

## Original Paper

# Integration of Finnish Immigrants Research Review

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### Abstract

*Finland, as a European welfare state with a long history, has, like many other European welfare states, become a desired destination for many immigrants, including refugees. However, without an in-depth understanding of Finland's socio-historical context, we may inappropriately compare its immigration issues with those of other countries, making it difficult to accurately grasp the current state of the Finnish nation and the immigration challenges it faces. Finland's socio-cultural environment has long been at the crossroads of East and West. Finland's long history of foreign domination seems to have shaped the national consciousness of Finns and their acceptance of newcomers. As a result, Finnish society maintained a relatively homogeneous ethnic composition from independence until the 1980s. It was not until the 1990s that Finland began to systematically receive foreign immigrants. Since the immigrant population as a percentage of the total Finnish population was very low at this time, Finland had not yet enacted a formal national immigration and integration policy program. It was only after becoming a member of the European Union in 1995 that Finland became obliged to harmonize its immigration policy with the other member states. However, Finland's immigration policy is significantly more restrictive than that of other European countries.*

### Keywords

*immigration policy, immigration integration, social integration, individual integration plan*

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Abroad Research Status

Foreign research on immigration has already produced a wealth of results, and in recent years many scholars have further deepened the relevant research from some new perspectives. Research on the integration of immigrants in Finland is also an area of concern for foreign scholars, and some progress has been made. Finland has shifted its immigration policy to a multicultural integration policy since the 1990s to promote the integration of immigrants of different cultures at the policy level. Ryan Savage

(Ryan Savage) in the "Comparison of the Immigrant Policies of Sweden and Finland in Light of EU Framework on Immigrant Integration" (Comparison of the Immigrant Policies of Sweden and Finland in Light of EU Framework on Immigrant In his book "Comparison of the Immigrant Policies of Sweden and Finland in Light of EU Framework on Immigrant Integration", he studied Finland's integration policies, arguing that Finland is a highly homogenized country due to historical reasons, and that both indigenous and immigrant factors need to be taken into account when formulating relevant integration policies, and that the roles and responsibilities of various departments in the process of implementation of integration should be clarified, and that there is a lack of understanding and understanding of the policy and the implementation process. In addition, it also provides a clear description of the responsibilities and tasks of each sector in the process of integration, as well as suggestions and measures to improve the policy and the shortcomings in the implementation process. Pesola, Hanna, Sarvimäki and Matti in Intergenerational Spillovers of Integration Policies: Evidence from Finland's Integration Programs. Evidence from Finland's Integration Plans) examines Finnish integration policies from the perspective of intergenerational spillovers, arguing that interventions targeting adult immigrants may have positive intergenerational effects and should be taken into account when assessing the cost-effectiveness of integration policies. The authors use relevant data comparisons to show that integration programs can significantly increase the economic income of immigrant families, which in turn leads to better integration of immigrants into Finnish society.

More research has also emerged on the development and implementation of immigrant integration policies. Mahama Tawat, in The Arc of Nordic Multiculturalism Policies (1974-2006), A Divergent Convergence. A Divergent Convergence) shows that since Finland turned to multiculturalism policy in the 1990s, it has taken a series of measures along the same lines as Sweden and Norway. Sweden, as the first of the Nordic countries to adopt integration through multiculturalism, has played the role of 'teacher' in Finnish policy making, which, together with their historical affinities, has led to strong similarities at the level of immigrant integration. Kaisu Koskela, in his article "Integration Policies - Finland Country Report", explains the meaning of integration policies at the national policy level - Finnish integration policy is essentially oriented towards employment in the labor market. In practice, the integration process is mainly undertaken by the employment and economic sector, and training is provided to immigrant groups who have not yet entered the labor market. The guiding idea is that if immigrants are able to enter the labor market, all other aspects of integration (social, cultural) will follow. Eve Kyntäjä, for her part, in The Integration of Immigrants in European Societies National Differences and Trends of Convergence devotes a chapter to a detailed discussion of the development and implementation of integration policy in Finland. The author argues that immigration and integration policy is not only a matter of ideas and concepts, but also of budgets, administrative practices, and border control. There are three levels of policies that can be adopted when implementing immigrant integration: (1) National integration policy (2) Municipal immigration policy programs and integration plans (3) Individual and family integration plans. In her article Becoming Integrateable :

Hidden Realities of Integration Policies and Training in Finland, Ameera Masoud looks at integration policies and training in the context of the integration of immigrants. Finland) examines the effects of integration policies in practice and illustrates the discrepancy between the vision they portray and the way they are applied in practice. It is pointed out that "the common perception of Finnish integration policy is that the Nordic welfare states are 'advanced' in terms of both policy and practice", but in practice the effect is that immigrants are caught in a paradoxical process of exclusionary integration and inclusionary exclusion. This means that as long as they participate in integration training and work practices, they are considered to be included even if the integration courses they receive do not correspond to their previous experiences, and even if they have difficulties in finding a job. In their article *Assessing The Level of Immigrant Integration in Finland*, Jagat and Kunwar argue that the Finnish immigrant integration program focuses too much on macro-policies aimed at making new immigrants more linguistically, economically, and oriented to integration. This has been done at the expense of the personal psychosocial integration of mature immigrants.

In addition to this, scholars have also explored the integration of immigrants by entering the labor market. Elli Heikkilä and Nafisa Yeasmin, in their article "Labour market integration of immigrants in Finland", explore the integration of immigrants into the labour market in Finland, emphasizing that As a Nordic welfare state with fully employed citizens, Finland sees the integration of immigrants into the labor market as the main way of integrating them into Finnish society. As the integration of immigrants into the host society is a multidimensional and complex process covering a wide range of economic and political fields, and the Finnish labor market is currently in transition, with many industries facing the challenge of labor shortages, this phenomenon predicts that the number of foreigners moving to Finland will continue to grow in the future. In her article *Out of the Immigration Periphery: A Case Study of Competence-based Immigration Policy Development in Finland*, Marjukka Hourunranta argues that Finland's immigration policy is a major factor in the growth of the immigrant population. *Out of the Immigration Periphery: A Case Study of Competence-based Immigration Policy Development in Finland*, Marjukka Hourunranta analyzes the integration of immigrants into the labor market through the analysis of specific case studies, with a focus on distinguishing the difference between "Competence-Based Immigration (CBI)" and "Labor Immigration". The difference between CBI and labor migration is highlighted. The need to treat all groups of immigrants in the Finnish labour market fairly and to minimize the exploitation of foreign labour is also made clear as a prerequisite for a sustainable immigration and multicultural mobility policy. In her article "Finland's Immigration Policy: State Objectives, Local Solutions", Saara Koikkalainen describes Finland's immigration policy in terms of national policies and local solutions. In the article "Finland's Immigration Policy: State Objectives, Local Solutions", the Finnish model of integration policy is described as borrowed from the Dutch and Swedish systems and constructed with the concept of multiculturalism in mind. It also points out the uniqueness of the Finnish integration system and through this uniqueness reveals the main principle of the Finnish integration system: integration is seen as a labor market issue rather than a

cultural or social issue. In his article *Barriers to Opportunity for Immigrants in Finland: A Source of Inequality*, Liam Brennan-Masters emphasizes that immigrants are experiencing employment discrimination, racism and inequality in the labour market. In his article "*Barriers to Opportunity for Immigrants in Finland: A Source of Inequality*", it is emphasized that immigrants are experiencing employment discrimination, racism and inequality in the labour market and that immigrants are clearly facing unfairness and diminishing opportunities in many fields due to barriers to opportunity. Quivine Ndomo, in *The Working Underclass: Highly Educated Migrants on the Fringes of the Finnish Labor Market*, discusses in detail how the integration and integration of immigrants in Finland has been a major factor in the development of the Finnish economy. discusses in detail how Finnish integration and immigration agencies have shaped immigrants into a subordinate workforce in the Finnish labor market. The characteristics assigned to immigrants, including ethnicity, nationality and race, play a key role in their subordinate position in the labor market. This implies that the value assigned to individual workers may be more important in terms of labor market integration than labor market competence. In other words, a person's identity, or what is perceived as a person's identity based on ascribed characteristics such as race and nationality, is more important in valuing them as a worker or professional than their labor market capabilities. Rolle Alho, in *Finland: integration of asylum seekers and refugees in a tightened policy framework*, points out that labor market integration measures for immigrants (including refugees) are more important. In *Finland: integration of asylum seekers and refugees in a tightened policy framework*, it is stated that labor market integration measures for immigrants (including refugees) generally fall within the scope of active labor market policies. The difficulties faced by refugees and asylum seekers in integrating into the labour market and the important role played by civil society organizations in facilitating the integration of immigrants are illustrated.

Ameera Masoud's doctoral dissertation this year, "*Finland: Constructing the Integrateable Refugee and Immigrant Through Integration within a Stricter Policy Framework*", provides an overview of Finnish integration policy and practice to date and makes recommendations for future policy development. *Policies and Practices in Finland* provides an overview of Finnish integration policies and practices to date and makes recommendations for future policy development. The author shows that individual integration programs are one of the unique elements of Finnish integration policy, but that in practice these programs are mainly for the unemployed. Once employed, all these schemes come to an end, which hides the racist undertones that lie behind them. It also affects the individual as it creates a shift from knowledge to the adoption of new skills through a process of de-skilling, re-skilling and skilling, which mostly leads to wastage of individual capabilities. These deep-rooted problems call for major structural and practical changes in integration policies and practices in order to combat the racism that exists and is experienced at all levels of integration and to transform attitudes towards immigrants, especially non-Western immigrants.

### *1.2 Domestic Research Status*

Discussions on the integration of immigrants in Finland are still on the fringe of the domestic academic community, and there is a relative lack of relevant academic results and information. However, in Europe, which is a hotspot for immigrants, the study of immigration from the macro perspective of major European countries and even Europe as a whole has yielded fruitful results, which can provide an important reference for the study of integration of immigrants in Finland. Wang Yi, “Research on Immigration Policies in the Process of European Integration” (Doctoral Dissertation, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, 2002) examines the issue of immigration from the process of European integration as a whole, analyzes the flow of immigrants, the control and integration policies of immigrants, as well as the changes in policies in the process of integration, and argues that with the continuous growth in the number of immigrants and asylum-seekers, the pressure of immigrants from third countries has gradually intensified. It argues that as the number of migrants and asylum seekers continues to grow, the pressure of migration from third countries has gradually intensified, and that Member States have come to regard the issue of migration as one of the key issues to be addressed. At the same time, the advancing political, economic and social dimensions of European integration, as well as the establishment of the EU's Single Market and the progressive implementation of the experimental results of the Schengen Agreement, have led to the realization that Member States are facing similar migration challenges. EU member states are under pressure from the top from the coordination of immigration policy at the EU level and from the bottom from the influx of large numbers of immigrants, and the double pressure makes national governments realize that it is difficult to formulate effective immigration policy in the traditional immigration policy decision-making system of each country, and that they must concede part of their national sovereignty, seek cooperation at the EU level, and develop a unified immigration policy. Qiu Ling, “Research on the Integration of European Immigration Policies” (Master's thesis, Nanjing Normal University, 2011) analyzes the problems of European immigration policies from a deep perspective, such as the existence of institutional defects within the EU and the obstacles of conceptual identity in Europe, etc. She argues that the process of the integration of European immigration policies has developed gradually along with the development of European integration, and that it has been a major challenge to the process of European integration, especially the The construction of European citizenship and the construction of cultural identity play an important role. As some scholars have mentioned, in order to create a “fairer, richer, stronger and younger” Europe, Europe is faced with a double task: conceptual change and institutional innovation. In the process of constructing a European identity, the first task is to bring about a change in attitudes, although this process is fraught with difficulties. Rejection of outsiders and deep-rooted nationalist and racist tendencies must be overcome in order to reduce hostility towards immigrant groups, which required a joint effort by immigrants and society. In the process of social integration emphasized by the EU, there are frictions and challenges between immigrants and host societies on several levels, including economic, institutional and cultural. Only if European societies adopt a positive attitude to

assist migrants in adapting to their living environments and their changes, and create more diversified spaces suitable for survival, can such interactions have a positive impact on solving the migration problem. This is precisely why we urgently need to study the obstacles to the integration of immigration policies posed by identity issues. Chen Peiqiu, "Analysis of the Impact of Changes in Immigration Policy on Immigrants—Taking the European Union Area as an Example" (Master's thesis, Henan University, 2016), believes that immigration is not only a simple social phenomenon, nor does it only involve the contradiction between supply and demand in the labor market, but also involves the complex and comprehensive issues of politics, economy, culture, diplomacy, etc., which makes what seems to be a relatively simple issue appear complex. Migration is a global issue that connects history and future, and thus requires coordination and cooperation among countries to cope with the problems brought by various kinds of migrants. From the perspective of Muslim migrants in Europe, Irene Luo, "The Economic and Political Impact of International Migration" (PhD dissertation, Institute for World Economics, 2013), argues that the deterioration of the economic form of European countries is the root cause of the high anti-Muslim migrant sentiment. At the same time, the differences between Islamic and Christian cultures make it more difficult for European Muslims to integrate into mainstream European society than other immigrant groups, thus making them more likely than other immigrant groups to become targets of mainstream European culture and exclusion.

At the research level of European countries, Liu Shuang's "Historical Evolution and Realistic Dilemmas of European Immigration Policies: Taking the United Kingdom, France, and Germany as Examples" (Master's thesis, Foreign Affairs College, 2021) takes three major European countries as the object of research, and argues that the United Kingdom, France, and Germany have shaped a specific mode of immigration and social integration in the process of development. In the course of their development, the United Kingdom, France and Germany have shaped specific patterns of immigrant integration, such as the "pluralism pattern" of the United Kingdom, the "republican assimilation pattern" of France, and the "rejection followed by integration pattern" or "guest worker pattern" of Germany. The "guest labor model" in Germany. These orientations have the representative significance of "knowing the whole picture from a glimpse" for grasping the whole picture of European countries' immigration policies. Yao Yao's "Comparative Analysis of German and Dutch Immigration Policies under the Integration of Foreign Communities" (Master's thesis, Yunnan University, 2013), on the other hand, is a comparative study between the two countries, which is organized from four aspects: the state of integration of the two countries' ethnic groups, the immigration policies, the policies of integration of immigrants, and the effects they have achieved. At the level of policy formulation and implementation, the immigration policies of Germany and the Netherlands share numerous differences, but also reflect commonalities. The historical and cultural differences between Germany and the Netherlands have resulted in contrasting immigration and integration policies prior to the 21st century. In the same European Union context, the two immigrant countries have started to move away from the dominant integration ideologies of "assimilationism" and "multiculturalism" and are slowly moving

closer to the opposing sides, absorbing the advantages of both in order to find a balance in the development of their own integration policies. The main theme of the study is "The integration of immigrants in Finland". Guo Lin, "Finland May Become a New Continent for Immigrants" (Guangming Daily, 2000, B04), points out that Finland, like other European Union countries, is facing the problems of aging population and labor shortage. Firstly, the population groups born at the peak of post-World War II fertility are gradually entering retirement age, leading to the acceleration of the trend of population aging; the prolongation of per capita life expectancy and the long-term low birth rate make the proportion of the elderly population in the total population of the society continue to rise. Secondly, Finns do not work effectively for a long time in their lives. At present, the average retirement age of Finns is 58.5 years, and before entering the workforce, they have to study at school until a considerable age, and the real working time in their life is just over 20 years. The result of this phenomenon is an increasingly heavy burden on the country's pensions under the current "cradle-to-grave" welfare state model. Without further improvements in productivity and rapid economic growth, the national economy will face heavy pressure from increased pension expenditures, which will affect the sustainability of high welfare policies. The solution to these problems requires a large number of highly qualified laborers, which is clearly beyond the capacity of relying solely on the country's labor pool. Generally speaking, there have been considerable achievements in the study of migration in major countries and at the level of large perspectives, but there are still shortcomings in the study of some small countries and marginalized areas.

## 2. Conclusion

To summarize, research on the integration of immigrants in Finland is receiving increasing attention abroad and is slightly lacking at home. A reading of the available research shows that in the Nordic countries, where the discourse of the nation-state is based on the premise of homogeneity and national autonomy, anyone perceived as an outsider creates a risk of jeopardizing the welfare state and the so-called homogeneous culture. In Finland, as in the Nordic and EU countries, outsiders have been perceived as a "threat" on the basis of racial and ethnic differences and beliefs from whiteness, which can become entangled with the ideology of the nation-state. Therefore, how to cross the boundaries of racial and ethnic differences, curb the negative impact of racism on integration policies and, in practice, help immigrants to integrate more effectively into their new countries and societies is key to the future development and optimization of Finland's integration policies, and is worthy of further study and reflection.

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