational school in Finland. Over 60% even failed to achieve the (A2.2) level. In 2015 around two out of every five participants in these Finnish language learning programs became unemployed or left the labor market completely. (OECD 2018 14-15.)

2.2.5 Networking

Networking is the undertaking of meeting and connecting with persons who are useful to know, especially in consideration to one's career or employment. It is considered an activity or action of strategically meeting people. (Cambridge Dictionary 2020g.)

Networking capabilities are rudimentary in a knowledge-grounded society. Persons who have a large, broad, and effective network are usually more successful and 'in-demand.' Networking can be both on a physical and virtual level. (Anderson 2010, 9-16.)

The essentiality of having social networks and connections in labor markets is well documented and extensive. Longer periods of unemployment are often due to persons networks also containing unemployed persons, or having a lack of useful connections. (Jackson & Calvo-Armengol, 2004, 426-428.)

Anne Badan, the CEO of The Shortcut has said that not being born in Finland, not having access or networks or alumni networks, is a problem in networking. People who are in charge of hiring often hire among their friends and persons they already know. (Wall 2019.)

Networking is essential in Finland as over 85% of job openings are almost never even advertised (Wall 2019).

Most of the time informal networks lead to the hiring of an employee as often employers hire a candidate they are already familiar with. A study by Rolle Alho discovered that immigrants own connections within their own culture were not useful in finding work. What was most useful, was having successful connections with Finnish persons in the Finnish labor market. One of the interviewees from his study is quoted as, "you need to know someone who knows someone," in order to advance one's career. (Gröning & Alho 2020.)

Many of the persons Alho interviewed surmised that their own merits were not as useful in applying for jobs than their connections. Many had stated that they had very poor results searching online for job positions in the labor market, and that more often than not, connections with Finns was what led them to success. (Alho & Gröning 2020.)

Another example is explained by Shofiullah, in an anonymous interview- the interviewee showed a rejection email they had received from a job application stating that the interviewee did not have the required skills, etc. This seems like a normal authentic rejection. However, the interviewee actually had a connection inside the same company and elaborated on the situation to the connection. This connection then told the interviewee to re-contact the company they were rejected from and use the connection themselves as a

reference. In doing so, the interviewee managed to sign a contract with that same company the very same day as the rejection email. This emulates the barrier and potentially discriminatory factor of needing social connections to even have a chance. (Shofiullah 2017, 19-21.)

With online networking and searching for jobs, there is also many difficulties. Recently the website “Jobs in Finland” was created by Business Finland to list jobs specifically targeted at foreign workers or potential expatriates. However, even this site currently only has 81 job listings as of October 15, 2020 with only 31 of them potentially even being in the capital region. In addition, they are mainly consisting of niche positions requiring mostly at least 5 + years of experience in very specific fields, and many require fluent Finnish.

2.2.6 Cultural Differences

Culture can be defined as the collective programming of the mind that differentiates the members of a certain specified group from another. Culture essentially consists of a patterned way of thinking, feeling, and reacting that is obtained and passed on by symbols. There is national culture and organizational culture. (Kluckholm 1951, 86; Hofstede 2001, 9.)

Culture is not the same as identity, and usually reserved for societies, nations or ethnic groups of people across nations. Essentially, the word could be applied to any group or category of persons who are collectively sharing something such as age, gender, or a family. Persons of the same culture share values, while persons of different identities simply answer to the question “where do I belong?” Identities are based on mutual images, stereotypes, and emotions linked to symbols, heroes, and rituals- but not values themselves. (Hofstede 2001, 10-11.)

Specializations and technical skills are not alone enough to ensure success in global or multicultural work. Customers and clients etc., require cultural sensitivity and understanding and willingness to adapt to new cultures. Persons who are not willing to meet the challenge of cultural sensitivity and understanding are likely to lose their competitive advantage in the market place. (Thomas 2010, 10-11.) It does not matter whether perceived cultural differences are considered incumbent or enriching or are dealt with properly. Cultural differences influence all persons’ perception, thinking, feeling and behaviors. Without understanding the differences and knowing how to act accordingly the dealing with the differences will prove unsustainable in the long run. (Thomas 2010, 12-13.)

Schein’s theory of cultural dimensions explores the idea that there are three dimensions to cultures which influence each other: artifacts, espoused beliefs and values, and

underlying assumptions. Artifacts indicate the surface level of cultures, the visible products of a group and any or all phenomena that one is able to see, hear, and feel when exposed to an unfamiliar culture. Such as clothing, emotional displays, myths, values, observable rituals, etc. Importantly, while artifacts are easy to see, they are difficult to understand. (Schein 2017, 23-26.) Espoused beliefs and values are the individuals of a cultures sense of 'what ought to be' versus 'what is.' Espoused beliefs and values are predictors of the cultural artifact dimension. (Schein 2017, 26-30.) Basic underlying assumptions refers to when a solution to problem has been accepted as the truth within a culture. Accepting what was the answer to a single hypothesis in a single scenario as reality for all hypotheses. (Schein 2017, 30-35.)

Four different types of cultural differences (Figure 11) affect labor market integration within and pre work place (Raman & Jenifer 2015).

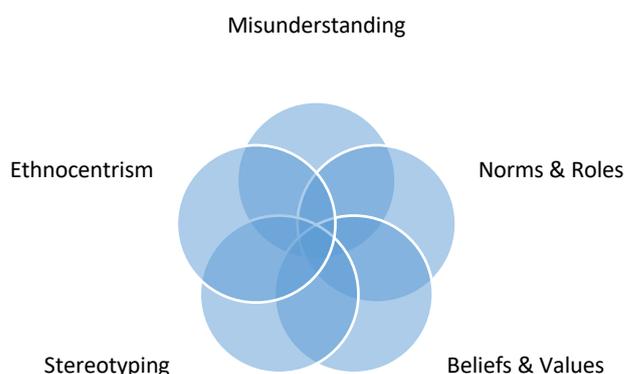


Figure 12 Cultural Barriers in the Workplace (Raman & Jenifer 2015)

Cultural misunderstanding is the greatest barrier to communication in the workplace. Different cultures within the workplace has the possibility to lead to immense levels of anxiety and uncertainty, and may lead to misunderstandings. (Raman & Jenifer 2015, 333.)

Norms are the cultural rules that determine the appropriate and adequate behavior of an individual. Persons have their own norms and rules and expect other persons to also follow them. Often, persons working in a multicultural environment do not succeed in understanding the norms and roles of persons coming from cultures other than their own. This has the capability to lead to more anxiety, and to even interrupt the communication process. (Raman & Jenifer 2015, 333.)

Beliefs and values will be different from person to person. In a diverse and globalized working community, each person's individual beliefs and values will be different based on their own cultures (Raman & Jenifer 2015, 333-334).

Stereotyping is creating value judgements about people. Not having enough information about a person leads to uninformed decisions in cross cultural communication. Stereotypes are generally raised out of fear, leading to more miscommunication and misunderstandings. (Raman & Jenifer 2015, 334.)

Ethnocentrism is the idea of using one's own culture as the standard for and against all other cultures, others. Ethnocentrism is directly related and proportional in consideration with anxiety levels. Many issues are faced when working on a multicultural team in the workplace due to ethnocentrism. (Raman & Jenifer 2015, 334.)

Cultural differences can provide themselves as a barrier in the integration of labor in the labor market (Zimmerman et al. 2008). For example, within Finland, most Finnish workplaces have no place for religious customs or rituals. Religious clothing is permitted, in compliance with safety regulations. However, for example, a person who must pray during the day would have to seek permission from their employer, and this could cause a barrier if it is not allowed in the workplace. (Info Finland 2020.)

According to Hofstede, Finland is an individualistic culture, meaning that there is a heavy focus on the individual, and employee/employer contracts are focused on mutual benefit. This can be a shock for someone coming from a collectivist culture who has this group mentality and believes everyone should take responsibilities for each other. (Hofstede's Insights 2020.) While in Finland, an individualistic culture, a person's work is their sole responsibility. While they may ask others help, their work is their own obligation. (Info Finland 2020). Meanwhile, in a culture that has a heavy emphasis on collectivism, the employee might unknowingly rely on others more than persons in an individualistic society (Hofstede 2020).

While Finns, have been taught to believe that Finland is a culturally and ethnically homogenous country, several ethnic and cultural minorities exist within Finland (Raento & Husso 2001).

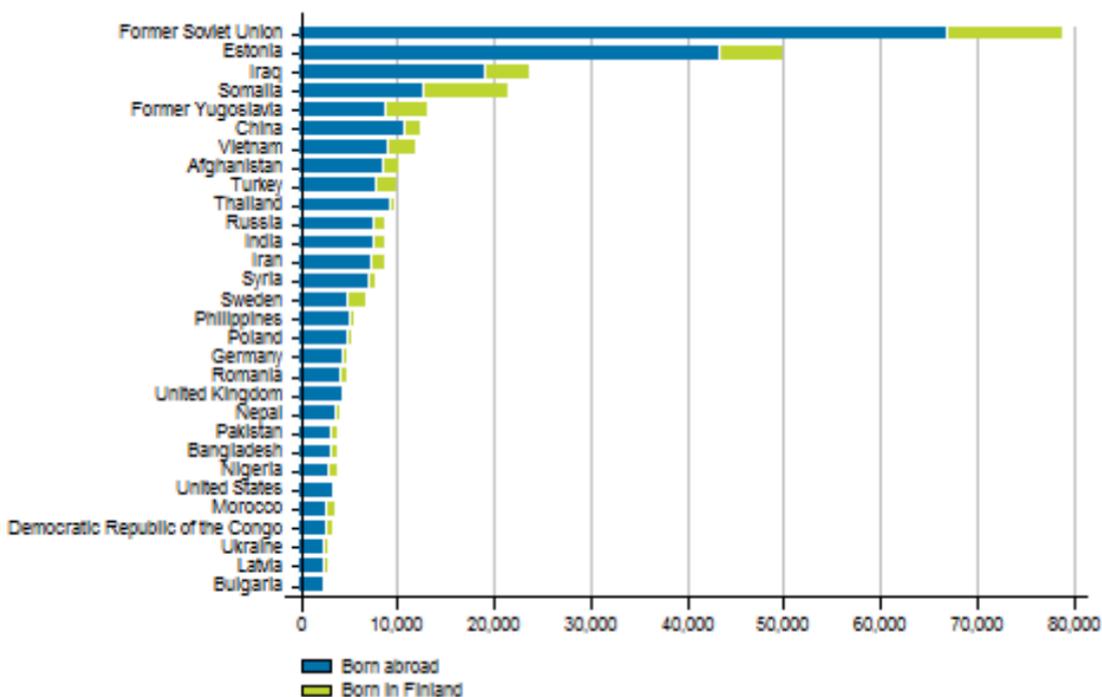


Figure 13 Biggest Country Background Groups in Finland (Statistics Finland 2019b)

Cultural misunderstandings can prevent from more foreign workers from being retained and desired in Finnish work places. As Earley and Mosakowski explain in “Cultural Intelligence,” even within any strictly Finnish workplace cultural misunderstandings can occur. An example would be in a large company, the sales force does not know how to communicate with the engineers and perhaps the PR persons might lose patience with the company lawyers. “Departments, divisions, professions, geographical regions—each has a constellation of manners, meanings, histories, and values that will confuse the interloper and cause him or her to stumble.” (Earley & Mosakowski 2016.)

Fundamentally, the reality is that every company has its own culture, and within that culture many sub cultures. Any newcomer will face challenges and need to adapt and vice versa. (Earley & Mosakowski 2016.)

3 EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

3.1 Data Acquisition

This research and thesis was completed from June 2020 until November 2020. In the beginning of the process the topic was outlined and explained with the approval of the thesis supervisor. The preparation phase of this thesis was long, and much research was done previously to beginning the writing and rewriting stages. During the summer vacation in 2020, the process of thesis was on hold, and the basis of the topic changed several times due to the excessive amount of new data that was discovered during the process. The secondary data was collected during the planning stage up until the implementation of the survey (primary data). The survey was uploaded to several online forums from September 28 until September 30, 2020. Then in October 2020 the collected data was analyzed further and condensed into readable charts.

The survey had 13 multiple-choice questions and one open-ended question. The survey was sent to online groups dedicated to foreign workers and skilled foreign workers along with one group "Foreigners in Finland," for a general group of foreigners in Finland. There were 212 responses in total with 57 responses to the one open ended question. The open-ended question allowed for respondents to give their individual thoughts and ideas about the Finnish labor market. Several of the responses were omitted out of the thesis due to overall relevance and off topic responses. A short introduction posted with the survey explained the topic of the study and asked for primarily skilled workers living in Uusimaa or Helsinki responses. The survey was conducted using Google Responses due to the automatization and ease of the program, allowing for the data to automatically be transferred to charts.

3.2 Data Analysis

This section will present each question of the survey sent to foreigners in Finland and Helsinki, along with the responses from the survey. Question fourteen, the one open-ended survey question, is then separately analyzed and discussed.

Question One: How Long Have You Lived in Finland?

Question one intended to establish the length of time the respondents had lived in Finland. This is due to the idea that the longer the foreigner has been in Finland the longer they have had to experience the Finnish society. Also, they have then had a better chance of integrating into and experiencing the Finnish labor market.

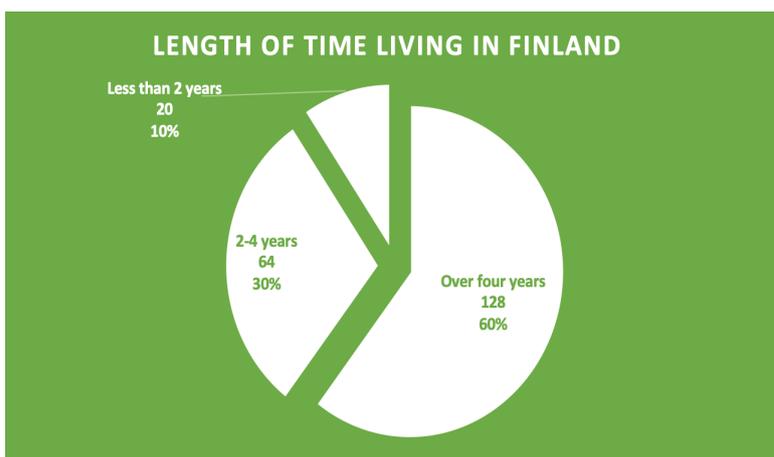


Figure 14 Length of time living in Finland

Most of the respondents have lived in Finland for more than four years, (60%). The second biggest group (30%) has lived in Finland for at least two years. This shows that a large percentage of those surveyed have at least some experience in Finland, and most likely would already have some experience in what the Finnish labor market is like.

As mentioned earlier, for women living in Finland under five years the employment rate was significantly less than those who had lived for at least ten years in Finland. The rate of employment increased from forty percent to sixty-seven percent with those that have lived in Finland for at least ten years. (Statistics Finland 2019.)

Question Two: Where Are You From?

Question two is purely to establish that the data is not coming from a single background linking the experiences solely to discrimination of a certain background. Additionally, question two works to show that the barriers they face may be equally present regardless of a specific background.

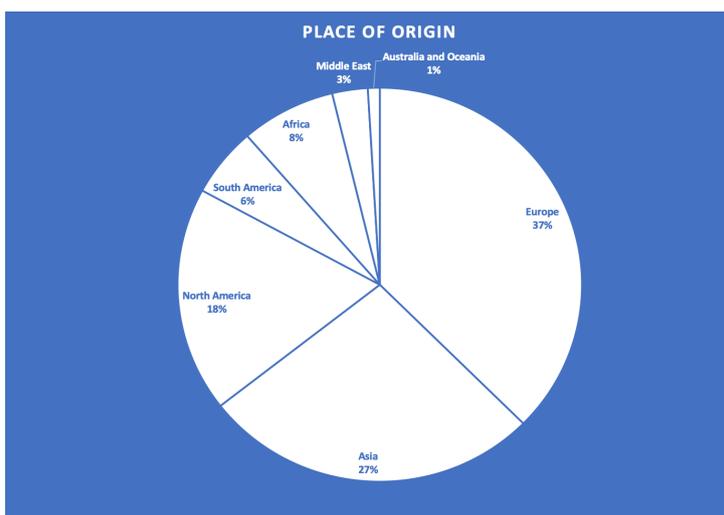


Figure 15 Place of origin

Most of the respondents 37% come from either within Europe, Asia (27%), or North America (18%). Additionally 6% came from South America, 8% from Africa, 3% from the Middle East, and 1% from Australia or Oceania.

This answer may be influenced by the fact that the surveys were distributed mainly on social media specifically also Facebook, so there may be foreigners living in Finland that do not use Facebook. Also, the results may vary as Russia was not a separate option in the answers options. It would have been beneficial to have 'Russia' as a separate response option as some respondents said they could consider it either Asia or Europe. However, mostly they chose Europe in this scenario.

As persons coming from inside European Union do not require a residence permit (MIGRI 2020), this could impact the reason there is more respondents from Europe. The answers do differ from Statistics Finland's statistical data of the largest groups of foreigners in Finland being from Russia, Estonia, Iraq, and Somalia. (Statistics Finland 2019.) Russia and Estonia are more accurate but persons from the Middle East responded less.

Question Three: Why Did You Originally Come to Finland?

Question number three intends to show that there are a myriad of reasons why the foreigners have immigrated to Finland. This shows that not all foreigners have the same motivations for being in Finland.

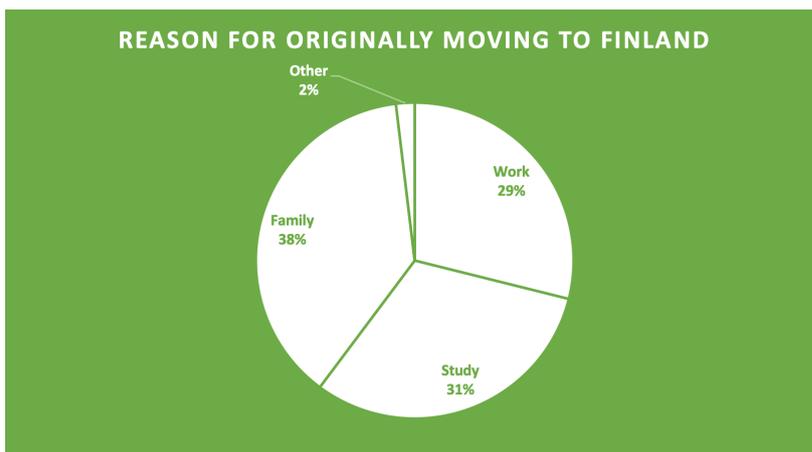


Figure 16 Original reason for moving to Finland

The most common reasons why the interviewees had moved to Finland, originally, were: Family (38%), Studying (31%), and Work (29%). Persons who moved to Finland for love or a romantic partner were classified under family. The other option classified persons who added they moved to Finland “for the love of Finland,” or other responses that didn’t fit into those three categories.

As many of the respondents are employed, this can in turn mean that many of the 31% who came to Finland for studies, ended up staying. This could perhaps show the opportunity for foreign labor integration by recruiting foreign students to stay in Finland. Statistics Finland’s own data stated that fifty-four percent of immigrants moved to Finland for family reasons, 18% for work, 11% for refugee status, 10% for studying, and 8% for other reasons. (Statistics Finland 2019.) However, both the survey data and Statistics Finland’s own data align with the main reasons for immigration being family, work, or study.

Question Four: Do You Speak Fluent Finnish?

Question number four formulates what percentage of the respondents feel as though they are completely fluent in Finnish. While many respondents may have some Finnish language skills, typically in the Finnish labor market companies that require the Finnish language desire for the potential candidate to have fluent or native Finnish. As previously mentioned fluency indicates understanding, speaking, reading, and writing the language with ease (Cambridge Dictionary 2020).

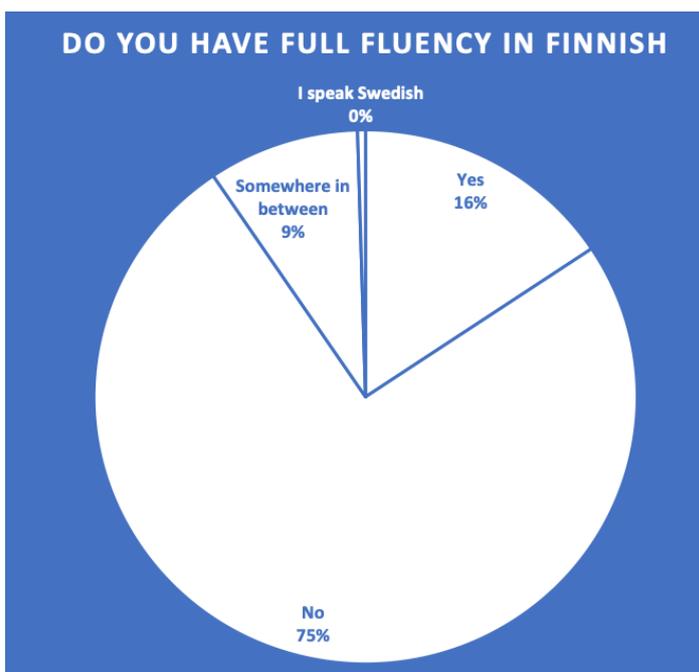


Figure 17 Fluency in Finnish

Seventy-five percent of the 212 respondents answered that they did not feel as though they were fully fluent in Finnish. Nine percent stated that they felt somewhere in between not knowing any Finnish and being fluent in Finnish. 0% or exactly one of the respondents stated they were fluent in Swedish rather than Finnish.

As mentioned previously language is considered to be one of the biggest barriers to labor market integration (OECD 2018 14-16). Therefore the 75% of respondents who do not speak Finnish, might face difficulties in the Finnish labor market.

Question Five: Which Age Group Do You Belong To?

Question five works to instill that most of the respondents have working experience already. If this survey was conducted with only younger respondents who do not have much working experience the results could vary heavily, and it is important to understand the potential experience the respondents have that could help them integrate into the labor market.

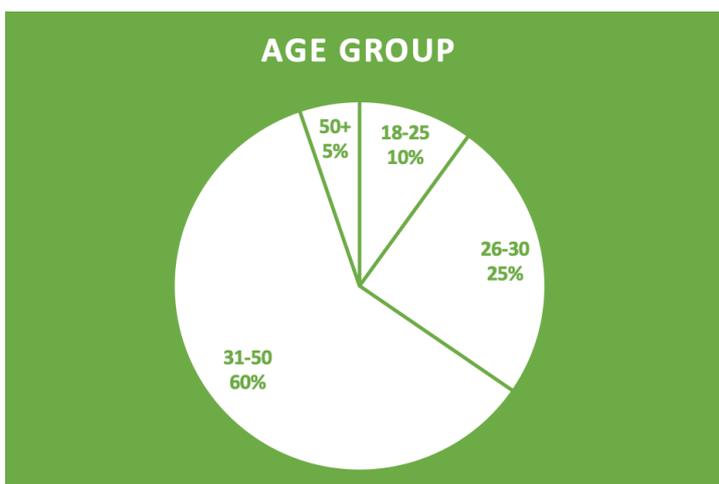


Figure 18 Age group

Sixty percent of the respondents were between the ages of 31 to 50, and 25% or the second highest group of interviewees were between the ages of 26-30. The median age of the entire population of Finland is 43.1 (Statista 2020) which is within working age, as are more than 60% of the respondents. As stated earlier the employment rate of 20 to 64-year old's who have a foreign background was 56.4% and for Finnish natives 78.4 % (Statistics Finland 2020).

A respondent to the open ended question number fourteen stated that as they were close to fifty, and without the Finnish language skills, it is very hard to compete in the labor market.

Question Six: What is your highest level of education?

Question number six explores the education level of the respondents. Again, this question works to establish how experienced and knowledgeable the respondents are. If the respondents display high educational skills the idea should be that they are employed in Finland. However, this can be far from the case.

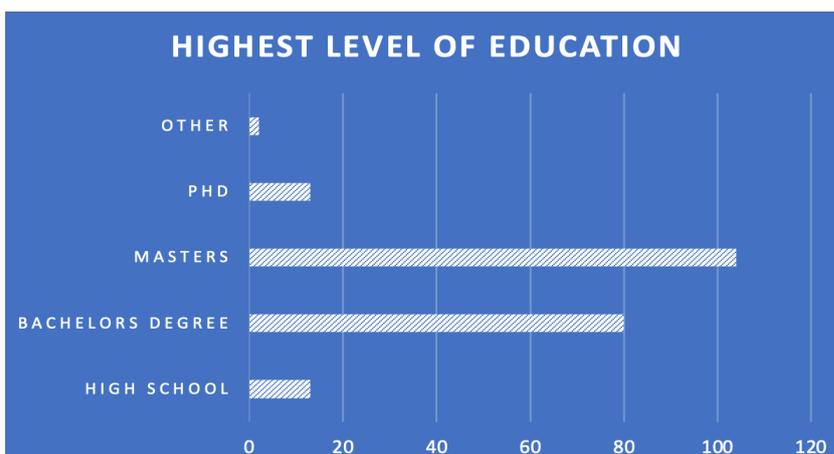


Figure 19 Highest level of education

Over 100 of the 212 respondents had at least a master's degree, and just under 80 persons of the 212 had a bachelor's degree at minimum. Theoretically, this should mean that the respondents are skilled labor, and able to work in the labor market. Especially considering the majority of the respondents were within working age (60% were between 31-50, and 35% between 18 to 30).

Aforementioned, forty percent of persons living in Finland had a tertiary level training or education (Statistics Finland 2019). Yet, also mentioned previously the unemployment rate of persons with a foreign language other than Finnish or Swedish, is much higher of persons with a tertiary degree or more, compared to the employment rate of Finns with the same level of education. (Statistics Finland 2019.)

Question Seven: Has it been difficult to find work in Finland?

Question seven implores the respondent to answer if they have had difficulties finding work in Finland. This question goes with the assumption that the respondents may have had working experience in other countries, therefore, are able to compare the difficulty level in Finland.

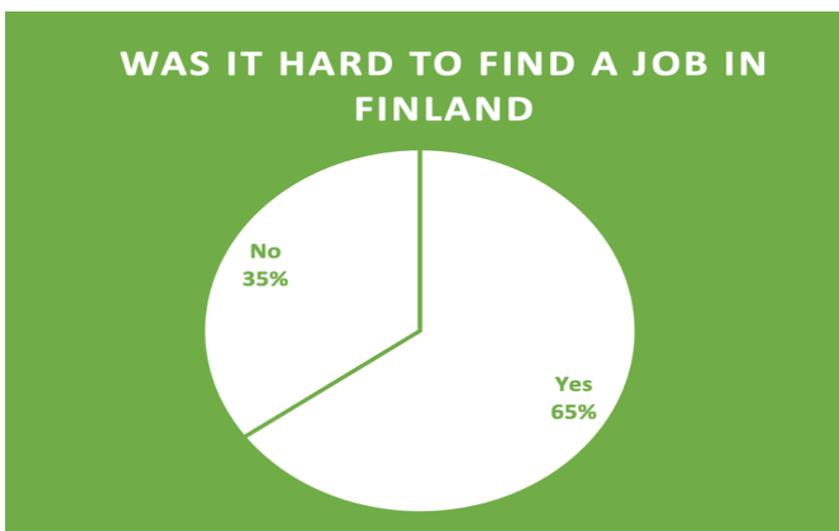


Figure 20 Difficulty in Finding a job in Finland

65% of the interviewees surmised that it was hard for them to find a job in Finland. While this is most of the respondents, 35% that did not think it was difficult.

While looking at the previous questions: the majority of the respondents being within working age (60% were between 31-50, and 35% between 18 to 30), and having at least a bachelor's degree (over 180). It can be inferred that these respondents are skilled, and should be integrated into the labor market. Therefore, it is not surprising that 35% did not find it hard to find employment in the Finnish labor market. However, the 65% who did find it difficult, align with Statistics Finland's data aforementioned about the higher unemployment rates for persons with a foreign background, especially skilled foreign labor.

Question Eight: If you have a job in Finland were you required to speak Finnish?

Question eight is structured on the question if the respondents were able to work in the Finnish language or were limited to work where they do not need to use the Finnish language. As much of the work listed on all the job opening website state they require fluent Finnish language, this is to gauge to see if the respondents are working in a job that requires Finnish or not.



Figure 21 Finnish language fluency

Over 140 of the 212 respondents stated that they were not required to speak Finnish for their work. This could mean that either there are actually more positions open that allow non-Finnish speakers, or that many non-Finnish speakers are taking jobs of a lower level than their skills due to the language barrier.

Less than 60 of the respondents said that they were in fact required to speak Finnish at the work place.

Question Nine: If you are a student do you wish to remain in Finland after completing your studies?

Question nine shows the desire of international students in Finland, and if they wish to remain in Finland, it is assumed that they would seek to integrate into the Finnish labor market.

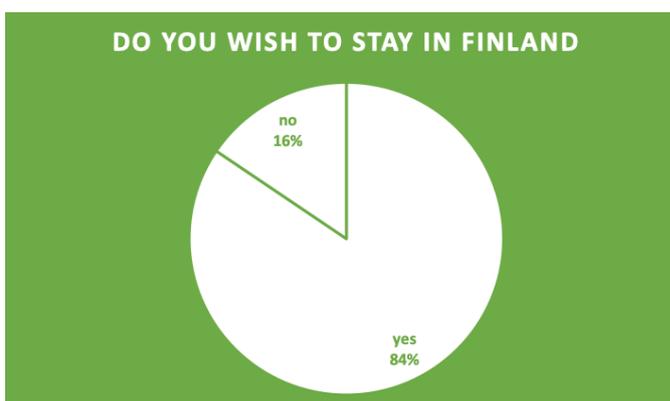


Figure 22 Students desire to remain in Finland

Again, this question shows that 84% of the foreign students in the survey wish to remain in Finland after their studies are completed. This question would have been better with an

open ended response option to understand (a) why 16% of the students did not want to remain in Finland and (b) if they do want to remain in Finland, why?

This means that international students could be a potential source of more human capital for the Finnish labor market. In 2016, there were over 21,000 international students in Finland completing a degree (Hudd, T 2018).

Question Ten: Do you think it is harder to find a job than a native Finn?

Question ten is based ultimately on the opinion of the respondent. Question ten asks if they feel it was harder as a foreigner to find a job in Finland, than it would be for a native Finnish person. Whether or not this is the reality, it shows how the respondents feel about their position in the labor market. There was an option on this question to leave more a more in-depth comment, which some respondents chose to do.

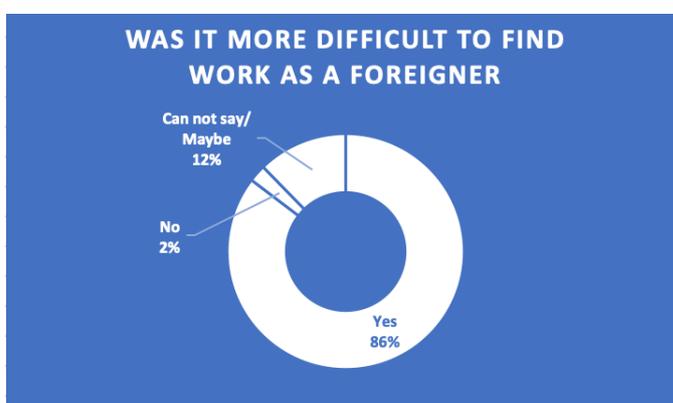


Figure 23 Difficulty finding work as a foreigner

Over 86% or most of the interviews felt that it was more difficult to find work than a native Finn. This question should have been open ended, or formatted with a more measurable way. However, it intends to explore the thinking of the foreign laborers themselves.

One person answered later (pertaining specifically to this question), “ I want to say yes, but I hear some Finns have a hard time finding work too so I don’t know. I do feel being foreign doesn’t help though.” Another also answered, “Absolutely yes, it is a closed society.”

This question primarily connects with the discrimination portion, as the Ministry of Economic and Employment’s experiment shows that foreign backgrounded persons had to apply to almost twice as many jobs as native Finns to get the same amount of interaction or call backs (Ministry of Economic and Employment 2012).

Question Eleven: Do you feel as a foreigner that it was harder to be taken seriously in the recruitment process?

Similar to the previous question, question eleven seeks to comprehend the mindset of the foreign laborers. Do they feel if it is harder to be taken seriously as a foreigner within the Finnish labor market? Essentially, even if it is not true (despite the data), it is the mindset of the respondents, and the discrepancy would need to be addressed. In this question harder to be taken seriously is meant as if the respondents felt that it was more difficult to be recognized as a contender in the labor market. For example, do they feel their employer actually value their ideas, or do they feel a potential employer actually considered their application.

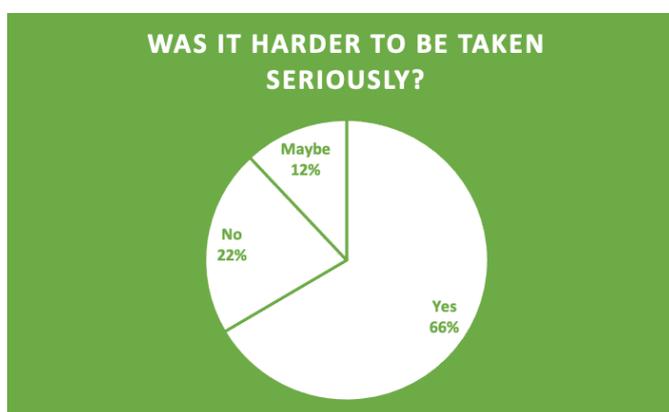


Figure 24 Harder to be taken seriously

Sixty-six percent of the respondents said that they did feel it was harder to be taken seriously as a foreigner. While 22% responded no, and 12% responded maybe. This question could also have been more open ended, and there is the possibility that respondents did not fully grasp the question itself and understood it in a different manner than the author intended.

This question can connect to the discrimination and language barrier, or cultural differences. Aforementioned, 72% of respondents to a survey in 2009 felt that discrimination was wide spread in Finland (Eurobarometer 2009, 60-61). Additionally, cultural differences can lead to misunderstandings (Raman & Jenifer 2015, 333), which could lead to this scenario where the foreign laborer feels like they are not taken seriously, when they could actually have been.

Question Twelve: Do you think it should be easier for a foreigner to get a job?

Question number twelve explores again the mindset of the foreign respondents, and if they believe that it should be easier for foreigners to find work in Finland.

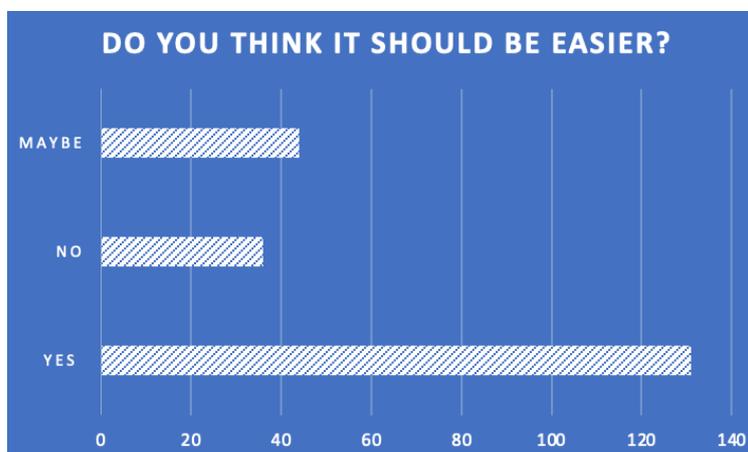


Figure 25 Should it be easier to get a job

The majority of the respondents (Over 120) felt as though it should be easier to find a job in Finland. Less than forty answered no, and just over forty answered 'maybe.'

As many of the respondents have lived in Finland for at least four years (60%) and have working experience, and some form of higher education (100 masters, 80 bachelor's degree), and have struggled with finding a job here; they can compare their experiences elsewhere and have some perspective on the difficulties faced here.

Some responses to question number fourteen included comments such as that the labor market is very rigid in Finland. Or that it should be easier to find work for persons who speak English, or have significant levels education and experience, and one shared their experience that they had lived and worked elsewhere but Finland was 'by far' the hardest country to find work in.

Question Thirteen: If you are employed do you think it was easy to integrate in your work and with your colleagues?

Question thirteen is based on the barriers within the workplace, did the respondents think it was easy to fit in in their workplace? Essentially, this question aims to explore the disconnect between the barriers in the recruitment process and integrating into the work place.

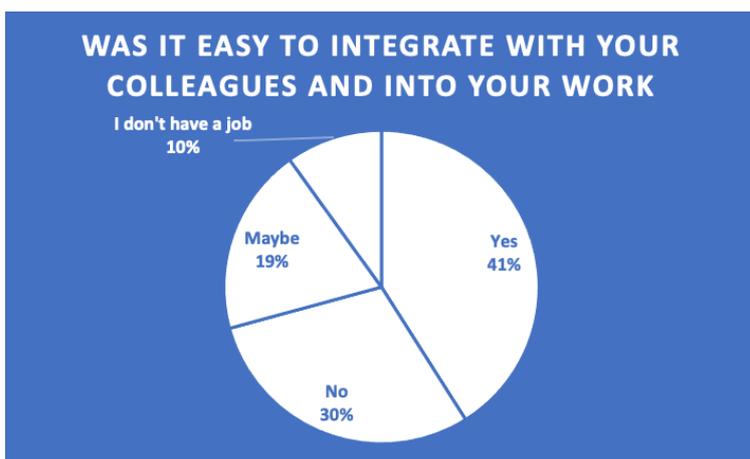


Figure 26 Was it easy to integrate in the workplace

While 41% of the respondents felt that it was easy to integrate into the workplace and with their colleagues, 30% still said no, and 19% were not 100% sure. This question would have been better open ended to have more detailed responses available. There is the possibility that the respondents did not properly understand the wording and clarity of the question.

Responses on question fourteen elaborated that some persons felt their colleagues were very invasive, or seemingly xenophobic. Some stated that they felt one must learn Finnish in order to join in. While others stated that the workplace language and ease depends on the industry.

Question 14 Open Ended Response

Question fourteen was an open ended question allowing survey respondents to leave a comment about anything relating to the topic. Of the 212 respondents, 57 responded to question 14. Answers that were off-topic or inappropriate were omitted from this report. Additionally, spelling and grammatical errors were left in place as the following responses are direct quotes received from the survey respondents. The responses have been sorted into three categories; overall experience with the Finnish labor market, experience with Finnish language in the market, and overall discrimination in the labor market.

Overall Experience in the Finnish Job Market

There were 15 responses of the 57 responses to question fourteen that fit into the overall experience in the Finnish job market category.

One response stated that they felt that Finland was the hardest place to find a job in even though they had very high education and a successful career. Another stated that their

high qualifications did not matter when applying to jobs, because they felt that the hiring persons only wanted native Finns.

Overall, five of the responses stated that they or others they know had a hard time getting their qualifications recognized, or that their high qualifications didn't matter.

One person mentioned that they believe the labor market is difficult for everyone, no matter if they are native or not, due to the 'rigid labor market.'

Six responses stated thoughts that it depends on the profession, and that most persons who work hard will succeed.

Overall, these responses vary between the labor market is difficult due to certifications and previous experience being verified, and that it is not terribly difficult to integrate into the labor market. Many had felt that their experience did not matter and that they had to start at the bottom of their career again.

Finnish language

There were fourteen responses of the fifty seven responses relating to language (primarily Finnish and English). The responses vary between believing employers should encourage English more, or that persons in Finland should learn Finnish, and that employers use the language as a way to discriminate. Some persons pointed out, the language factor can depend entirely on the industry in which one works.

One person stated that it is possible to get a job without the Finnish language but if one wants to switch their job it is easier if one knows Finnish. Some others said that it depends on each company. Another states that it is essential to learn Finnish or Swedish, and that it is important to learn the language of wherever one is living.

Some emulate that the language is a discrimination, and that English should be more widely accepted. (Five responses).

Discrimination

Out of the 57 responses to the open ended question number fourteen, 12 of them can be classified under the discrimination category.

Several persons wrote about their personal experiences. For instance, one person wrote about their experience as a librarian. They stated that they were never asked about their library experiences or organization in their home country, instead, they were asked only personal questions and about their motivations for living in Finland.

Another person wrote that over 14 months they applied to over 279 jobs. With only six applications turning into an interview, before they were finally hired for a nursing job, while they are studying nursing. They then stated that after the work contract ended it was not extended due to supposed language issues. When the respondent asked how the language issues impacted their work, or how it compromised patient safety, they were told there was no issue with their language.

Another one wrote how even their kids who are born in Finland couldn't get a job.

In the discrimination group, responses vary with different experiences of discrimination, and some feel that there is serious issues with discrimination.

The responses show the perspective of the foreign labor in Finland, although not as a whole, as much more research and surveys would need to encompass a much wider demographic. Additionally, there is a chance for the responses to be swayed objectively by the conditions of the current situations since many have may been struggling with employment for many months.

4 DEVELOPMENT PLAN

4.1 Job Listings

Currently, there are many job listings posted on various websites for jobs in Helsinki where the ad itself is posted in English, but the ad lists the candidate is required to have “Native Finnish.” Why couldn’t the add simply say “C2 Level Finnish Required” (and be written in Finnish)? From the survey results it was clear that many of the respondents had some level of Finnish skills (9%), while some even feel they are fully fluent in Finnish (16%) .

Even if the person has passable B2 level skill in Finnish this is hard to measure. Afforementioned, a person can test certain tasks (for instance language) at a B2 level but not be able to pass other or all tasks at the same level. (Little 2006, 9.)

However, if more companies were to utilize the CEFR scale of language, job listings could easily list a more accurate level of Finnish required. This would enable persons with some level of Finnish skills on the A1-C2 level scale to accurately understand the level of Finnish required and apply for jobs that are suitable for their level. Using this scale would make it easier and more efficient to search through and filter job listings more efficiently.

Foreign workers looking for jobs online would come across a myriad of sites such as Glassdoor, Indeed, Te-Palvelut, Mol.fi, Linked-In and Facebook. Each of these sites has their benefits and issues, but a major issue is even knowing which site to use and being able to filter out positions suitable for non-native Finns, or positions that are open to immigrants. Therefore, if there were to be a singular website posting jobs meant for foreign labor it would make it much easier for foreign workers to find attainable jobs in Finland. This needs to be a site that can also access listings from similar sites and find a way to filter out job listings by the languages required and highlight if fluent Finnish is required.

Perhaps even the ‘Jobs in Finland’ platform created by Business Finland could be adapted in this way. If they were to add more filters and manage to add more listings. Especially good would be the possibility for the site to have filters that allow persons who - are not native/fluent in Finnish – have limited working rights – do not have permanent residency sort through available positions it would save both parties time and allow for foreign workers to more easily find a suitable position.

4.2 Training Programs

To support foreign workers and their integration into the Finnish labor market, better training programs could be made available.

For example the TE-Palvelut program which allows for foreign workers with certain working rights to learn basic Finnish is a good start. However, it could be improved for further and wider reaching success. Especially as many persons (four out of five) could not even test at the B1 language level after said course. Additionally since over 60% could not even test at the A2.2 level. (OECD 2018 14.)

Perhaps having training for also employers and Finnish employees on working in English, or with foreign workers, and cross-cultural competencies would allow for a better working cohesion. Such training programs working with both foreigners and Finns could show Finnish companies to see the benefits of foreign workers and how to best utilize them. Thus in turn would help encourage Finnish companies to hire more foreign workers. Additionally, this would allow for their Finnish employees to learn more while and develop their multicultural working skills.

One response to the open ended question (question fourteen) surmised that having more internships and work placements available for foreigners would allow them prove themselves as hard workers.

A few responses discussed how they felt uncomfortable with their colleagues, one stating they felt their colleagues were xenophobic. As mentioned earlier, persons working together from different cultures often have misunderstandings due to their differences, and not understanding one another's culture (Raman & Jenifer 2015, 333).

Essentially, there is a great potential to have two different types of training programs available.

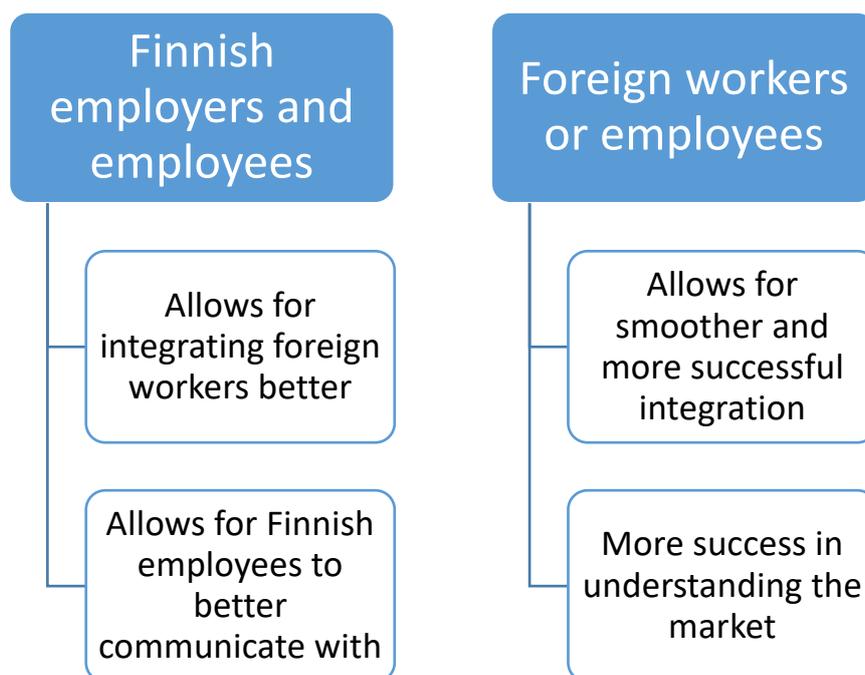


Figure 27 Training Programs

Having training for Finnish employers and employees- in English, could allow for companies to not only become more confident in stepping out of their shell- but also allows for foreign workers to be integrated easier and more successfully. This also allows for employees to succeed in partnerships where the language is not only Finnish. A program like this would also allow for employees to understand key cultural differences and develop cross-cultural competence

The Finnish employers and employee training could include:

- Cultural Awareness (Finnish culture seen from an outside perspective)
- Communicating in the business world (internationally)
- Practicing being 100% comfortable in English

For foreign workers this training program could be for specific companies- or foreign workers in general. This type of training program would allow for foreign workers to understand Finnish working culture and ensure they can adapt and continue on to successfully integrate. Without being able to adapt or understand Finland, many foreign workers might not be as efficient and may have misunderstandings and become discouraged.

This part of the training could include:

- Language: Finnish (if needed) and English skills

- Culture: Cultural Awareness (of their own culture and Finnish culture)
- Finnish business culture: Understanding Finnish business culture (how things work and why they work this way)
- Working rights in Finland
- Successful networking in Finland

It would also be very valuable for companies to combine trainings with both native and foreign employees. This would allow for the employees to network with each other successfully and get comfortable with their differences and learn from one another. Diversity training, or other such forms of training creates an environment where employees are more aware of cultural differences, and allows for them to recognize situations in which they must use their new sense of cross-cultural competencies. From this point on, if they are dealing with international partners or customers from another culture than their own- they will comprehend more of their actions and how to persuade or communicate more effectively.

4.3 Encouraging English

One of the main solutions to the language barrier foreigners face when moving to Finland, would be to encourage the English language in the working place. English is already the most used language across the globe (Statista 2019). Additionally English is the global business language (Tsedal 2016, 104). So why not have more opportunities to speak English in the work place in Finland.

Of course, only just over 20,000 persons in Finland are native English speakers (Statistics Finland 2019). The point of using English as the business language in Finland, doesn't mean only for native speakers, but for everyone who can speak English.

Inferred from Tsedal's work, it is essential for companies in Finland to come to the understanding that English is a widely used language and could hold the key to the foreign workforce's integration into Finnish society, and enable their own companies to further themselves on the global market.

Aforementioned, Finnish persons are ranked highly in the world with English proficiency (7th), and as English is the most widely spoken language with over 2 billion speakers worldwide (YLE & EF 2018; Statista 2019).

All these point to the conclusion, that perhaps it would not be too difficult for more Finnish companies to use English as their working language, and to not be afraid of hiring foreign workers who can speak English.

While of course this might not apply to smaller companies, as Helsinki becomes more internationalized, and most people can communicate in English, there is little harm in having workers communicate in English. It can also be to the benefit of many SME's who are planning on internationalizing to switch to the English language in the work place as this will benefit the company in the future by easing language barriers and allowing for smoother communications in the long run. This is the main thing that Hiroshi Mikatani noticed at Toyota.

4.4 Promoting Networking

As mentioned earlier, networking is extremely important in Finland since over 85% of job openings are not posted (YLE 2019).

While there are many programs and ideas already in place to promote networking in Finland, perhaps streamlining an organization solely focused on promoting the foreign working force in Finland would be a more optimal option. Organizing more events and opportunities for newcomers to meet persons in their industry. Even if not every networking opportunity will result in a long-lasting job-it enables for the potential workers to realize their potential opportunities and what they can do to elevate themselves.

This type of networking opportunities would also allow for more personal insight into how the job market and specific industries work in Finland compared to their countries of origin.

While there already exist organization such as "International Working Women of Finland," they don't encompass all international workers in Finland. If bigger organizations such as Business Finland or TE, for example, were to create bigger networking events with companies and without companies in Helsinki- this would be a great networking opportunity. Additionally, if these organizations were able to target all new comers in Finland, perhaps partnering with Immigration Services (MIGRI), or some government programs, to specifically introduce new foreigners to the way it works in Finland.

5 CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Answers to the Research Questions

The aim of this thesis is to identify the barriers facing foreign laborers to integrating into the foreign labor market. First, the author gathered information on these barriers, while conducting a survey for skilled foreign laborers in Finland, to further understand their perspective, and to answer the following research question and sub-questions.

For the reader's reference the figures below contain the main research question, along with sub-questions.

Table 7 Answers to Research Question and Sub-questions

Question	Answer
<p>What barriers are preventing more skilled foreigners from successfully integrating into the Finnish labor market?</p>	<p>The main barriers preventing skilled labor market immigration in Finland are either institutional barriers or internal barriers. These barriers consist of items such as residency, discrimination, social welfare, language, networking, and cultural differences. (Zimmerman et al. 2008, 6-27.)</p>
<p>What type of barriers prevent labor market integration?</p>	<p>There are institutional and internal barriers. Institutional barriers consist of barriers that are created or affect by institutions such bureaucratic or governing bodies. Internal barriers are barriers presented by the foreign laborers inherent selves such as their language skills. (Zimmerman et al. 2008, 6-27.)</p>
<p>Do skilled foreign laborers in Finland feel as though they can or have been able to integrate into the Finnish labor market with ease?"</p>	<p>For the second sub-question, "Do skilled foreign laborers in Finland feel as though they can or have been able to integrate into the Finnish labor market with ease?" the survey completed in the thesis can be used. An overall 65% of respondents felt that it was difficult to find a job in Finland,</p>

	<p>86% believing that it was harder to find a job, and harder to be taken seriously as a foreigner.</p> <p>While the majority of the two hundred and twelve respondents had at least a bachelor's degree, (over 80) or master's degree (over 100) they still felt that it was a challenge to find employment in Finland. Additionally, only 41% or less than half of the respondents felt like it was easy to integrate within their working place. With language being named a significant barrier to labor market integration (OECD 2018, 14-16), only 16% of the 212 survey respondents felt fluent in Finnish. This leads to the idea that many of the immigrants in Finland, (or at least of those interviewed) struggled with integrating into the Finnish labor market, which proves that the barriers can be a significant influence on integration.</p> <p>Additionally, of the 212 respondents to the survey, over 130 feel that it should be easier to find employment in Finland.</p>
<p>How can these barriers be better solved and alleviated?</p>	<p>Discovered within the study, four different development ideas can be presented.</p> <p>Better job advertisements, training programs, encouraging English, and promoting networking are the four main ideas presented.</p> <p>As it was aforementioned that language barrier is a significant barrier, and that programs such as TE-Palvelut's program had</p>

	<p>very low success rates of 4 out of 5 persons failing to test at a B1 level in 2016 (OECD 2018, 14-16). Thus, combined with the fact that English is the most spoken language (Statistia 2019), and English is the world main business language (Tsedal 2016, 104), it would be beneficial to encourage the English language.</p> <p>This connects to the idea that job listings should use the CEFR language scale to specify the language levels needed.</p> <p>Additionally as 85% of jobs are not advertised (YLE 2019), and as networking is an essentiality in the labor market (Jackson & Calvo-Armengol, 2004, 426-428), better networking opportunities for skilled foreign laborers are needed.</p>
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5.2 Reliability and Validity

This study relates to skilled foreign workers within the region of Uusimaa or Helsinki, therefore, if the research is not used within this context the data is not reliable. The secondary data was collected via online and text book resources.

The primary and secondary data was collected by the author, however, the reliability of the primary data can be questioned as it was collected online via a survey. Two-hundred and twelve persons responded to the survey with fifty-seven persons answering the final open ended question, which is not an inherently large sample size, if there was a large sample size the data could differ.

It's important to consider additionally the timeline of the study, as during the year 2020, there was an ongoing pandemic affecting Finland, Europe, and many other countries. As many businesses were forced to close, the higher unemployment rate has the possibility to affect the primary data from the survey.

The research questions were answered considering the primary and secondary data, the validity and reliability of the entire thesis is dependent upon the context that the research is based on foreign skilled labor in the Finnish labor market, specifically, in Helsinki.

5.3 Suggestions for Further Research

It would be beneficial to carry out a study conducted with the frame of understanding the employer's perspectives of hiring foreign labor. If a study was to be done with interviewing and compiling data of companies that hire foreign workers on a larger scale, versus ones that do not hire without the Finnish language, more can be understood about their motivations. In turn, such studies could then turn into innovations and ideas on how to entice or encourage more Finnish companies to hire foreign workers.

Another study perspective would be to examine the immigrant barriers by gender. Women migrants have a much lower employment rate, 56% employed versus 73.5% of native Finnish women being employed between the ages of 20-64 (Statistics Finland 2014). This is a large group that needs more promotion to be integrated into the labor market. More comprehensive research should be done to analyze the reasons behind the lower number, and whether its primarily because of language, family, culture, or something else.

Additionally, there are organizations focused on integrating foreigners and foreign workers into Finland, but not as many based on the labor market (besides TE). More in depth research should be done to fully understand the impact of these organizations. And if they exist, why is there still such a wide gap between employment of native Finns and immigrants.

6 SUMMARY

The purpose of this thesis is to compile new information and explore the barriers that prevent skilled foreign labor from integrating into the Finnish labor market. The thesis primary question and three additional sub-questions were answered in this research, the questions being, “What barriers prevent foreign workers from successfully integrating into the Finnish labor market?” along with, “What types of barriers prevent labor market integration?”, “Do immigrants in Finland feel as though they can, or have been integrated into the Finnish labor market with ease?”, and “How can these barriers be better solved or alleviated?” The author aimed to investigate the main barriers that are faced by skilled foreign workers, and to determine the causes, and what affects these barriers. Understanding the barriers helps identify what prevents successful labor market integration, and thus in turn, what can be done.

Utilizing both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods, a deductive approach is applied in the research. Beginning in the theoretical portion of the thesis, several theories relating to labor market integration were explored. The theories covered were labor market and economic integration theory, along with Piore’s dual labor market theory, human capital theory, along with The Institute for the Study of Labor’s labor market integration barriers, four dimensions of discrimination theory, and Geert Hofstede’s cultural dimensions. These theories were utilized to identify and explore the barriers presented.

The third section of this thesis covered the empirical research. The empirical research consisted of primary data collected by an online questionnaire that was sent to skilled foreign laborers in Finland, mainly, the Helsinki and Uusimaa region. This questionnaire was then analyzed in combination with the theoretical portions covered earlier.

The fourth section then covered a development plan with several ideas based on the findings of the previous sections. The development plan ideas are in an attempt to find solutions to alleviate or soften some of the main barriers presented.

This study is based on the perspective of the foreign laborers’ struggles and challenges that can prevent labor market integration. The thesis contains a theoretical and empirical portion. The theoretical portion

Then in the conclusion, the answers to the research questions are given, along with a section confirming the validity and reliability of the research, and suggestions for further research are made. This final chapter, number six, gives an overall summary of the thesis.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Survey Questionnaire

This survey has thirteen questions along with an anonymous response portion, all in English. All questions had the option to reply with text if the answers were not suitable for the respondent. Below is the list of questions, along with the multiple choice options provided.

1. How long have you lived in Finland?

- a. Less than two years
- b. Two to four years
- c. More than four years

2. Where are you from?

- a. Europe
- b. Asia
- c. Africa
- d. Middle East
- e. North America
- f. South America
- g. Australia/ Oceania
- h. Other?

3. Why did you originally come to Finland?

- a. Work
- b. Study
- c. Family
- d. Other?

4. Are you fully fluent in Finnish?

- a. Yes
- b. No

c. Somewhat

d. Other

5. Which age group do you belong to?

a. 18-25

b. 26-30

c. 31-50

d. 50+

6. What is your highest level of education?

a. High School

b. Vocational School

c. Bachelor's Degree

d. Master's Degree

e. PHD

f. Other?

7. Was it difficult to find a job in Finland?

a. Yes

b. No

8. If you are employed, were you required to speak Finnish at work?

a. Yes

b. No

9. If you are currently a student, do you wish to remain in Finland after your studies?

a. Yes

b. No

10. Do you believe it was harder to find a job as a foreigner?

a. Yes

b. No

c. Maybe/ Cannot say

11. Do you believe it was more difficult to be taken seriously as a foreigner?

a. Yes

b. No

c. Maybe

12. Do you think it should be easier to find a job in Finland?

a. Yes

b. No

c. Maybe

13. If you are employed, do you think it was easy to integrate with your colleagues and in your work place?

a. Yes

b. No

c. Maybe

d. I am unemployed

Appendix 2 Question Fourteen Responses

14. Anything you'd like to add about the Finnish labor market and your experience?

- “I’ve lived in 4 foreign countries and Finland is BY FAR the hardest place to find a position. It’s like my experience (big, global, v successful) somehow counts against me here. I try to be smaller. Which doesn’t help anyone, least of all finland.”
- “They want only Finnish people in the organizations , your qualifications doesn’t matter to their system even your are highly qualified. Very annoying system in terms of jobs for immigrants”
- “One major problem here is getting foreign qualifications recognised as equivalent to Finnish qualifications.”
- When I came to Finland 30+ yrs ago, I was lucky in that it was fairly easy to find a job in my field (and I managed to learn Finnish. Had to back then!). My field has changed - and now it's hard for Finns to find enough work to stay afloat. I was very lucky... until korona. I've watched many many foreigners come and go because they've been treated poorly, or had no way of getting jobs in their fields in spite of being highly educated. Finland really needs to treat foreign workers much much better.”
- “Finland should be more open to giving jobs to foreigners, and foreign credentials should be recognized or have easier ways to be transferred or certified in Finland. Specialized work experience should be recognized — for example: people who are specialized and have years of experience in pediatric therapies of all kinds (speech therapy, feeding therapy, occupational therapy, pediatric psychology..) should be able to have their work experience acknowledged and they should be allowed to take tests to pass the same certifications in Finland in English, so they can serve the dire needs of English-speaking families here with special needs children. That was just one example. There are so many of highly qualified foreigners in Finland, the country needs to recognize these talents and use them so Finland as he can grow to be a stronger, more skillful and good place to be for its citizens.”
- ” Finding a job in Finland is difficult for everyone not just foreigners. It is true it is more difficult for foreigners but it is not easy for natives either due to the rigid labor market the country has.”
- “I think that Finnish society welcomes foreigners that come here to work and contribute to the greater good. And that foreigners who come here to live off the social benefits are looked down upon. In 12 years here, having worked in several different places in the country I can say with 100% confidence that if you put on a hard day’s work and do your expected tasks then you will be rewarded.”

- “As a foreigner its hard to get hired, but once you get work and been working like a year or so, most of the times you are more appreciated as we tend to give it our best specially for the hardworking Africans”
- “Foreigners need to believe in themselves and step outside of their comfort zones and aim for more. As a foreigner myself, I came to realise that the limitations I had initially when seeking for a job was my lack of willingness to integrate and learn the Finnish language and culture. “
- ” Whether or not you find a job depends heavily on the profession you work as”
- “It has become really difficult to find a job after Corona virus. Specially foreigners have less opportunities after this disease so far they are facing so much problems for getting resident permit”
- ” Very Tough situation for Foreigners and very hard to find jobs for us in general, and COVID situation has made it more difficult to find job”
- ” I was a independent for a number of years and now a full-time employee of a USA company but work from Finland.”
- “Finding a job is not equivalent to integrating, this idea becomes a real obstacle for integration”
- “ Finland has increased soo much in past 5 years because of foreign human capital and workers. Without us, they wouldn't have been able to do it. Let's all agree that cohabitation is the best for all.i hate Finns that are jealous of a foreigner with a nice car, for example. We work for it, don't wait it from Kela...this is the main lesson, many foreigners come here to work hard,not to ask money from Kela.But Vero is punishing the best workers, convincing them is better not to work extra, because nothing stays in your pocket...”
- “Being brave about speaking Finnish even when I made mistakes was a big help to me.”
- ” Job market is very narrow. There are a lot of Finn's with similar skills set. It's hard to complete without fluent language and in my age. I am.close to 50.”
- “The local language discrimination is very oblivious!”
- ” now a days even technical jobs requires to speak finnish.”
- “Why Finnish should be a criteria to apply for a job English is common? Are Finns afraid of losing the culture in corporate environment.”
- “You can get first job without Finnish language but after this if you want to switch your job then it would be easy with Finnish language.”

- “Some Finnish people doesn't required the language but in my case I am taking care with old people and I am not affected with any cases...”
- “I don't think that there is a racism problem in Finland but Finns are very closed people and their language is very difficult so that's why there is that bad impression here.”
- “The skills one has and the kind of job he gets are go hand in hand. Finnish language can be not mandatory if your skills are exceptional or just perfect for the job you apply for.”
- ” Learning Finnish/Swedish are essentially. No Mateer what country one moves to and I made it a priority from the beginning. Even being fluent it's difficult because of how difficult it is to get a residence permit and the time employer May need to wait so that you have full working rights and hours. When switching from student to work my first application took 9 months to process before I could work... most employers don't want to have to wait that long.”
- ” Even though some job specify that the job is in english but at last they want Finnish language from the candidate.”
- “In order to attract needed skills in the workplace and encourage people who want to live in Finland, an easier transition and English as a common language should be encouraged. If not, they are going to have a population decline and not be able to pay for the aging generations social welfare benefits. “
- “Certain skills will always be in demand in both low and high skilled jobs. Good English is more essential than most companies advertise, especially when you reach a level where you communicate with people in higher level positions internally and externally. Often, they are foreign (especially at C-suite level) and don't speak finnish either.”
- “Finding a job basically depends on the industry as well, as i work in IT industry so it wasnt that hard, and finnish is also not required in my field, but that also depends upon companies.some want some dont.but i do think that if i want to switch my job here, that might be challenging”
- ” I'm a librarian in Finland and I also worked as a qualified librarian in my home country, which has a long tradition in libraries and library sciences, guess what, my Finnish colleagues of the dozens of libraries I've been working for never asked me anything about libraries organization in my country, nor about library sciences studies in my country. Of course they asked me instead every kind of personal question, about my motives for living here. It's totally messed up”
- “1. I've read an HR's post at LinkedIn honestly saying that it's easier to hire a finn because the CV in easier to understand: the university and the companies a person worked at, so it's a quick way to figure out what kind of a person is behind the CV. 2. Yes, COVID

decreased the chances to be hired. Many locals became unemployed and if they happen to have more experience than you - you're out of the game. 3. Fun statistical data: I've applied to 39 jobs in the last month. I was invited to 2 interviews (one is thanks to a recommendation but already got rejected). I got one letter with further questions and silence since then. And I've already got 18 rejection letters. Though I don't apply randomly: I apply only to relevant jobs where I have relevant experience and knowledge."

- " Finland claims to want to become more 'internationally friendly', but the work market does not reflect this. It's causing a lot of issues for foreigners."
- "Serious discriminations! I have struggled with it!"
- "There is a lot of discrimination in the work place and that's very visible. I had been looking for an UNPAID internship, for MONTHS, during the corona and after and it was extremely difficult to find something. Many didn't even answer."
- "It took me 14 months, 279 applications (only 6 interviews) to get a nursing job after going to school here for nursing. After my contract ended it was not extended due to 'language issues', but when i asked for examples that compromised patient safety or my ability to do my job, i was told there"
- "My contract was just short of 6 months and I am now back to searching, having put in 30 applications since mid august and no interviews."
- "Inexperience of Finnish people is other thing makes them hired foreigners. Personally, I feel they have insecurities of getting job taken away from them."
- "It is hard to speak generally, most of my colleagues are ok with international working place, but still some Finns are so xenophobic that I as a forigner feel totally unwanted and that is not a nice feeling..."
- "I am not fluent in finish, but i know enough . I am laihoitaja that is why i have a job . But my kids can't get a job other than daycare substitute. And they are born here."
- "I hope the government would encourage the private companies to give the foreigners at least internship where they can prove their skills if they cant trust yet despite of our long work experience from our home country."
- "I think it is already hard to find work as a foreigner if your skill set is generic or not in something in high demand (like IT). Many people are losing their jobs now because of corona and so what once was difficult for foreigners (finding a job) is probably much harder due to the fact so many people are out of work and in Finland I think finnish people are typically preferred over foreigners."